

## Talk with kids about plans before a disaster strikes

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The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) urges families to prepare for disasters like tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires and chemical spills. Parents also should make sure everyone knows what to do and how to connect with each other when they are not together during a disaster.

We can't predict everything we need to do to get ready for disasters, but there are some steps everyone can take.

Different types of natural disasters can occur depending on where you live. For example, nearly every part of the U.S. can have severe storms or flooding, and everyone should be prepared for power outages. But not all areas experience wildfires, earthquakes or hurricanes. Your community also could face disasters caused by people like hazardous material spills.

Making a plan can help reduce fear and worry. Here are steps you can take with your family before a disaster strikes:

- Figure out how family members will stay in contact if you are separated at school, work, child care or away at college. Decide on a meeting place where you will reunite.
- Put a list of contacts such as family members, doctors' and veterinary offices, and the pharmacy you use in a place where everyone can find it.
- Ask your child's school or child care facility how they will communicate with parents in an emergency and where they would go if they must leave the building suddenly.
- Have an internet-based social media platform, instant messaging or texting option so family members can connect if cellular networks do not work.
- Teach young children their parents' names, phone numbers and address. You also can fill out a backpack emergency card for your child and yourself. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has printable cards at <https://bit.ly/2VQWD54>.

- Put together a disaster kit with first-aid supplies, hand sanitizer, batteries, water, nonperishable food, blankets, medicine and other supplies. Find a supply list at <https://bit.ly/3sosg29>.

If a disaster does occur, the AAP urges you to listen to your child's concerns and fears. Children may need time to figure out how they feel about what they have gone through. Also, limit children's access to TV and social media and talk to them about what they see and read.

Find more tips at <https://bit.ly/3yX8DAw>.

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