



**Emergency Preparedness Tips
For Caregivers of Children With Complex Medical Conditions and/or Disabilities**

Eliana's Light and the Lollipop Kids Foundation co-developed this document in partnership with Montgomery County, Maryland's Fire & Rescue Service and Police Department. It will be updated regularly based on input from the community.

1. Create and practice a "911 script" for when you may need to call 911.

Prepare to tell the 911 operator key information, such as your child's age, date of birth, height, weight, medical condition/diagnosis, list of medications with current doses and schedule, doctor (name, phone number, and medical center) preferences (e.g. doesn't like to be touched, is sensitive to loud noises, likes to have a stuffed animal, etc.), good friends and their addresses and phone numbers (if the child is lost), and other identifiers.

- 1. Store this document in your handbag, glove compartment, kitchen drawer, and other locations where you and other caregivers of your child can easily access it when/if it's necessary to call 911 in an emergency and/or if a medical or fire team needs to find it when they enter your house/apartment.** You can use the "Emergency Information Form for Children With Special Needs" as a template and adapt or add to it as necessary (<http://www.emergencycareforyou.org/globalassets/ecy/media/pdf/eif-form.pdf>).
- 2. Keep a "Window Cling Emergency Information Sheet" as well in the glove box of your car and attach a free "MCPD Supports Autism/ID Awareness" sticker to the back of your car.** While this sticker was designed for families with children who are on the Autism Spectrum or have intellectual disabilities, this sticker can be used to alert police and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) officers that there's a child in the car with any kind of medical condition. You can also put a sticker on the child's car seat, especially for children who are non-verbal.

Situation: You get in a car accident and are knocked unconscious but your child is conscious but non-verbal. This sticker will alert the officer to take appropriate actions to care for your child. You can include any information on the sticker that you think would be helpful to the officer who arrives (e.g. my child does not like to be touched).

- 3. Ask your local police department for a free plastic bracelet in which you put a piece of paper that contains your child's name and medical information.** If your child will wear this, it will help a police officer or Emergency Medical Services (EMS) team member know better how to best support your child in the case of an emergency.



4. **Register your child at your closest police and fire departments**, providing the officers with a recent picture and the information mentioned in the first point above. Keep the photo updated as regularly as possible, especially after physical changes (e.g. weight/height changes, hair cuts, etc.).

For families living in Montgomery County, Maryland: You can call **Montgomery County's Non Emergency Number (240-773-4700)** to let them know you have a child with a medical condition who lives at your house. An officer will visit your home to meet your family and learn what they need to know about your child to best support and protect your family in the case of an emergency. You can also provide this information in person by visiting your local fire department.

5. **Get a "File of Life"** you keep in your vehicle, on the refrigerator, and in any other visible and easily accessible place where you and emergency officers can find it (<http://www.forlife.org/>). It will contain your child's basic information.
6. **Determine a specific spot where all your family members will meet if there's a fire so you can account for everyone.** The officer will ask when they arrive if everyone is accounted for. If someone is missing, they will go into rescue mode.
7. **Make a plan in the case of a fire that you can practice with your family.** Make 2 exit plans. It is not recommended to purchase the ladders that go out a window, as there is a high risk of a person falling. They are not very stable.
8. **If you're in a room and there's a fire outside the door:** Close the door. Put the back of your hand on the door to see if it's hot. Keep the door closed. Put a sheet or towel out the window and close the window. The officers will circle the house to look for a sheet/towel that's hanging at the window in order to rescue you.
9. **Keep doors of all rooms (including bedrooms) closed at night when you're sleeping.** If there is a fire in the house during the night, the fire will be contained inside a room and the people in each room will be more protected. The closed door is preventing oxygen from entering the room and fueling the fire, and keeps the smoke contained in certain areas. Closing doors can save lives.
10. **If there is a fire, stay low by crawling (where the fresh air is) to get out of the house/apartment.**
11. **If your clothes/hair catch on fire, "stop, drop and roll" (while covering your face) to put out the fire.** *Do not run*, as the oxygen from the flowing air will fuel the fire.
12. **You can ask for and about CPR classes you can take from your local fire department.**
13. **Ensure that your child is secured by seatbelt every time they're in the car.** You may need to use games convince them. You may need to purchase a booster seat that has a belt that makes a 5-point cross.



If your child has Autism and/or Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities, Montgomery County's Autism/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Outreach Unit shares the following tips that can be found on:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pol/resource/lifesaver.html#carousel-example-captions>

- Make every effort to make it difficult for your loved one to wander. Install an alarm if possible.
- Reach out to neighbors for support. Examples of letters to neighbors are available on this webpage.
- Create a "911 script" and include a Google map of the area, showing bodies of water. Do not hesitate to tell officers about the dangers of drowning. An example of a "911 script" can be found on this webpage. Mention what your child likes to do (e.g., go to the playground).
- Make sure the loved one has identification on at all times.
- Take a full-length photo and headshot of your loved one. Store the photos electronically so that if the person wanders, the photos can be sent to law enforcement quickly.
- Call 9-1-1 immediately if your loved one has wandered so that police can respond.

Related documents:

- "Are You Prepared for Disasters?"
- American College of Emergency Physicians' EmergencyCareForYou page, which contains various resources that may be helpful to you:
<http://www.emergencycareforyou.org/Visiting-the-ER/Emergency-Information-Form-for-Children-with-Special-Health-Needs/>
 - "10 ER Tips for Moms":
http://www.emergencycareforyou.org/globalassets/ecy/media/pdf/acep_ecfy10tipsformoms_poster_final.pdf
 - "Home First Aid Kit":
<http://www.emergencycareforyou.org/globalassets/ecy/media/pdf/acep-home-first-aid-kit-final.pdf>
 - "Travel First Aid Kit":
<http://www.emergencycareforyou.org/globalassets/ecy/media/pdf/travelers-first-aid-kit-final.pdf>
 - "Home Safety Checklist":
<http://www.emergencycareforyou.org/globalassets/ecy/media/pdf/acep-home-safety-checklist-final.pdf>
 - "Welcome To The Emergency Department" children's story:
<http://www.emergencycareforyou.org/globalassets/ecy/media/pdf/acep-coloring-book.pdf>