



## Helping Kids Cope with Floods

Floodwaters can rise quickly and threaten safety. It can be scary to experience a flood and unsettling for kids to evacuate or see flood damage in or near their home, school, or community. As an important person in a kid's life, here's how you can help them feel better as the flood is unfolding:

### **Focus on safety and survival.**

- Letting kids know you'll put their safety first helps them feel more secure.
- Pay attention to emergency warnings and evacuate if you might be at risk or if you're instructed to leave.

### **Explain the situation.**

- Tell kids what's happening in a supportive way, like "The water is nearby, so we're going farther away to be safe. I'll help you and we'll be together."
- Tell them when danger has passed and they are safe.

### **Be a source of comfort and reassurance.**

- Let kids know you care about them and that they can count on you.
- If you evacuate to an emergency shelter, try to create a calm space with comforting items from your go-bags and let kids know you'll stick together.

### **Lead by example.**

- You may react more strongly under stress, so try to speak calmly. Your steadiness makes it easier for kids to cope.
- Model healthy coping by saying a little about what helps you, like "I feel less worried about the flood because we have a safety plan."
- If you ever have to raise your voice to keep a child out of danger, explain later that you weren't angry at them.

### **Watch out for media exposure.**

- Storm alerts and news coverage can worry and frighten children. Help older children and teens manage their news consumption, and keep media coverage away from young children.

### **Be emotionally available.**

- Once you're in a safe place, listen to what kids think and feel, answer their questions, explain what they don't understand, and let them know that their feelings are okay.

### **Point out what's good.**

- Knowing others care gives hope. Show kids how the community, emergency responders, and your own family or classroom are helping each other.