



The Purpose of this brochure

is to help families think about how to plan for health emergencies or accidents that would affect their children with disabilities, chronic illnesses or other special needs.

Emergencies can happen

At any time or place. Even the best efforts cannot always prevent accidents and sudden illness.

What you can do is plan....

Here are some questions to help guide your preparations:

♥ What is available in the way of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for my child at home, at school or other places where my child might be?

♥ Which hospital might receive my child on an emergency basis? How are decisions about emergency transport handled? What choices do I have?

♥ What training, certification and experience do the EMS providers have, especially with regard to the needs of children like mine?

♥ What rules or policies apply with regard to family involvement?

♥ Where to find more information:

American Academy of Pediatrics
(phone: 847-434-7395)
www.aap.org

American College of Emergency Physicians
(toll-free 800-320-0610 Ext. 3006)
www.acep.org

Emergency Medical Services for Children
National Resource Center
(phone: 202-884-4927)
www.ems-c.org

National Center on Emergency
Preparedness for People with Disabilities
(phone: 202-546-4464, Ext. 201)
www.disabilitypreparedness.com

Planning for Medical Emergencies



A Guide for Families Of Children with Special Health Care Needs

NH Family Voices
NHDHHS/SMS
129 Pleasant St.
Concord, NH 03301
1-800-852-3345 Ext. 4525
www.nhfv.org

Emergencies and Children

Every child has some risk for injury or illness that can be severe, life threatening or cause permanent harm. For children or youth with chronic illnesses, disabilities or special needs, the risk can be far greater.

This is especially true if a medical emergency occurs when your child is not with you. In those situations, responsible adults should know about your child's special health needs and know how to reach you quickly and which doctors to call.

It is wise to think about and make plans before an emergency happens to assure that your child gets the quickest and best possible treatment.



Getting Prepared

Begin by discussing emergency preparations with your child and his or her pediatrician or primary doctor.

- ♥ Ask about special health risks for your child or symptoms you should watch for.
- ♥ Discuss whether it is appropriate for your child to wear identifying medical jewelry containing information about medications, allergies, operations, or other facts.

- ♥ Ask for your doctor's help in completing an Emergency Information Form (EIF form) on your child. A EIF medical history form is available from the American Academy of Pediatrics, Family Voices and other groups.

- ♥ In NH there is a program called "SKIP" which

- ♥ Discuss who should have a copy of your child's EIF or SKIP form. Consider EMS (pre-hospital) providers and responsible adults at school, child care, camp, or other programs your child attends.

- ♥ Ask the doctor to help you review and update your child's emergency form annually or more often as needed.

- ♥ Discuss with your child's doctor about using signed consent for treatment forms. (The American College of Emergency Physicians has a sample for this purpose.)

Emergency planning also means knowing what your child's health plan or insurance covers for urgent and emergency care. If the event is not life threatening, the plan may not pay for a trip to the Emergency Room.



Your pre-emergency preparations should include having a well-stocked first-aid kit in your home and car. Also, place emergency phone numbers on or near all your telephones.



Get to know the EMS providers in your area and make them aware of your child's special needs. Find out how they respond to emergencies and ask how you can help them serve your child better.

Take a course in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and first aid techniques. Encourage others to sign up as well.

In Times of Emergency

When an emergency or crisis occurs, it's important to stay calm, especially for your child's sake.

- ♥ Know who and how to call for help. Dial 9-1-1 or your local emergency number. Have it programmed as a speed dial number on your phones, if possible.
- ♥ Have your child's emergency form available for the EMS response team.
- ♥ Comfort and reassure your child. Listen to your child and give permission to ask questions, cry and talk about feelings.

Acknowledgments: Family Voices of TN; AAP; ACEP.