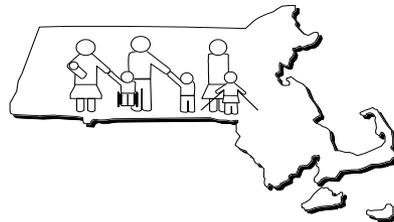


# Planning For Emergencies Is A Key To Success

**FAMILY TIES**  
of Massachusetts



*Together In Enhancing Support*

Family TIES is a project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs, with funding from and in collaboration with the Mass. Department of Public Health, Division for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs.

# How do we define “emergency”?

## What is “Emergency Preparedness”?

“Emergency” may include:

- Unexpected mishaps  
(the school bus gets home first)
- Situations that risk health and safety  
(ran out of medical supplies)
- Natural disasters  
(snow, floods, high winds)
- Man-made disasters  
(gas leak, fallen poles)

“Emergency Preparedness”

- “fact of being ready for something; the state of being prepared”  
(Merriam-Webster Dictionary)
- Identify potential emergencies, develop plans to address them, practice to increase successful resolution.

**We encourage families to develop, review, and practice your plans often enough for everyone to feel comfortable and know what to do in case of an emergency.**





# Tiers of Emergency Preparedness

## Tier 1: Develop your Family Emergency Plan (5 steps)

1. Plan ahead and develop your plans
2. Contact local First Responses and community providers
3. Complete the Disability Indicator and AAP Emergency Info forms.
4. Consider your personal networks, to share your plans
5. Prepare disaster kits: one to go, one to shelter in place



## Tier 2: Engage Family Members, Caregivers, and Friends (3 steps)

1. Provide critical information, for continuity of care
2. Check in with your network, to keep current
3. Practice your plans with family and friends periodically



## Tier 3: Identify Community Resources (4 steps)

1. Determine who is your local Emergency Management Directory (MEMA)
2. Meet your local First Responders
3. Meet the local Board of Health and Disability Commission
4. Join in local efforts for local preparedness and response initiatives



# Tier 1 - Basic Preparation for Families

## 1. Develop your Family Emergency Plan.

- a. Consider, what would your family do should an emergency occur?
- b. It's important to make a plan, for lots of reasons.
- c. Let's look at the Family Disaster Plan inside our Family TIES packet.
- d. Call us if you would like help with your paperwork, either filling out the form, identifying emergency contacts, family meeting places, etc.
- e. Remember to share your emergency plans with your children and family in ways they can understand.



## 2. Contact local first responders and community service providers.

- a. Look at the 9-1-1 Disability Indicator Form, also inside the Family TIES packet.
- b. Here's how the program works and how it can help. Please complete and return the form with a short letter of introduction to your local Emergency Management Director: <http://massfamilyties.org/info/ep.php>
- c. Let's discuss program confidentiality and benefits.
- d. Families should contact local fire, police, EMS personnel, power companies and local organizations that may be helpful in an emergency.

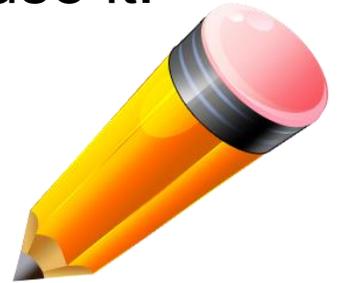


### 3. Complete the AAP Emergency Information form.

- a. How many of you have seen this form?
- b. Here's why the form is important and how to use it.
- c. Take the form to your child's primary and/or specialty health care providers to include all necessary information.
- d. **It's importance to keep this information current.**
- e. You can download more copies of the form at:

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) .

Search for “Emergency Info Form” (for children with special health care needs) or “EMS Form” (for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder).



#### **4. Consider your personal networks: Who needs to know about your child/family in the event of an emergency?**

- a. Consider your child's daily activities, for example, school, child care, nursing. It's important to share information about your child's special health needs and your Family Emergency Plan with these people.
- b. Brainstorm: who knows your child and family, who could you call on and trust in the event of an emergency if you are not able to get to or care for your child? Include them in the planning process.

## 5. What about your prepared disaster kits? You need one for evacuation and one for staying in place!!

- a. You can find information in the Family TIES packet or download a checklist from [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) .  
(Check out “Plan & Prepare” for lots of resources.)
- b. Remember to include copies of prescriptions, the AAP Emergency Health form, and personal identification in your family disaster kit.
- c. We have a list of Frequently Asked Questions from our Community Conversations in 2005, also in the packet or available at [www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph) .



# Tier 2 - Engaging Caregivers, Family and Friends

## 1. Provide critical information

- a. In order to be helpful, caregivers, family and friends must be aware of specific needs, medications, and resources.
- b. We encourage you to discuss these issues with schools, childcare providers, family members, and friends.
- c. Create a plan that will identify who will respond in a variety of situations. For example, what should the school or child care program do if children cannot return home or who will care for a child in the event that the parent is ill with pandemic flu?
- d. Identify a network - family, friends, neighbors, community who are willing and able to care for your child if for any reason you are not.
- e. Share all important information, such as family emergency plans, health care forms, medication and durable medical equipment information in advance, so that the system can be smoothly implemented.



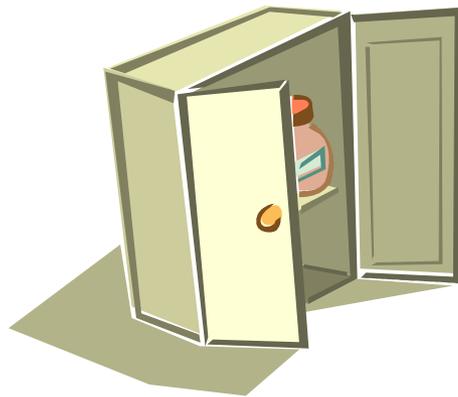
## 2. Check In

- a. Remember to check-in with your network and support systems regularly to be sure that they have the information they need, are still feel able to take on the responsibilities they agreed to, etc.
- b. Remember to update **EVERYTHING** when there are any changes in child's medical and care needs.



### 3. Practice

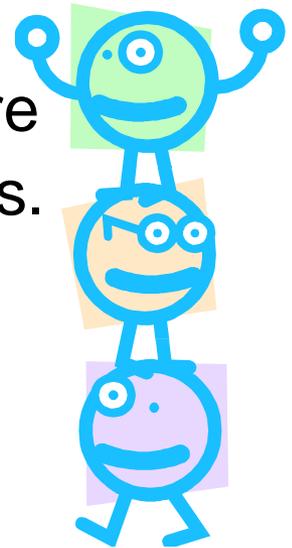
- a. Ensure that other caregivers know where to access whatever they will need to effectively care for a child.
- b. Ask family and friends to come to your home and see where necessary supplies are kept.
- c. Go over plans; check medications and supplies.



# Tier 3 - Identifying community resources

## 1. Who's who in the community?

- a. Identify your local emergency planning and/or Emergency Management Director.
- b. Identify first responders - police, fire and/or Emergency Medical Services personnel.
- c. Meet these first responders if you can and share your child's/family's emergency response needs.
- d. Meet members of the local health board.
- e. Become part of the planning process for local preparedness and response initiatives.



**2. Share information about your child's special needs with these coordinators and work collaboratively to develop plans that address the various emergencies that could arise.**



### 3. What is where in the community?

- a. Find out what hospital(s) serves your community.
- b. Find out what has been designated as the flu treatment site.
- c. Find out where the Emergency Dispensing site is.
- d. Find out where the local shelter is.
- e. Whenever possible, meet coordinators at all these sites before any emergency occurs.



# What's Your Next Step?

- Considering your child's disability or special needs:
  - What concerns do you need to address, in this area?
  - What national, state, and local programs and resources are available to help your planning?
  - Remember your state's Parent-to-Parent program can help you to address challenges, as they come up.

# **Your thoughts are important to us!**

**Please contact Family TIES to  
continue this conversation.**

Mary Castro Summers, Program Director:

781-774-6736 or [mcsummers@fcsn.org](mailto:mcsummers@fcsn.org)

For Massachusetts families: **1-800-905-TIES**

***Thank you for your time.***

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