



## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR FAMILIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

It is important that those in our community with special needs be prepared for any disaster event. Parents and care providers need to project a calm demeanor during a disaster or emergency. Children and adults may sense your uneasiness and become upset. Practice for and prepare to project a sense of calm and assurance.

Be ready to evacuate. Have a plan for getting out of your home or building and ask friend or family for assistance, if necessary. Plan two evacuation routes. Some roads may be closed or blocked in a disaster.

Create a self-help network of relatives, friends or co-workers to assist in an emergency.

If you think you may need assistance in a disaster, discuss your disability with relatives, friends, and co-workers and ask for their help. Give a key to a neighbor or friend who may be able to assist you in a disaster situation.

Register with the Sarasota County's People With Special Needs Registry if you need assistance. This will allow you to be located and assisted quickly in a disaster.

Wearing a medical alert tag or bracelet to identify your disability will help in case of an emergency.

If you have a severe speech, language, or hearing disability:

- When you dial 911, tap the space bar to indicate TDD call.
- Store a writing pad and pencils to communicate with others
- Keep a flashlight handy to signal whereabouts to other people and for illumination to aid in communication.
- Remind friends that you cannot completely hear warnings or emergency instructions. Ask them to be your source of emergency information as it comes over the radio.

- If you have a hearing ear dog or seeing eye dog, be aware that the dog may become confused or is disoriented in an emergency. Store extra food, water and supplies for your dog.
- Consider your pets. Plan for their needs in advance, particularly if sheltering is necessary. This will allow you to concentrate on the rest of the family as danger approaches.

Prepare your needs in your home now so that you will be ready after disaster strikes.

- Check for items that may have broken or been displaced that could cause a hazard, particularly electrical lines.
- Follow instructions for disaster supplies kits for home, workplace, personal, and car