

Hope After A Hurricane

Helping Elementary School Children After A Disaster

Ages 6-11



Typical reactions for children of all ages include:

- ◆ Fear of future disasters
- ◆ Loss of interest in school
- ◆ Behaviors they might have shown at an earlier age such as bed-wetting or thumb sucking
- ◆ Trouble sleeping
- ◆ Fear of natural events associated with the disaster
- ◆ Fear of being left by loved ones

Common responses in this age group are:

- ◆ Irritability
- ◆ Whining, clinging
- ◆ Problems with sleep or appetite
- ◆ Aggressive behavior at home or school
- ◆ Extra competition for parents' attention
- ◆ Night terrors, nightmares fear of darkness
- ◆ Avoiding school, problems separating from parents
- ◆ Withdrawal from other children their age
- ◆ Loss of interest and poor performance in school
- ◆ Physical problems (such as headaches, bowel or bladder problems)



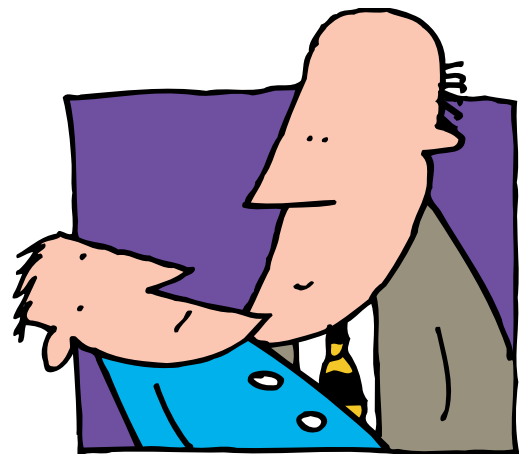
Although people of all ages share many feelings and reactions after a disaster, children need special attention.





- ◆ Say things to reassure the child
- ◆ Give hugs
- ◆ Give extra snacks
- ◆ Encourage talking about how it feels to lose pets or toys
- ◆ Provide comforting bedtime routines, such as nightlights, special story time...

Consider professional mental health services for children whose responses to the disaster are getting in the way of regular home and school life.



For more information, please contact the Division's website at <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/mhddsas/>

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