



## Child Care Answers "Parents in the Know"

### Spring Skies

SPRING! Just the word brings to mind images of baby animals, flowers and trees budding, longer and warmer days! Doesn't that sound wonderful? In Indiana, spring often means the beginning of rough weather. The natural happenings of thunderstorms, strong winds, hail, floods and tornados are frightening for both children and adults. When a young child's usually predictable world suddenly becomes unpredictable, the adults in their lives need to provide comfort, reassurance and the needed stability. Concerned and nurturing adults can provide guidance and the emotional support that help restore a sense of security.

#### *Strategies to help children cope:*

##### **1. MAKE EMERGENCY PLANS.**

Have the children help to establish emergency plans. Do not just talk about what to do, you need to also practice the plans. Make sure they know not only where to go for bad weather but also what to do once they are there. Be ready for questions such as do you go outside or stay inside during storms, why is it so loud, are you scared?, how much longer?, why do we cover our heads, where are the lights? Being prepared empowers children and helps them overcome feelings of helplessness about the unknown. Be sure to practice the plans on a regular basis.

##### **2. HAVE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES ON HAND.**

Have the children help in creating a list of what will be needed. Some ideas are flashlights with extra batteries, cells phones, battery radios, bottled water, first aid kits and blankets.

##### **3. PLAY, STORY TELLING AND MOVEMENT HELP.**

Be sure to allow plenty of time and opportunity for children to work out their concerns and feelings through pretend play.

- ◆ There are several wonderful books available in bookstores and libraries that reflect what children are thinking and feeling. This is a great starting point for expressing concerns and fears.
- ◆ Create opportunities for children to write or dictate stories and draw pictures about what they have experienced. Children sometimes need the adults in their lives to supply the encouragement and words needed to express new experiences and emotions.
- ◆ During times of the unknown it is vital to have the reassurance and physical comfort of knowing that bad things happen but you are safe and there is always someone there to take care of you. Smiles, hugs and handholding go along way during these times.

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**Child Care  
Answers**

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