

Everyone's being urged to be prepared for emergencies. But, for families who have children with special health care needs the idea of "an emergency" is even larger. It could mean your community experiences a public health emergency, like the spread of COVID-19, or a natural disaster, like a tornado or flood, or a health emergency for your child. No matter the situation, it is even **more important** that we take steps now to be prepared to keep our families healthy and safe during any emergency.



### BE INFORMED

Know where to get the most informed, reliable information about a disaster or other emergency.

- For pandemics, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website and your local health department will post regular updates and about staying safe and healthy. Ready.gov is another resource that gives information on government emergency management.
- For weather emergencies, sign up for a weather app that has emergency alerts for your area. Another smart phone tool is Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA). WEAs are sent by authorized government agencies to your phone during an emergency.
- Get information about local or regional emergency and crisis resources. Organizations like your local Red Cross or county government will know where to find help in case of an emergency.



Don't be overwhelmed!  
Just Start!



### MAKE A PLAN

Now is the time to start thinking about the people and things that are most important to you and make a plan to protect them in case of an emergency. Let your family and your child's caregivers know about your plans, take a picture of them so they are available on your phone or other devices, and have hardcopies in case there isn't electricity.

- Make a list of important contact information, including phone numbers, email and street addresses, extended family members, your child's doctors and other medical providers, preferred hospitals and school personnel.
- Create a Care Plan—This document lists your child's medications with doses and when taken, equipment and other supplies and the name and telephone numbers of these medical suppliers. See our **Coordinating Your Child's Healthcare** training to learn more.
- For younger children, or children who are non-verbal or unable to communicate, make an identification card with their name, parent's names and cell phone numbers. Then be sure to put a copy in their backpacks so it's always close.
- Decide on a place to meet or a person to call in case you get separated. For example, in case of a house fire, all family members know to evacuate the house and meet at the end of the driveway or at a neighbor's house.



## BUILD A KIT OR “GO BAG”

Start by making a list of the essential items you will need for 5-7 days. Then begin building your survival kit. Some ideas to include:

- Bottled water and non-perishable food
- Enough on-hand cash to cover expenses
- A battery-operated radio and a flashlight with extra batteries
- A first aid kit
- Several days’ supply of medications for your child and other family members
- Copies of financial information, like bank accounts, credit card and health insurance information
- Extra clothing including socks, underwear, a warm jacket and a blanket
- Supplies for your child’s special equipment like extra syringes and gloves

### Tip For Families:

Make a list of emergency telephone numbers and post it in a visible place in your house. Make sure your children know when—and when NOT—to call 911.



## SHARE AND CONNECT

- Visit your local fire department and police station with your children. This will help your children know who to look for in case of an emergency and learn that these are **trusted adults**.
- Be sure to share your child’s Care Plan with family, caregivers and providers in case someone else needs to step in and care for your child.

### Tip for Families:

Share necessary information about your child’s condition so first responders are familiar with their unique needs.



## RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Caring for Children in a Disaster: [cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/index.html)
- [Ready.gov/disability](https://www.ready.gov/disability) and their resources for people with disabilities
- American Academy of Pediatrics, Disasters and Your Family: Why to Be Prepared: [healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Getting-Your-Family-Disaster-Ready.aspx](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Getting-Your-Family-Disaster-Ready.aspx)