



Preparing Kids for a Disaster

1

Limit Media Exposure:

Under normal circumstances, adults and children tend to be glued to the TV with an impending disaster. Although you need to stay informed this can be overwhelming for kids because they do not understand everything that is happening. It can also cause heightened anxiety and fear. Turn the TV off when they are in the room or try to watch news updates in a different room to limit their exposure. For older kids, there is a steady stream of information on all different social media platforms. Parents should try to include them while watching the news, so they can help them understand the circumstance and how to stay safe.

2

Find Out What They Want to Know:

Ask your kids open-ended questions on how they are feeling and what they are worried about. This will allow you to properly address their feeling and concerns without overwhelming them. Reassure kids that they are safe. Talk with them about your family's plans to stay safe. Remember, it is always good to talk about these plans before a disaster is upon you. This helps to alleviate fears as well since kids are prepared in advance and have had time to practice. Remember to keep the conversations age appropriate, younger kids need a higher level explanation while older kids will want additional details.

3

Focus on Preparedness:

A great way to calm any fears is to focus on things that are in your control. When you have prepared and planned for a disaster the unknown is not so scary as kids feel more prepared about what to expect. It is important to be honest with kids. Questions like, could that happen here? Should be addressed with an honest answer as well as a plan to alleviate concerns. Involve your kids in the process. Pack an emergency preparedness kit with them, practice your evacuation plan with them, sit down with them and complete a communication plan together. Activities such as these help emergency situations feel more controllable.

4

Utilize the Resources Available:

The NFS website has many resources to assist in disaster preparedness. In addition, Ready.gov has a complete library of resources available to prepare kids for a disaster. Visit www.ready.gov/kids to access the disaster preparedness kit for kids.