

# 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. For those indirectly impacted, 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 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 you are taking care of yourself so you can help take care of others. When you are calm and rested, you're better able to provide care for those around you and 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 how you are feeling).

### 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. Scan to download all resources.



# 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.

## ***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 practice strategies that 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 coping skills. Use this handout to guide children and teens 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.

## ***Common Responses to Traumatic Events***

### **In this resource** ↘

Many adults and caregivers are unsure what reactions children may have after experiencing a stressful life event. Learn about common reactions, worries, and fears that may occur in children—and adults—in response to the Los Angeles wildfires.

## ***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 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 kids across the country can help.

## ***Pause-Reset-Nourish (PRN) to Promote Wellbeing***

### **In this resource ↘**

You may have heard the saying, "You can't pour from an empty cup." As a caregiver, it's important to make sure you are taking care of yourself while taking care of others. This video provides information about the specific self-care strategy of Pause-Reset-Nourish (PRN).

## ***Protective Factors to Traumatic Events***

### **In this resource ↘**

The more positive and supportive relationships that children have with peers and adults, the better they do overall. Here are a few suggestions to create and continue to foster healthy relationships during times of high stress and disrupted routines.

## ***Q&A With Dr. Brymer***

### **In this resource** ↘

Dr. Melissa Brymer, director of terrorism and disaster programs at the UCLA-Duke National Center for Child Traumatic Stress, is an expert on how children deal with stress following disasters. In this video, Dr. Brymer responds to questions submitted by attendees on how best to offer psychological assistance to children in the aftermath of the Los Angeles wildfires.

## ***Supporting Children, Strengthening Communities: Professional Skills for Talking About Wildfires Together***

### **In this resource** ↘

In the wake of the tragic fires facing Los Angeles County communities, this video addresses how to talk with children and families about the wildfires. This video is useful for a range of professionals, including therapists, social workers, teachers, health care workers, lawyers, and more, including parents and family members.

## ***Tools and Strategies for Managing Anxiety***

### **In this resource** ↘

When we help others, we help ourselves as well. This video will cover some ways for children of all ages to engage with activities to manage anxiety by making meaning from stressful events.

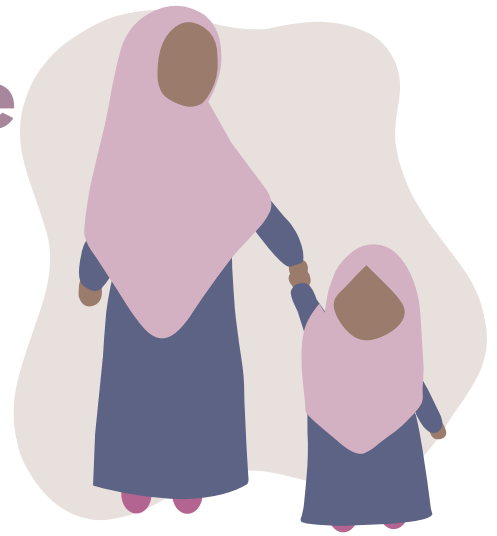
## ***3 Phrases to Support Upset Teens***

### **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 range of emotions they may have trouble processing. These feelings can be compounded 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 resources below 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 Crisis and 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 information about safety and recovery following 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 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.

## ***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.