

Addressing the Wildfires

A resource guide for Caregivers and Educators



The recent wildfires in Los Angeles have had an effect on our entire community. For families directly impacted by the fires, it's been an acutely stressful and distressing experience, to say the least. For those indirectly impacted by the fires, it has been hard to witness the destruction to our community. The sustained impacts of this event will continue to reveal themselves, and young people in particular will need our collective support.

Whether directly impacted or not, children and teens are witnessing these events through the news, social media, and other friends. It is normal for them to have complicated, and big, feelings about the wildfires. As a caring adult, you can help mitigate the stress of the wildfires by taking these steps to support young people in your life:

1. Take care of yourself.

Although it can be hard to do during times of stress, it is important that you are taking care of yourself so you can help take care of others. When you are feeling more calm and rested, you're better able to provide care for those around you and you serve as a role model for young people in your life.

2. Talk to your children.

Once you're feeling more regulated, take the time to have a conversation with kids and students. Assure them they are safe and there are adults in their life watching out for them. The type of conversation you have will depend on the child's age and developmental level, overall, it is important to be honest (including about how you are feeling) and encourage them to ask questions.

3. Help them cope.

Chances are that young people will be experiencing lots of emotions and reactions. Finding ways to help them process and deal with everything that's going on will foster resilience and wellbeing.

4. Prepare as a family.

One way to help young people feel safer and more comfortable is to help them be more prepared if and when another wildfire hits. Asking them to help prepare for an emergency by identifying comfort items and discussing your family's specific plan can help them feel better about the wildfires right now.

The following guide includes resources to help you with each of these steps.

Self-Care

During stressful or catastrophic times, it is important to take a step back and make sure you are taking care of yourself. Remember, you cannot give what you don't have and meeting your needs as a parent, teacher, or caregiver can help you maintain resilience and foster wellbeing.



Compassion Fatigue and Self-Care

In this resource ↘

This comprehensive online resource for parents provides information on all aspects of child care, from talking to your pediatrician to toy safety and the effects of media use on learning.

Helping Children Become Resilient

In this resource ↘

A downloadable guide for educators on how to help children overcome unexpected events that impact children's lives. Offers activities, discussion questions, and tools to help build resilience in children.

Improving Coping Skills for Caregivers

In this resource ↘

Here are self-help tips for caregivers to improve skills for coping with stress and prevent caregiver burnout.

Parents Anonymous® Inc.

In this resource ↘

The California Parent & Youth Helpline and online parent support groups address increased stressors and concerns faced by families, parents, and youth during the current uncertain and troubling times.

Parents and youth can call, text, and chat at **855-4APARENT (1-855-427-2736)** every day from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm for emotional support and referrals in English, Spanish, and other languages.

Sign up for the online groups at [caparentyouthhelpline.org](https://www.caparentyouthhelpline.org). Other California Parent & Youth Helpline resources can be accessed on their website.

P.R.O.A.C.T.I.V.E. Tip Sheet

In this resource ↘

During trying times, it is essential to prioritize wellbeing. Use this printable to remember to practice strategies to maintain wellbeing.

Soothing With Our Senses

In this resource ↘

Students may experience stressful situations throughout the school day. Soothing with Our Senses is a helpful worksheet that focuses students' attention on sensory awareness coping skills. Use this handout to guide your students to use their senses to calm themselves when they are experiencing tough emotions.

Taking Care of Yourself During Crisis

In this resource ↘

A tip sheet outlining common signs of stress and practical strategies to care for your own wellbeing while providing assistance to others.

Talking To Children About Wildfires

Whether your child is directly or indirectly impacted by wildfires or another disaster, they will undoubtedly have questions and worries about what happened and what happens next. Engaging your child in conversation about their concerns is the best way to help them with these challenging thoughts and fears. The following resources can help you and your child tackle the difficult questions that arise.



Be PREPARED

In this resource ↪

A tip sheet for parents and caregivers on speaking with their kids about difficult situations.

Beloved Toys and Stuffed Animals are Gone: How Parents Can Help Kids Understand L.A. Fires.

In this resource ↪

Describes how children may have been impacted by the L.A. fires and what parents can do to help support them.

Birdie's Tree

In this resource ↪

Information and resources to help children and families build emotional resilience to cope with and recover from natural disasters.

Children and Recovery from Wildfires

In this resource ↪

A guide describing potential reactions and helpful responses according to kids' age groups, and a compilation of other resources.

Child Reactions to Stress

In this resource ↪

Children and adults have different reactions to stress. Use this informative printable when working with children to learn about what stress reactions look like from birth to 6 years old.

Helping Children After a Wildfire: Tips for Caregivers and Teachers

In this resource ↪

Discusses the unique challenges associated with wildfires, the possible reactions of children and youth and strategies for providing immediate care and support at home and in schools.

Helping Children Become Resilient

In this resource ↘

A downloadable guide for educators on how to help children overcome unexpected events that impact children's lives. Offers activities, discussion questions, and tools to help build resilience in children.

Helping Teens With Traumatic Grief: Tips for Caregivers

In this resource ↘

Describes how teens may feel when struggling with the death of someone close and offers tips on what caregivers can do to help.

How to Talk to Your Children About the California Wildfires and Other Natural Disasters

In this resource ↘

When natural disasters strike they are scary for anyone. Help support coping with these suggestions.

Helping Youth After Community Trauma: Tips for Educators

In this resource ↘

Lists common reactions educators might see in the students with whom they work and suggestions on how they may help after community trauma.

Instagram: How to Talk to Kids About the Wildfires

In this resource ↘

Dr. Damour discusses how to help kids cope with the fires, and other catastrophes, and how to talk to kids across the country about how to help.

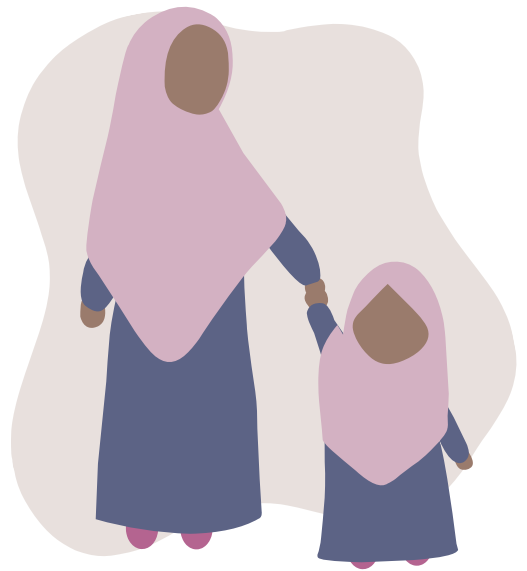
3 Phrases to Support Upset Teens

In this resource ↘

It can be difficult to know where to start when your teen is upset. Dr. Lisa Damour, psychologist, author and mom shares 3 phrases that can really help give your teen the emotional support they need.

Helping Kids To Cope

After a disaster, like a wildfire, children and young adults can feel a whole range of emotions that they may have trouble processing. These feelings can be compounded if their whole world has been turned upside down by the loss of a home and/or school. Helping them to cope with this upheaval in the immediate aftermath of the event and months down the line can be challenging. The below resources can help guide you in your conversations with your children about how they are feeling and how they might move forward.



A Guide for Families Affected by Crises Displacement

In this resource ↘

The resources and activities in this guide are designed to build on families' resilience by teaching ways to navigate transitions while maintaining a hopeful perspective.

After a Crisis: How Young Children Heal

In this resource ↘

Offers tips to parents and caregivers on how to help young children, toddlers, and preschoolers heal after a traumatic event.

Here for Each Other: Helping Families After a Wildfire

In this resource ↘

Downloadable activity and coloring book.

Helping Children Become Resilient

In this resource ↘

A downloadable guide for educators on how to help children overcome unexpected events that impact children's lives. Offers activities, discussion questions, and tools to help build resilience in children.

Preparing Children After a Wildfire Damages Your Community

In this resource ↘

Offers guidance to parents and caregivers on deciding whether or not a child should return to their home or neighborhood after it was damaged in a wildfire.

Recovering Emotionally After a Disaster

In this resource ↘

Access Red Cross services now and access information about safety and recovery after a disaster.

Sesame Workshop: Digging Deep

In this resource ↘

Downloadable handout with strategies and tips on how to take care of yourself and your family during and after a disaster or crisis.

Sesame Workshop: Traumatic Experiences

In this resource ↘

Provides tips and additional resources to help children overcome traumatic experiences.

When Something Scary Happens

In this resource ↘

Resources to help families cope in emergencies and other challenging times.

Trinka and Sam: The Big Fire

In this resource ↘

A children's book that can be read with/to children to explain the wildfires. The [downloadable book](#) includes the Spanish, Portuguese, and Greek versions of the book. There is also a [video](#) of the book being read.

Preparing for Disaster

The often surprising nature of disasters can lead to feelings of anxiety and distress, especially in young adults and children. One way to alleviate these feelings is to prepare along with your children. Ask them to help you put together go-bags and discuss future safety strategies, like where the exits are and who their “helpers” are should another disaster occur. These activities can help your children feel more empowered and ready. Below are resources that can help you discuss disasters like wildfires and how to prepare for them with your children.



All About Wildfires: Causes, Effects, and Educational Activities

In this resource ↘

This article covers these topics and includes classroom activities for all grade levels that will give your students a deeper understanding of wildfires.

FEMA Accessible: Helping Children with Disabilities During an Emergency

In this resource ↘

A CDC/FEMA collaborated video on how to help children with disabilities during an emergency.

Fire Safety Program: Family Guide

In this resource ↘

Help empower young children to be prepared during a fire emergency with this fire safety guide for families.

Helping Children Become Resilient

In this resource ↘

A downloadable guide for educators on how to help children overcome unexpected events that impact children's lives. Offers activities, discussion questions, and tools to help build resilience in children.

Prepare with Pedro: Wildfire

In this resource ↘

Join Pedro the Penguin as he learns how to be prepared for and take action during a wildfire along with his friends Elan and Yuma. This video is a companion to the Prepare with Pedro: Wildfire digital storybook and PSA.