

TALKING WITH YOUR KIDS ABOUT THE FIRE

One of the most difficult tasks a parent has to face is that of talking about tragedy with their children. Although there is no way to make this task easy, there are some basic guidelines which may help parents organize the discussion in a way that is helpful to their children.

Remember to consider the age level of your child. Children under the age of 8 or 9 may not understand everything. When speaking with younger children, remember to emphasize the ways that they are safe and cared for. With older children, it is appropriate to give more information.

WHAT TO DO AND LOOK FOR WITH CHILDREN

Children and adolescents can react in a variety of ways when dealing with a fire including experiencing anxiety. A child's ability to cope is influenced by how their parents and caregivers deal with crisis. Be as a positive role model for your children as you can. Encourage them to return to their normal routines, including school and playtime.

Invite questions. Even if your children seem to understand what happened, remind them that they can ask you questions any time. Remind them that questions are okay.

It takes time. Expect some behavior changes. Most children will return to their normal behavior 1 to 2 months after the event, if these behaviors continue beyond this general time frame, consult your pediatrician or school for steps.

Children express grief differently than adults. Don't expect children to react in the same way. Often, children show their grief through anger and disobedience. Many times, children don't know why they're upset—they need adults to help give them the words to express their feelings.

Note: Remember that tragedy is a part of every life—the job of parents is not to shield their children from tragedy, but to help their children become resilient enough to survive it. If you need help, ask for it, from friends, family, clergy, or helping professionals.

Get into a Routine. Structure helps. Work toward stability, structure and tradition. If at all possible, continue to do the things your family usually does; mealtimes, going to school, or religious/cultural groups.

TIPS FOR ADULTS

Losing a home can cause significant emotional distress. Evacuation, relocation and rebuilding after a fire is challenging. People experience several stages of adjustment including shock, anger, depression and hopelessness and eventually a stage of acceptance.

Note: Talking about and experiencing a fire can be exhausting. Don't forget to take care of yourself:

- Turn off the news.
- Take a break.
- Exercise.
- Do something fun with your family.

Share your feelings with your child. It is OK to acknowledge your feelings with your children. They see you are human. They also get a chance to see that even though upset, you can pull yourself together and continue on.

Be a role model. This applies to emotions, too.

Tell the truth. Lay out the facts at a level they can understand.

Take time to think about your own sense of routine. Sometimes parents try to repress their own feelings in order to stay strong for their children. It is very important to take care of yourself, and your own feelings of loss.

Making small decisions daily in order to feel in control of your life. Putting off major life decisions, if possible.

Take care of yourself. Practicing proven stress-reduction techniques, such as exercises, meditation and prayer. Allowing yourself release negative emotions in a healthy manner.

Talking about your ordeal with friends and family. Being healthy. Taking advantage of community support. Focusing on what you are thankful for in spite of your loss. Staying away from un-prescribed mood-altering substances, such as alcohol and other drugs. Getting plenty of rest when possible.

Lake County Departments

Agency	Contact	Resource
Konocti Unified School District	(707) 533-6237	Student Services (Homeless) Services
Lake County Behavioral Health	Crisis Line (800) 900-2075 Southlake Office (707) 994-7090 Lucerne Office (707) 274-9101 Circle of Native Minds Wellness Center (Lakeport) (707) 263-4880 The Bridge Peer Support Center (Clearlake) (707) 995-2973 La Voz de la Esperanza Centro Latino (Clearlake) (707) 994-4261	Wellness and emotional services
Lake County Victim Advocate	(707) 262-2482 Tatsuhiko.Suzuki@lakecountycga.gov	Tatsuhiko Suzuki Victim Wellness Division
Lake County Social Services Click here for an online Benefit Application	(707) 995-4200 / (800) 628-5288	Medical and food assistance for qualified individuals, and temporary cash assistance for families with a needy child based on eligibility criteria.
Lake County Animal Care and Control	(707) 263-0278	
Assessor-Recorder Lake County	(707) 263-2302	<i>Real property tax relief and valuation.</i>
Community Development	(707) 263-2221	Building & Safety, Inspection, Code Enforcement, and Planning.
Public Health	(707) 263-1090	Health Resources and services
Housing Programs	(707) 262-1090	Fire Housing Information
Public Works	(707) 263-2341	County maintained roads

Agency	Contact	Resource
Special Districts	(707) 263-0119	Sewer, Utilities...etc.
Veteran's Services	(707) 263-2384	<i>Serving Those Who Served</i>
Native American Resource Center		
California Indian Legal Services	(800) 829-0284 or (916) 978-0960	Free or low cost legal services to qualified California tribes, tribal organizations and Native American individuals.
California Tribal TANF Partnership (CTTPC)	(707) 262-4400 or (866) 720-TANF (8263)	Temporary cash assistance for families with at least one Native American child, based on eligibility criteria.
Non-Profit Organizations		
American Red Cross	(707) 263-8451	Referrals to disaster recovery case managers and disaster recovery resources. Preparation resources including family disaster plans, radio stations in area and tips to build a disaster survival kit.
Lake Family Resource Center (LFRC)	(707) 279-0563/888-775-8336	Provide Resource Information
Legal Services of Northern California	(707) 462-1471	Legal support for families
North Coast Opportunities (NCO)	707-462-1954 or 800-606-5550 (toll free)	Coordinating cash donations via Mendo-Lake Credit for Clayton Fore Victims
Workforce Lake	Clearlake (707) 998-8591 Lakeport (707) 263-0630	Employment services as EDD's America's Job Center of California, also Veterans Services Office at Lakeport location.

Lake County Chamber of Commerce	(707) 263-5092/1-866-525-3767	Community and business resources
Agency	Contact	Resource
Salvation Army	(707) 995-1128	Food and hygiene.
United Policyholders	(800) 286-5631	Non-profit insurance claim help. Providing information and answering questions about insurance and recovery.

Federal & State Agencies & Organizations

[U.S. Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#) (800) 827-5722

[SBA Disaster Loan Program information](#)

[SBA Disaster Loan application](#)

Senator Dianne Feinstein (415) 393-0707

Help with issues with any federal agencies; for example, passports, Social Security checks lost or damaged, etc.

Senator Mike McGuire *Representing the 2nd Senate District - North Coast / North Bay* **Santa Rosa Office:** 50 D St., Suite #120A Santa Rosa, CA 95404 Phone: 707-576-2771 Fax: 707-576-2773

Internal Revenue Service (800) 829-1040 For information on Casualty, Disaster, and Theft Losses and other questions regarding Federal income and payroll taxes.

Social Security Administration (SSA) (800) 772-1213

Information on applying for Social Security benefits, survivor benefits, expediting delivery of check due to disaster, and replacement of lost social security cards.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (800) 827-1000

Information about VA death benefits, pension, insurance settlements, or other information related to VA.

California Board of Equalization (BOE) (800) 400-7115

Questions regarding sales and use, property and special taxes

California Contractors State License Board (800) 321-CSLB (2752)

Information on how to check the license of contractors and guidance on building after a natural disaster.

[How to Hire a Contractor](#) (Video)

California Department of Housing and Community Development (916) 255-2501 permits and (800) 952-8356 registration and titling

Can assist with manufactured housing questions, including repairs, installation and/or registration and titling.

Department of Insurance (800) 927-4357

Answer questions about existing insurance policies and coverage provided.

Franchise Tax Board (800) 852-5711

Information on filing disaster and casualty losses on a tax return.

California Department of Public Health (916) 650-6416 main line (916) 445-2684 vital records or [click here](#)

Information on health concerns related to a disasters. Works with those who have lost vital records as a result of disaster; birth, death, and marriage records should be requested from the county recorder's office in the county where the event occurred .

California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) (800) 777-0133

Forms to assist in replacing documents, such as driver licenses, identification cards, vehicle registration, and certificates of title lost to disaster.

California Department of Veterans Affairs [\(VA\)](#) (800) 952-5626

Services for those with CALVET loans who have suffered damage caused by a disaster.

California Employment Development Department (EDD)

(800) 300-5616 (unemployment insurance benefit claims) and (888) 745-3886 (assistance for employers)
Employment services for job seekers and employers. Unemployment benefits for qualified workers who lose their job due to no fault of their own, such as disaster. Employers affected by a state of emergency may request a 60-day extension to file state payroll taxes without penalties or interest.

California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) (916) 845-8510

Information on disaster preparedness and recovery.

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program (707) 994-1151, 14085 Lakeshore Drive #4, Clearlake, CA 95422 *Helps low income to moderate income pregnant women, new mothers, babies and young children with vouchers for healthy and nutritious food.*
