



Children and Severe Weather

Prepare Children in Advance

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Severe weather can strike at any time. Prepare in advance so you and your children are safe, confident, and ready. Younger and older children rely on adults to provide information and guidance. Have you discussed with them what to do if severe weather strikes?

Children Have Unique Needs

In hot weather, children are at higher risk for dehydration compared to adults. In cold weather, children lose body heat more quickly than adults. As a consequence, they need extra attention during extreme heat and cold. Pay close attention to your child and model the right behavior:

- Drink plenty of water when it's hot
- Seek out shade/air conditioned areas to cool off

- Wear warm layers of clothing when it's cold
- Seek out heated, sheltered places to warm up

Be Honest

Tell children what to expect based upon a child's age and comprehension. Be calm and use reassuring words: "Storms happen, but we will be okay." Answer children's questions. Use simple words: "If the lights go out, then we will use flashlights"



to see.” Include children in storm preparations and praise their efforts. Children feel a sense of belonging when they have a role to play and are helping.

Make a Plan Together

Teach children basic information: their address, phone number, and how and when to dial 911. Encourage youth to ask their family members for help. Select a spot to meet inside and outside in an emergency. Children who feel prepared are more likely to have a sense of self-control.

Weather conditions

Familiarize children with seasonal weather conditions. Explain using words they understand. For example: “If you hear thunder or see storm clouds, go inside the home/apartment right away.” or “Drink

extra water when the weather is hot.” When flood warnings are issued, teach children to stay out of standing or moving water. Practice using language such as: Turn Around, Don’t Drown® and Move to Higher Ground®.

Stay informed

Media and local authorities provide updates on changing weather and safety recommendations as storms approach. Watch/listen to the weather on TV, the computer or an app so children will learn about local weather under normal conditions. Do not alarm children with graphic weather images. Tell them in a calm, positive way that you as a family are going to be safe.

Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, September 1). How are Children Different from Adults?

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/differences.html>

For more information, www.ready.gov/kids.