



Children and emergencies

Children cope better with frightening events when they have been involved in preparing and adults stay calm and honest. This page covers how to prepare kids, talk to them during a crisis and support them afterwards.

CHECKLIST

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| ☐ Emergency card with contacts, medicines and allergies | ☐ Books, games or puzzles |
| ☐ Note with home address and a relative's contact | ☐ Infant formula, nappies and wipes if needed |
| ☐ Small favourite toy | ☐ Three days of food, water and medicine per child |

PREPARE

- Talk through your family plan with children and agree actions together.
- Let children help pack the kit, including games or a favourite toy.
- Teach children when and how to call emergency services.
- Help them learn your home address and a parent's mobile number.
- Learn the school's emergency, contact and pick-up procedures.
- Put a card in your child's bag listing contacts, medicines and allergies.

USE AND MAINTAIN

- Stay calm yourself, as children pick up on adult worry.
- Explain what is happening in simple words suited to their age.
- Be truthful without frightening them, and say so if you do not know.
- Invite questions and listen carefully to their worries.
- Keep daily routines as normal as you can.
- Do not rush to the school if it evacuates children; wait for officials.
- Turn off constant news and do calming activities together.

REVIEW

- Keep children with you or another trusted adult.
- Let them help others in safe ways, but keep them out of clean-up work.
- Tell them clearly that they are safe now and not to blame.
- Expect to repeat explanations, especially with young children.

IN THE UAE

Teach children the UAE emergency numbers: 999 police, 998 ambulance, 997 civil defence.

MY NOTES

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Before, During, and After an Emergency (<https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html>); UK Government (Prepare), Get prepared for emergencies (<https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/get-prepared-for-emergencies/>); Get Prepared (Public Safety Canada), Your Emergency Preparedness Guide (<https://www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrctns/pblctns/yprrprdnssgd/>); Swedish Red Cross, How to talk to children about difficult incidents (<https://www.rodakorset.se/en/get-help/mental-health/give-support-to-someone-in-a-crisis/how-to-talk-to-children-about-difficult-matters/>); Ministry of the Interior, Czech Republic (72 hodin), Children (<https://www.72h.gov.cz/en/children>); Ready.gov (FEMA), Build A Kit (<https://www.ready.gov/kit>); UAE Government Portal (u.ae), Handling emergencies (<https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/justice-safety-and-the-law/handling-emergencies>) General guidance in our own words. Always follow your local authorities.