



Supporting Families with Large Community Events

When a large community event, such as a political rally, a parade, or a major sporting event, happens in your community, families may need to prepare together for changes that might occur. Here are some helpful tips:

- ✓ Check on your community's website or social media (note: there may be a website created specifically for this event) and review when preparations will start and what is being proposed leading up to the event, during the event, and right after the event. Specifically:
 - Expected road closures and when these will happen
 - Adjustments to public transportation routes, parking, and getting around
 - Additional police or security measures being proposed and when these will occur
- ✓ Sometimes plans change due to many reasons. Make sure you are signed up for your community's alert system to stay informed.
 - If your children are too young to sign up for the alert systems, make sure the adult caregivers with them are signed up. For more information on these systems visit: <https://www.ready.gov/alerts>
 - Review your family's communication's plan for community or school emergencies. If you don't have a plan, create one in advance of the community event <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/family-preparedness-thinking-ahead>.
- ✓ Discuss as a family what you learned and how this might impact your family.
 - Let your family know about the event and answer their questions
 - Expect potential delays in your usual timing to get around your community
 - Map out new routes to get to school and family activities during this time
 - Discuss if there will be changes for when family members need to leave the house or when they will return home
 - For anxious children, practice the new timing and route ahead of time
 - Remind kids when they should resume the regular routine for getting to activities
- ✓ Discuss with children that additional security and police may be present to keep safe both your community and those attending the event.
 - Discuss that they may see different types of police and military members (e.g., SWAT, national guard) and they may have additional equipment on them or their vehicles.
 - For families and communities who have been through difficult experiences where police were involved, the additional police presence may remind them of those times. If this is the case for your family or children, it may be helpful to acknowledge that any fear or anxiety they are feeling makes sense given this history. Discuss coping strategies to assist with any of their anxiety (e.g., breathing exercises, going with a buddy to the activity, distraction activities like listening to music).
- ✓ Certain events may attract groups who do not share your family values. Let children know they can talk with you if they have any experiences with these groups, especially if this made them upset or feel unsafe. Support them and address their safety concerns. If they experienced or witnessed a safety issue, report these concerns to the appropriate authorities.

In summary, preparing for the changes to your family routine, and temporary new sights and sounds can be helpful to minimize the impact of these events on children.

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