

# VISITING YOUR HOME AFTER THE HURRICANE?

## WHAT TO TELL YOUR CHILDREN



*It's hard enough for me, an adult, to see the terrible damage from the hurricanes. I know my kids are going to have to deal with this too. How do I help them?*

### *Do . . .*

- Be calm. Explain the wind blew over trees and damaged roofs, and the flood ruined the furniture and made mold grow on the walls.
- Tell your children the facts about your home and neighborhood...but don't be too scary.
- Tell your children they are safe, and show your love with hugs and kisses.
- Ask your children how they are feeling and what they are worried about. Accept their feelings without criticism. Tell them you are glad they are talking about their feelings.
- Keep things hopeful. Even when times are hard, point out something positive and stay hopeful for the future.

### **For their safety . . .**

- Don't let your children go into any building until you have made sure it is safe.
- Don't let your children play with dirt, in puddles or with the rubble in your neighborhood.

### *Don't . . .*

- Don't tell your children your troubles. Talk **privately** to a friend, family member or counselor about your feelings.
- Don't remind your children – or yourself – about the worst things that happened to you.
- Don't criticize or punish your child for being sad or angry, being afraid, getting up in the middle of the night or wetting the bed.

### **What else will help . . .**

- Stick with everyday routines (including mealtimes and bedtime) and keep your rules about good behavior and how your child should treat other people.
- Make sure your child is keeping busy with school and other activities.
- Be patient: Your child may need extra patience and attention.
- Speak with a counselor if you are concerned about your child's feelings or behavior.