

# Climate Change and Kids' Well Being: A New Guide for Parents and Other Caring Adults — An Overview (Transcript)

***Anya Kamenetz, the project's lead researcher and guide author in conversation with Rachel Moszkowicz, who supported all aspects of the parents' project.***

Rachel Moszkowicz: Hi, everyone! My name is Rachel Moskowitz. I am an intern with the Climate Mental Health Network, and I am joined today by Anya Kamenetz, and we are discussing our new Climate Change and Kids Well-Being guide for parents and other caring adults, and we're going to take you through the guide and tell you

Rachel Moszkowicz: what's in it, tell you how to use it, and I'll let, Anya give a little introduction.

Anya Kamenetz: Thanks, Rachel! Yeah, we're really excited to be unveiling this guide today. It's something that's, both Rachel and I have been working on for a long time. With the support of Oregon State University, we conducted national focus groups with parents.

Anya Kamenetz: About what they're facing as far as climate emotions with themselves and with their kids, and with that as our guidance.

Anya Kamenetz: As well as,

Anya Kamenetz: lots of feedback and input from many, many different amazing experts, from many different walks of life across the country. We put together this guide, and we're hoping that it

Anya Kamenetz: is useful for people that need it, and of course, you can access it online, at [climatementalhealth.net](https://climatementalhealth.net).

Anya Kamenetz: But this is going to be a little bit of an audio overview, for people that prefer to listen, because that's one thing that parents told us.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Amazing. And I think what's great about this guide is there's lots of different, entry points.

Rachel Moszkowicz: To be able to access it, so whether, you know, you...

Rachel Moszkowicz: haven't started the conversation around climate change and climate emotions with your kids before. You know, you might...

Rachel Moszkowicz: not even have kids at this point, but are considering having children, you know, what that means in this climate-changing world. We have, you know, sections for older kids, we have sections on managing climate feelings, surviving extreme weather, so just a whole kind of range where you can really access

Rachel Moszkowicz: Like, where you're coming to this conversation.

Anya Kamenetz: Yes, that's exactly right. So let's dive in, and the beginning, of the guide is a sort of overview, don't know how to start. And, you know, what's important to understand here is that,

Anya Kamenetz: climate change and extreme weather are already affecting our children's physical and mental health. Where I am right now in New York City, there's an air quality alert because of wildfires in Canada, so I had to

Anya Kamenetz: assess and talk to my husband this morning. Do we go to the beach? Do we spend time outside? So this is an everyday stressor, whether our kids are explicitly aware of it or not. We know that this is impacting them, it's impacting families.

Anya Kamenetz: You know, one very striking statistic, is that 3 out of 5 parents of young children have already experienced at least one extreme weather event in the past 2 years. So this is something that is very much impacting us in the here and now.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Yeah, absolutely. I know, for me, I'm in Southern California, we're getting fire alerts on our phone, constantly, and of course, there was just the Palisades and Altadena fires, not that long ago. And we're seeing, you know, the emotional impact

Rachel Moszkowicz: is...

Rachel Moszkowicz: affecting very young children as well, who are noticing when, you know, a sky is turning bright orange because of wildfires. They're noticing that they can't go outside and build snowmen.

Rachel Moszkowicz: in the winters like they... like they used to. So people of all, you know, ages are really picking up on the subtle changes and the extreme weather we are experiencing.

Rachel Moszkowicz: And... A good place to start that we...

Rachel Moszkowicz: Outlined in the guide in terms of kind of recognizing what

Rachel Moszkowicz: emotions we're feeling around this, is the climate emotions wheel.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Which, Anya, do you want to speak a little on the wheel?

Anya Kamenetz: Sure, and I just want to, you know, connect the dots here, right? So, so these events are happening, they're in the news, their causes could be very complex, but we, there's a misconception that we can sort of avoid

Anya Kamenetz: talking about them or getting to the details with kids, and the reason that that's a misconception is that if it's something that's stressing us out as parents, and that we haven't dealt with, it's going to come into our...

Anya Kamenetz: our relationship with our kids. And as our kids get a little older, by the time they start school, they're already receiving messages about the Earth, and what's happening to the Earth, and living creatures, and it can

Anya Kamenetz: snowball into really extreme forms of anxiety and depression, and that's what we're seeing happening with Gen Z right now. So, what we're trying to do with this guide is really build the building blocks of emotional literacy around climate change so that

Anya Kamenetz: it doesn't have to be so scary. There are ways to cope, there are ways to thrive, and when it comes into the conversation, when we start to be able to face our own climate emotions.

Anya Kamenetz: As parents or caregivers, as well as handle our kids' climate emotions, that's how we start to become a more healthy society that's able to cope.

Anya Kamenetz: And so, the Climate Emotions Wheel is based on the research of Panu Picala, who's a researcher in Finland, and compiled from 14 different studies from around the world of the emotions that people name in relationship to climate change.

Anya Kamenetz: And then we have this translated into multiple different languages. There's an emoji version for young children. And so, you know, basically what's a need to know right now is that, of course, there's different flavors of anchor.

Anya Kamenetz: Grief and sadness.

Anya Kamenetz: Fear and overwhelm and anxiety.

Anya Kamenetz: And what's also on the wheel, of course, is positivity. Do you, Rachel, do you want to speak to that?

Rachel Moszkowicz: Yeah, I think so much of the conversation around climate change and our motions,

Rachel Moszkowicz: it tends to be really centered around these more quote-unquote negative emotions, such as anger and anxiety and grief, and of course, those are real, those are valid. What we're also seeing, though, is that there is such a range of

Rachel Moszkowicz: emotional experience that people are having in relationship to climate change. That there's also...

Rachel Moszkowicz: feelings of curiosity and gratitude and hope, when we just really think about, you know, this really beautiful, amazing planet, we are living on. And what we found is a lot of,

Rachel Moszkowicz: the parents were talking about how their children are expressing curiosity about the environment, about climate change, about what is happening. They're really wanting to...

Rachel Moszkowicz: understand it. And, you know, this is discussed in the guide at one point, but there's so many ways to be able to connect your children's

Rachel Moszkowicz: interests and curiosities, to climate change, and that's a way to

Rachel Moszkowicz: start the conversation. And so, I think the Climate Emotions Wheel is such a great tool, an accessible tool, for people of all ages to use, and to recognize, too, that our feelings

Rachel Moszkowicz: at least, you know, mine around... shift constantly around climate change. They can look really differently, at different... at different points.

Anya Kamenetz: Yeah, I think that's exactly right, and it's important to understand that, you know, engaging in this exploration with our kids, it can bring us closer together as families, and it can also... there's research actually that shows this, that when parents embrace the challenges of climate change, and we follow our children's interest and curiosity.

Anya Kamenetz: It can be a catalyst for personal growth, and meaning, and even hope. So it's a beautiful journey. And I want to start, you know, we start for people that don't even have kids yet, and Rachel, you're, you're getting married. I don't know what you're thinking about as far as starting a family, but...

Anya Kamenetz: You know, the reason that we start there is, I mean, maybe you can speak to this, I mean, climate anxiety is often popping up as we're thinking about starting a family.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, it's something, I feel like I thought a lot about in my early 20s, and have had lots of conversations with my friends around this, because I think...

Rachel Moszkowicz: you know, especially, the climate education I received as kind of a Gen Z millennial, was kind of...

Rachel Moszkowicz: More so this, like, apocalyptic messaging of, you know, humanity's kind of doomed, and there's so much going wrong, how could we possibly bring

Rachel Moszkowicz: children into this world, and that's something I think a lot of us, young people carry. I will say.

Rachel Moszkowicz: My, kind of, views around this have really...

Rachel Moszkowicz: shifted, in part to... due to the work of, Britt Ray, and her... her... her book, Gen Dredd. But I think there's real, you know, reproductive anxieties around climate and what it means to bring children into this world, and of course, it's a deeply...

Rachel Moszkowicz: ... personal, decision. But... you know, I think, ... learning... about...

Rachel Moszkowicz: all that is being done around climate, and how there's still much... there's still so much joy and purpose and connection to find, ...

Rachel Moszkowicz: among others.

Rachel Moszkowicz: has really shifted some of those feelings for me. So, I think it's an... yeah, an important place to... to start.

Anya Kamenetz: Absolutely, absolutely. And yeah, it's a very, very personal process, but I just wanted to acknowledge that starting out. And, you know, it's part of the... it's part of what it means to embark on your life right now, right?

Rachel Moszkowicz: Yeah.

Anya Kamenetz: ...

Anya Kamenetz: And segueing into that, for people that have very young children, we have, you know, the beginning of the guide.

Anya Kamenetz: And the nice thing about sort of starting early, of course, is you can always lay the groundwork for more complicated conversations later, but the good news is that the foundations of things like extreme weather safety, climate literacy.

Anya Kamenetz: are things that every young child needs to grow up happy and healthy. So we call out, sort of, you know, how we're teaching basic co-regulation of emotions, how we're teaching our children to self-soothe.

Anya Kamenetz: How we're teaching basic social-emotional literacy, right? Understanding and expressing and managing and naming our emotions is something that we teach in preschool.



Anya Kamenetz: Another thing that early childhood is really known for is showing very basic care of self and care of environment. So we start to teach our kids about, you know, we wear a hat, we wear sunscreen, we keep our body cool when it's hot.

Anya Kamenetz: And care of environment, this is something my child's Montessori was really wonderful at, you know.

Anya Kamenetz: We... we care for animals and plants around us, and we also don't waste water, don't waste food. So these are the ways, these are the little planting of the seeds of messaging. And I had a story, from a...

Anya Kamenetz: a childhood educator who talked to me about how they were kind of putting, you know, inculcating that in their kids, and they have a little boy who's just over one year old, and

Anya Kamenetz: You know, he pointed at a bug that was upside down and said, oh no, and he got his father to pick up the bug. And, you know, our children just really have that innate biophilia for the natural world, and so...

Anya Kamenetz: this is where we start. You might not think of that as climate literacy or climate education, but it's everywhere, and there's always opportunities for it.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, and I think even being able to listen to the messages that our bodies are telling us, are we too hot, are we too cold, is so important, and yeah, just having that...

Rachel Moszkowicz: connection to the place where we're living, and our home, and what the environment means, and how, you know, I'm a part of it, I'm a part of that system, and taking care of myself is taking care of the environment.

Rachel Moszkowicz: There's... there's so much we could do with early education to kind of establish the root of being a caring climate being.

Anya Kamenetz: Absolutely, absolutely. And then as we start to go into the school age, I mean, the core of our initial version of this Parent Resources, this is a really big update of our guide, but, you know, it's talking about it in terms of a talk, a conversation. And we know that this is not just one conversation, and that's why we expanded into this whole guide. But we do sort of provide a script that you can use, whether there's still

Anya Kamenetz: Something in the news that they're curious about, or something they learned about in school.

Anya Kamenetz: You know, to spark that conversation, and we have, you know, a multi-step way of getting into it, talking about

Anya Kamenetz: What's unique about the Earth?

Anya Kamenetz: You know, how the Earth is actually changing right now, how the amount of carbon dioxide in the air and other gases can feel like a blanket. Too many blankets can make you feel too hot, like you have a fever. And then, of course, we know why this is happening. This is happening because of emissions.

Anya Kamenetz: And then, of course, having, you know, space for emotions.

Anya Kamenetz: And, of course, talking about solutions, big-scale solutions, as well as very personal solutions, and giving kids ways to take action.

Rachel Moszkowicz: And...

Rachel Moszkowicz: you know, I think an important note, too, is we have such negativity bias in our brains, and the media as well, really understands this, and we're fed a lot of really...

Rachel Moszkowicz: Upsetting stories, and obviously there is a lot to be upset about when it comes to climate change, but there are so many, so many solutions, and stories of hope, and making sure we're really

Rachel Moszkowicz: You know, balancing.

Rachel Moszkowicz: the... that.

Anya Kamenetz: Yes, I... thank you for underlining that, and I think it's just... it's really, really palpable right now, because I just think that there's... I mean.

Anya Kamenetz: Climate education is under-emphasized in general in the United States, but even more than climate education is climate solutions education. So, there's a lot of research that shows that kids just don't know that much about

Anya Kamenetz: all the things that are being done to combat these problems. And, you know, I think right now it's such a palpable

Anya Kamenetz: Contrast, because while we see that there's a dismantling of climate-related

Anya Kamenetz: regulations and programs here in the United States, there is a global clean energy revolution that is absolutely underway around the world. And so.

Anya Kamenetz: there's also an incredibly strong movement around the world of people who want to push leaders to have a, you know, a more ambitious plan to protect nature and to protect living creatures. So...

Anya Kamenetz: highlighting the human action, and also highlighting the technological progress is something that I've had to be really intentional about for myself, as well as for my kids.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Yeah, absolutely. And, you know, something that...

Rachel Moszkowicz: A lot of the parents of older kids, of teens, in our research said is, you know, kind of when do we...

Rachel Moszkowicz: start having this conversation about climate justice, and introducing, kind of, that piece, where the conversation expands beyond, you know, recycling, bringing your reusable water bottle, to more, kind of.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Larger, maybe transformative, collective, action.

Rachel Moszkowicz: And this kind of... Gets into it a little in our section for older kids between 10 and 18.

Anya Kamenetz: Yes, I'm so glad you brought that up. So, so Climate Action is highlighted several times throughout our updated guide, Climate Justice and Climate Action, and we really advocate that,

Anya Kamenetz: children can start taking part in collective climate actions at a young age. You know, I've gotten involved in New York City with Climate Families NYC, which is led by Liat Olenek, who has two really young children, a baby and a toddler.

Anya Kamenetz: And we asked her to kind of come in and write our guide about taking action as a parent, but one of the things that's really cool about that organization is they, you know, all of their protests are family-friendly, so they have kids in strollers.

Anya Kamenetz: at marches, at rallies. They also have ways for kids to, you know, draw pictures to send to elected officials. For kids that are a little bit older, 4th and 5th grade, you can already make phone calls, and call elected officials. So there's no need to confine ourselves to

Anya Kamenetz: individual climate actions, like recycling and composting, it's always important to figure out ways to connect to the bigger picture, because, you know, kids aren't dumb. I mean, they understand lots of things about big numbers and the idea that, well, I can help my little part, but also I want to be part of something bigger as well. So that is something that we advocate a lot.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Yeah, yeah, and even younger kids, I feel like they have a real understanding of fairness and justice is actually kind of quite important to younger kids, like, what is fair? And so that's...

Rachel Moszkowicz: Kind of a good gateway into a climate justice conversation.

Anya Kamenetz: It absolutely is, yeah, and I guess I want to jump ahead a little bit as we're talking about this, because we do have a section

Anya Kamenetz: you know, specifically for families, that have intersectional identities, right? This is something we were asked about by parents.

Anya Kamenetz: And, you know, the topic of climate justice, we understand that there are frontline and fence line communities that are impacted.

Anya Kamenetz: disproportionately by pollution, by fossil fuels, and so... and then there are just, families that are affected by the poly crisis that's going on right now because of their immigration status, because they have queer family members. So, how does the climate conversation come in there?

Anya Kamenetz: Do you have any thoughts about that, Rachel?

Rachel Moszkowicz: Yeah, I mean, I think... you know... Children, families of color are...

Rachel Moszkowicz: probably having, right, these conversations about justice and other kind of big, hard topics, perhaps at...

Rachel Moszkowicz: You know, a younger age than others, and... This kind of, ...

Rachel Moszkowicz: the racism talk can kind of be adapted to fit the model of climate injustice, and we do have a link, in the guide about,

Rachel Moszkowicz: Linking to a specific talk around racism and structural violence that can be, you know, a good

Rachel Moszkowicz: Model for introducing, climate, and the way that all these things, are, you know, deeply interconnected.

Rachel Moszkowicz: And... And, you know, another point of intersection that

Rachel Moszkowicz: Our guide talks about... we have a section, dedicated to, neurodiversity and how to kind of talk with

Rachel Moszkowicz: you know, neurodiverse kiddos, disabled kids, kids that learn differently. Annis is really... important.

Rachel Moszkowicz: When, you know, talking about... climate disasters, for example, because

Rachel Moszkowicz: It is often, you know, ...

Rachel Moszkowicz: Disabled folks that, are more impacted by disasters. And...

Rachel Moszkowicz: For neurodiverse kiddos, the kind of routine disruptions, that occur due to climate and extreme

Rachel Moszkowicz: You know, weather, maybe more...

Rachel Moszkowicz: Challenging to cope with, and so really having, you know, a safety plan in which your children can really

Rachel Moszkowicz: Be a part of that, and understand that.

Rachel Moszkowicz: And having conversation of, you know, hey, like, because of the certain, medications your body... you are on, like, your body is, you know, affected differently by heat, and so this is what we're gonna do to keep you safe, and really just clearly spelling those things out, and having your kids be...

Rachel Moszkowicz: A part of that.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Is really important.

Anya Kamenetz: Absolutely. So we have, you know, research-based, information from...

Anya Kamenetz: Elizabeth Bayshard, Emily Diamond, I also want to call out Dr. Jade Sasser, who helped us with our section on, you know, families that face racism and discrimination. And, you know, what's really important, I think, with this conversation as well, when we talk about families with intersectional identities or the climate justice issue.

Anya Kamenetz: is also taking a strengths-based approach, right? So we make the point in the guide that

Anya Kamenetz: You know, families that, for example, have, you know, traditions of cultural solidarity, practices of mutual aid, queer chosen families, these are resources. So these, these groups, these identities, you know, it's not just about the disproportionate impact of climate, but it's also about

Anya Kamenetz: what are your strengths, and what do you have around you to help your kid thrive? Well, if I have a stronger community tie or identity, that can be part of what helps us face the future. And by the same token, you know, when talking about kids who are neurodiverse or who learn differently.

Anya Kamenetz: inclusive...

Anya Kamenetz: climate movements are stronger climate movements, right? And the climate movements that are built by and for people with different identities are the ones that are really

Anya Kamenetz: equipped to face the challenges of the moment. And so, always thinking about how... I think a lot of times with parents, we're in such a culture of toxic



individualism that families really feel like they're on their own facing these challenges. But what I've seen again and again is that when families do decide to show up and make space.

Anya Kamenetz: You know, the experience is so life-affirming, and there's so much

Anya Kamenetz: connection and support that can come from that. And to understand that, you know, your kid belongs there too, you know, just because, you know, it's very hard to navigate a world that's not necessarily designed for kids or kids like yours.

Anya Kamenetz: But, we all deserve a place, and so something like, for example, if there is a climate rally and you're afraid it's going to be too loud for your kid, is there another way for them to participate, or could you even ask the organizers to make a more accessible, you know, action? And these are all things that are important to...

Anya Kamenetz: To think about and include.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, I think... something that I've...

Rachel Moszkowicz: It's really struck me is just the power of, like, knowing our neighbors.

Rachel Moszkowicz: And I'm... I'm... I'm just realizing how essential and crucial, community is. And, I mean, knowing your neighbors, I think, is so important in... in so many ways.

Rachel Moszkowicz: But it's also, I believe, one of the number one, like, climate preparedness, you know, strategies is... is knowing... knowing your neighbors, knowing who lives around you.

Anya Kamenetz: Absolutely, absolutely.

Anya Kamenetz: So I want to skip back a little bit, because, you know, we did talk about... one thing parents asked for was, different kinds of diverse identities, how to re... how to meet them, and that's very much covered in the guide. We also have...

Anya Kamenetz: specific sections for different emotions that kids are presenting with. So we talk about fear, we talk about grief, we have a, a whole guide on climate grief, but this is a list of, like, very specific, concrete

Anya Kamenetz: Actions, that we can take.

Anya Kamenetz: But I also want... I want to highlight, because I had a lot of, you know, working on the section of

Anya Kamenetz: anger, right? So what do you do if your child or teen is angry? And can you talk about a little bit about that?

Rachel Moszkowicz: Yeah, ... I think... you know...

Rachel Moszkowicz: Really focusing in on our anger and what feels unfair really translates into the values that you hold. ...

Rachel Moszkowicz: kind of... I think about how, you know, often grief kind of points to what we love and care about, which I believe Joanna Macy, talks about in her work. And...

Rachel Moszkowicz: Same with what makes us angry, right? We can really use this as kind of, like, a moral...

Rachel Moszkowicz: Compass, to give guidance on finding ways.

Rachel Moszkowicz: to act together.

Anya Kamenetz: Absolutely, and, you know, I think that the key thing to remember, too, is if you're in, you know, if you're a parent or a caregiver or a teacher.

Anya Kamenetz: young people might be angry at you, right? Because young people are a most affected group when it comes to the climate crisis. To talk about climate justice, young people are frontline in the climate crisis, and so that might be uncomfortable, you know, to confront that anger. It also might be buried under

Anya Kamenetz: a sense of indifference or apathy, that, you know, that's also really developmentally appropriate for teenagers who are just taking in so much of the world right now. And being a safe space for those emotions and really acknowledging the unfairness of it is something that I think it's incumbent on all of us to do, who...

Anya Kamenetz: have younger people in their lives to be able to hold that space, and to be honest about the fact that it's not fair, and that we could have done more, and that we are handing off to them a world that, you know, doesn't have the same promise that it might have had 20 years ago because of inaction.

Anya Kamenetz: yeah, I just think there's a lot of power in that.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Yeah, yeah, I think I... Grew up with...

Rachel Moszkowicz: a lot of anger, honestly, around, kind of older generations, of being like, how... could you let us, like, inherit

Rachel Moszkowicz: A planet like this?

Anya Kamenetz: Yeah.

Rachel Moszkowicz: ...

Rachel Moszkowicz: But I think, you know, just understanding, like, everyone has been through their own struggle and journey around this, and that older generations have actually done a lot of work, you know? Like, history is not...

Rachel Moszkowicz: linear, and...

Rachel Moszkowicz: I don't know, I think we have to recognize, too, like, the need for intergenerational work, and how it is really essential to...

Rachel Moszkowicz: be working with younger people, working with older people. We actually do have a specific intergenerational guide as well, which is another great resource. But I think, you know, I relate a lot. This one parent shared this...

Rachel Moszkowicz: she said, referring to her child, she has a lot of grief and a lot of anger, and it's not just at leaders, but at humans in general. She thinks humans have just, like, wrecked the life support systems of

Rachel Moszkowicz: the planet.

Rachel Moszkowicz: And I really relate to that. I felt that a lot growing up. You know, and obviously, we can hold all the feelings there, and then also open up a conversation of, you know, it's not...

Rachel Moszkowicz: all humans, right? And, they're still really amazing people doing amazing, work, and, and really lean... leaning into their humanity, and humanity of others, but, ...

Rachel Moszkowicz: I think anger... Is... is such a valid and important emotion.

Anya Kamenetz: yeah, I think that's... that's exactly right, and just validating feelings in general is always something that

Anya Kamenetz: We're trying to show up for as parents. Now, while there's a lot of psychological advice in the guide, I do want to highlight that there's some very research-based information also about things like extreme weather, and there's a guide from

Anya Kamenetz: Emily Diamond, who's done research, about extreme weather, it's just one of the ways that the rubber's really meeting the road for a lot of families in terms of experiencing the acute effects of climate change. And so, one thing I want to say, like, this is really important, right?

Anya Kamenetz: that Emily... a point that Dr. Diamond made, that when we think about teaching children, we're thinking about having conversations, and a lot of this has been couched

Anya Kamenetz: In that... in that term, but the number one way for parents to teach is by leading by example, and that's...

Anya Kamenetz: Taking climate action in all these different ways.

Anya Kamenetz: But I'm gonna... I'm gonna go ahead and walk through this, because she talks about, you know, talk about your values as a family, show that your kids

that you're prepared and have a safety plan, involve them in that plan, and then I love this idea of Preparedness Day. Can you talk about that?

Rachel Moszkowicz: Mmm, yeah, so... having kind of...

Rachel Moszkowicz: a whole kind of system in place, a whole kind of slew of... so you have your pack... packing your go bag, and involve your children in packing their own go bags, so really taking ownership of this process. ...

Rachel Moszkowicz: You know, keeping... Keeping, non-perishables in the house, asking...

Rachel Moszkowicz: you know, what first aid or medication should be kept on hand in the home... in the home in case of a disaster. ...

Rachel Moszkowicz: making contact with friends and family that are willing to host your family for a few days, so just having... having everything ready, but Preparedness Day, specifically, is thinking about starting this tradition by, as Dr. Diamond describes, having a day that's set aside, just...

Rachel Moszkowicz: for all that preparedness described above. So summer is when there'll be more serious heat waves, right, more fires, ...

Rachel Moszkowicz: And... A kind of calm day outside of that

Rachel Moszkowicz: season, is a really good time to set aside, you know, an afternoon, to review and discuss some of these issues. She discusses, like, replacing batteries for headlamps, restocking the first aid kit, updating the emergency contact list, right?

Rachel Moszkowicz: ... And... this could be a tradition

Rachel Moszkowicz: you know, carried on, where it's like, today is preparedness day, and you put on music, you make it into kind of a fun communal family event.

Anya Kamenetz: Yeah, I really love this idea. I love... because, you know, anything can become a family tradition, and this is such a positive way to do it. It also occurs to me that, you know, there's a way to fold in preparedness. For example, if you have a family that

Anya Kamenetz: is lucky enough to spend outdoor time. Like, a lot of this could fold into, like, oh, we're going backpacking, so let's look at our gear, let's look at our first aid.

Anya Kamenetz: My kid is doing a first aid course tomorrow, my 13-year-old, because they want to get jobs babysitting, but that's still

Anya Kamenetz: another way that they're going to feel more prepared, you know, in whatever might come. So, you know, there's the idea that there's things that can have, you know, an immediate purpose in the present, and then potentially another purpose in the future.

Rachel Moszkowicz: That's really the kind of the soul of preparedness.

Anya Kamenetz: And then I want to connect that to... we also talked to Erica Solov, who works for Extreme Weather Survivors, about what if you do go through an extreme weather event? What happens afterwards? And so...

Anya Kamenetz: she fled her home, within... with her two young children, with her husband, in 2021 from a huge fire in Colorado. They didn't even have time to put their shoes on, and they lost their entire house and everything in it.

Anya Kamenetz: And Erica is a personally really inspiring person to me, because she's rebuilt her life.

Anya Kamenetz: And she now works at this nonprofit, helping other people, like, communities of people, for example, the LA Fire Survivors. And she talked about the prioritizing of recreating their normal routines, so...

Anya Kamenetz: You know, cooking dinner together, playing their favorite games, meeting up with their neighbors, their former neighbors who were evacuated.

Anya Kamenetz: they kept their son enrolled in the same school, even though it was a really big drive. That was something they were able to do.

Anya Kamenetz: And so she says, in short, we model daily that one very scary experience would not take away our family's joy.

Rachel Moszkowicz: It's... yeah, it's so important. I've actually... Kind of witnessed my... my in-laws, ...

Rachel Moszkowicz: practicing this, who they recently lost their home, in the Palisades fire. ... And...

Rachel Moszkowicz: what I've seen is them really trying to kind of... ...

Rachel Moszkowicz: Find... tap into the new community. And... That is such...

Rachel Moszkowicz: a source of... of joy. They were lucky enough to move into a new place really near... near family, which is wonderful, but...



Rachel Moszkowicz: like you're... like you're describing here, like, cooking together, playing games, right? Establishing these... these...

Rachel Moszkowicz: Routines has been... really helpful.

Anya Kamenetz: Absolutely. And, you know, that's... that's sort of the seeds of what some people call post-traumatic growth, also, when people feel...

Rachel Moszkowicz: a sense of....

Anya Kamenetz: strengthen relationships and, confidence, even a bigger sense of faith, and putting things in perspective. These are the silver linings after the very real losses that we're facing.

Anya Kamenetz: And Erica's final tip, you know, is to seek out other families and build community, and that's our final tip as well, you know.

Anya Kamenetz: We hope that you take a look at the whole guide, that you read through the sections that are interesting or important to you, and when it comes time to want to take action, the number one thing that parents told us is that they would like to talk to other parents about what they're going through.

Anya Kamenetz: As well as what their kids are going through. And, you know, a simple step that you can do is send this guide to someone else. Say, I got something out of this, maybe we can have a conversation about it.

Anya Kamenetz: There are a lot of places out there, like Climate Cafes, the Good Grief Network, the Work That Reconnects, that are all bringing people together to explore these emotions.

Anya Kamenetz: And you can do it yourself. You know, you can start a peer support group with other friends, other parents and caregivers.

Anya Kamenetz: you know, to... to start the conversation going. It could lead to action steps like disaster preparedness, or climate action, political action. You know, that's kind of open-ended, but making sure that there's a safe space, because what I've found is that

Anya Kamenetz: you know, it's been a personal journey for me as a parent, as I start to dive into these emotions more for myself and for my kids, it's inevitably led to action, and...

Anya Kamenetz: For my kids, knowing that we are active on these issues really... ..

Anya Kamenetz: It helps alleviate a lot of the anxiety, because...

Anya Kamenetz: they can sort of feel like we have got it, and that we're handling it, and that it's not a taboo topic.

Anya Kamenetz: And so I think that's something that, in my family, really helps

Anya Kamenetz: Keep the topic of climate change

Anya Kamenetz: In a space that is open, and it's one of the things that we're dealing with as a family, and it's not buried where it can really fester.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Yeah, exactly. ... Yeah, I think just acknowledging...

Rachel Moszkowicz: the reality, and not... I think a lot of times we think it's too scary and sad to have these conversations with

Rachel Moszkowicz: Children.

Rachel Moszkowicz: And young people, but the truth is, like.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Young people are experiencing it, they're feeling it, and so why not really open up these conversations, which may lead to more connection, and actually joy and community?

Rachel Moszkowicz: You know....

Anya Kamenetz: That's exactly right. And meaning, right? Meaning and purpose. These are all things that are waiting for us as we... on the other side of something that might feel kind of scary.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Exactly.

Anya Kamenetz: So, thanks for going through this with me, Rachel, and thanks for working with me on it. I'm so excited for people to get to hear it and to read it.

Rachel Moszkowicz: Yes, thank you so much.

Anya Kamenetz: Alright.