

# National Center for Disaster Preparedness

EARTH INSTITUTE | COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## CHILDREN & DISASTERS: TOP 10 THINGS TO KNOW

- 1. Reassure your child (honestly).**
  - "You are safe"
  - "You will be protected"
  - "Your safety is the most important thing to me"
- 2. Give your child messages of realistic hope.**
- 3. Keep familiar routines when possible (family, school, church, etc.).**
- 4. Give information about the event.**
  - Monitor the information your children receive from TV and the Internet.
  - Discuss information they have received from the media, as well as what they have seen on the street.
- 5. Observe your child's behavior.**
  - Provide information appropriate to your child's interest in the event and his/her ability to cope.
- 6. Encourage children to express their feelings through words and play.**
- 7. Your child may be confused about the event.**
- 8. Children in denial may still be upset about the event.**
- 9. Young children are vulnerable; however, they are also resilient when supported by adults.**
- 10. The best predictor of children's mental health after a trauma is the ability of the adults to cope and provide support.**