

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU

We spend hours of every day preparing: for the day, the big presentation or a family meal. But when was the last time you took steps to prepare you family for a disaster? With 90 years of emergency response experience, Save the Children knows that children are most vulnerable in disasters, with unique needs that require specific and purposeful planning to keep them from harm. Taking simple steps, like making a family plan, gathering disaster supplies and keeping informed will help protect your children.

**Don't let these assumptions stand in the way of making emergency preparedness a priority for your family and community.**

## IT'S SCARY

It may seem scary to talk to your children about emergencies, or maybe it just never seems like the right time. That's normal. But thinking and talking through worst-case scenarios can help prevent them from becoming worst-case realities. **It took six months for the last child to be reunited with her family following Hurricane Katrina** and we can't let that happen again. Protect your family by having a disaster plan and being informed. If needed, spread out conversations about different types of emergencies so it doesn't feel so overwhelming. Ultimately, children will feel safer knowing what to do and understanding that adults are equipped to protect them.



## IT WON'T HAPPEN HERE

Many of us like to think we live in safe neighborhoods, but the reality is that disasters pose a threat to everyone. **Ninety percent of children in the United States live in areas at risk for natural disaster and manmade disasters can strike anywhere at any time.** That makes emergency preparedness a must for every family and community. Just last year, Hurricane Sandy hit the north-eastern seaboard and tragedy struck Sandy Hook Elementary, a well-to-do Connecticut neighborhood. Both events occurred under unexpected circumstances that shocked the nation. While emergency plans cannot prevent the emergency, it can mitigate its effects, especially its harm to children who are dependent on caregivers for their safety.

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## MY KIDS ARE SAFE WITH ME

What about all those times your kids aren't with you? Each work day, 68 million children are in child care or school, separated from their families, yet Save the Children's National Disaster Report Card found that **more than half of states and the District of Columbia lack basic safety standards for protecting kids in these facilities.** Even if your school has a great emergency plan, the one down the street may not, leaving thousands of children vulnerable and at risk. Be familiar with your school's plan and take action by urging local, state and national leaders to make kids' needs a priority.

**“It isn't about waiting until the storm is upon you to ask yourselves if you are ready. It isn't the time when you are waiting in a room full of worried parents wondering if your child is seriously injured or worse... Now is the time for all of us to act. It is time to be prepared.”**

**--Alissa Parker,**

Mother of 6-year-old Sandy Hook Elementary victim

## WE'VE ALREADY PREPARED

Being prepared is more than having a plan and making a kit, it's part of a safe lifestyle that **requires regular practice and maintenance.** Practice emergency drills with the family. Provide the school with updated medical and contact information and make sure all caregivers are familiar with your emergency plan.