

CONTROL

A sense of control during times of chaos can promote regulation and decrease feelings of overwhelm while helping the brain focus. Providing opportunities for control is important for resilience especially after the brain and body have begun to regulate and connect with others.



Infants and Toddlers: 0-2 years

- **Developmental Milestones:** Developmental milestones are as important to babies and toddlers as to the loved one's caring for them. Provide opportunities for them to practice rolling over, sitting up or saying new words. This helps both baby/toddler as well as those caring for them to feel like things are still moving forward.



Early Childhood: 3-6 years

- **Provide Appropriate Choices:** Being able to make simple and appropriate choices helps young children gain a sense of control. What do you want for snack: crackers or pretzels? Would you like to color or play a game? Keep the choices limited to not overwhelm but to help your child with a sense of control.
- **Simple Tasks:** Encourage your child to complete age-appropriate simple tasks, putting on their socks, helping clean up toys, and/or sweeping the floor gives children a sense of purpose and encourages learning of a new skill.



Middle Childhood: 7-12 years

- **Helping Tasks or Chores:** Encourage children to participate in tasks or do chores to help the family or the community. Learning and completing a task supports a sense of accomplishment. Children this age want to contribute and doing chores is a great way to feel needed, even if they dislike the task.
- **Creating and completing projects:** Encourage your children to make art, dance, or write a song. Through creating and completing projects children feel industrious. Encourage them to share their projects with others as a way to bring people together.
- **Hold family meetings:** Provide space for children to ask questions and talk about feelings and fears. During these meetings talk to your children about the different challenges your family has encountered. Identifying family strengths and encouraging children to participate in problem solving will build competence and reassure children you can get through this together.
- **Manage amount of information:** Changes can happen fast during a disaster. When possible, allow your child to choose how much information they want to have. This is a way to help them manage the information they are receiving and identify what they can control.
- **Making Plans:** Allow opportunities for your child to have choices within the routines of the day. Encourage them to create their own strategies for managing changes, preparing for them and finding ways to cope with what they cannot control.



Adolescence: 13+ years

- **Interests and hobbies:** Encourage teens to continue their interests and hobbies. Do they play a sport, instrument, or collect items? Help them to find innovative ways to continue those passions. Help them to recognize that disasters don't take away accomplishments or the effort put into something. Engaging in activities reinforces a sense of productivity.
- **Do something positive:** Participating in the clean up after a disaster, handing out fresh water to those in need, or watching younger siblings while parents access services will help your teen feel like they are capable, effective and contributing to something bigger than themselves.
- **Identify Strengths:** Ask your teen about the challenges in their own life from learning a new skill to facing a fear. Discuss ways they might use those strengths in the current situation.
- **Celebrate:** Celebrations often bring family and friends together, but when there is a disaster, celebrations can be easily forgotten or overlooked. For teens these milestones are even more important to acknowledge and the connections they create can potentially be lost. Posting a banner, doing a clap out, or singing a congratulatory song will not only acknowledge the achievement but also bring family and friends together.