

**A Guide for Teachers and Parents
for**

THE OAK TREE CLUB



The Florida Division of Emergency Management

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Dear Educators and Parents,

The mission of the Florida Division of Emergency Management is “*Working together to ensure that Florida is prepared to respond to emergencies, recover from them, and mitigate against their impacts.*” We work with local governments to respond to all types of disasters. Many of these disasters are due to severe weather events such as lightning, tornadoes, and hurricanes, which in Florida, are common occurrences.

While we cannot prevent severe weather, there is much each of us can do to prevent injury to ourselves and damage to our property. Awareness begins with each individual, no matter how young. To that end, the Florida Division of Emergency Management has commissioned i.d.e.a.s. to create three storybooks and an interactive website located at www.KidsGetAPlan.com that are intended to be utilized by first, second, and third grade students as well as older students.

The storybook for first graders, The Adventures of Rabbit, Possum, and Squirrel in The 30/30 Rule, teaches young children how they can protect themselves from lightning strikes. Professor Tinkermeister and the Wacky, Whiz-Bang, Weather-Watching Wonder, allows the second grade reader a chance to learn about and protect themselves from the powerful nature of thunderstorms while traveling on a fantastic journey in a magical machine. In The Oak Tree Club, third graders will learn about how they can create a Disaster Supply Kit for their families to prepare for a hurricane. Each of these books was created at the appropriate reading level for each grade. The science is presented in a matter-of-fact and non-threatening manner so as not to create undue fears in our children.

Each of the books also comes with an accompanying guide for teachers and parents. Each guide explains some of the science presented in the books and answers questions that children are likely to have while reading the stories. The guides also explain how the books can be used to help our children to become better readers.

We hope you find the books, interactive website, and accompanying guides for teachers and parents helpful. Thank you for your continued support in helping Florida’s children protect themselves from the hazards of severe weather.

Florida Division of Emergency Management

Be Smart! Be Safe! Be A Survivor!

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Before you read together...

The Oak Tree Club is a book about kids in a Florida neighborhood who are readying their homes for the possible onslaught of a tropical hurricane. Although technically written at a grade three *reading* level, a child of this age will benefit from discussion of some of the *science* concepts and new vocabulary before reading the book. The pre-reading suggestions below will help the readers to comprehend the story better.

Introduce New Concepts and New Vocabulary

Beginning readers benefit by the introduction of new concepts and new vocabulary words before starting to read a book. In order to understand the story, and grasp the meaning of the science concepts introduced in it, it is important that the readers know and understand the following words and concepts that will be found in this book. Most children are familiar with the fact that a hurricane is a big storm. But few will understand the science that makes them happen or how to protect themselves in the event of the severe weather or the consequences it brings.

Introduction of New Vocabulary Words by Chapter

Chapter 1

- Page 2: *character* – Most students will know what a “story character” is, but the way it is used in this story (*something that makes the clubhouse distinctive and different*) may be confusing to them.
- Page 4: *bolted* – moved suddenly
- Page 5: *scurried* – moved quickly

Chapter 2

- Page 6: *hurricane* – A hurricane is a tropical cyclone with winds in excess of 74 miles per hour. It is usually accompanied by heavy rain and flooding, lightning, thunder, and often tornadoes.
- Page 8: *all hazards weather radio* – The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) is the voice of the national weather service. It is a direct link between the National Weather Service meteorologist and the public. All-hazards weather radios broadcast this news within seconds of release. Thanks to built in technology, the radios turn themselves on when there is weather alert. The newer ones can be programmed to only receive the alerts for a specific area. All schools, businesses, and residences should have an all-hazards or NOAA weather radio. People who take part in outdoor sports and water recreation should also take along an all hazards weather radio, too. They can be purchased at hardware stores, local retail outlets, and electronic stores. Timely warnings save lives!
- Page 8: *tracking the storm* – In this case, tracking the storm relates to listening to the weather reports and plotting the latitude and longitude of the storm’s center on a map. Doing so over time shows the path of the storm.

- Page 9: *Disaster Supply Kit* – A disaster supply kit is a collection of items that every Florida household should have on hand at all time in case of an emergency. A handout is provided in the back of this guide that will help people prepare a disaster supply kit.
- Page 9: *restocked* – filled up again, re-supplied
- Page 10: *pre-packaged* – In this case, the pre-packaged food refers to those foods that are canned, bottled, or otherwise prepared so that they do not need to be kept cold or cooked. This is important part of a disaster supply kit, as the electricity may be out for several days at a time in the event of a hurricane.

Chapter 3

- Page 13: *The clouds made funny stripes across the sky...* -- see “bands of rain” below
- Page 15: *bands of rain* – Hurricanes and other tropical storms almost always produce lines of showers and thunderstorms that can sometimes show up as strips or stripes of clouds in the sky. Rain and sunny weather may alternate frequently as the rain bands pass over.
- Page 15: *eye of the storm* – The center of a hurricane is known as the “eye.” As the eye passes overhead, the winds die down to nothing. This can be very dangerous, as people may believe the storm is over. But when the eye travels past, the most dangerous hurricane winds hit *instantly*! On a satellite image, the eye shows up as a dark spot in the middle without clouds.
- Page 20: *stilts* – Stilts are the poles that hold up each corner of the clubhouse.

Chapter 4

- Page 25: *evacuating* – People should leave or evacuate an area where a storm is likely to cause them to be in danger. Evacuation routes should be researched and decided long before the time when bad weather threatens. Evacuation should also be done far enough in advance of a storm so that you are not trapped in your car on the road.
- Page 28: *gusting* – A *gust* of wind is a sudden brief rush of wind as opposed to steady or sustained winds

Chapter 5

- Page 34: *The National Hurricane Center* –The National Hurricane Center/Tropical Prediction Center is co-located with the National Weather Service Miami Forecast Office on the main campus of Florida International University in Miami, Florida. Weather updates about hurricanes are generally released from this office of the National Weather Service.
- Page 36: *storm surge* – Storm surge refers to a large dome of water 50 to 100 miles long that sweeps across the coastline near where a hurricane makes landfall. The stronger the hurricane and the shallower the offshore water is, the higher the surge will be. Along the immediate coast, storm surge is the greatest threat to life and property. The surge is the highest on the *north* edge of the storm. In the story, it says that the hurricane is likely to hit *south* of their home, so the storm surge is likely to be the worst threat to that location.

The words above are used throughout the rest of the book. If you find other words that you believe your students will not understand, be sure to go over them before you use the books in class.

Introduce the Characters

The story is about four children who have a clubhouse called the Oak Tree Club. Carlos is an artist. Anna is a little younger and somewhat over concerned with keeping things clean! Christina is the studious one. Josh is “all boy.” Josh’s father built the Oak Tree Club in their backyard. The kids are neighbors and all come to Josh’s house each day in the summer when their parents go to work because Josh’s mom is a teacher and a stay-at-home mom in the summer.

Josh has a sister named Caitlin. She is fifteen, and therefore, no longer interested in using the clubhouse. Caitlin uses a wheelchair to get around. Point out to your students that the younger kids look up to her and do not even seem to notice that Caitlin is different from them.

The kids soon discover that a hurricane is brewing. Josh’s cousin Kyle comes to visit during the storm because he and his family have to evacuate their new home near the Florida coast. Kyle brings his new puppy, Zog with him. In the story, Uncle Harold and Aunt Lisa (Kyle’s parents) learn from Josh’s dad about preparing the home for a hurricane.

Carlos’s father calls him “Carlitos” which is a nickname for Carlos and is used as term of endearment, much like native English speakers might use “Johnny” as a nickname for the name “John.”

The parents of the kids are minor characters in the story.

As the students read...

As the students read, ask probing questions about the story after each chapter. This will help them comprehend what they are reading. Help them to begin to think about the story *before* they start to actually read the words on each page. Point out how they can use the pictures to benefit their comprehension. Ask the students about the things they see in each picture. Talk about what they see. If you model this kind of questioning with your students, you will help them build mental models of the story and increase their reading comprehension. Because children are great mimics, eventually, they will begin to create their own questions as they read on their own. There is no “exact right way” to do it. Use the suggestions below as a guide.

Chapter 1

- What was Carlos painting?
- Who is concerned about always being neat and clean? What does she do or say that lets you know that?
- Who spends time on the Internet writing to friends all over the world?
- Whose nickname is “Big Guy?” Why is he called that?
- What did Christina forget when she left the clubhouse?
- Where did Anna put what Christina forgot?

Chapter 2

- What kind of job does Josh’s dad have?
- What kind of storm is coming?
- What kinds of things will they need to do around the house to get ready for the storm?
- Who might be coming to visit Josh’s family? How does Josh feel about that?
- What did Christina and her mom do on the Internet?
- What can you do with a NOAA weather radio?
- Why is Christina excited?
- How does Carlos feel about the hurricane coming?
- Why do you think he feels that way?
- What did Anna’s mom find out at the grocery store?
- What is a Disaster Supply Kit?
- What kinds of foods do you need in a Disaster Supply Kit?
- What other things should you have in your kit?
- What idea does Anna have at the end of the chapter of what she can do with her friends?

Chapter 3

- Why does Josh get to sleep late?
- What does Josh like to eat for breakfast?
- What will the weather be like today?
- When will the storm arrive according to Christina?
- How did each child decorate his or her Disaster Supply Kit?
- What special signal will they use tonight?
- What time will they signal?
- Why don't they hang Carlos's sign up now?
- Why do they have to begin cleaning up the yard?
- What does it mean to be "tracking the storm?"
- What did they leave for Josh's dad to do when he got home?

Chapter 4

- Who is coming to Josh's house?
- What does Christina tell Josh he has to do before Kyle can come into the clubhouse?
- How does Josh describe his cousin Kyle?
- Who rang the doorbell?
- Why is he there early?
- What surprise does Josh have for Kyle?
- What surprise does Kyle have for Josh?
- What is the weather like when Kyle arrived?
- Why did Anna ask for a plastic bag?
- What is the club secret that Josh is referring to when he talks to Kyle?
- Where did Josh's mom get their supply kit from?
- How much water should be in a Disaster Supply Kit?
- What kind of medicine does Kyle take?
- Why did Kyle's dad go put gas in the car?
- What is in the plastic bag that Kyle found in the Disaster Supply Kit?

Chapter 5

- Why didn't Josh's grandparents come to dinner?
- When is the hurricane predicted to arrive now?
- What do storm shutters do?
- What will a storm surge likely to cause?
- What did Josh's dad and his Uncle Harold do after dinner?
- Why was Josh worried that he was going to cover up his bedroom window?
- How did Josh convince his mom to fix him a big bowl of ice cream?
- What is Josh keeping secret from his mom?

Chapter 6

- Where did Josh and Kyle put their sleeping bags?
- What does Josh plan to do all night?
- Why did Kyle turn on the radio? What did he learn?
- Why does Josh want his mom to call Christina's house?
- Why do you think Christina didn't answer the signal?

Chapter 7

- What did Josh find when he woke up?
- How bad was the hurricane where they lived?
- Why was there garbage everywhere in the yard?
- What did Josh and Kyle eat for breakfast?

Chapter 8

- What does Josh's mom say needs to happen before he can go into the clubhouse?
- What happened to Christina last night?
- What surprise did Anna have for Christina?
- What did Josh's dad do with the sign?
- What are the kids going to do tonight?
- What will they do with the extra tree branches?
- What does Josh ask Kyle *not* to do?

After you read together...

After reading the story, talk about it with your students. Suggested questions to discuss are:

- Where do you think Josh and his family lived? How can you tell?
- What are the different kinds of weather hazards that hurricanes can bring?
 - Lightning
 - Floods
 - Storm surges
 - Tornadoes

Use the handout on the next page as a homework assignment for kids to do with their parents. When they return the certificates, display them proudly on a "Be Smart! Be Safe! Be A Survivor!" bulletin board in your classroom.

Allow the students to draw a picture about a hurricane and write their own story. Post these on the bulletin board, too.

Dear Parent,

Your child has been reading a book called The Oak Tree Club. In the story, children learned about hurricanes and how each family should have a Disaster Supply Kit in the home to prepare for emergencies. Please use the information below to put together a Disaster Supply Kit for your home. Once you have done so, please sign and return this form. We will post all of the certificates on the bulletin board in our classroom.

Thank you for helping your child to “Be Smart! Be Safe! Be A Survivor!”

Signed,
Your child’s teacher

This certifies that the family of _____ has assembled the
(Child’s name)
following supplies to go in our Disaster Supply Kit.

Signed _____
(Parent or Guardian)

Disaster Supply Kit Recommendations

- An all-hazards (NOAA) weather radio
- Other battery powered radio
- Flashlights
- Batteries for all of the above
- 3-7 gallons of water for each person in the family
- A three-day supply of non-perishable food items including baby food if necessary
- A non-electric can opener
- Portable grill and pains
- A change of clothing for each family member including rain gear
- A blanket or sleeping bag for each person
- A first aid kit including prescription medicines for your family
- Hygiene items like soap, washcloths, toothbrush, toothpaste, and disposable diapers for babies
- Important family documents (including insurance papers, social security cards, medical records, and shot records in a fireproof and waterproof container)
- Board games, toys, and books
- Pet food and a carrying cage and leash for your animals
- An extra set of house keys
- Credit cards and cash
- And don’t forget to fill up your car’s gas tank!

“Be Smart! Be Safe! Be A Survivor!”