

A COLORING BOOK

# AFTER THE TORNADO

FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS OR HELPERS



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# A WORD TO THE PARENT OR HELPER

This Little Coloring-Reading Book is meant to be a help to children and their parents or helpers after they have had to deal with the effects of a tornado on their lives and homes. Part of it is just for the parents or helpers to read. The rest is for both the child and the parent or helper to read and work through together. It contains information which has been found to be helpful and true in other towns and much of it was gathered by the National Institute of Mental Health.

## HOW TO USE THIS COLORING BOOK

1. Parents and/or helper read **Just for the Parent** before your work through the coloring book with your child.
2. After reading **Just for the Parent** help the child do the coloring and other things suggested in the book. The directions tell what things the parent or helper should read out loud, what things the child should do to have the most fun and to make the best use of the book.
3. Once the inside of the coloring book is finished, the parent/helper and the child can color the cover together.



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Helper's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY</b> <b>EXTENSION</b> <b>4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT</b></p>	<p>These materials were originally printed by the North Carolina Division of Mental Health, mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services under grant #1 H07MH000016;-01 from The National Institute of Mental Health. North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service</p>
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# Just for the Parent

Information parents or helpers should read  
before starting this book with a child.

*This information has been found to be useful to parents and helpers in answering questions by children and in helping them use and enjoy the materials presented in this book.*

## What have other people felt and experienced when they were going through the same thing?

Although your main concerns may be for your children, parents themselves should take good care of themselves after the tornado disaster. They should realize they are having to deal with their own worries as well as those of their children, and that there are many normal reactions to a disaster in our lives. At first, people just go through doing whatever has to be done, and feel sort of numb. They may begin to feel that making any decision is hard, and that simple things get confusing at times. This usually happens in the first few weeks after the disaster. People sometimes feel helpless and unprotected...as if they can't count on any safety or security. Others feel anger and resentment at having so many losses while some may even feel guilty that they have fewer losses than their neighbors or relatives.

## What can you as an adult do to help yourselves and the family?

- I. Recognize that you are under high stress and that you must take extra good care of yourselves at this time, even if it means putting off some work to be done. You can't continue to help with the work if you get physically sick or emotionally exhausted. Do things for each other which may help to lower the stress you may have to deal with.
- II. To help lower the stress for each other and the family:
  - A. When the weather gets bad again, try to plan something as pleasant as possible. You might pop some popcorn or play a table game with the children. Do something enjoyable with friends.

- B. Plan into your routine some “time off” from work and repairs. Be sure you take time for an outing, hobby, or going to the movies. Take a day away to visit friends and relatives. This is important for your health, as it lowers your stress. In the long run, you will probably feel less tired and be able to accomplish more than just working at repairs and chores related to the disaster without a break.
- C. Couples need to be very careful not to blame each other for anything that happened and try very hard not to take stress out on each other. If your husband or wife is especially irritable and contrary with you, that might be a good time to take some time out to say “We need some rest” and to take a break from the work.
- D. Plan some physical activities that are not directly related to the disaster. You may find that walking, running or other sports will leave you feeling less tired because they take your mind off the stress and worry.
- E. Don’t ignore your needs for rest, warm food and general needs for good health during this time. Working continually under physical and emotional stress will make you more likely to get sick. If you are sick, you cannot be a help to the family or others. Plan a good, healthy, but reasonable work schedule, so you will not be overcome by stress or illness. The work will still be there after you rest or take a break. If you push yourself until you are physically ill, you won’t be able to continue with the work to be done.
- F. Make your family plans for dealing with any future emergency. This can make you feel more peace of mind. Read the information about emergency drills and plan one for your family for the future.
- G. Also, try to talk about some of the good things you saw happen after the disaster. How people helped each other or how the town drew together and how people shared.
- H. Talk about your feelings... anger, fears, anxiety, with each other. Some people think this makes things worse...but the feelings are still there, and talking about them usually helps to make them less strong and harmful to us.



## *How long can you expect these feelings to go on? What is normal and when should we try to get help from the mental health center or elsewhere?*

This is different for everyone. Certainly everybody feels overwhelmed, confused and fearful at some time during the disaster. After some initial “doing what has to be done” may come days of some numbness and confusion. Most people are still able to go through their actions, doing what needs to be done, even though they

may be exhausted, worried, and sad. You could expect some or all of these feelings during the first few weeks and months.

Then confusion and anger may follow along with the “red tape” and effort necessary to try to rebuild homes and businesses. In addition, some people have lost friends or relatives and

have to deal with that grief and loss.

During the first year after a disaster many people report they feel sad or nervous whenever a birthday, bad weather, or other things remind them of things in their life that have changed or have been lost. That grief is natural and part of the process of healing.

## *When should an adult have special help?*

Adults need special help if they are unable to begin to go back to at least some parts of their normal routine. If they continue to be confused, completely

helpless, or constantly crying for days, even weeks after the disaster, most people would recognize that this person needs special help. If in doubt, a phone

call to your doctor or mental health center should be the first step in deciding whether they need special help.

## *How do children show their worries and fears after a disaster and what should parents and helping adults do for them?*

### **THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD (1-5).**

Children this age may go backwards somewhat in their skills...they may start losing bowel or bladder control, wetting the bed, and clinging to you when they seemed more independent before. They may eat lots more or lots less than before. Some children go back to thumb-sucking and “baby talk” or stuttering. They may show special fears of the weather or rain or wind.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PRESCHOOL CHILD:**

Encourage them to talk about their worries or fears, or what has happened as much as they want to. Give them as much

attention and physical closeness (hugs, holding hands) as you can. Try to have a very quiet and comforting bedtime routine. Do something quiet and soothing rather than playing a noisy game. Try to get back to the routines of your family as soon as possible. This means, unless your child is violently afraid, they should return to their own bed...you might be better off moving a cot into their room for a while if they need you there than having to deal with moving them out of your bed later when things are more back to normal.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD (5-11).** These children may show their discomfort by doing things that make it hard for you to give them more affection unless you realize that they are to be expected. They may whine, cling, be irritable, get into fights, and complain or act more “babyish” or lose interest in school.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR AGES 5-11.** Their routine needs to get back to normal as soon as possible. They need to talk about their feelings and need more physical affection than usual. They need to feel safe by discussing plans for any future emergency, and to feel they are helping by being involved in some structured responsibilities that are not heavy chores. You may have to be a little more lax in expecting them to show the same interest and concentration in school.



### *When Should A Child Have Special Help?*

The length of time a child shows problems or difficulties after a disaster is different for every child. If a child is unable to go back into at least some part of

their normal routine and shows problems which are severe for weeks after a disaster, most people would feel that this child needs special help. If in doubt, a

phone call to your doctor or mental health center should be the first step in deciding whether they need special help!

### **THE PREADOLESCENT AND ADOLESCENT YOUNGSTER (11-18).**

Sometimes we expect these children to act more like adults. Their behavior and reactions will be on some levels more like younger children and on other levels more like your own. They may show disturbances in their sleep, complain about physical illnesses (headaches, stomachaches), be irritable or rebellious, even fighting and other attention-getting behavior at home and school. They may either seem tired and listless or overactive. They may show a lack of interest in school, activities, and peers.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR HELP:** Although they may deny problems and worries, they need to talk about them with parents and with peers. Parents can give examples by talking about the way it is normal to feel these worries. It is extremely important for these youths to begin working and going to school within their regular routine. If possible, all social activities, sports, etc., should be resumed and encouraged to give this normal structure to their life. If possible, they should be involved in planning for any future emergency in the family or community.

*Using this coloring book to talk to your child and play with them in ways that will help them talk about and deal with the feelings about the tornado.*

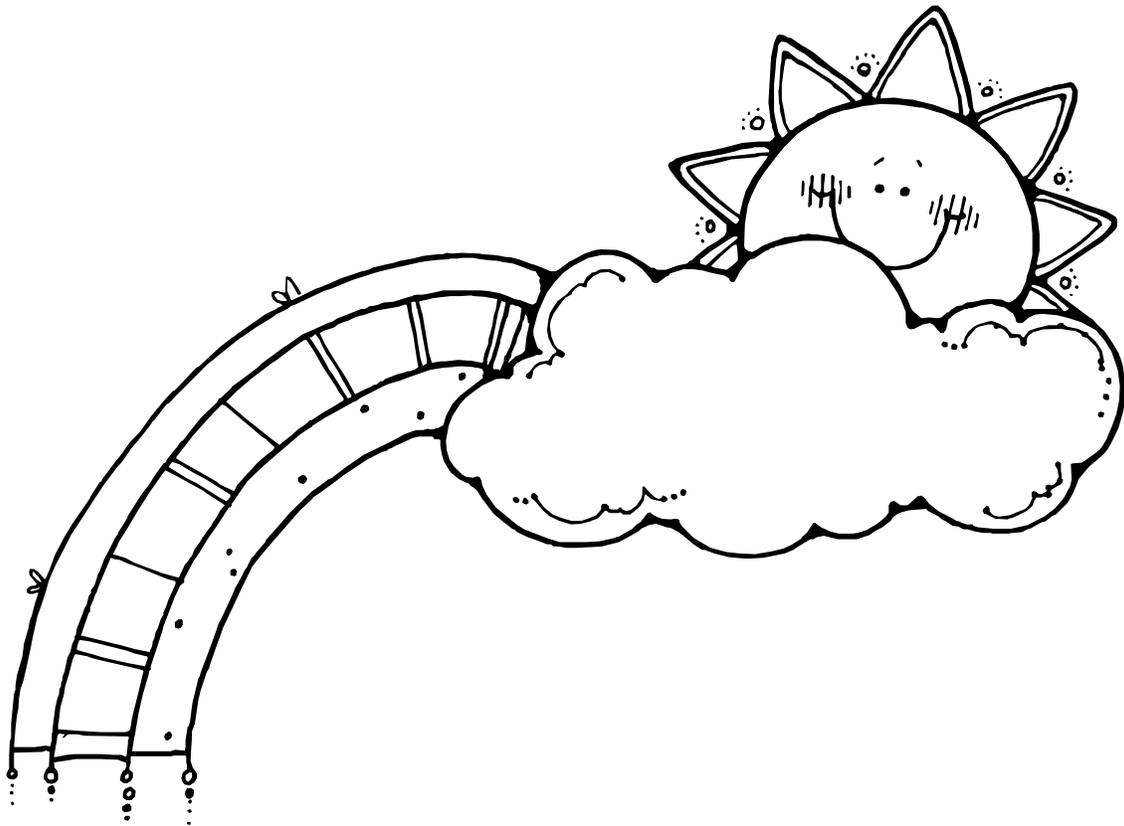
Everyone seems to agree that talking with your child about the tornado and its effects is a good thing. Many people are not sure of the words they should use. Pages 6 through 22 will help you talk with your child about the tornado in a fun and helpful way. Sometimes a child will talk about all these things without needing such activities, this is also good. Remember that repeating these feelings is important for the child in the beginning to feel that they understand and are safe.

These pages contain some suggested statements for you to make and directions, along with some activities which should help your child begin talking about the tornado.

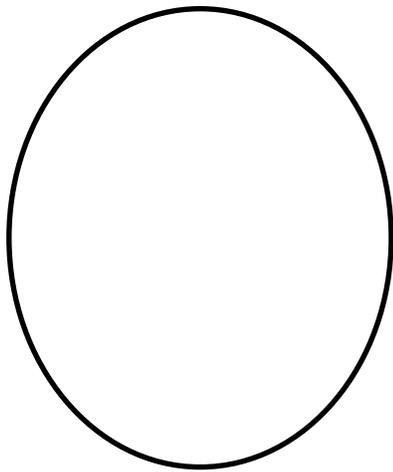
While it is important to have the child talk out and play out his feelings, it is also important to give them a feeling that they are safe, and that they and the people around them will be able to take care of themselves and/or be cared for in other emergencies. This booklet should help to encourage those feelings.



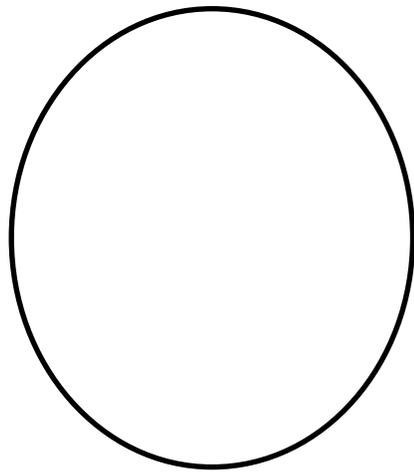
**Parent or Helper Reads:** This is a book we are going to read and color in and work in together about the tornado that went through our town. It will help us talk about some good feelings and some scared feelings, but mostly it will talk about good feelings and be fun to do because we will be doing it together. First, you pick your color crayon you like best, and I will pick mine. OK. Now we'll color a picture about some of the fun things wind does for us...when it gives us good feelings and good things...that's most of the time. Do you want to color the sailboat or the boy flying a kite? I'll color the other one.



*After Coloring the Picture on page 7 and 8, Read:* We couldn't have sailboats or kites if we didn't have wind. Wind helps dry things out like clothes on the line or the ground after it rains. Let's draw a face that shows how you would feel if you had to walk in the wet mud all the time! The wind helps us most of the time. It makes us feel good, and helps us have fun like with the sailboat.



**A Happy Face**



**A Wet Muddy ,  
Unhappy Face**

***Parent or Helper Reads:*** What is a tornado? It is a big wind that can happen in Oklahoma most often March through August. A tornado can happen any time, even in winter. I have lived many years, and this is only the \_\_\_ tornado that I have ever seen or been in.

A tornado happens when some very unusual weather happens that mixes up hot air and cold air in a very special way that makes a kind of very, very strong whirlwind, that looks like a funnel dropping down out of a cloud. It usually makes a big sound like a train or a big roar like a rocket going off on the fourth of July.

We never know when or where a tornado will happen. We may never see it happen again here. Let's color a tornado. It looks sort of like an ice-cream cone, except it is very big. Let's color one, you pick a color and I will color one too.

***While the child colors, parent or helper reads:*** People do not make a tornado, and nothing they do makes a tornado. It just happens in Oklahoma when hot and cold air mix up in an unusual way. We can't stop rain and wind and we can't stop a tornado. But there are lots of things that we can do to keep safe when a tornado comes.

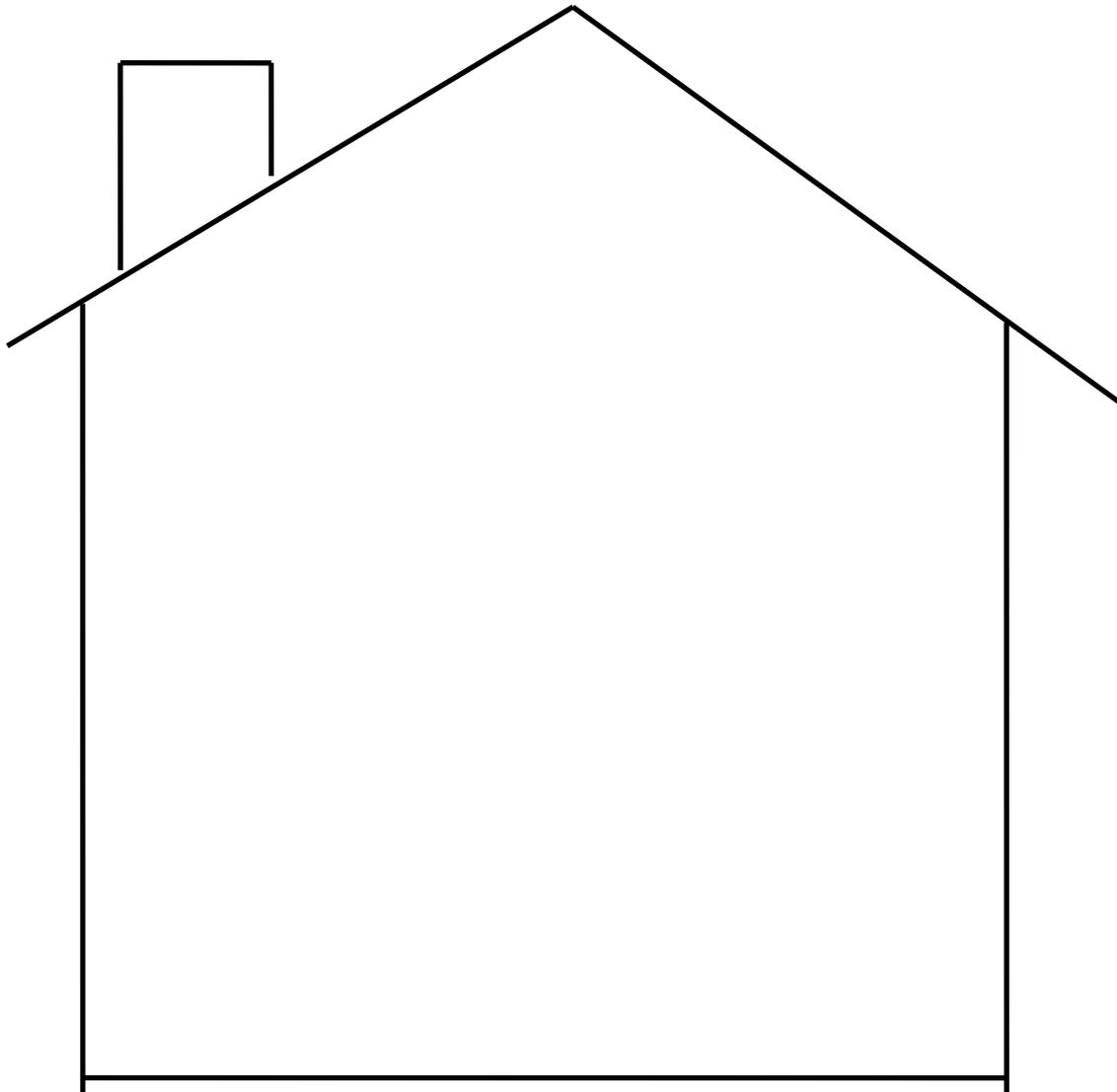
*Parent or Helper Reads:* We usually know when a tornado is coming, because the weathermen on TV and radio will tell us. They have special instruments which tell when and where a tornado might come. If a tornado does come to our town we will go to the basement, middle of the house (like a closet or bathroom), or to a cellar. Being underground is the safest place.

## **Safe Places in a House The Basement or Cellar**

**Safe Places in a House  
Inside a Closet or Bathroom in the Center  
of the House**

**Parent or Helper Reads:** Now let's draw us. Let's draw our family. Where is the best place for us to get to be safe if a tornado came? It is good to know, but we also know that we may never be in another tornado. Remember that I am \_\_\_ years old, and I have only seen/been in \_\_\_\_ tornadoes.

Let's draw where our family would go if there is a tornado so we will feel safe and know just what to do. (Label the names of the family members.) If you were at school or I was at work, the teachers there and the people where I work would know the safest place for us.



**My Family in a safe Place in Our House**

***Parent or Helper Reads:*** If you are in a mobile home, riding in a car, or playing outside when a tornado comes, you should do what this picture shows. Get out of the mobile home or car. Go to the nearest cellar, ditch or low place. Get in the ditch and lie down and cover up your head.

Color the picture. If you live in a mobile home fill out the sentence.

The nearest cellar, ditch or low place near our mobile home where I would go if there is a tornado is:

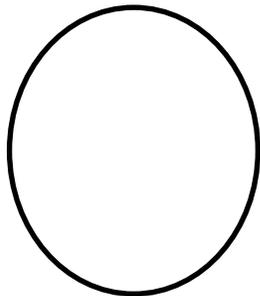
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## **Get out of a Mobile Home**

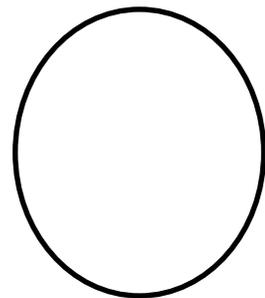
**Parent or Helper Reads:** A tornado can be scary. It is all right to be scared. But a tornado does not last very long. The wind and rain come too, after it is gone, but the tornado itself does not stay long. A tornado can be very strong. It can blow things down, like trees and parts of houses, telephone wires, and cars. Let's color this and draw a scared face at the bottom of the page. And then draw a happy face, for how you would feel when the tornado is gone.

### **What a Tornado sometimes Does**

This town had a tornado that broke trees and tore down telephone wires and blew things out of houses. This house had a TV set blown out of it. Can you find the TV set while you color the picture?



**Scared Face**



**Happy Face**

***Parent or Helper Reads:*** What kinds of things do people do after the tornado? Bigger folks put telephone wires back, and then clean things up and fix the houses and buildings. This is a picture of people fixing things and cleaning up. What can you think of that got cleaned up in your town or at your house? We can draw that in the picture while we color.

**Things  
People Do  
After a  
Tornado**

***Parent or Helper Reads:*** Children can help too. They carry things and help sweep and clean up if they are large enough. Find the broom and the rake in the picture below while you color the picture.

## **Helping to Clean Up After a Tornado**

***Parent or Helper Reads:*** Children also share with other children after the tornado. They might share toys, clothes, food, tools, a car, or even their home. Draw one thing that you might share with someone if your parents asked you to share or draw a picture of one thing you are thankful someone shared with you. If you have trouble with the drawing, or thinking of something, I will help.

The toy or thing I would share.

Or What I am glad someone shared with me.

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Draw a picture of the item above.

**Shared Item**

***Parent or Helper Reads:*** What do children do after the tornado? One thing they do is go back to school. (Have the child connect the dots to get the answer.)

***Parent or Helper Reads:*** People, even adults, sometimes have scared feelings for a while after a tornado. When a big wind or rain comes, sometimes people think it will be a tornado. By listening to the TV and radio, we will know if it is a tornado or a bad storm. Sometimes people have bad dreams at night.

***Ask:***

Have you had a bad dream?

Tell me about it.

That bad dream usually goes away after you tell someone.

A dream is not real and can't hurt you.

***Parent or Helper Reads:*** When kids have scary dreams or feelings, they should tell their parents or other nice adults. They might ask their parents to sit with them awhile in their room while they go to sleep, at least once or twice. They might keep a light on. And they can say to themselves:

*“It is all right to be afraid a little. Everybody is a little afraid of some things. But when a tornado happens, my parents and I know what to do to keep safe.”*

Here is a picture of someone who has been afraid talking to themselves, after they have talked with their parents. Have the grown-up write in what they are saying to themselves (write in the bubble the words of your child or use the words in quotes above).

***Parent or helper reads:*** After a while everyone goes back to school and work. Everything is cleaned up, and things are a lot like they used to be. Some children move to another house or build a new house. Some people may even have to make new friends after the tornado.

We know that no matter what bad things happen, friends and family will care for us and who will make us safe. We also know we can help clean things up and rebuild after a tornado.

Let's write in the names of people who love and care about you and who will be here to help you. They can be relatives, friends, teachers and others.



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