



WILDFIRES



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 Wildfires to Children

Be honest with children and keep explanations simple.

Encourage children to ask questions and lead the discussion.

Fire can be helpful and is used to toast marshmallows or keep us warm at a campsite. But Fire can also be dangerous when it becomes out of control. Fires are made from fuel, oxygen and a heat source. When it is hot and there has been little rain, trees, branches and leaves will dry out. If a heat source such as a spark from a campfire or a lightning bolt connects with fuel such as the dry trees, it will ignite a fire and spread quickly. Flames are the part of the fire we can see, but people need to also protect themselves from the smoke and heat from the fire.

PREPARATION



Helping Children Prepare for a Fire

Encourage children to participate in planning as a family. Preparing for and talking about fires helps children cope with fears and anxieties.

Asking children to participate in creating a family emergency plan increases their sense of safety and confidence in case of an emergency.

► [Create a Family Emergency Plan](#)

COPING



All Feelings Are Okay

Using the following ► [Tools for Caregivers](#) will help children to feel safe, calm and relaxed. If there has been a loss of personal items, home and/or loved ones or animals, creating a memory box can help children express feelings about the loss while also beginning to develop tools for coping with grief.

► [How to Make a Memory Box](#)

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. Children may use colored paper and sticks to make pretend fire or mimic sounds of sirens while playing with cars, fire trucks, and playhouses pretending items are breaking or falling.

EXPRESSIVE ART



Express Yourself

Children need opportunities to express themselves. Encourage children to express emotions through movement, play, art or talking with a trusted adult. Creating opportunities for expression such as creating an art piece about your experience through ► [Wildfire Scratch Art](#) will encourage children to see there is hope after loss.