

Planning for an Emergency

Children under age 5 are more likely than older children to die or be injured from fires in their homes. It can be scary to imagine your home on fire. Most of us would rather not think about it! But if this tragedy happened to you, your child would depend on you to get them out safely. That's why it's a good idea to have a plan.

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Fires are not the only emergencies that might affect your family. Natural disasters like storms and floods force thousands of people from their homes each year. Or imagine that another child or adult in your household were seriously injured in an accident. Who would care for the rest of your family while you were taking them to the hospital?

This handout gives you a chance to think about such life-threatening situations. Talk about your emergency plans. If possible, practice what you would do. Talk about each person's role—children and adults.

Choose someone outside your household to contact in an emergency. Let this person know you might call them for help. Find out if they or someone else could watch your children or pets if needed. Keep their phone numbers handy.

In case of a fire

Teach your child to get out of the house through the nearest door or window. Consider buying escape ladders if you live on the second or third floor or have a two-story home.

Decide on a place to meet outside, away from the house. Tell your child to never go back into the house, no matter what!

Once you have a plan, run a home fire drill. Stay calm and talk your child through it. Children practice fire drills at child care and at school too, so they know how they work.

Our plan for a fire:

When a tornado warning sounds

Stay away from glass. Go to the basement—or, if you don't have one, go to a hallway, bathroom, or closet on the lowest level of the house. If possible, use a radio or TV to track the storm.

If you often need to go to the basement, put sleeping bags, portable chairs, and toys or books in the area where you will be waiting out the storm.

Our plan for a tornado:



In case of a natural disaster

If hurricanes, floods, or wildfires happen where you live, decide ahead of time what you would bring along in case of evacuation. How would you leave the area? Where would you go? Do you have emergency numbers in your cell phone?

Our plan for a natural disaster:

During an emergency

Have a **first aid kit** in your home. It can be a simple zip-top bag with bandages, ointment, and so on. Keep it where your child can't easily get into it but where it is handy for an adult.

If your child has an allergy or asthma, keep an emergency dose of medicine available. Check the contents regularly and replace any missing or expired supplies.

It's also a good idea to have an **emergency kit** of supplies that could last your family for 72 hours. This can save you a trip to the store during a power outage or blizzard! Include canned food, bottled water, diapers, formula, and so on.

Battery-operated or crank-powered radios and flashlights are handy. Think about your family's needs and add other things: medicine, baby supplies, games and activities, pet food, two-way radios, and an extra set of car and house keys.

The Red Cross's website (www.redcross.org) gives other suggestions based on disasters that are common to your area.

Our emergency kit:

