

What we've learned from experts and from teaching in the community:

It matters what children see. Graphic news footage of death, violence and other fear inspiring images are damaging to children.

Children experience much of the disaster through the reactions and experiences of the adults and people around them. EXAMPLE: If a child experiences a house fire and what they hear from their parents is “we’ve lost everything”, “we’re cursed”, or if they witness their parents risking life and limb to save material possessions, blaming others or questioning their faith – that is their experience. By pointing out the positives – the bravery of the rescuers, the generosity of the volunteers, expressions of gratitude that they are safe, how you are all going to make the best of this and that everything will all work out – you make that their disaster experience.



Optimism is a learned behavior. Disaster preparedness is an excellent way to share family values and to teach children how to be strong and resilient. Depending on YOUR response to the disaster, your children can experience feeling loved, protected and clear on your family’s values and future. Help children think of themselves as responders, **not victims**, by learning age-appropriate preparedness and response skills (see *Personal Preparedness: Children*).

Recovery after a disaster requires space for healing and a structure for returning to “normal”. Stress and strong emotions are, of course, natural after traumatic experiences. The important thing is to foster healing and protect children from further unnecessary distress. Limit exposure to media that focuses heavily on discussing the disaster. Have age-appropriate conversations about the experience and your and your child’s feelings. Establish routines and structure – ideally returning to familiar ones, but if need be, creating new ones.



Your choices and actions demonstrate your priorities – participate! If you want your child to know how to “Drop, Cover and Hold”, practice the skill with them to show them you consider it important. Do what you can to participate in the preparedness efforts of your child’s school other activities. For each place your child spends time, know how they will respond to keep your child safe and how you will be reunited with your child after a disaster.

Opportunities abound! You can use real events, TV shows, movies, rumors, accidents and any other situation to dispel wrong information, practice disaster skills, instill family values, and help your child to respond correctly in dangerous circumstances.

Children can begin learning useful preparedness skills at a very young age. In addition to keeping them safer, these skills can help children become more confident and develop a healthy, empowered relationship with preparedness. Adults should practice these skills WITH kids to demonstrate that everyone's safety is a priority!



Drop, Cover and Hold

In an earthquake, or if something dangerous is happening:

- **DROP** to the ground.
- Have a strong table **COVER** you.
- **HOLD** on till shaking stops.

Also practice "safety eyes": seeing safe places to drop, cover and hold in rooms you enter.



Shake, Look and Listen

After the earthquake stops, **FIRST**:

- **SHAKE** yourself gently to make sure no glass is on you - do not rub.
- While under the table, **LOOK** for an adult and **LOOK** at what has happened.
- **LISTEN** carefully for instructions.

Know your trusted adults

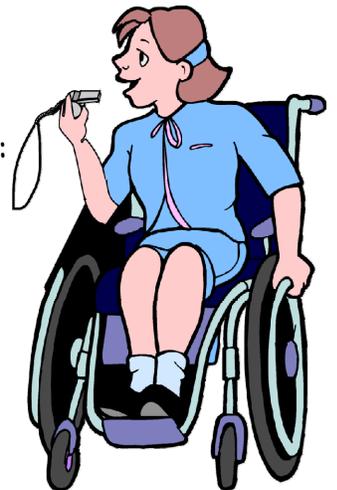
Talk to your parents about which adults to trust.

How - and when - to call 911

If you need help, or to stop someone from getting hurt:

- **DIAL 911** -

- Answer their questions.
- Tell them your name.
- Tell them where you are.
- Tell them what has happened.
- Follow their instructions.



Packing Your Go-Kit

You can help pack your own Go-Kit! You might like to add these things:

- Some favorite books or toys - something small and fun for one person.
- Games or toys for more than one person, like playing cards.
- Paper and pens, pencils or crayons.

Make sure that the clothes in your Go-Kit still fit you!