

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT THE TORNADO

Parents, take a few minutes and think about where your child was **during the tornado** and answer the following questions. If your child was separated from you during the tornado, ask your child the following questions.

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| 1. | Did windows or doors break in the place your child stayed during the tornado? | yes | no |
| 2. | Did your child get hurt during the tornado? | yes | no |
| 3. | Did your child see anyone get hurt badly during the tornado? | yes | no |
| 4. | Did a pet your child liked get hurt or die during the tornado? | yes | no |
| 5. | Was your child separated from parents during the tornado? | yes | no |

Parents, take a few minutes and think about your child **after the tornado** and answer the following questions.

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| 1. | Was your home damaged badly or destroyed by the tornado? | yes | no |
| 2. | Did your child move to a new place because of the tornado? | yes | no |
| 3. | Did a family pet run away or have to be given away because of the tornado? | yes | no |
| 4. | Did your child have to live away from you for a week or more because of the tornado? | yes | no |

Ask your children the following questions.

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|----|--|------------|----------|-------|-------------|
| 1. | At any time during the tornado, did you think you might die? | yes | no | | |
| 2. | Has it been hard to see friends since the tornado because they moved or your family moved? | yes | no | | |
| 3. | Overall, how scared or upset were you during the tornado? | not at all | a little | a lot | a whole lot |
| 4. | Overall, how upset about things have you been since the tornado? | not at all | a little | a lot | a whole lot |

A greater number of questions answered “yes” reflect that your children may have had greater exposure to distressing events during or after the tornado. Fewer questions answered “yes” reflect less exposure to traumatic events. Greater exposure and reports of your children feeling upset “a lot” or “a whole lot” may mean that your children may be at a greater risk for developing problems specific to the tornado. Look for the following signs that your children might be having difficulties adjusting long-term after the tornado.

Look for These Behaviors:

- Increased “clingy” behavior such as not wanting to be separated from parents or refusal to sleep in own room.
- Persistent fears about the tornado or excessive worry that another tornado will occur.
- Difficulty concentrating on tasks; irritable.
- Very jumpy; startles easily
- An increase in misbehaviors or new types of misbehavior.
- Physical complaints such as headaches or stomach aches
- Withdrawal from friends or enjoyable activities
- Lacks energy or appears sad
- Sleep problems such as nightmares, night terrors, bedwetting

Children often show many of these behaviors after experiencing natural disasters. Usually these behaviors will get better over time. **If your children are still showing these behaviors more than 4-6 weeks after the tornado, they may benefit from additional support.** Consult with a mental health professional to find out about what types of activities or therapies could be helpful.