

**PREPARING
CHILDREN
FOR
EMERGENCIES**
Are You Ready?

Is a series of handouts designed to assist you and your family to plan ahead for emergencies.

For more information on **Preparing Children for Emergencies**— Check out these Helpful websites:



www.fema.gov/kids



Washington County
Emergency Services/
Emergency Management
33 W. Washington St.
Hagerstown, MD 21740
240-313-2930



www.fema.gov



www.redcross.org



www.hhs.gov



www.whitehouse.gov

Are You Ready?



WASHINGTON COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

SEPTEMBER 2005

Helping Children Cope with Disaster

Disasters may strike quickly and without warning. These events can be frightening for adults, but they are traumatic for children if they don't know what to do.

During a disaster, your family may have to leave your home and daily routine. Children may become anxious, confused or frightened. As an adult, you'll need to cope with the disaster in a way that will help children avoid developing a permanent sense of loss. It is important to give children guidance that will help them reduce their fears.

- ★ Make sure your children know how to contact you at work.
- ★ Make sure your children know the address where they live, including nearby cross streets and landmarks. Be sure your children know their home phone number, including the area code.
- ★ Explain 9-1-1. Talk to your children about how to call 9-1-1 and when calling it is appropriate.
- ★ Teach your children and teens how to be safe. Tell them to seek help immediately from a teacher, law enforcement officer, or other security personnel if they overhear classmates threatening to hurt themselves or others.



Advice to Parents: Prepare for Disaster

You can create a Family Disaster Plan by taking four simple steps. First learn what hazards exist in your community and how to prepare for each. Then meet with your family to discuss what you would do, as a group, in each situation. Next, take steps to prepare your family for disaster such as: posting emergency phone numbers, selecting an out-of-state family contact, assembling disaster supplies kits for each member of your household and installing smoke detectors on each level of your home. Finally, practice your Family Disaster Plan so everyone will remember what to do when a disaster does occur.

After the Disaster: Time for Recovery

Immediately after the disaster, try to reduce your child's fear and anxiety.

- ★ Keep the family together.
- ★ Encourage children to talk.
- ★ Calmly and firmly explain the situation.
- ★ Include children in recovery activities.



Parents & Families

Include your children in planning for an emergency. Teach them how to get help and what to do in different situations. Practice your family emergency plan with your children and quiz them about preparedness information.

Remember.....September is **National Preparedness Month**

Get a Kit, Make a Plan, Be Informed and Get Involved

Q: What is National Preparedness Month?

A: National Preparedness Month is a nationwide effort to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools. Throughout September, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross will work with a wide variety of organizations to highlight the importance of emergency preparedness and promote individual involvement through events and activities across the nation.

Q: What is the purpose of National Preparedness Month?

A: The goal of National Preparedness Month is to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies and to encourage individuals to take action. Throughout the month, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, American Red Cross and National Preparedness Month Coalition Members will ask all Americans to take some simple steps to prepare for emergencies including getting an emergency supply kit, making a family emergency plan, being informed about different threats and getting involved in preparing their communities.

GET PREPARED!



Make a plan.



Build a kit.



Get trained.



Volunteer.



Give blood.