



Supporting Your Child During Stressful Times

Even the littlest humans are affected emotionally by emergencies. After a scary event, it's normal for young children to become more clingy, have tantrums, struggle with sleep, or regress in skills.

These reactions are usually short-term. However, it's important to monitor changes in personality and behavior or reactions that persist. Big or lasting changes should be shared with a health professional.

Ways to help your child

CREATE A COZY SPACE

- ☐ Arrange your area in a shelter or living arrangement so it feels like your own little nest.

INCREASE COMFORT AND CONNECTION

- ☐ Hold, rock, sway, or bounce gently.
- ☐ Speak in a soft voice.
- ☐ Keep your child facing you while feeding or playing.
- ☐ Reassure them you'll stay with them.

USE GENTLE DISTRACTIONS

- ☐ Tell simple stories.
- ☐ Sing their favorite songs together.



SUPPORT EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- ☐ Encourage your child to share their feelings—through talking or calming activities like drawing or coloring.
- ☐ Give simple, age-appropriate explanations, and be honest when you don't have answers.
- ☐ Limit exposure to distressing news and social media when possible, and guide them toward calmer, age-appropriate content.
- ☐ Acknowledge that some exposure to difficult situations may be unavoidable—offer reassurance, stay present, and help them process what they see and feel.

RESPOND CALMLY TO FEELINGS

- ☐ Acknowledge their worries with simple, reassuring words like:
 - “I know, I want to go home too. We’re staying here together to keep safe.”
 - “The big wind was scary. It’s over now.”

KEEP ROUTINES STEADY

- ☐ Stick to familiar rhythms: eat, play, nap, play, sleep.
- ☐ Let your child make choices over small things throughout the day to help them feel in control.