



229 East Vaughan Lane
Deer Park, TX 77536
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www.nextsteptransitioncenter.org

Natural Disaster Resources for Families

Planning is an important part of any family with a young adult with special needs or disabilities' daily routine, but it is even more important when it comes to being prepared before, during, and after any type of natural disaster. The following tips to assist families with creating emergency preparedness and response plans have been adapted from recommendations from Ready.gov, FEMA, and the Red Cross.

iPads (and other medical equipment) that are used by someone with a disability to communicate are covered under medical losses/disability equipment. During the intake call with FEMA, you may be asked about medical devices, and whether anyone is dependent on a computer or other equipment. This does include iPads and potentially even things like weighted blankets, headphones, and foods for a special diet. FEMA won't ask specifically about these things, so make sure you mention if you have lost disability/medical equipment.

If you have already applied for assistance through FEMA, you can also update your application and add more information/claims by calling the hotline. FEMA disaster recovery assistance centers can provide in-person assistance and are located in several spots, people can text 4FEMA (43362) "DRC" + their zip code to get their nearest DRC, or go to: www.FEMA.gov/DRC to find your closest assistance center. We also encourage you to reach out to the national Red Cross for assistance in temporary shelter, food, and clothing: <http://www.redcross.org/get-help> We hope these resources are a helpful start for you and your family. If there is anything else we can do to help, please let us know. Wishing you all the best going forward!



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Basic Preparedness Tips:

- Know where to go. If you are ordered to evacuate, know the local hurricane evacuation route(s) to take and have a plan for where you can stay. Contact your local emergency management agency for more information.
- Put together a disaster supply kit, including a flashlight, batteries, cash, first aid supplies, and copies of your critical information if you need to evacuate. If you are not in an area that is advised to evacuate, and you decide to stay in your home, plan for adequate supplies in case you lose power and water for several days.
- Make a family emergency communication plan.
- Many communities have text or email alerting systems for emergency notifications. To find out what alerts are available in your area, search the Internet with your town, city, or county name and the word "alerts".

Evacuating your home - some important things to remember:

- Grab your IEP and any pertinent medical records or evaluations you may have on hand. Your IEP is a federal document and can help you settle your child in an alternate school setting more quickly if you have it on hand.
- Bring identification for your children: birth certificates, passports, etc. Make copies of important documents such as family records, medical records, wills, deeds, social security numbers, bank account information, and tax records. It is best to keep these documents both in a waterproof container and stored online. If there is any information related to medical equipment that you rely on, include those in your emergency kit as well, and also make sure that a trusted friend or family member has a copy of these documents.
- Check your insurance policy about flood and disaster coverage to see what additional requirements may be needed to file a claim more quickly.
- Make an emergency contact list - even if you have them saved on your phone you should also write them down! Include the names and numbers of everyone in your personal support network, as well as your medical providers, local law enforcement, emergency responders, the Coast Guard.



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- Make sure your emergency information list notes any communication difficulties,

including the best way to communicate with you or your loved ones.

- Pack any needed Assisted Technology Devices and don't forget the chargers! Just in case record the device name, manufacturer's name & information, model and serial numbers, vendor (Store's/Seller's) name and info, date of purchase and copy of the receipt if available, copy of Doctor's or Therapist's prescription if available and contact and funder's (i.e., Medicare, Medicaid, Insurance Co.) name, contact info, & policy numbers.
- Pack enough medicines or special dietary needs for at least three weeks. Shipments of new supplies to impacted areas may be difficult or impossible. Bring copies of prescriptions with you or be sure you have refills scheduled with a national pharmacy that can access them electronically.
- If you regularly visit doctors or specialists for treatments or interventions or if you receive regular services such as home health care, treatment, or transportation, talk to your service provider about their emergency plans. Identify back-up service providers in the areas you might evacuate to. If you use medical equipment in your home that requires electricity to operate, talk to your health care provider about what you can do to prepare for its use during a power outage.
- If you have a service animal, be sure to include food, water, and collar with ID tag, medical records, and other emergency pet supplies. Remember to bring familiar items that will help your young adult adjust to their new surroundings and ease the stress of the transition with some of their comforts from home - favorite toys, DVDs, and computer games.
- During an emergency, quick and unanticipated changes in routine and environment can cause increased anxiety and stress. If staying in a shelter bring headphones or earplugs to help with noise. You may also consider bringing a roll of duct tape to place labels, visual support, or even layout visible perimeters of your family's assigned "space" in a communal style shelter.
- Use Visual Supports and Social Stories – these resources can help our young adults more clearly understand, process, and cope with changes in environment and routine.
- With any weather/water-related emergency, electricity can be interrupted affecting



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bank ATMs and gas pumps. Be sure to have your car gas tanks full and additional gas on hand. Take cash out before evacuating as credit cards may not work due to

electrical interruptions.

- When you leave your home cut off the main electrical grid and gas main to the house. This will make it safer for officials, flood recovery personnel, and for your return.
- Register with FEMA.gov ahead of time. Or keep up with their mobile site while on the move. You can call 1(800) 621-3362 for assistance.
- Call the Red Cross before evacuating to ask them which shelters accommodate people with special needs. Upon arrival to any shelter, let them know your young adult has special needs and fully explain all of their specific needs. Ask if there is a secure room or office where your family could stay if your child is a wandering risk.
- Remember children and adults with autism may be particularly drawn to water or at risk of natural disaster hazards.
- If you are facing a natural disaster with waters rising this quickly you will want to take extra precautions if you are not fully out of harm's way. Floodwaters are full of debris and bacteria, so stay out of them. If your loved one with autism tends to wander from safety, make sure you have a multifaceted safety plan in place.
- It is a good idea for every family to have an emergency plan in place to know what you would do during a crisis or natural disaster.
- Keep your emergency contacts organized and up to date.