

Texas LAUNCH NEWS – Special Edition

Linking Action for Unmet Needs in Children's Health

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Hurricane Harvey:
Resources
Impact on Kids

Hurricanes Impact on Children & Families

According to the [National Child Traumatic Stress Network \(NCTSN\)](#), hurricanes can threaten a child's everyday feeling of safety. From the beginning, when warnings are issued, children are watching their normally confident caregivers become increasingly stressed and anxious. Stress, anxiety and fear are often contagious for a child as parents, caregivers, and community members begin to prepare frantically for a storm. If evacuation or relocation becomes necessary, it can disturb family support and social networks. Hurricanes can also cause secondary disruptions to a child's sense of safety, through a parent's loss of their job, disruption of normal routines, and loss of personal items that may bring comfort. In addition emotional and physical exhaustion may impact children's or families' ability to recover. Some of the common emotional reactions that NCTSN highlights include:

- Feelings of insecurity, unfairness, anxiety, fear, anger, sadness, and despair
- Fear that another hurricane will hit them again
- Disruptive behaviors, irritability, temper tantrums, agitation, hyperactivity
- Clinging/dependent behaviors; avoiding activities or situations
- Physical symptoms: stomachaches, headaches, nightmares, insomnia
- Increased concerns regarding the safety of family, friends, and loved ones

To [read more](#) or learn about [readiness](#), [response](#), and [recovery](#) visit the [NCTSN website](#).

"...children are watching their normally confident caregivers become incredibly stressed and anxious."



If you or someone you know has been affected by Hurricane Harvey, communication and information is one of the initial important steps of emergency management.

- In case of emergency, call 911. Local and state officials are asking to only contact 911 if in danger at this time for flooded areas.
- For evacuation information, call 211.
- For roadside assistance, call 1-800-525-5555.
- For TxDOT Statewide Road Closures, call 1-800-452-9292.
- For relay service, call 711.
- If you or your family suffered damage from the storm, please register with FEMA by calling 1-800-621-3362 or applying online at [disasterassistance.gov](#).
- For Red Cross disaster assistance, call 1-877-500-8645. Red Cross has a list to register your family as safe.
- If you are in need of help or **would like to volunteer, call 211.**
- For assistance filing a personal claim, call the Texas Department Insurance's Consumer line, 1-800-252-3439.



FEMA

How You Can Help

Want to help but don't know where to start? [The Federal Emergency Management Agency](#), aka FEMA, offers a [Hurricane Harvey Resource page](#). To make the most of your contributions, please follow their [guidelines](#) and learn the most effective and safest ways to donate time, goods, or financial support.

Shelter from the Storm

Jamie Colvard, Senior Technical Assistance Specialist, Policy Center and Resource Specialist for Project LAUNCH, shared a valuable resource from ZERO TO THREE and Save the Children that was developed a couple years ago to help caregivers support young children following a tornado, hurricane or other natural disasters. [Shelter from the Storm](#) includes resources for parents, shelter staff, and early care and education staff. They offer guidance for understanding children's new or challenging behaviors that may be of concern to a parent and tips for self-care while caring for others. They are available in both English and Spanish.

How to Help Your Children Cope After Hurricane Harvey

[Forbes](#) contributor, Tara Haelle, authored an article entitled [How To Help Your Children Cope After Hurricane Harvey](#). Within the article she highlights two important concepts for parents to understand first and foremost: self-care is vital in order to best support a child and children may take a long time to mentally and emotionally recover, therefore, allowing them time to express themselves in a non-destructive way is essential. Haelle goes on to provide tips on how to help children deal with their experience and their family's circumstances, some of which include:

- Reassure the child they are loved;
- Watch and expect common symptoms of severe stress;
- Talk to the child about the experience;
- Address the child's fears directly and honestly;
- Avoid television coverage of the disaster; and
- Remember that children are watching their caregivers for their reactions.

Many of these tips came from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), who have additional information on how to assist children before, during and after flooding. Haelle quotes Fernando Stein, MD, a Houston-based pediatrician and president of the AAP writing, "During any disaster, children are uniquely vulnerable—both to the physical threats of the storm and flooding, as well as to the long-term psychological impacts from enduring a traumatizing event. Children fare best when they are surrounded by loving, nurturing adults, so it's critical that families remain together during rescue and recovery efforts [and] that staying together is critical for immigrant families as well." Haelle goes on to list additional resources for children and families coping with recent events. To see the full list and read the article in its entirety click [here](#)

