

Special Needs & Accessibility

A preparedness plan isn't complete until it includes everyone in your household.



Mobility & Physical Disabilities

- ✔ Build extra time into every evacuation plan
- ✔ Identify accessible routes in advance — avoid stairs-only exits
- ✔ Assign a buddy who knows how to assist, and when
- ✔ Keep mobility aids charged, labeled, and by the door
- ✔ Plan for a lightweight evacuation chair in multi-story buildings



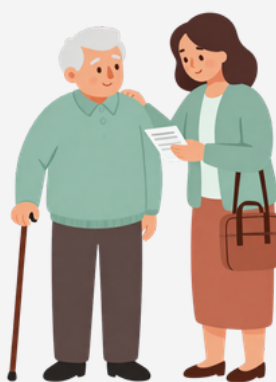
Children

- ✔ Practice the family plan like a game, not a drill
- ✔ Pack a small comfort item in their own bag
- ✔ Teach them the family code phrase and out-of-state contact
- ✔ Pin an ID card with allergies/medical info inside their bag
- ✔ Match the amount of detail to their age — reassure, don't over-explain



Older Adults

- ✔ Keep a full medication list with dosages and physician contact
- ✔ Confirm a transportation plan in advance — don't assume
- ✔ Pack mobility, hearing, and vision aids, clearly labeled
- ✔ Check on isolated or homebound elders — don't wait to be asked
- ✔ Keep a medical alert bracelet or device visible and current



Sensory & Communication Needs

- ✔ Keep written instructions as backup to verbal ones
- ✔ Use high-contrast, large-print materials where possible
- ✔ Prepare a communication card or board for non-verbal individuals
- ✔ Speak directly to the person, not only through a companion
- ✔ Pack spare batteries for hearing aids or cochlear devices



Cognitive & Developmental Needs

- ✔ Keep routines as consistent as possible during disruption
- ✔ Use simple, concrete language — avoid abstract warnings
- ✔ Pack a familiar object or noise-canceling headphones
- ✔ Carry ID info: name, contact, and condition, in case of separation
- ✔ Practice the plan repeatedly in advance, not just once



Pets & Service Animals

- ✔ Keep carrier, leash, and harness ready by the door
- ✔ Pack a 2-week supply of food and medication with the go-bag
- ✔ Carry vaccination records and a photo for reunification
- ✔ Research pet-friendly shelters in advance — not all accept animals
- ✔ Know that service animals are legally permitted even where pets aren't



Start the conversation this week: who in your household or neighborhood needs a specific plan?

Full guidance: ready.gov/disability