



Preparing Your Children for Disasters



- **Don't be reluctant to talk with your family about the possibility of a disaster.**

Thought and action before a disaster hits usually help family members react wisely. Use age appropriate books, news articles and other methods to introduce the topic and talk about how your family can be safer by knowing what to do.



- **Involve children in the development of your Family Emergency Plan and Supply Kit.**

Discuss and practice these plans as a family. Give children exact steps to follow and establish a meeting place. For older children, it may be appropriate to let them ask questions and make suggestions. Even young children can have a role in this process. Let them choose band-aids for a first aid kit, help select the family meeting place or choose pictures of family members to be labeled and put with your supply kit.



- **Help young children practice dialing emergency numbers.**

Keep the phone off the hook or use a toy phone. take turns asking for help and use this as a chance to discuss when to call for help.



- **Teach your children how to recognize danger signals.**

Make sure they know what smoke detectors and other alarms sound like, talk about keeping doors and windows closed to keep smoke or fumes out of a house as well as how to get out safely in the event of fire or other emergency.



- **Help your children to memorize important family information.**

They should memorize their family name, phone number, and address. This includes knowing that “Mommy” and “Daddy” have first names too! Having pictures of all family members can be helpful for reuniting young children with their families as well as to combat homesickness. By labeling pictures with parent’s names, young children can more easily communicate to adults who they are looking for.



- **Provide basic supplies for a variety of possible situations.**

Stock a box with games, books, and hobby materials for sitting out emergencies. Make sure you keep a stock of water and non-perishable food on hand and consider the needs for diapers, formula and medications. As children outgrow them, consider placing special items like favorite toys, stuffed animals or favorite blankets with these supplies. Familiar items can help ease fears and reassure children.