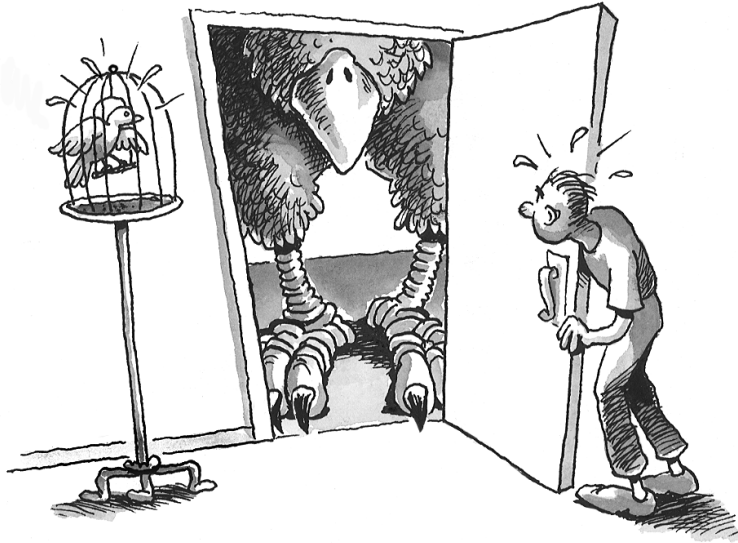




Plan for the Unexpected



Even the most organized families and parents encounter surprises and emergencies that throw a monkey wrench into their plans. Baby sitters get sick, keys get lost and you run out of peanut butter just when your 8-year-old agreed to prepare sandwiches for the next day's lunches. The key to dealing with unexpected events is to plan ahead.

- **Know who you can rely on.**
- **Create backup systems.**
- **Train your children to solve problems on their own.**
- **Organize your household so that needed resources and supplies are available and easy to find.**

Keep a Home Information List

Your household should have a list of important names and numbers near the phone. The list should be in large clear print so it's legible for young children and older adults. Make notes about which friends, neighbors and relatives live nearby. Indicate

which ones are available during different times of the day and which have cars. Show children, other adults and baby sitters where the list is posted and ask that they always return it to the same place. The list should include names, addresses and phone numbers for:

- **parents' places of employment.**
- **grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and other relatives who can help.**
- **friends and neighbors.**
- **doctors.**
- **veterinarians.**
- **the fire department.**
- **the police department.**
- **poison control.**

Baby Sitter Backups

Make a separate list of backup baby sitters and child care providers. Exchange phone numbers with other parents who have children the same age as yours. Keep the list handy so you don't have to search for it at the last minute.

Brainstorm Potential Problems

Train older children to solve problems without you. Give them alternatives to calling you at work. For example, discuss what they should do if the dog runs away and they're not supposed to leave the house. Ask a trusted neighbor or friend to act as a backup in emergencies. Leave an extra key with the neighbor.

Handle Emergencies Calmly

Real emergencies do occur. If your child calls with a critical situation, stay calm. Get as much information as you can. Then help the child figure out who else to call and what to do.

Keep Essentials on Hand

It may be impossible to keep enough peanut butter in the house at all times. However, you can keep a petty cash fund in a kitchen drawer for your children to use when they run out of essential items. Keep your refrigerator and freezer stocked with quickie meals and easy-to-prepare snacks in case you get caught in traffic and can't make it home in time to make dinner. Make sure your medicine chest or first aid kit includes:

- **cotton**
- **bandages**
- **a thermometer**
- **hydrogen peroxide**
- **burn ointment**
- **antibacterial ointment**
- **adhesive tape**
- **sunscreen**
- **syrup of ipecac**
- **pain relievers for children**
- **a heating pad**