

What can be done at school to help a traumatized child?

- Maintain usual routines. A return to “normalcy” will communicate the message that the child is safe and life will go on.
- Gives children choices. Often dramatic events involve loss of control and or chaos, so you can help children feels safe by providing them in some choices or control when appropriate.
- Increase levels of support and encouragement given to the traumatized child, designate an adult who can provide additional support if needed.
- Set clear, firm limits for inappropriate behavior and developed logical, rather than punitive, consequences.
- Recognize that behavioral problems may be related to trauma. Remember that even the most disruptive behaviors can be driven by trauma related anxiety.
- Side a safe place for the child to talk about what happened. Set it aside a designated time and place for sharing to help the child no it is okay to talk about what happened.
- Give simple and realistic answers to the child’s questions about traumatic events. Clarify distortions and misconceptions. If it’s an inappropriate time, be sure to give the child a time and place to talk and ask questions.
- Be sensitive to the cues in the environment that may cause a reaction in the traumatized child. For example, victims of a natural storm– related disasters-might react very badly to threatening weather or storm warnings. Children may increase problem behaviors near and anniversary of a traumatic event.
- Anticipate difficult times and provide additional support. Many kinds of situations may be reminders. If you’re able to identify reminders, you can help by preparing the child for the situation. For instance, for child who doesn’t like being alone, provide a partner to accompany him or her to the restroom.
- Warn children if you’ll be doing something suddenly out of the ordinary, such as turning off the lights for making a sudden loud noise.
- Be aware of other children’s reactions to the traumatized child and to the information they share. Protect the traumatized child from peers’ curiosity and protect classmates from the details of a child’s trauma.
- Understand that children cope by reenacting trauma through play or through their interactions with others. Resist their efforts to draw you into the negative repetition of the trauma. For instance, some children will provoke teachers in order to replay abusive situations at home.

- Although not all children have religious beliefs, be attentive if the child experiences severe dealings of anger, guilt, shame, or punishment attributed to a higher power. Do not engage in theological discussion. Rather, refer the child to appropriate support.
- While a traumatized child might not meet eligibility criteria for special education, consider making accommodations and modifications to academic work for a short time, even including these in a 504 plan. You might:
 - Shorten assignments
 - Allow additional time to complete assignments
 - Give permission to leave class to go to a designated adult (such as a counselor or school nurse) if feelings become overwhelming
 - Provide additional support for organizing and remembering assignments