



Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

How to Talk to Your Kids About a Disaster

- **Be honest.**
 - Tell your child, “The grown-ups will take care of you.”
 - Don’t promise that everything is going to be OK.
 - Tell your child, “You are OK.”
- **Listen. Kids need to know that their feelings are OK.**
 - “It’s OK to feel sad.”
 - “It’s OK to be scared.”
- **Talk about what happened in a place where kids can’t hear.**
 - Don’t give children upsetting details about what happened.
 - Don’t talk about your own fears in front of the kids.
 - If you need support, talk with a social worker.
 - If your child needs to talk, a child life specialist can help.
- **Limit the amount of television your child sees.**
- **Keep a normal routine as much as you can.**
- **Encourage your children to go to the playroom.**



Listen. Kids need to know that their feelings are OK.

- **Answer questions at the level the child is asking.**
— Don't offer more answers than the child asks you for.
- **Remind your children that you love them.**

What Kids Might Do After a Disaster

During hard times, kids show their feelings in different ways. Keep in mind that kids cope by playing. Let your child play!

In the days ahead, your child might:

- be worried
- be clingy
- cry
- have nightmares
- talk about the disaster over and over
- not want to be alone

These are normal reactions to an event that is not normal.

When you should be concerned

- **Watch for signs your child is acting out fears through repetitive play.**
- **If your child has not returned to normal behavior within two weeks, talk to your child's doctor.**

Call your doctor right away if you see big changes in your child's eating, sleeping, talking, or level of activity.



If you have any questions or concerns,
 call your child's doctor or call _____

**If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital:
1919 East Thomas Road in Phoenix
602-546-1400
www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com**

Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

#642 • Written by Dani Pape • Illustrated by Dennis Swain
This handout is also available in Spanish as #643/642s.