

## CHILD SAFETY & COMFORT GUIDE DURING HURRICANES & GRID-DOWN EVENTS

Protecting children is the top priority. Kids get scared easily and need special planning for safety and emotional comfort.

### 1. Pre-Hurricane Preparation (Do This Early)

- Identify each child's **special needs** (medications, allergies, comfort items, medical devices).
- Pack a dedicated **Child Go-Bag** for each kid (bright color so it's easy to find).
- Teach children **family codes** and PACE plan basics (age-appropriate).
- Choose a **safe room** in the house (interior, no windows) and make it child-friendly.
- Practice a family drill so kids know the routine.

### 2. Child Go-Bag Essentials

- Comfort items: Favorite stuffed animal, blanket, small toy, or pacifier
- 3–4 days of familiar snacks and drinks (avoid new foods)
- Child-specific medications + copies of prescriptions
- Diapers / wipes / pull-ups (extra supply)
- Change of clothes (2 sets), socks, and comfortable shoes
- Age-appropriate activities: coloring books, crayons, small games, books
- Flashlight or glow sticks with extra batteries
- Child ID bracelet with name, parent contacts, and allergies
- Hand sanitizer, baby powder, and rash cream

### 3. Safety During the Storm (Bug-In)

- Keep children in the **safe room** away from windows.
- Use white noise (battery radio or phone with downloaded stories) to drown out wind noise.
- Explain the situation calmly using simple words: "We're safe here. This is like a big thunderstorm."
- Maintain regular meal and sleep routines as much as possible.
- Watch for dehydration and heat stress (Florida humidity is dangerous).

- Have a plan if you need to move quickly — assign older kids small jobs (carry their own bag).

#### 4. Comfort & Mental Health Tips

- Allow children to keep one special comfort item with them at all times.
- Use humor and reassurance frequently.
- Limit exposure to scary sounds — keep them occupied with games or stories.
- Prepare a “Storm Activity Kit” (cards, small puzzles, books).
- After the storm, let them talk about their feelings and return to normal routines quickly.

#### 5. Evacuation / Bug-Out Specifics

- Dress children in bright colors for visibility.
- Use child harnesses or wrist links in crowds.
- Have a family meeting point in case you get separated.
- Bring familiar foods and comfort items to reduce anxiety in hotels or shelters.
- For long drives: Download offline movies, audiobooks, and games.

#### Top 5 Most Important Rules for Children

1. **Familiarity wins** — Bring foods, clothes, and toys they already love.
2. **Never leave them alone** — Even for a minute during chaos.
3. **Keep them informed but calm** — Age-appropriate honesty reduces fear.
4. **Watch for dehydration and constipation** — Common in stress + heat.
5. **Reassure them often** — “We are together and we are safe.”

---

**Pro Tip for Parents:** Do a “Campout Night” in the safe room once a year so the experience feels more normal when it really happens.