

ACF Administration for Children and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees and Delegate Agencies

SUBJECT: Supporting Children and Families after Hurricane Sandy

INFORMATION:

Many children and families have had their lives disrupted by Hurricane Sandy. This may have included temporary or permanent loss of homes, possessions, and in the worst cases, family members or friends.

Head Start programs play a critical role in providing stability, safety, nurturing, and access to resources. The purpose of this IM is to provide information that staff may use to meet the social-emotional needs of children affected by the storm and its aftermath.

The following guides can help staff and parents know what to say when children ask questions, as well as when they don't. They offer tips on how to communicate with children using accurate, age-appropriate information. They remind us that children need reassurance that adults will take care of them, and that they need adults to turn off the television with its relentless repetitive reporting of conditions. The documents offer strategies to help staff cope with their own feelings while still meeting the needs of children and families. Additionally, they identify situations where additional outside support, such as counseling, may be helpful.

RESOURCES:

[After a Disaster: Helping Young Children Heal](#)

Tips for helping young children feel safe, express their feelings, and make sense of a disaster.

[Young Children and Disasters](#)

Some ways for parents and providers to support children after a disaster, including common responses of children to traumatic events.

[Talking with Your Child About Natural Disasters](#)

Tips on how you can help children cope with concerns and questions about disasters.

[Head Start Emergency Preparedness Manual, Chapter V](#)

Information on program recovery, including Needs Analysis worksheets for establishing priorities, and strategies for restarting services, revising curriculums, and supporting families in their communities.

These and other resources are available at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sandy>.

The Office of Head Start is compiling additional resources that will be available on the ECLKC. Additionally, programs are encouraged to contact their Program Specialists or Training and Technical Assistance providers with specific requests or questions.

Thank you for your service to children and families as we work together to recover from Hurricane Sandy.

/ Yvette Sanchez Fuentes /

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