

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH



THE FAMILY THAT PREPARES TOGETHER

It's the final week of National Preparedness Month, and we're dedicating this week to talking about preparing youth for disasters. We all know that disasters can be difficult physically, financially, and emotionally, and the uncertainties that come with that can be especially stressful for kids.

Creating a plan with your family can help kids of all ages, from elementary to high schoolers. Keeping your kids in the loop when preparing can go a long way to keeping your family unit steady during a disaster.



A LOOK AT THIS MONTH:

Week 1: Make a Plan

Week 2: Build a Kit

Week 3: Low-Cost, No-Cost Preparedness

Week 4: Teach Youth About Preparedness



WEEK 4: TEACH YOUTH ABOUT PREPAREDNESS

Talk to your kids about preparing for emergencies and what to do in case you are separated. Reassure them by providing information about how they can get involved.

TEACH YOUTH ABOUT PREPAREDNESS

**BY ADRIENNE SNAP,
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We're addressing how to prepare youth for disasters with three steps:

1. Preparing with kids and teens
2. Creating a family communication plan
3. Providing resources for parents

FOR THE KIDS

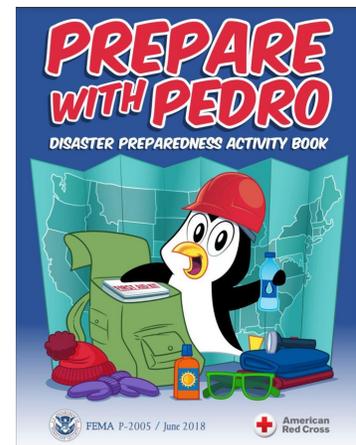
The process of preparing your family for an emergency can be quite the task! Plus, preparing with young children and preparing with teenagers can be very different. Help small children feel prepared by talking to them about the most common hazards in Williamson County (which we talked about in our week one newsletter).

For each hazard, create a plan of action that includes a point of contact. This should be a friend or family member who lives far enough away that they wouldn't be affected by a disaster in Williamson County. Choose someone your family feels comfortable talking to under stress so you can keep them updated during a disaster. Make sure your kids know how to contact this individual in case your family is separated.

Discuss with your child the items you will need in an emergency and what each item is for. If you feel they are old enough, show them how to use a flashlight and radio.

Want an interactive tool? Visit ready.gov/kids/games and play a few games to help kids understand how to build a kit and face any disaster to become a Disaster Master!

Also, visit ready.gov/kids/prepare-pedro and download Pedro the Penguin's Disaster Preparedness Activity Book, which is available in six different languages.



FOR THE TEENS

Assign certain responsibilities to your teenager that you feel he or she is mature enough to handle. These could include:



Checking the emergency kits monthly to make sure they are in good condition



Updating emergency contact lists if there are any changes



Specific tasks in the event of an evacuation, such as grabbing kits or pets

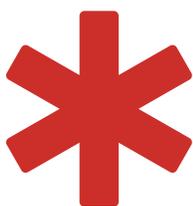
If you have a teenager who wants to take preparedness one step further, the Youth Preparedness Council (YPC) is a great way to get involved. The YPC was created in 2012 to bring together teenagers who are interested in disaster preparedness. For more information, visit [ready.gov/kids/youth-preparedness-council](https://www.ready.gov/kids/youth-preparedness-council).



FAMILY COMMUNICATION PLAN

Families are often tested during emergencies so it is important to plan for several different scenarios. For example, every household should discuss safe evacuation routes and a common meeting location in the event of a house fire. This plan will be different than an evacuation plan for an incoming natural disaster, or a shelter-in-place plan for a tornado.

Review the importance of cell phones as a life saving tool, not just something for games or social media. Discuss the advantage of texting during an emergency instead of calling since phone lines may be tied up with the high volume of calls.



Identify an emergency contact within each family member's cell phone contact list. It may be helpful to place "EMERGENCY CONTACT" next to the saved name within the phone. Some phones also have ways of quickly identifying emergency contacts, such as with a red star. The "medical ID" setting on iPhones allow first responders to view emergency contacts on a locked phone.

FOR THE PARENTS

As a parent, it is important to identify how each of your children responds to emergency situations, which can be very different for each child. You can help kids cope by utilizing several strategies:

1

Talk to your children and encourage them to talk back. Validate what they are feeling and make sure they feel heard. If they ask questions and you are not comfortable sharing full answers, give them the level of information you feel is appropriate at the time.

2

Try to keep to a routine. Routines are safe and provide structure. In a changing and shifting environment it is important to have something steady in daily activities.

3

Make time for your kids, even if it means putting off chores and other tasks. This can help them feel safe and secure during and after a difficult time. If you are having difficulty with supporting your child in this way, find support with family and friends.

4

Try and keep the exposure to the news and other media limited! This can be difficult as kids are often glued to their phones, but limiting news media may avoid alarming your children. If they do see something, be sure to be available for a dialogue to answer any questions and give any type of emotional support needed.

ARE YOU READY?

Thank you for joining us for National Preparedness Month 2021!
Remember, being prepared for disaster is something to do year-round.
If disaster strikes, you'll be glad you prepared in advance!



FOR THE KIDS!
**PREPARED,
NOT
SCARED**

Kit loves to help kids be prepared, not scared! His backpack is always stocked with emergency supplies. What are some items that need to go in *your* emergency kit? Draw them in the circles below.

