

## Prof: Tips to help children cope with earthquake, tsunami tragedy

March 15 2011, by Amy Pattereson Neubert

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The damage from the Japan earthquake and Pacific Ocean tsunami may be thousands of miles away, but the disaster can affect children around the world, says a Purdue University children's expert.

"The television, Internet and other media outlets are saturated with images of the tragic [earthquake](#) and [tsunami](#), so it is inevitable that [children](#) will notice something about the event," says Judith Myers-Walls, professor emerita in human development and family studies. "Parents and child-care providers need to be aware of how this endless stream of information and images can affect a child."

Some tips to help children cope include:

- \* Help reassure children by teaching them what they can do to prepare for disasters.
- \* Provide factual information to children. Answer their questions or look up information with them.
- \* It can help children and adults to do something to help those affected by disaster. Look for simple and concrete things that children can do to support the families in [Japan](#) and other affected areas.
- \* Follow the child's lead. Stop talking about the situation when the child seems satisfied.

- \* Be prepared to discuss at any time.
- \* It is not appropriate for young children to see many of the graphic images of destruction.
- \* Adults should be cautious of watching the news when the children appear too busy with other things. They may likely be watching or listening while playing.
- \* The younger the child, the less likely they will benefit from news coverage.
- \* It is good for older children to learn about current events, but the intense news coverage may not be the best way for them to learn.
- \* A better way to inform children about the events may be with print media or photographs because they allow parents to preview the content.
- \* Sometimes it's a good idea to turn off the television and news reports, and instead play a game or go outside.

Provided by Purdue University

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