

# My Emergency Preparedness Guide

For Families With A Disabled Child



## Everyone Should Have a Plan

One of the primary concerns of parents with disabled children is what to do when an emergency arises and you and your family, including your disabled child, must evacuate. Preparation is key, no matter what your child's disability may be.

## Putting Together A Plan and An Emergency Kit

The first step is to develop a preparedness plan that assesses the pathway to refuge in the event of a catastrophe or crisis. A "place of refuge" needs to be clearly identified in advance, and the pathway should be traveled in advance so that any potential obstacles can be noted.

### The Preparedness Kit

Encourage your child to help put together a preparedness kit. Include items such as:



Flashlights and spare batteries



Battery-powered radio and spare batteries



Extra batteries for small devices such as hearing aids, if needed



Bottled water



First aid kit



Canned goods and a hand-held can opener



Medications (both your child's and yours)



An identification (ID) or bracelet with information that includes relevant medications and contact information for doctors



A spare pair of eyeglasses



Formulas and special foods



Extra diapers and baby care items, if appropriate



Masks



Crutches, Walkers



A favorite book, blanket or small toy that gives the child comfort

## Who to Call

Keep your home care/hospice company's number near the phone in case you need help. In a true emergency, call 9-1-1.

If your child has medical, dietary, or other special needs, list them and put them in your kit. It is helpful to have both an electronic and written copy of his or her history, daily care plan, important contacts, and other key information, such as the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Parents should consider obtaining an external power source and learning how to use it safely, especially if your child

needs respiratory support. If you have or obtain one, pack a power source to go with you.

More information about emergency kits for children can be found at [cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/checklists/](https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/checklists/). For more information about generators, see [emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/cofacts.asp](https://www.emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/cofacts.asp)

## Make Sure You Stay Together

- Pick someone to be the leader.
- It is essential to have a way to reunite your family if you are separated. Teach your child important names, phone numbers, and addresses. If your child is not able to learn these, make sure he or she always has important contact information on their clothing.
- Teach your child about emergency situations and what to do, such as calling 911.
- Practice with your child what to do in case of an emergency. Using a picture diagram or a written story helps.



- Protecting your family will involve others, as well, for example:
  - Pick a family member or friend out of town to be a contact for others to call or text in case local phone lines are busy or down.
  - If your child has special legal documents (e.g., custody or guardianship), particularly if over the age of 18, have a copy of these documents accessible.
  - If someone else cares for your child during part of the day, make sure the caregiver knows what to do and who to contact in an emergency. This includes people who care for your child at school. {CDC, Wrights Law}



### Evacuating With A Wheelchair

If you and your family live on the ground floor, most adults will be able to help a wheelchair-bound child exit safely without assistance. However, it is important to verify that individuals using any kind of assistive device are capable of successfully leaving the building, unassisted, via emergency routes. If assistance is needed and your child uses an electric

wheelchair, a manual wheelchair should be available to use going downstairs. Investing in an "evacuation chair" is another planning option. An evacuation chair is especially constructed for evacuating a non-ambulatory person downstairs from multi-level facilities in either a seated or lying position.

### Emergency Authorization for Care

In the event you are unreachable, but your child needs emergency authorization for care and treatment, document the name and contact information of the person you have authorized to do so. Include their name, address, contact numbers as well as their relationship to you and our child. Make sure this person is agreeable to assume this role. Provide this information to the child's primary care provider as well. Keep this information with the emergency documents with a comprehensive list of medication and treatments your child receives. Review and update this list frequently and sign and date the updates.



## More Information and Online Resources

- [ADA Evacuation Planning for the Disabled. ADA 2020](#)
- [CDC. Keeping Children with Disabilities Safe in Emergencies.](#)
- [University of San Diego Blink Emergency Evaluation for People with Disabilities, October 14, 2020, www.safetyinfo.com](#)
- [UCSC Office of Emergency Services](#)
- [U. S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)
- [Wrights Law](#)

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WRITE THE NAME AND PHONE  
NUMBER OF YOUR HOME CARE/  
HOSPICE COMPANY IN THIS BOX.