



TORNADOES



Families play a critical role in helping to reestablish a sense of normalcy and safety for a child before, during and after a disaster occurs. Please take a moment to read through these suggestions on how to support your child.

▶ [Look for links to more activities and facts on our website](#)



DEVELOPMENTAL EXPLANATION



How to Explain Tornadoes to Children

Be honest with children and keep explanations simple. Encourage children to ask questions and lead the discussion.

Wind is caused by warm air and cold mixing together. A tornado is when the warm air and cool air mix together close to the ground. This causes the air to create a spinning motion like a top. This spinning motion is called a tornado.

▶ [Additional Information About Tornadoes](#)

PREPARATION



Helping Children Prepare for a Tornado

Encourage children to participate in planning as a family. Preparing for and talking about tornadoes helps children cope with fears and anxiety. Work with children to prepare their own Go Bag by asking them to think about what helps them feel safe, calm, and comfortable. Empowering children with tools to feel prepared will lessen their fears and anxiety and develop skills that may keep everyone safe during severe weather. ▶ [Go Bag Suggestions](#)

COPING



All Feelings Are Okay

Using the following ▶ [Tools for Caregivers](#) will help children to feel safe, calm and relaxed. Breathing helps children stay grounded, connected, and can be practiced together as a family. Using bubbles, balloons, or party blowers are fun ways to engage children in learning how to take deep slow breaths.

▶ [Learn About 5 Finger Breathing](#)

PLAY



Play It Out

Play is how children understand their world and learn to process difficult experiences. Creating a safe space to act out, express, and recreate moments is how children learn to understand their experiences. After a tornado children may build structures and knock them down repeatedly or want to build a fort to hide in.

EXPRESSIVE ART



Express Yourself

Children need opportunities to express themselves. Encourage your child to express emotions through movement, play, art or talking with a trusted adult. Making a tornado in a bottle can help your child understand the science while also sharing their feelings and connecting to mindfulness practices.

▶ [Tornado in a Bottle Activity](#)