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## **Hurricane Readiness Includes Trauma Prevention *National Center Offers Tips and Tools for Parents***

DURHAM, NC (August 13, 2004) As Hurricane Charley and Tropical Storm Bonnie threaten the East Coast, many families are being dislocated from their homes, from each other, and from vital support networks.

The dislocation, threat to safety, and damage to homes wrought by such storms can be traumatic for children and adults. The National Center for Child Traumatic Stress (NCCTS) Terrorism and Disaster Branch's rapid response unit is poised to act where needed.

The NCCTS, based out of the Duke University Medical Center and the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute, also has prepared tips and tools to help families with disaster preparedness.

"Just as governments and businesses develop risk assessment and preparedness plans, families can assess their risk based on where they live. It is important for families to develop a safety plan that matches specific risks with appropriate preparedness and response," said Alan Steinberg, PhD, associate director of NCCTS at UCLA and advisor to the NCCTS Terrorism and Disaster Branch.

NCCTS designed a Family Preparedness Guide and Wallet Card to help ensure that families are "on the same page" when it comes to whom to call and where to meet in the event of an emergency. The resources include important telephone numbers and websites for emergency information. The Family Preparedness Guide and Wallet Card are available at [www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org).

Parents also should talk with their children. "Find out what your children are worried about," said John Fairbank, PhD, co-director of the NCCTS for Duke University. "Clarifications to correct misunderstanding and confusion can be reassuring for children. For example, young children may need to know that big storms can be dangerous but that adults have experience preparing for them."

Any child exposed to a traumatic event is at risk of developing posttraumatic stress. In addition to violent storms, common sources of child trauma include abuse and neglect, violence in neighborhoods, schools, and homes, and serious illnesses and injuries. The federal government established the National Child Traumatic Stress Network to improve the quality, effectiveness, and availability of therapeutic services to traumatized children and adolescents. The Network includes 54 sites.

***Members of the media may contact Patrick Cody for assistance at 202-965-0580 or Dr. Robert Franks, director of the National Resource Center for Child Traumatic Stress, at 919-812-1852. Dr. Fairbank may be reached at 919-682-1552.***

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