

Key Planning Steps

Complete an Emergency Information Form (EIF) for your child

- An EIF is a list of your child's medical conditions, needs, medications, equipment, and care providers. Visit [this resource page](#) for examples of an EIF.
- Ask your doctor to help you fill out your EIF and update it each year.
- Keep a paper copy with your child's medical supplies and take a photo of the EIF on your phone.



Gather supplies your family will need in an emergency

- Consider items your family needs to survive for several days at home (e.g. food, water, medicines, supplies).
- Gather items you will need if you are forced to leave your home (e.g. a water-tight container for text magnifiers, hearing aid or cochlear implant and extra batteries) and keep them in an easy to carry container or "go bag."
- Review these items with your child's care team. For more information, visit [this resource page](#).



Create a family communication plan

- Plan and practice how your family will communicate if you are separated during an emergency.
- Write down contact information for your family and important people (e.g. doctors, care team, schools, service providers). Keep with your important documents and as a photo on your phone.
- Send your child to school with a "[backpack emergency card](#)" that includes this information.



Communicating During Emergencies



- Have your child wear some form of identification a medical ID bracelet or necklace** (medical ID bracelet or necklace, or place a tag on your child's phone or shoe) with your child's name, medical conditions, and important contact information.

- Have your child carry a [Communication Card](#)** to help others understand their communication needs. Include whether your child needs an ASL interpreter or is non-verbal.

- Teach your child simple statements** to use when communicating with first responders. Introduce your child to local first responders before a disaster.

- If your child uses a device to communicate, **keep batteries or back-up chargers** in the event of a power outage.

- Have your child **practice alternative ways to communicate**, like with a communication board, in case regular devices do not work or are damaged or ASL interpreters are unavailable.

- Talk with your child's school or daycare** about the plan for caring for your child if an emergency occurs while they are at school. Plan how you will connect with your child.

- If applicable ask your child's specialists or speech therapists to help communicate with your child about emergencies. [Social stories](#) can help your child learn what to expect in an emergency.



Be Ready for a Power Outage or an Evacuation



Keep these things handy in case you have to stay at home for **several days without power:**

- Things that help calm your child, such as favorite foods, clothing, blankets, and games
- Extra batteries for hand-held electronics, communication devices, and portable chargers (keep them charged)
- A car charger in case you can't power your devices at home

In case you have to **leave your home in an emergency:**

- **Keep a "go bag" ready** with things your child may need:
 - Your child's EIF, Communication Card, and copies of medical insurance cards
 - Your child's medications
 - An emergency whistle
 - Walking aids (e.g. folding cane)
 - Phone number for interpreter services
 - Hearings aids or cochlear implant, text magnifier, and batteries or charger kept in a water-tight container
 - Flashlight to help with signing or lip reading
 - Favorite toys and activities
- **Plan for where you will go** – ask family or friends in advance if you can stay with them, or plan to go to a hotel or shelter.
- **Practice your evacuation plan** with your family often – at least once every six months.
- If applicable, **consider your child's service animal's needs**



Helping Your Child Cope

Before

- Review and practice your plan with your child. This will increase confidence and give your child a sense of control.
- Introduce your child to local first responders at community events or a station visit to help your child get more comfortable and help responders communicate with your child.
- Identify trustworthy information sources that can accommodate your child's abilities (e.g. closed captioning, ASL interpreters).

During

- Plan for activities that can keep your child occupied and help their routine from getting disrupted.
- Consider comfort foods, toys, or other items that help keep them calm and items that can reduce sensory overload.

After

- Look out for any changing behaviors and discuss any changes with your child's doctors/therapists.



Questions About Planning for Your Child's Unique Needs?



Your child's doctors and care team know your child and can help you plan for their unique needs during a disaster. Here are some good questions to discuss with them:

- How do I acquire light-up smoke alarms or bed shaker alarms for my child?
- How can I help my child stay calm and accommodate their communication needs?
- How might disruption of services and therapies affect my child?
- How do I get an emergency supply of medications for my child?
- How can I connect with other parents who have children with similar needs?

Additional Resources [Available](#)

- Local information resource guide
- Checklists for other special medical needs
- What to expect at an emergency shelter