



KNOW THE RULES...

Safety Tips for Children Displaced in Natural Disasters and Their Caregivers

Many children caught up in a natural disaster have not only been separated from their families but find themselves in a new state, school, and living environment. Often they must receive help and care from people they do not know. The trauma they experience may not be readily discernible. The tips noted below are designed to help child victims of natural disasters acclimate to a new environment and caregivers provide the best assistance possible.

Tips for Children

- **CHECK FIRST** with the adult in charge before going anywhere or leaving with anyone.
- Stay together and go places with a friend or sibling.
- If anyone tries to touch you or does anything to make you feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused, say **NO**.
- Tell the adult in charge if anything happens to make you feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused.
- **Ask for help from the adult in charge if anything happens to make you feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused.**

Tips for Caregivers

- Make sure you know where the children in your care are at all times, and make certain to provide close supervision at all times either yourself or by trusted adults.
- Help children acclimate to new environments by taking time to show them around and explain any rules or guidelines to children who are old enough to understand.
- Give children time to acclimate, and be patient with those who appear to be withdrawn, shy, or angry. When talking to the children in your care, do so in a calm, nonthreatening, and reassuring manner. Get the support you need from other adults so you may be in the best shape to help those in your care. Reach out for helpful resources.
- Since the environment is new for the children in your care, ask how you may make the stay more comfortable. Offer to do things such as leaving a light on at night or reading at bedtime. Establish a routine with the children that includes scheduled nutritious meals and bedtimes.
- Be sensitive to their individual needs and seek professional help for any children in your care who demonstrate acting out behaviors, appear to be extremely withdrawn, or have difficulties adjusting to their new environment.
- Make every effort to normalize the situation by enrolling the school-aged children in your care in school, providing activities for school-aged children outside of school, and providing structured activities for children who are too young to attend school. Try to introduce the children in your care to other children their age.
- Be as involved as possible in activities in which the children in your care participate so you may better observe the other adults in charge and how they interact with program participants.
- The children in your care may have concerns, fears, and questions about why this happened and what will happen next. Encourage open communication, listen compassionately, and take every opportunity to reassure.

Tips for Dealing With Others' Curiosity and Media Requests

- People will be naturally curious about the children in your care. Ask the children how they feel about being around others and if they want to participate in a specific activity or go to a certain place.
- Children should be shielded from media contact, and any requests for interviews should be routed through the Department of Social Services or adult in charge of the facility, shelter, or placement in the state in which the child is residing.

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