



A little help for big events

Supporting kids' wellbeing before, during and after disasters



When disasters like floods, fires, droughts, or other community tragedies happen, children feel the impact deeply. When their world feels uncertain, kids need calm, confident adults.

Here's how you can support kids and help them feel safe, connected, and understood before, during, and after disasters:

- **Connection is protection**

Be physically and emotionally available, warm, and responsive—your relationship is the most powerful buffer against trauma.

- **Children have unique needs**

Their reactions depend on age, development, personality and whatever else is happening in their lives at the time —tailor your support.

- **Caregiver wellbeing matters**

Look after your own physical and mental health. You can't pour from an empty cup.

- **Support expression + involvement**

Encourage children to share feelings through talking, play, art, or movement, and recognise their need to be involved and feel helpful.

- **Prepare, don't scare**

Use age-appropriate information, involve them in meaningful roles, and be gently honest. Connect kids to the world around them so that they understand the country, nature, seasons, and weather.

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Before a disaster Prepare

- Talk about seasons, weather, and disasters 
- Create a family emergency plan with your children 
- Help your children express their feelings openly 
- Connect with others who can provide mutual support if needed

During a disaster Respond

- Activate you plan and ensure physical safety, including taking care of yourself 
- Keep your children with you if possible as this lowers the risk of trauma  
- Try and maintain familiar routines and relationships
- Let children express themselves and find ways where they can help 

After a disaster Support recovery

- Watch for signs of distress, and seek professional help if you are unsure about how your child is coping   
- Help make sense of the event and let kids help in ways that are not distressing or re-traumatising   
- Rebuild connections and routines as quickly as practicable
- Talk with your children about what was learned and incorporate this into your emergency plan for future disasters 

Helpful resources



Birdies Tree
(0-8 year olds)



headspace
(12-25 year olds)



Extra resources +
download the flyer



Emerging Minds
(0-12 year olds)



**Preparing an
emergency plan**



**Outback Futures
get support**



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