

Activities for Children

Activities in the Car

Pre-planned Activities

- Make surprise packs for your child with inexpensive toys and treats.
- Print out activities from the internet– Word Searches, Connect-the-Dots, and Road Trip Scavenger Hunts
- Empty DVD cases can be use as supply boxes and a hard surface for coloring. Put a few pencils and writing paper inside.
- Purchase a Mad Libs book for Kids or look up “Mad Libs for Kids” and print off examples online. First have the kids give words for each of the blank spaces (the blanks tell you whether you need a noun, color, etc). Go back and fill-in-the blanks with their answers and read the funny story!
- Buy disposable cameras and allow kids to document the trip!

Spontaneous Games

- Play games like Tic-Tac-Toe and “I Spy”.
- Alphabet game: Pick a category (TV shows, animals, places, occupations). The group takes turns identifying something that corresponds with the category in alphabetical order. Using occupations, someone would say (Architect, Banker, Cook, etc).
- Play “Would you Rather...?” For example, “Would you rather be stranded on a deserted island alone or with someone you hate?”. There are examples online or you can make up your own.
- Virtual Hide-n-go-Seek: One person pretends to be hiding anywhere at home (except in walls, wires, and pipes). Take turns asking yes-no questions to discover where they are hiding.
- Story-building: One person starts a story and each person takes turns adding on to it.



Helping to Prepare Children for Storms and Hurricanes



Hurricanes are a frequent concern for families residing on the Gulf Coast. For children, especially young children, they may not fully understand hurricanes and damage that may occur. Children may experience emotional, sleep, and behavioral problems because of storm-related stress. One way to mitigate, or reduce the likelihood of negative emotional and behavioral responses is to prepare children by teaching them more about storms and emergency response. Similarly, it is beneficial for parents to provide children with appropriate distraction to help them focus on things outside of the storm.

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Preparing Children for Hurricanes

Education

Much of the anxiety children experience related to storms is associated with not knowing what to expect.

- Give children (age appropriate) information about hurricanes in language that is easy for them to understand. If the storm caused damage in your area, talk with children about how the community works toward recovery.
- Encourage kids to ask questions and validate any feelings or concerns they may express.
- Minimize the amount of TV coverage and conversation children see and hear about the storm **during** and **after** the event. The coverage often causes stress and anxiety.
- Develop a **Family Emergency Plan**
 - Allow children to help with family planning. Make sure children know their emergency contacts and their phone numbers. Write down the information and place it with the emergency kit.
 - Allow children to help parents review what items are needed for the emergency kit.
 - Allow kids to make their own hurricane kit. Items could include:
 - * Clothing
 - * Favorite toy
 - * Security item
 - * Items to keep busy (see children's activities in the next section)
- Use online resources assisting parents and kids with family education and planning for hurricanes.
 - Ready.gov: www.ready.gov/kids
 - Sesame Street: www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/hurricane#



Reduce Stress through Distraction: Activities for Children

The following are basic supplies that can be helpful to keep children entertained:

Basic supplies:

- Blank paper
- Coloring books, crayons and/or markers
- Board Games (Ex: Connect Four, Monopoly, Twister)
- Card Games (Ex: Uno, Old Maid, Go Fish)
- Electronic games and movies (when power is available)
- Reading books— Go to your local library
- Items for emotional security (Ex: Favorite stuffed animal)

Simple Activities Indoors

- Get active by playing Red Light/Green Light, Hide-n-go Seek, Simon Says, and Freeze Tag.
- Play 4 Corners: The "It" person keeps their head down while others quietly go to one of four identified corners of a room. The "It" person calls out a corner. (Corner 1, Corner 2, etc.) If you are in that corner, you're out. Keep playing until one person is left.
- Make forts using furniture and bed sheets.
- Use flashlights to make shadow puppets on the wall.
- Play Guessing Games
 - Try to guess what your team mate is acting out (Charades) or drawing (Pictionary)
 - 20 Questions: Select an object, place, TV show, etc . Other people ask a total of 20 questions and try to guess what was selected.
- Use a deck of regular cards to play concentration (turn the cards face down and try to find number matches).

