BE READY

PROTECTING CHILDREN IN EMERGENCIES

A Guide for Parents
Emergency Planning Checklist for Parents

Tips for keeping children safe in a shelter

Trauma coping Tips for Children

CHILD ABUSE: Know the signs!

Steps to protect children from child sexual Abuse
EMERGENCY PLANNING CHECKLIST for PARENTS

PROTECTING CHILDREN IN EMERGENCIES

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT DURING ANY EMERGENCY, CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND PROTECTED. FOLLOW THIS CHECKLIST TO INCREASE YOUR CHILDREN’S SAFETY AND PEACE OF MIND.

- Pack all essentials needed for children inclusive of medication, boots, gloves, raincoats, hand sanitizers and extra clothing.
- Pack your children’s favorite toys, books, music and appliances especially electronics that are battery operated.
- Talk to your child about what to expect if he or she has to go to a shelter.
- Develop a system beforehand with your child that would allow him or her to be identified if he or she becomes lost or separated from parents. Take photos or scan official documents such as passports, birth certificates and National Health Insurance cards.
- Ensure that children with special needs such as physical impairments have a system or help available to be evacuated such as a neighbour or relative.
- Create a buddy system especially if they have large households to ensure that they are all accountable to one another.
- Learn basic first aid skills such as Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) in case you or your child becomes ill during an emergency.

BE READY

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, TO CALL 911 OR 311
PROTECTING CHILDREN IN EMERGENCIES
6 TIPS
FOR KEEPING YOUR CHILDREN SAFE WHEN STAYING IN A SHELTER

1. Be Vigilant – know where your child is at all times

2. Always accompany young children to bathrooms and showers

3. Ensure sleeping arrangements for boys and girls and adults are appropriate

4. Remind your children to avoid isolated areas

5. Always remind your children to seek permission before they leave your presence

6. Development a buddy system - there is always safety in numbers

In case of an emergency call 911 or 311
TRAUMA COPING TIPS FOR CHILDREN
Here are some tips to help your child psychologically prepare and/or cope in case of an emergency such as a natural disaster (hurricane or an earthquake).

**TIP 1: ENGAGE YOUR CHILD**
Communicate before, during and after the event if possible. You can’t force your child to recover from traumatic stress, but you can play a major role in the healing process by simply spending time together and talking face to face. Acknowledge and validate your child’s concerns. Do “normal” activities with your child.

**TIP 2: MINIMIZE MEDIA EXPOSURE**
Children who’ve experienced a traumatic event can often find relentless media coverage to be further traumatizing. Don’t let your child watch the news or check social media just before bed, and make use of parental controls on the TV, computer, and tablet to prevent your child from repeatedly viewing disturbing footage.

**TIP 3: ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**
Physical activity can burn off adrenaline, release mood-enhancing endorphins, and help your child sleep better at night. Take younger children to a playground, activity center, or arrange play dates.

**TIP 4: FEED YOUR CHILD A HEALTHY DIET**
The food your child eats can have a profound impact on their mood and ability to cope with traumatic stress. Processed and convenient food, refined carbohydrates, and sugary drinks and snacks can create mood swings and worsen symptoms of traumatic stress.

**TIP 5: REBUILD TRUST AND SAFETY**
Trauma can alter the way a child sees the world, making it suddenly seem a much more dangerous and frightening place. Your child may find it more difficult to trust both their environment and other people. You can help by rebuilding your child’s sense of safety and security. Create routines and minimize stressful situations at home.

For more information on dealing with trauma, call Community Mental Health at 852-7670.
CHILD ABUSE IS PHYSICAL
Shaking, hitting, beating, burning or biting a child

CHILD ABUSE IS EMOTIONAL
Constantly blaming or putting down a child; excessive yelling, shaming

CHILD ABUSE IS SEXUAL
Incest, any forced sexual activity, exposure to sexual stimulation not appropriate for the child’s age

CHILD ABUSE IS NEGLECT
A pattern of failure to provide for the child’s physical needs, such as food, clothing, shelter and medical care; a pattern of failure to provide for the child’s emotional needs, such as affection, attention and supervision.

In the British Virgin Islands, call your local police at 311 or the Social Development Department at 468-3650.
EVERY CHILD MATTERS

5 STEPS TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

STEP 1- LEARN THE FACTS
The facts about child sexual abuse can be staggering, but they can help us understand the risks children face.

STEP 2 - MINIMIZE OPPORTUNITY
If you eliminate opportunities for children to be in isolated, one-on-one situations, you can dramatically reduce the risk of abuse.

STEP 3- TALK ABOUT IT
Children often keep abuse a secret, but talking openly about our bodies, sex, and boundaries can encourage children to share.

STEP 4- RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS
Don’t expect obvious signs when a child is being abused. Signs are often there, but you have to know what to look for.

STEP 5- REACT RESPONSIBLY
Be prepared to react responsibly if a child discloses abuse to you, or if you suspect or see that boundaries have been violated.

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@BreakthesilenceVI
www.bvi.gov.vg

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