

# PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

## TIPS for Families with Young Children

Birth to 5 years



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It is important to ensure that you and your family are well-prepared and ready should disaster strike; preparedness and planning are key. Children have unique needs, especially during a disaster or emergency. Using everyday moments in your child's life to help your child learn and build skills will help them if faced with an emergency in the future. Back-and-forth interactions with you can help your child's developing brain make connections with what is happening around them and help them feel **safe** and **secure**.

Try the brain building tips below with your child for **preparing**, **responding** or **recovering** from an emergency.



### Brain Building Tip



## Preparedness

This takes place before an emergency. It includes being informed, making and communicating plans, practicing your plan, and building emergency supply kits. During this phase, you learn about your risks.

### TODAY IS...

As you ride in the bus or car, describe to your child how the day is: "Today is bright and sunny. Today I can feel the warmth of the sun on my face," or "Brrr, today is cold! That's why we have coats on." Ask them to take a turn. Be sure to respond to their words or sounds.

## Brainy Background

When your child hears you describe the weather and things associated with the weather, they're learning to make connections between what and why. These connections will help them develop critical thinking and communicating skills.



### Brain Building Tip



## Response

This begins when you are alerted to an emergency and when an event actually occurs; this is when you either evacuate or shelter-in-place depending on the type of emergency.

## FROM HERE TO THERE

Do you have magazines, newspapers, or pieces of cardboard at home? Ask your child to create a path to get from one side of a room to the other without touching the ground. Make it harder by increasing the distance and timing them to see how fast they can go. Take turns!

## Brainy Background

Your child uses critical thinking skills to make a plan and test it out, and also think flexibly to come up with different solutions, such as putting one piece of paper in front of the other. This is a great group activity where they can practice communicating and working with others.



### Brain Building Tip

## Recovery

This is the period of time (hours, days, weeks, months) after an emergency occurs where returning to your everyday life is a focus. This is when you work to get back to your day-to-day; emotions may be running high during this phase.

## CALM DOWN KIT

Using an empty shoebox or other container, have your child put special items inside that help them calm down, like a book, a favorite toy, or piece of clothing. Have them decorate the box and when they're feeling upset, remind them to use the Calm Down Kit.

## Brainy Background

By creating a Calm Down Kit before upset feelings happen, you're helping your child plan for how to handle stress so they can take action in a difficult situation. This gives them more control and builds their skill in learning to take on challenges.



Visit [ChildCarePrepare.org](http://ChildCarePrepare.org) for more information on emergency preparedness and visit [WeAreBrainBuilders.org](http://WeAreBrainBuilders.org) for information on brain building.