



Helping Children after a Disaster



A child likes people
and places he knows.

A child likes to know
what will happen.

A disaster can make a child afraid, more afraid than you. A child can mix up real fear and make-believe fear. This is okay. You can help.

How can a parent help?

- Don't leave the child alone in a new place.
- Stay together to show you won't go away.
- Tell the child about the disaster.
- Tell the child you were afraid.

Talk with the child.

- Help the child talk.
- Listen to the child.
- Say it's okay to be afraid.
- Hold and hug the child.
- Explain. Talk. Listen. Over and over.

Keep working to make things better.

- Let the child help clean up.
- Don't stop doing things.
- Put order in your day as best you can.
- Tell the child about your plans each day.
- Stay close together.

Bedtime may be bad.

- A child may not want to sleep away from you.
- A child may be afraid of the dark.
- A child may have bad dreams.
- A child may wet the bed.

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You can help.

- Tell the child about why it gets dark.
- Tell the child about dreams.
- Praise the child for good things.
- Don't yell at the child.
- Don't spank the child.
- Agree on a time for the child to go to bed.
- Leave the door open a little.
- Read to the child.
- Tell a story about a good time today.

If you stay worried about the child, seek help. Schools can help you find professional help. Remember, this is a hard time for you, too.