

Child Safety Tips

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"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."— **Fred Rogers**

As parents, we want more than anything to keep our children safe from harm. Unfortunately, the reality is that children are vulnerable to dangers and threats. The best way to prevent our children from being injured or harmed is to be prepared. One first step is to prepare a Safety Plan for your family, which establishes what you should do in the event of an emergency. Some of the components of the plan should be to establish two safe meeting spots within your home as well as two meeting spots outside of your home and make a color-coded diagram of the escape routes so your child can have a visual reminder of what to do during an emergency situation. Another important thing to do is teach your child how to dial 911 and recite their address to the emergency dispatcher. This is especially important if they use a cell phone rather than a landline. It is also helpful if they know the contact information of other close family members or friends in case they are separated from you. If they can't remember this information on their own they could have the information on a card or on an identification bracelet. The key to emergency preparedness is practice. The more you and your family practice your home emergency procedures the easier it will be for your child to act on reflex in the event of an emergency. Children may also benefit from a visual schedule or a social story to reduce their anxiety and help them remember what to do in an emergency situation. Keep in mind that Safety Plans need to be fluid. They need to be revisited and updated as needed.

Keeping a child safe who has a disability is no different than that for a child without a disability but there may be some extra steps or considerations that a parent may need to take. Did you know that if your child has Autism you can fill out an [Autism Elopement Alert](#) form at the Franklin Police Station? This form provides the emergency responders important information about your child's physical description, the preferred method of communication, medical, sensory and behavioral challenges, as well as effective calming methods, favorite toys, objects, etc. It is also important to have an electronic or written copy of your child's medications, health plan, IEPs, or other important information on hand in case you are displaced from your home for a period of time.

We never want to scare our children by talking about the "what ifs" but being prepared for an emergency situation can help everyone in the family remain calm under a stressful situation and ultimately remain safe.

Resources:

[Disaster Safety for Children](#)

[Get your Kids on Your Team](#)

[Keeping Safe from Injury for Children with Special Needs](#)

[Safety and Children with Disabilities](#)

[Child Safety and Injury Prevention](#)

