



The purpose of this brochure is to help families think about how to plan for health emergencies or accidents that could affect their children with disabilities, chronic illnesses or other special needs.

Emergencies can happen at any time or place. Even the best efforts cannot always prevent accidents and sudden illness from happening.

What you can do is plan... Here are some questions to help guide your preparations:

What is available in the way of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for my child at home, at school or other places where my child might be?

Which hospitals might receive my child on an emergency basis? How are decisions about emergency transport handled? What choices do I have?

What training, certification and experience do the EMS providers have, especially with regard to the needs of children like mine?

What rules or policies apply, especially re: family involvement?

Where to find more information:

American Academy of Pediatrics
(phone: 847-434-7395) www.aap.org

American College of Emergency Physicians
(toll-free: 800-320-0610, ext. 3006)
www.acep.org

Emergency Medical Services for Children
National Resource Center
(phone: 202-884-4927) www.ems-c.org

National Center on Emergency Preparedness
for People with Disabilities
(phone: 202-546-4464, ext. 201)
www.disabilitypreparedness.com

Who to contact in your state:

[FV state contact info goes here]

FAMILY VOICES

3411 Candelaria N.E., Suite M
Albuquerque, NM 87107
Toll free: 1-888-835-5669
Phone: (505) 872-4774
Fax: (505) 872-4780
Email: kidshealth@familyvoices.org
www.familyvoices.org

FAMILY VOICES

Planning for Medical Emergencies

*A Guide for
Families
of Children with
Special Health Care Needs*

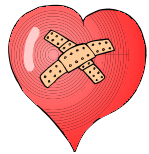


Emergencies and Children

Every child has some risk for injury or illness that can be severe, life threatening or cause permanent harm. For children or youth with chronic illnesses, disabilities or special needs, the risk can be far greater.

This is especially true if a medical emergency occurs when your child is not with you. In those situations, responsible adults should know about your child's special health needs and know how to reach you quickly and what doctors to call.

It is wise to think about and make plans *before* an emergency happens to assure that your child gets the quickest and best possible treatment.



Getting Prepared

Begin by discussing emergency preparations with your child and his or her pediatrician or main doctor.

Ask about special health risks for your child or symptoms you should watch for.

Discuss whether it is appropriate for your child to wear identifying medical jewelry containing information about medications, operations, or other facts.

Ask for your doctor's help in completing an Emergency Information Form on your child. (The EIF medical history form is available from the American Academy of Pediatrics, Family Voices and other groups.)

Discuss who should have a copy of your child's EIF. Consider EMS (pre-hospital) providers and responsible adults at school, child care, camp, or other places your child goes.

Ask the doctor to help you review and update your child's EIF annually or more often as needed.

Discuss with your child's doctor about using signed consent for treatment forms. (The American College of Emergency Physicians has a sample form for this purpose.)

“Having an emergency plan in place made a huge difference for my child when an emergency actually happened.”

Emergency planning also means knowing what your child's health plan or insurance covers for urgent and emergency care. If the event is not life threatening, the plan may not pay for a trip to the Emergency Room.

Your pre-emergency preparations should include having a well-stocked first-aid kit in your home and car. Also, place emergency phone numbers on or near all your telephones.

Get to know the EMS providers in your area and make them aware of your child's special needs. Find out how they respond to emergencies and ask how you can help them serve your child better.

Take a course in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and first aid techniques. Encourage others to sign up as well.

In Times of Emergency

When an emergency or crisis occurs, it's important to stay calm, especially for your child's sake.

Know who and how to call for help. Dial 9-1-1 or your local emergency services number. Have it programmed as a speed dial number on your phones, if possible.

Have your child's EIF form available for the EMS response team.

Comfort and reassure your child. Listen to your child and give your permission to ask questions, cry, and talk about feelings.



Acknowledgments: Family Voices of Tennessee; AAP; ACEP.