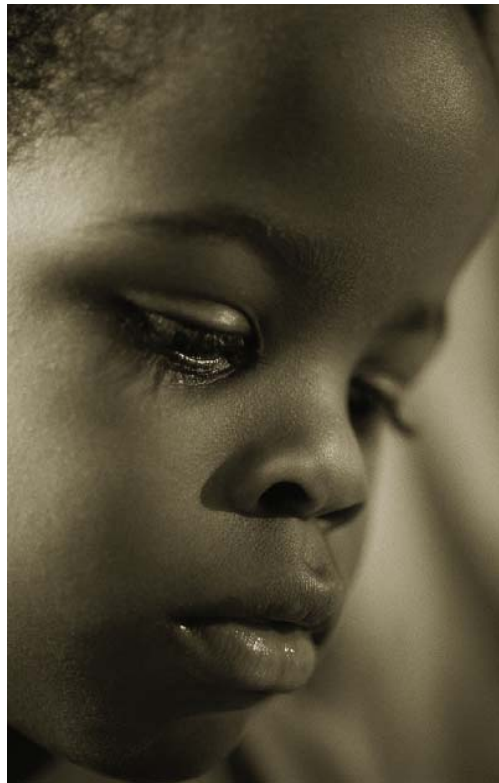


**How do I know if my children need more help than I can provide? Where would I go for help?**

- The anniversary of Hurricane Katrina may lead to a range of upsetting but “normal” reactions
- If your children continue to be upset for several days—or if they are worried—or having trouble in school, at home, or with friends—then it is a good idea to speak with someone outside the family for advice
- Helpful people to turn to for advice may be your child’s teacher or school counselor, pediatrician, or a mental health professional



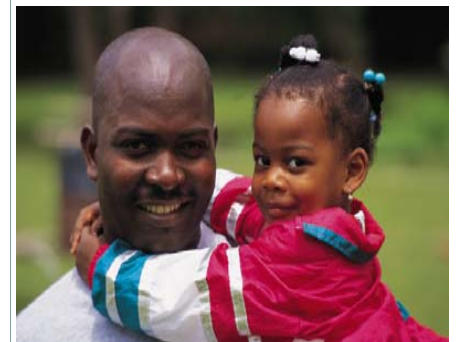
**In this brochure, we try to answer questions and concerns that parents may have about the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina and provide advice about how parents can support their children—and themselves- during this difficult time.**

Adapted by Joy D. Osofsky, Ph.D. and Howard J. Osofsky, M.D., Ph.D. from the brochure developed by New York Department of Education For Project Liberty

***The  
Anniversary of  
Hurricane  
Katrina:  
Parents’ Guide  
for Talking to  
Their Children***

**Louisiana State University  
Health Sciences Center,  
Department of Psychiatry  
and Louisiana Rural  
Trauma Services Center**

**Louisiana Spirit**



**HELP LINE (504) 568-8772**

# At the time of the anniversary, what reactions should we expect to see in our children?



Most children will be resilient and doing fine. Some may be upset at the time of the anniversary -

1. They may experience similar feelings to those after the hurricane such as feeling unsafe
2. They may think about the hurricane and want to talk about it
3. Some children directly affected who appear to be "back to normal" may still be feeling scared, anxious, angry, or sad
4. Children do not always show their feelings directly so pay attention to signs of concern or distress

- **Children with a history of loss or trauma** may be especially vulnerable around the anniversary. They may need more support.
- **News stories** and even events around the anniversary may increase children's reactions.
- **Television viewing** - Consider limiting the amount of TV viewing, especially for younger children. Try to watch television with older children or adolescents and talk to them about what they are seeing and how it makes them feel.
- **Signs of distress to look for include:**
  1. **depressed or irritable mood**
  2. **difficult behaviors, aggression**
  3. **problems with attention or behavior**
  4. **difficulty getting along with friends**
  5. **becoming socially isolated or withdrawn**
  6. **difficulties with school work**
  7. **physical complaints, stomachaches, headaches**
  8. **sleep problems**
  9. **for younger children, cling behaviors**
  10. **for older children or adolescents, risk taking behavior (i.e., drugs, alcohol)**

Should my child participate in an anniversary event?

- **Ask children if they want to participate; let them choose**
- **Adults should try not to tell children what they should feel**  
**Ask them how they are feeling and listen to them**
- **Children and adults will express their needs in different ways**
- **Help your children participate in ways to help them be comfortable**
- **Find ways to reassure your children, i.e., talk about a plan or how you will keep them safe**

