

natural disaster e-book

Your guide to preparing for
extreme weather while
pregnant or with a newborn
in the
Whitsundays



Contents

1 Introduction

2 Emergency planning during pregnancy

3 Emergency planning for birth

4 Emergency planning with a newborn

5 Breastfed babies

6 Expressed breastmilk fed babies

7 Formula fed babies

8 Cup feeding babies

9 Beat the heat

10 Keep calm and carry on. Yeah right!

11 Processing the experience

12 Older babies & toddlers



1

introduction

Like it or not, living in the Whitsundays means living with extreme weather events and natural disasters.

Cyclones, bushfires, heatwaves and floods are all a part of life in our wonderful part of the world, and regardless of the nature of the emergency, the advice is always the same...be prepared!

This e-book is designed to give you a head start in your planning, including providing advice on what to include in your emergency kit. The better prepared you are the more you can be assured that you are ready for whatever nature throws at you.

Research shows that natural disasters can directly impact unborn babies and have prolonged affects on their health and wellbeing and how they continue to interact with the world around them. There is also evidence that experiencing potentially dangerous events like cyclones and bushfires can cause women to go into early labour.

Research into the Black Summer bushfires in 2019/20 showed that caring for very young children profoundly impacted how the parents experienced the emergency. Preparations were more complicated and difficult, and parents were under-prepared. We can learn from these experiences and be better prepared.

Feeding and caring for a baby if you don't have access to power or clean water can be very challenging and potentially dangerous for your baby. Baby's have very small stomachs and their gut and immune system isn't fully developed, so they need feeding frequently and are vulnerable to any contamination in the milk.

If you are pregnant you may find the situation particularly stressful or fatiguing, and you will already know that even something as simple as sitting in one place for a while can get pretty uncomfortable!

When planning your preparations you should think about where you are going to be if/when an emergency occurs, and plan accordingly. If you need to evacuate because where you are staying is not safe, depending on where you go you may need different supplies. The Council will only open the local cyclone shelters in Proserpine and Bowen if a cyclone is expected to impact the area at a category 3 or above, and the shelters will typically only be open for up to 18 hours or while the cyclone passes. The shelters should be considered a last resort for those that have no other safe place to go. Facilities are basic, may be crowded and in most cases you will only have a chair to sit on.

After a cyclone or other major weather event the cyclone shelter and other local facilities may be opened as evacuation centres for those that have been displaced.

1

introduction

The Council has confirmed that there are no supplies available in either the cyclone shelters or evacuation centres for babies. Anyone using the facilities is expected to bring whatever they need with them.

Remember that it's not just cyclones that can cause problems. If you have lived in the Whitsundays for a while then you will know that some areas are highly prone to flooding which can result in road closures and make some areas inaccessible, including getting access to the maternity unit for example. It's not unusual during the wet season for roads to be impassable for 2 or 3 days. If you are new to the area it is a good idea to ask your neighbours for advice about local road conditions during the wet season so that you can be prepared.

- If you are pregnant, do you have a plan for either getting to the hospital or safely birthing at home if the roads are blocked?
- How will you safely feed your baby if you are without power or water for an extended period?
- Do you have the right supplies for you, your baby and any other dependants?

So, if you are pregnant or have a young baby there are a few additional things that you need to plan for to help keep you and your baby as safe as possible.

Past experiences show that preparing early is the best strategy, not only does it provide you with peace of mind, it also means you won't get caught up in the frantic last minute shopping that can occur. Local shops won't always have large supplies of the things you might need to care for your baby, so building up a supply early is a good idea.

The advice provided in this e-book is complementary to, and in addition to, the general advice provided by the Whitsunday Council and agencies like the SES. The [Whitsundays Disaster Dashboard](#) is a fantastic resource.

The Australian Breastfeeding Association has a huge amount of free information and resources available, including many of the factsheets linked in this e-book. Check out their [Emergency resources for babies and toddlers](#) information on their website, which have been developed as part of the Community Protection for Infants and Young Children in Bushfire Emergencies Project.

If you'd like to connect with other pregnant women and new mums in the Whitsundays area so that you can share ideas and support each other you are welcome to join the [mumabuba pregnancy and baby wellness community on Facebook](#).

Plan ahead - **download this e-book** and any of the additional information that is linked now while you still have internet access and don't leave it too late to get organised!

2

emergency planning during pregnancy

The key thing to think about is what is different for you now that you are pregnant, and does that change anything that you need to plan for in an emergency?

If you are taking any supplements, medications or are diabetic make sure you have the information about what they are and have at least 1 week's supply in a sealed plastic bag.



If you are bunkering down, think about how you can make yourself as comfortable as possible, have additional cushions, pillows, blankets or towels that you can use to provide support. As well as the usual planning for access to food and water, if there are specific foods or drinks that you find helpful to reduce sickness, make sure you include them in your supplies.

If you need to go to a cyclone shelter or evacuation centre, it's likely that you'll only have access to a chair, so think about how you can improve your comfort whilst sitting, this is particularly important if you are suffering with back or pelvic pain, or if you are near your due date.

Pregnant women have reported that they were so focused on looking after their children that they didn't look after themselves, they forgot to eat or drink, in some cases causing some to pass out. So make sure that you eat and keep hydrated.

Keep your maternity notes and any paper/electronic pathology and imaging reports in a go-bag in case you need to evacuate or see a different maternity care provider. Also keep the contact numbers of your care providers handy, like your midwife, doctor and local hospital even if this is not where you are planning to give birth.

emergency planning For birth

If your due date is close to when a natural disaster is predicted to occur, **you should contact your lead maternity care provider** (midwife or obstetrician at your birthing hospital) to discuss your specific circumstances and agree a plan.

They may recommend that you come to the hospital a day or so early rather than risk not being able to travel when your labour starts. If you live a long way away from the hospital, it may be appropriate to try and stay somewhere nearby so that you can get there quickly if the emergency situation becomes imminent.

If you are new to the area, have a chat with your neighbours to get an idea of what the road conditions are usually like during the wet season, which roads are likely to flood, and see if you have alternative routes available.

It's a good idea to have a plan for different scenarios and to have easy access to any supplies you might need. You might also want to consider if there are any family members or friends that you would like to have with you to provide additional support, and make arrangements for them to be with you before the emergency event occurs.

Even if your due date isn't close, research has shown that experiencing a major weather event can cause a woman to go into labour early. Although the likelihood of this happening to you is low, there is no harm in being prepared and having a conversation with your maternity care provider to provide you with peace of mind.

If you haven't already done so you might want to pack your bag for birth and one for your new baby.

Familiarise yourself with the signs of labour.

These include:

- Regular contractions or tightenings
- Constant low, dull backache
- A change in vaginal discharge (watery, mucus-like or bloody) sometimes referred to as a "show"
- Your waters break (this is normally a trickle not always a gush as shown on TV)
- A feeling of pelvic or lower abdominal pressure
- The urge to go to the toilet, due to your baby's head pressing on your bowel



emergency planning For birth

If you do go into labour during the emergency event and it is not possible to get to a hospital, or a maternity professional or other healthcare provider to get to you, there are a few things you can do to be prepared. If it's your first baby it's a good idea to familiarise yourself with the birthing process and what to expect.

Maternity Choices Australia provides pragmatic advice that you might find helpful and reassuring, including these 7 steps to an unassisted birth:

- 1** Stay calm- this allows your body to produce oxytocin that helps your uterus to contract and the body to increase endorphins which is our body's natural pain relief. When you feel fearful your body produces adrenaline and this can interfere with those good hormones we want to be present in high amounts.
- 2** Stay warm- have a blanket ready for after birth. Lots of skin to skin with baby. This helps regulate their temperature, breathing, blood sugars and heartbeat. It also helps keep you calm.
- 3** Stay hydrated and empty your bladder - Remember to regularly empty your bladder. A drink high in electrolytes can help your body's cells absorb the water rather than just drinking and excreting it back out in your urine. You may like to use a peri-bottle of warm water to encourage your body to release your urine.
- 4** Stay close to the ground and use something soft underneath you if you're concerned about dropping baby. A towel or two in the bottom of the shower or a pillow underneath you on the floor can make a nice soft landing. Slowly bring baby up to your chest just in case the umbilical cord is short.
If the cord is around baby's neck, this is very common, just calmly untangle the cord.
- 5** Baby's colouring. If baby is white or grey and floppy, rub baby's back and feet vigorously. Talk to them. Blow on their face. If you see any mucous or gunk in their nose, put your mouth over their nose and suck it out.
It may take a couple of minutes for baby to come around and cry.
- 6** Don't clamp and cut the umbilical cord prematurely (unless the cord snaps). Allow baby's blood to go back through to them as 1/3 of their blood is still in the cord at birth. You can leave the placenta attached to baby if you have nothing to clamp and cut.
- 7** Your placenta may come out shortly after birth or it may take hours to come out. If you're not bleeding, are calm and warm, you can just relax and wait for the placenta to come when it's ready.
Having baby feed at the breast can help bring on contractions to help birth the placenta.

4

emergency planning with a newborn

In most cases all a newborn baby needs is to be close to you, be well fed, clean and comfortable and feel safe. The same is true during an emergency situation, if you are bunkering down or evacuating, there are a few additional things to plan for.

If your baby has any medications make sure that you have at least 1-week supply, you may also want to have some infant paracetamol or similar in your supply kit.

Think about how you will be able to stay close to your baby during an emergency event, baby wearing is a great option in this situation if you have a sling or baby carrier.

It provides your baby with a safe and comforting way of being carried, frees up your hands and makes it easier to move around.

Queensland Government provide advice on how to safely use baby slings - you can access the [T.I.C.K.S guidelines here](#).



Think about where your baby can sleep (again baby wearing is a great option), having their buggy with you if there is space is also a good option as it will also give you somewhere to keep the supplies close by and can be used as a change table.

If there isn't space for the buggy, for example if you are bunkering down in a safe room at home, or if you are in a busy cyclone shelter or evacuation centre, you will also get tired and need to sleep, so keeping your baby in a sling or carrier allows both you and your baby to rest safely. Ideally having both a buggy and a sling/carrier provides you with options depending on the circumstances you find yourself in.

4

emergency planning with a newborn

Make sure you have easy access to a good supply of clean nappies and wipes and somewhere to put the dirty nappies where they won't create a stink! A sealed plastic box is a good option. Be sure to store any used nappies away from feeding supplies.

Changing nappies or preparing formula is much more challenging in the dark! Make sure that you have a battery powered lantern and/or head-torch in your baby kit that remains with the kit so it's always available and lets you keep your hands free. Keeping them with your baby kit means that you won't need to go searching for one in the middle of the night when your baby is wanting a feed or to be changed. Be sure to have a supply of batteries close by too.



Feeding your baby during an emergency situation can be challenging, the next four sections provide advice for the different ways of feeding.

Remember that your baby's gut is particularly sensitive to germs, pathogens or other contaminants that may be in the environment during or after an emergency event. Do your best to maintain a high standard of hygiene when preparing and feeding your baby. If you don't have access to hot water and your usual cleaning supplies, you will need to pay attention to what is in the immediate vicinity (eg dirt, water, dust etc), pay special attention to any surfaces you place equipment on, and of course wash or sanitise your hands before touching anything that will be in contact with your baby's mouth.

If you are concerned about whether your baby is feeding ok, monitor her/his nappy outputs for any changes from what you would normally expect, both in terms of the weight of wet nappies, and the colour, texture and smell of stools. This can give you an indication of whether your baby is getting enough milk, or if they are having any digestive issues such as an upset tummy.

5

breastFed babies

One of the many advantages of breastfeeding is that it is the ultimate in fast food! You don't need any supplies to breastfeed and it's available wherever and whenever it's needed, and it has its own built in antibacterial properties. If you've been in contact with any dirty or contaminated water, or dust etc, be sure to give your breasts a wash or wipe before feeding your baby. If it's hot and you are perspiring you should also wipe off any perspiration as the salty taste can put your baby off feeding.

During an emergency your baby may change their feeding habits, this is entirely normal, so it is important to monitor their behaviour and respond accordingly. They might want to feed more than usual as this is a great way to help regulate their central nervous system and help them feel safe. However it's also possible that they won't want to feed as much which could lead to engorged breasts and blocked ducts. Hand expressing is a really good skill to have for this reason and you can find information on this in the [expressed breastmilk fed babies](#) section of this e-book.

If you are experiencing any challenges with breastfeeding, or you are concerned about breastfeeding during an emergency situation it's a good idea to seek support as soon as possible, don't wait until there is an emergency on the horizon. You can contact the Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline on 1800 686 268, or a local International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) for advice.



Breastfeeding in emergencies

Breastfeeding emergency kit

Click on the buttons to download these additional great resources from the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)

6

expressed breastmilk Fed babies

If you are using an electric breast pump to express breastmilk you will need to think about what will happen if you lose access to power and clean water (for washing the equipment). After Cyclone Debbie in 2017, some affected areas were without electricity for 2 weeks.

Some pumps can also be battery operated. If you have one of those make sure you have a good supply of replacement batteries, or you may be able to access a generator.

A manual pump and hand expressing are alternatives if you cannot use your usual pump.

Some expressing mums have a store of frozen breastmilk in the freezer.

It can be upsetting at the thought of losing it should the power go out. Check out the link below on blackouts & frozen breastmilk. If your baby relies on access to frozen breastmilk you may want to consider getting a generator if you don't already have one.

A handy way of knowing if your frozen breastmilk has defrosted and refrozen is to put a small plastic cup or bottle half filled with water in the freezer. When it has frozen place a coin on top of the frozen water. If the freezer loses power and the water has defrosted then frozen again you will see that the coin has sunk. This suggests that the frozen milk may not be safe to use.

The ABA have great resources for expressing breastmilk, along with guidance on expressed breastmilk during an emergency and how to hand express should you need to. Click on the buttons below to access these great resources.

You could also make an appointment with a local IBCLC to show you how to hand express and give any other advice you might find helpful.

[Expressed breastmilk factsheet](#)

[Expressed milk emergency kit](#)

[Blackouts & frozen breastmilk](#)

[Hand expressing factsheet](#)



Click on the buttons to download these additional great resources from the ABA.

7

Formula Fed babies

If you are feeding your baby formula milk then there are a number of things you will need to consider and plan for. We recommend preparing an emergency kit for feeding your baby in advance of the start of the cyclone season, or as early as possible.

As you will already know, keeping the bottles and other equipment clean is very important for the health of your baby, and doing this in an emergency situation, where you may have limited supply of clean water, and/or be unable to boil water or easily clean the equipment, can present some challenges.

Women have shared their stories about how they weren't prepared and were forced to wash their baby's bottle in the toilet sink of the evacuation centre. This is not something we need to think about when we have ready access to power and clean water and can prepare a bottle whenever we need it. There are some additional measures required when cleaning infant feeding equipment that you should familiarise yourself with. Follow [this link](#) to access useful guidance from the American CDC.

Think about how many bottles your baby goes through in a normal 24hr period, then factor in that they may want to feed more frequently as a result of the change in their normal routine, then multiply that by how many days contingency you want to plan for. You should ideally plan for at least 3 days supply. You'll be surprised just how much it all adds up to! For a baby that feeds every 2-3 hours you will need 24-30 bottles for 3 days.

You should purchase enough bottles well in advance (in case the shops run out), sterilise them and put them separately in ziplock bags so that you know they are clean and ready to use.

Also purchase bottled spring water specifically for the purpose of making the milk if you will have no way of boiling water to make up formula. Note that it is important to use spring water, and not mineral water. Mineral water contains minerals that are also present in the formula, so you can overload your baby's kidneys if they receive too many minerals.

The ABA provides some great resources on formula feeding, and there is specific guidance on how to prepare for an emergency and what to include in an emergency kit. Click on the buttons below.



Formula feeding factsheet

Formula emergency kit

8

cup Fed babies

If you don't have access to clean, hot water to properly clean bottles, or you only have one pre-sterilised bottle left in your supplies, and you are either exclusively expressing breastmilk or formula feeding, it is possible to feed your baby from a cup. Baby's of any age can be cup fed.

Bottles and teats are difficult to clean properly, especially if you don't have access to detergent, hot water and proper cleaning equipment, whereas cups are much easier to clean in an emergency situation.



You can also use a small glass or measuring cup like in the image, wash it and dry it well each time.

Small disposable plastic or paper cups are ideal for this, they don't take up much space and can be stored in a clean, sealed container, use them once then throw them away.

If you are using formula, it is important that you measure the water and formula accurately. If you don't have a measuring cup, use your last clean bottle to measure the volume of water, then pour the water into a cup and put the lid back on the bottle to keep it clean.

Its important that you use something clean to mix in the formula (you can't shake it like you would a bottle) and remember to always add the formula to the water, and not the other way around, just as you would if you were using a bottle.

Throw away any unused formula, being in a cup means you cannot guarantee it remains clean.

As part of your emergency preparation it is a good idea to practice cup feeding at home so that it is not a new experience for you or your baby during an emergency.

Cup feeding factsheet

Here is a link to a helpful factsheet from the American CDC on cup feeding in an emergency.

Women often feel hotter during pregnancy because of the increased blood volume in the body, so think about how you can plan to try and keep cool, especially if there is a power cut and you can't use aircon or fans. Women we spoke to who were pregnant or had a newborn during cyclone Debbie found that the heat and humidity in the days following the cyclone were particularly challenging.

Sandwich bags of frozen water, or ice packs will stay frozen for 24-48 hours without power (depending on the type of freezer you have - chest freezers tend to stay cold longer because the cold air stays inside the freezer when you open the door) and can help to alleviate thermal stress, solid blocks of ice will last longer than ice cubes. Minimising the time the freezer door is open will help keep things frozen for longer.

There are battery operated fans available, and of course the old fashioned handheld fans still do the same job.

Drink lots of water to stay hydrated. Coconut water is also a great natural way to keep hydrated as it contains salts and minerals that your body needs. You can also freeze a few cartons of coconut water, or bottles of water, so that you have access to a cold, refreshing drink when you need it.

Some women are cautious of drinking lots of water when they are experiencing fluid retention (oedema), but instead of making it worse, it can actually be helpful. Heat can increase oedema, causing your legs or feet to swell more than usual, along with staying hydrated you can reduce the impact of oedema by putting your feet up, soaking them in cool water, avoiding tight footwear and avoiding standing for long periods.

Young babies can't self regulate their body temperature in the same way you do, so it is important to monitor their temperature regularly to make sure they are not too hot or too cold.

Using ice packs wrapped in thin cloth can be a great relief, hold it where the veins are close to the surface, such as on your feet, wrists, back of the neck or forehead. For your baby, have the icepack by their side but not directly in contact with their skin. Having a spray bottle of water to mist yourself and your baby can also help, as well as a wet muslin, or other thin material draped over your baby's body. Be sure to keep your baby's airways clear and that any material can't fall across their face.



keep calm and carry on...Yeah, right!

A lot of the advice you will find will include things like “stay calm”, indeed it is the first bit of advice in the section about preparing to birth!

Realistically, if you're sitting in the middle of a cyclone, or surrounded by bushfires or floods, chances are you will be anything but calm, and it's pretty rare for someone to feel calm just because someone tells them to! Let's just acknowledge that keeping calm during a stressful and potentially dangerous situation is unrealistic.

The best you can do is be prepared, have a plan that allows for different scenarios and where possible, make sure someone is with you to help and knows what the plan is.

It's ok and normal to be anxious or frightened, and it is worthwhile knowing that whatever you are feeling will transfer to your unborn or newborn baby, and that is ok too. Your unborn baby is directly wired into your body, so when you are stressed, or scared, or anxious, the chemicals that your body automatically releases to prepare your body for the situation (you may know this as flight, fight or freeze), will also be released to your baby through the placenta. This is a naturally occurring process that is designed to help prepare your baby for whatever the outside world has in store for them.

Regardless of where you are in your pregnancy when experiencing a major weather event, research shows that there can be a direct impact on you and your baby, including increased likelihood of lower birth weight, stillbirth, preterm birth and postnatal depression, as well as the potential for long-term developmental impacts on your baby.

There are however positive steps that you can take to help yourself and your baby during and after the emergency event. The next section provides some proven pre and perinatal somatic psychology tools that can help to minimise any negative long term impacts of the stressful situation.



processing the experience

Short-term stress isn't something to be concerned about, indeed developing a healthy nervous system relies on exposure to the range of emotions that humans can experience. However, long-term exposure to stress, including not resolving any held trauma, can result in a dysregulated nervous system in yourself and in your baby and can have long-lasting and profound effects.

Research shows that babies that were exposed to natural disasters while in-utero can experience a range of physical, cognitive and emotional developmental challenges. Those same evolutionary tools that are meant to help prepare our babies for the dangers of the outside world can result in long-term behavioural, emotional and social challenges. So if you or your baby are exposed to a particularly stressful event that you found traumatic, it is important to try and resolve your trauma, and to help your baby to do the same.

Do everything you reasonably can to decrease your stress levels when the situation allows, seek help, find time to relax when you can. You will already know what helps you feel relaxed, and what works for one person may not work for another. When the situation allows for it, take some time to settle your nervous system in whatever way works for you.

Your baby, whether still in the womb or a newborn, is a sensing, feeling, sentient being, capable of feeling a wide range of emotions and responsive to all sorts of stimuli, either directly through touch, sounds, light, and movement, or indirectly through the cocktail of hormones the baby receives from you. Knowing this means you can directly influence how they experience the emergency situation and the period afterwards.

In the lead up to, during, and in the aftermath of the emergency, it will be easy for you to be distracted, but it is important that you take some time to focus on your baby. Communicate with your baby, talk to her or him, explain what happened or is happening, how it made you feel, let her or him know that what happened was scary but that it's over now and everything is going to be ok. Empathise with them and how they might have felt while the emergency was happening. Tell her or him how you are feeling and be curious as to what the experience was like for them. This can be healing for both yourself and your baby.



processing the experience

Even though your baby can't answer you verbally, be assured that they will understand the intent of what you are saying and will be comforted by it. Expectant mums have reported that their babies respond by increased movements inside the womb. Mums of newborns can observe a range of emotions in their babies, from becoming relaxed, or lethargic, or showing signs of anger or hearing a different tone to their crying. These are all indications that your baby is responding and processing their feelings.

Here's an example of how you can talk to your baby.

"oh wow, when that big bang happened it made me jump, I was really scared! I bet it made you jump too didn't it? How did it make you feel? Were you scared too? You know what though, even though that was scary its all over now, we are all safe and things will get back to normal soon."

Maintain the communication during the cleanup process, which can also be a stressful and exhausting experience for you and your baby. Use this as an opportunity to maintain a regular dialogue with your baby. The mere fact that you are talking to her/him in a calming, loving and protective way will make a huge difference in counteracting any negative impacts of the affects of the stress and other challenging emotions that your baby may be feeling.



For your newborn baby, provide her or him with cues that they are safe and that you are with them and present for them. When you are feeding them, make eye contact, talk gently to her/him and let them know that you are keeping them safe. The time it takes to integrate the experience will vary from baby to baby, and also be influenced by how well you are able to process your own feelings. Be patient, there is no time limit to the healing process.

processing the experience

You may find that following the emergency situation you and/or your baby react to certain situations differently, for example reacting to loud noises, or being emotionally affected by a particular smell or sound. This can become apparent immediately following the event, or could be something that affects you or your baby a long time afterwards. These are indications that your nervous system is being activated by something that triggers a somatic memory that the body is holding onto and suggests that there is still some unresolved trauma to process. You may find it helpful to seek professional help, including support from a pre and perinatal somatic sciences therapist.

The Queensland Government provide some great information and resources to help children and families build emotional resilience to cope with and recover from natural disasters, including specific information for families in pregnancy and early parenthood, and families with babies and young children - [here is the link to the website](#).

Complementary therapies can also be great to help reduce stress both in yourself and your baby and help your baby feel safe and nurtured. Learning how to massage your baby can be a fantastic skill to have.

If you are pregnant you could rub your belly giving baby his or her first massage (yes they can feel it through your uterus, especially nearer to your due date). Whilst doing this you could talk, sing, play relaxing or classical music or even read a book to your baby.

If you have a newborn, playing with your baby's feet can provide many benefits, you can gently massage the bottoms, not applying too much pressure as the bones haven't hardened yet.

KD1 is a fantastic acupressure point and is great for calming (it works on adults too!).

It's found on the bottom of the foot, in the middle just below the ball of the foot and can be used on it's own or when massaging baby's feet.



Although the focus of this e-book is on pregnancy and young babies, we know that parents with older babies and toddlers that experienced significant weather events found that caring for their children was challenging, especially if they were pregnant or also had a young baby to care for. As we mentioned previously, pregnant women described how they were so focused on making sure their children were ok that they forgot to eat or drink, some even fainted.

Think about what non-perishable food your infant or toddler will be able to eat for a few days. Toddlers can get bored very easily, especially if you lose power. Think about what kind of toys or games you can have available.

If you are staying at home, maybe even try and make a game of preparing for an emergency by building a 'camp' in a safe part of the house and let them help get it ready.

Many children are scared of the dark, and after a major event there is a good chance of there being a power outage which could last for several days, or even weeks. If you don't have a generator this will mean that a lot of the time the house will be dark. Have a selection of battery powered lamps and torches available in different parts of the house, you can even use battery powered fairy lights to make for a more fun but effective way of providing light. Remember, you will need lots of batteries in your emergency kit!

The ABA has some great advice on what to pack in your emergency kit for toddlers, click on the link.

[Toddler emergency kit](#)

Younger children process their experiences in different ways to babies and adults. Babies experience what is going on but they don't have the cognitive ability to make sense of it, these early experiences are remembered somatically in their body, and can form very powerful implicit memories.

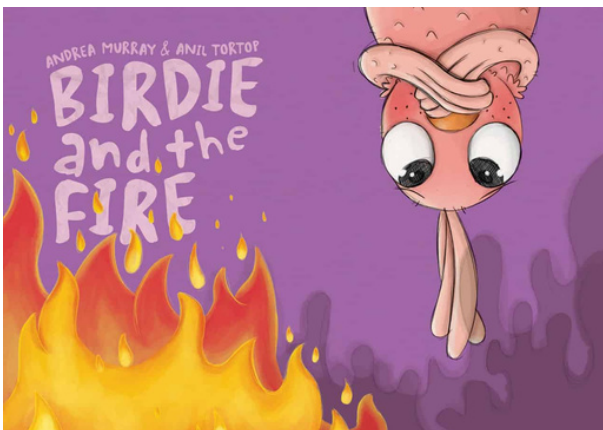
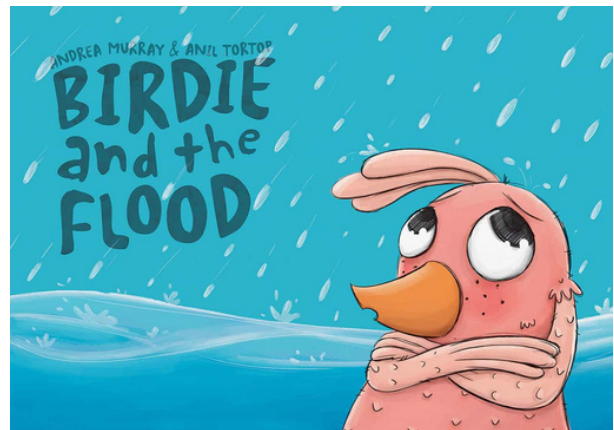
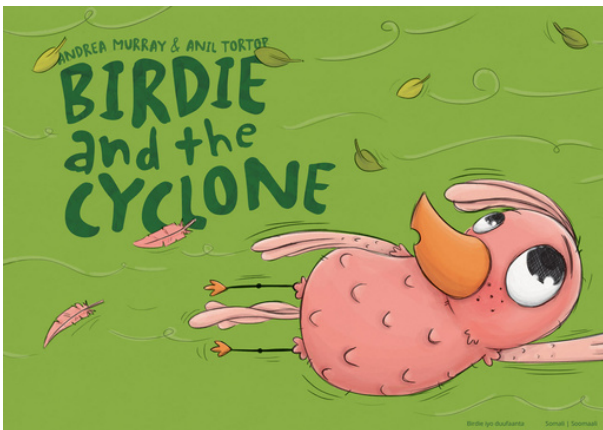
Older infants and toddlers may understand some of what is going on, but they may not be able to understand how they are feeling, or know how to process their emotions during or after the event. All of the advice in the previous section is equally as valid for helping your children integrate their experiences in a healthy way.

The Whitsunday Council have developed a kids disaster preparedness activity book which is great to help your toddler prepare for any disasters. Access [Turbine and Friends activity book and video](#).

Stories can be a great way of helping young children to make sense of their experiences, and provide a safe and validating way for them to explore their feelings with you.

There is a wonderful range of Birdie children's books available from Children's Health Queensland. The books are written based on research into how children are impacted by natural disasters and are aimed at helping them to understand and question what they experienced in a safe and constructive way.

There are several books in the series, including Birdie and the Cyclone, Birdie and the Flood, Birdie and the Fire, Birdie and the Storm and Birdie and the Shelter.



You can access the online versions of the books by clicking on the image, or purchase hard copies via the link in the button below. You may also be able to borrow them from our local Whitsundays libraries.

Birdie's tree storybooks

mumabuba

pregnancy & baby wellness centre

The Whitsundays Centre of Excellence in fertility, pregnancy, birth and baby wellness, providing continuity of care and tailored support for whatever you need on your pregnancy journey.



Jo Lloyd
founder of mumabuba

I am a Whitsundays local, mum of two wonderful daughters and a gorgeous little boy, a wife, and local business owner.

I have dedicated my professional life to supporting mums and their babies with specialist complementary care, including fertility support, pregnancy care, positive birth preparation, postnatal care, breastfeeding support and prenatal and perinatal somatic sciences.

I have been supporting mums and babies through my business since 2004, originally in the UK and in Australia since 2009.

My own personal experiences with fertility, pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding have shaped the way I support others.

helping you achieve a positive birth and parenting experience
www.mumabuba.com.au