Back to School –Be Prepared!

While packing that backpack with school supplies make sure you add a few extra items in case there is an emergency.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) says children who are prepared for emergency are more confident during stressful emergency situation. (http://blogs.cdc.gov/publichealthmatters/2015/08/back-to-school-be-prepared/)

The backpack emergency kit is filled with supplies that could be needed to deal with many types of school emergencies, disasters or simple first-aid needs. Every family should build an emergency kit and have a family disaster plan. But did you know you can prepare your children for emergencies during school by including a few extra items in the backpack?

The following steps can ensure children are prepared:

- Make sure your child/children know the full name, address and phone numbers of parents or guardians. Include a copy of this information in the backpack.
- Items to keep in the backpack include water and non-perishable snacks; a pocket-sized first aid kit; a whistle to alert others for help; and a list of allergies, medical conditions, and medications—make sure their school and teacher have a copy too.

- Be familiar with different routes and ways to travel home, like walking, taking the bus or riding home with a friend who lives nearby.

- Establish a secret code word with your child and whoever takes them home from school to protect against an unauthorized person picking them up. Talk to your children about what to do in situations where they may to use an alternative means to get home or may have to be picked-up early by a neighbor, relative or family friend.

- Know your school’s emergency plan.

- Make a plan on how you would reunite with your children should an emergency situation occur.

By providing preparedness guidelines, parents, children and schools staff can improve the safety and peace of mind, according to the CDC.