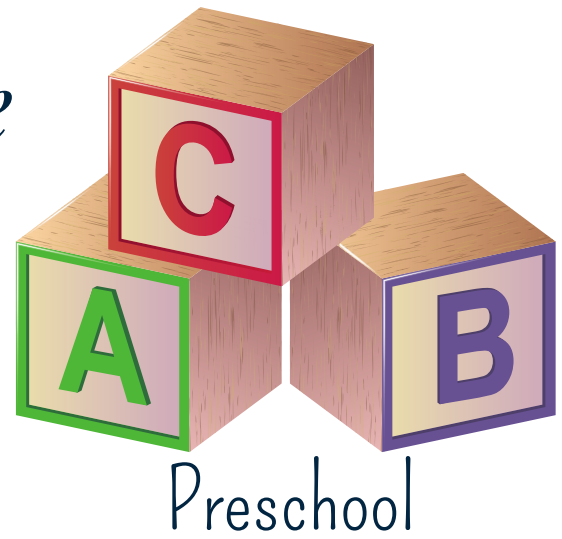


# Intentional Mom Guide

## Parenting your preschooler during a crisis



Children will exhibit a wide range of emotions and behaviors as they adjust to the changes that happen after a disaster impacts their lives.

Your preschooler cannot verbally express how they feel, that's why it's important to help little ones cope with big changes.

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### Practical Ways To Offer Help:

- Show them lots of patience
- Provide reassurance (verbal and physical)
- Allow short-term changes in sleep arrangements
- Encourage expression through play, reenactment, story-telling
- Plan calming, comforting activities before bedtime
- Avoid media exposure
- Maintain as many regular family routines as possible

One of the best ways you can help your preschooler cope when dealing with a crisis is by helping them to create a sense of security. Here are a few things you can say to help promote a feeling of safety.

#### **[explain what's happening in simple clear words]**

"Things are different since [name disaster/tragedy]. One thing that won't change is my love for you."

#### **[pay attention to their play and take note of any changes in their behavior]**

"I noticed you throwing your toys instead of playing nicely with them. Come here. Let me hold you."

#### **[play with them in the places where they are most comfortable]**

"Let's go play in your room for a little while. What toys should we play with together?"

#### **[remind them of your love for them]**

"I want you to know I love you, more than you can ever know."

#### **[let them know there are other people working to protect them as well]**

"So many people work hard every day to keep you safe. You are well taken care of."

#### **[acknowledge their feelings]**

"I see your tears, it's okay to cry."  
"I can tell you're angry. I feel that way too sometimes."

#### **\*Signs Your Pre-Schooler May Need Additional Help:**

Fear of being alone, bad dreams, speech difficulties, loss of bladder/bowel control, constipation, bed-wetting, change in appetite, increased temper tantrums, whining, or clinging behaviors

THE NATIONAL CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK [WWW.NCTSN.ORG](http://WWW.NCTSN.ORG)

\*If your child needs additional help reach out to a local church or visit [www.PsychologyToday.com](http://www.PsychologyToday.com) for a detailed list of mental health professionals.

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