

# Helping Children Cope With Disaster

Disasters of any kind or magnitude can strike quickly and without warning.

These events can be especially frightening for children.

During a disaster, children may become anxious, confused or frightened. As an adult, you'll need to cope with the event, and also give your children crucial guidance about how to respond.

Children depend on routine. When emergencies or disasters interrupt this routine, children become anxious. In a disaster, they'll look to you and other adults for help. How you react to an emergency gives them clues about how to act. If you react with alarm, a child may become more scared. They see our fear as proof that the danger is real. Children's fears also may stem from their imagination, and you should take these feelings seriously. A child who feels afraid is afraid. Your words and actions can provide reassurance.

When you're sure that danger has passed, concentrate on your child's emotional needs by asking him/her to explain what's troubling them. Your response during this "problem time" may have a lasting impact.

Be aware that after a disaster,

children are most afraid the event will happen again; someone will be hurt; they will be separated from the family; and they will be left alone.

Immediately after a disaster, try to reduce your child's fear and anxiety by calmly and firmly explaining the situation. As best you can, tell children what you know about the disaster. Explain what will happen next. Talk to children at their eye level.

Parents and caregivers can create a family disaster plan by taking four simple steps. First, learn what hazards exist in your community and how to prepare for each. Meet with your family to discuss what you would do, as a group, in each situation. Next, take steps to prepare your family for disaster such as posting emergency phone numbers, assemble disaster supplies kits for each member of your household, and install smoke detectors on each level of your home. Finally, practice your family disaster plan so that everyone will remember what to do when a disaster does occur.

Teach your child how to recognize danger signals. Make sure your child knows what smoke detectors sound like.

Explain how to call for help. Teach your child how and when to call 911 for help. Check the telephone directory for local emergency phone numbers and post these phone numbers by all telephones.

Help your child memorize important family information. Children should know their family name, address and phone number. They should also know where to meet in case of an emergency. Some children may not be old enough to memorize the information. They could carry a small index card to give to an adult, or babysitter, that lists emergency information.

Encourage children to talk. Let children talk about the disaster as much as they want. Encourage them to describe what they're feeling, listen to what they say. If possible, include the entire family in the discussion.

Include children in recovery activities. Give children chores that are their responsibility. This will help children feel they are part of the recovery. Having a task will help them understand that everything will be all right.

You can help children cope by understanding what causes their anxieties and fears. Reassure them with

firmness and love. Your children will realize that life will eventually return to normal.

Contact the Portland Office of Emergency Management, a Division of the Portland Fire Bureau, 823-3738 for information and materials that can better assist in preparing a disaster plan.

## Walnut Park Liquor Store To Relocate

The Walnut Park Liquor Store next to the Renaissance Market on N. Killingsworth will be relocating. The store will be located at 4312 N. Interstate Ave., corner of Skidmore and Interstate, as of February 16, 1999. The hours will be from 11:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. Monday through Saturday.



Steve Bradley Band  
Thursday, February 11 · 7:00 pm

Valentine's Dance with X Angels  
Friday, February 12 · 7:00 pm

Mt. Hood Jazz Festival Concert Series  
KKJZ 5th Birthday Bash with Rick Braun  
Sunday, February 14 · 7:00 pm · \$20 admission

Arthur Moore Four Blues Band  
Thursday, February 18 · 7:00 pm

Paul Delay Trio  
Thursday, February 25 · 7:00 pm

Songwriters in the Round · Craig Caruthers  
Sunday, February 28 · 7:30 pm · \$7 admission

All ages welcome · No charge except where noted

## Too Many Of Our Children In Foster Care

Volunteers from diverse communities are needed to volunteer, one full weekday a month to review cases of children in the foster care system. The Citizens Review Board (CRB) is recruiting citizens to serve on its boards in Multnomah County.

The population of Oregon in 1996 was estimated to be 88.98% Caucasian, 1.59% African-American, 5.11% Hispanic, and 1.50% Native American. However, according to "The Status of Children in Oregon's Child Protection System 1997," only 73.9% of the children in foster care were Caucasian; 13.6% were African-American, 6.6% were Hispanic, and 5.0% were Native American.

The CRB is a division of the Oregon Judicial Department that reviews cases of children in the custody of the State offices for Services to Children and Families (SCF), and of youth in the custody of the State Offices for Services to Children and Families (SCF), and of youth in the custody of the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA), who have been removed from their homes. These children and youth are in foster homes, group homes, and residential treatment centers the boards conduct reviews attended by parents, foster parents, therapists, attorneys, and SCF caseworkers or OYA parole officers. The boards review each child's case plan, or each youth's reformation plan, identify the needs in the case, and make recommendations to the Juvenile Court, SCF, or OYA.

The Chief Justice of the Oregon

Supreme Court appoints volunteers to serve 2-year terms. There are 22 boards in Multnomah County, and each board meets on a set weekday every month from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Board members spend approximately 8 to 10 hours

to prepare for the reviews on their own prior to the board meeting day. Residents of Multnomah County interested in serving on the CRB may call Clayton Kubota at 731-8382 to request an application.

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