



Healthy Habits for Your Child

- Toddlers and preschool children need 12 to 14 hours of sleep per night.
- Children between 6 and 12 years old need 10 to 12 hours of sleep per night.
- Make sure your child has time to play and be physically active.
- Make sure your child eats a healthy, well-balanced diet according to Canada's Food Guide. Limit high-sugar foods or drinks.

Healthy Habits for Your Teen

- Teens need 9 to 12 hours of sleep per night.
- Model and encourage your teen to be physically active
- Model and encourage your teen to have many positive relationships.
- Model and encourage your teen to eat a healthy, well-balanced diet according to Canada's Food Guide. Limit caffeine and high-fat and high-sugar foods.

For Children and Teens

- Limit repeated or constant exposure to distressing pictures, TV, or radio reports.
- If your child watches or listens to reports about disasters or emergencies, watch with them. Afterwards, talk to your child about what they saw to help make sense of the events.
- Children need age-appropriate guidance, perspective, and reassurance during distressing events

All children and teens respond differently to a disaster or emergency. When you help your child or teen learn to cope with feelings like anger, fear, guilt, and feeling helpless, you help build and strengthen your family's ability to cope if a disaster or emergency happens.

Websites

- www.aacap.org
(click on the tab called "families & youth", then go to "facts for families")
- www.nctsn.org
(enter the keywords "resources for parents and caregivers" in the search box)

Health Link
811

Mental Health Help Line
1-877-303-2642
Open 24 hours a day,
7 days a week

Kids Help Phone
1-800-668-6868
www.KidsHelpPhone.ca
Open 24 hours a day,
7 days a week

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Helping Your Child or Teen Prepare Emotionally for a Disaster or Emergency



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Every parent hopes that their child never has to go through a disaster or emergency. But, it's likely that at some point your child will face some kind of distressing event. Helping your child or teen develop healthy emotional coping skills ahead of time can help them react and recover better after experiencing a disaster or emergency.

A distressing event is anything that makes a child or teen feel physically or emotionally overwhelmed.

A child or teen can feel insecure, scared, or confused after:

- being involved in a disaster or emergency
- hearing others talk about a traumatic event over and over again
- seeing a traumatic event on TV

It can be hard for a child to cope if they don't understand what's happened or why it's affecting their routine. The more scared or helpless a child feels, the more likely they are to feel troubled.

As a parent or caregiver, you can lower the impact of a disaster or emergency by giving your child support and guidance that's right for their age. Helping a child develop healthy and effective ways to cope with daily challenges will help a child control how they react if an emergency happens.

Building Blocks for **COPING** Emotionally

Communicate and Connect with Others

Help your child learn words to describe and talk about their feelings. Let them know that it's okay and healthy to share worries with a trusted adult. Model and encourage positive communication skills for your teen. This can help them build healthy supportive groups of friends and family to safely share feelings with.

Optimism and a Positive Attitude Help

Plan regular family meals and have each person share at least 1 positive thing that happened that day. Teach your child how to look for the positives in a situation, especially times when the only positive is a chance to learn from the experience. Let your child have successes (e.g., doing age-appropriate tasks around the house and give praise for their effort).

Participate in Family and Community Events to Build Support Networks

Get your child to help you make an emergency kit for your house. Let your child help make a family emergency plan. Find events that you can do or volunteer at as a family.

Identify Stress

Ask your child what makes them feel stressed. Teach your child to know what they can and can't change or control. Help your child learn skills to problem solve and set realistic goals. Create easy chances for your child to practice problem-solving and setting goals every day. Teach your child how to break down big problems into small, more manageable steps to help cope with stressful times. Remember, your child is watching how you cope and problem-solve, so practice what you teach.

Nurture and Support your Child or Teen's Healthy Emotional Development

Let children express themselves. Listen to your child's feelings without judging. Have age-appropriate talks with your child. Let your child know that you care and want to understand how they react to stress. It's very important during an emergency to:

- reassure your child that they're safe
- let your child know that you'll protect them from danger
- continue to help your child when they're scared

Go for Help

Talk to your child about who they should ask for help in times of stress. Teach your child how to:

- call for help
- memorize emergency phone numbers

