



**American
Red Cross**
of Greater Indianapolis

Be Red Cross Ready



Plan for children

Disasters can be frightening for adults, but they're traumatic for children if they don't know what to do. During a disaster your family might have to leave your home and daily routine. Children can become anxious, confused or frightened. Guidance will help reduce their fears. One way to help children feel more confident and in control is to involve them in preparing your family disaster plan. Discussions and practice of preparedness plans can strengthen a child's sense of safety and security.

- Teach your children their basic personal information so they can identify themselves and get help if they get separated from a parent or guardian.
- Make sure your children's schools and daycare centers have up-to-date emergency contact information and the names of those authorized to pick up your children.
- Teach children how to dial their home telephone number and a parent or guardian's cell phone number.
- Teach your children how to recognize danger signals. Make sure they know what smoke alarms, fire alarms and local community warning systems sound like.
- Teach children what gas smells like and advise them to tell an adult if they smell gas after an emergency.
- Warn children never to touch wires lying on the ground or hanging loose from poles.

A special note on disasters and children

Disasters can be especially traumatic for children. When disaster strikes, a child's view of the world as a safe and predictable place is lost temporarily. Children become afraid that the event will happen again and that they or their family may be harmed. If you have questions or observe unusual behavior in your children that you think may be caused by the disaster, contact the Greater Indianapolis Red Cross chapter, a children's counselor or community professional for additional information and help. The Red Cross can arrange for you to talk with a member of its disaster mental health team who has expertise in this area.