

# Safety Planning with Children

Damaging earthquakes such as the 1994 Northridge temblor and their aftershocks can rattle nerves of adults and children. You can't do anything to prevent earthquakes and aftershocks, but you and your children can work together to prepare for the next earthquake. Here are some ideas about how to make your children more prepared for an earthquake:

## Learn What Earthquakes Are and What Causes Them

Explain why the ground and buildings shake. Go to a museum, a theme park or an expo that has an earthquake simulator so everyone can experience the shaking sensation. Remind everyone that the shaking will stop. Read stories about earthquakes and let your children ask questions. Learn the difference between fact and fiction.

## Discuss Aftershocks

Talk about the possibility that aftershocks as strong as the earthquake itself might occur and continue for some time. Make sure everyone understands that aftershocks are normal.

## Assemble Children's Earthquake Kits

Help your children to assemble their own earthquake kits.

- Include a family picture and a favorite toy, game or book for each child in their go-bag.
- Include your child's emergency card and include information on reunification locations and out-of-area contact.
- Provide comfort food and treats for each child in your family disaster supplies kit.
- Keep a recent photo of your children in your go-bag.
- Include a note from parents \

Kits should meet their needs and likes. Remember that no supplies are "wrong."

Or, take them to an earthquake supply store and let them pick out their own child earthquake kit.

## Planning

- Include your children in family discussions and planning for emergency safety.
- Teach your children their basic personal information so they can identify themselves and get help if they become separated from a parent or guardian. Prepare an emergency card with information for your child, including their full name, address, phone number, parent's work number and out of state contact.
- Teach children to dial their home telephone number and Emergency 911.
- Know the policies of the school or daycare center your children attend. Make plans to have someone pick them up if you are unable to get to them.

- Make sure each child knows the family's alternate meeting sites if you are separated in a disaster and cannot return to your home.
- Make sure each child knows how to reach your family's out-of-state contact person.
- Teach children what gas smells like and advise them to tell an adult if they smell gas after an emergency.
- FEMA offers a wonderful website that allows children to paint an emergency-preparedness themed coloring book online:  
[http://www.fema.gov/kids/games/colorbk/original\\_color.htm](http://www.fema.gov/kids/games/colorbk/original_color.htm)

## Get Use To Living without Electricity

Go through an entire evening without using electricity to prepare everyone – especially children – for the possibility of having to live without it. Conduct a "flashlight" walk around the block; hold a candlelight or "flashlight" dinner; tell stories or play games instead of watching television.

## After An Earthquake

Monitor family members – particularly children – for behavioral changes, including withdrawing from family and friends, overeating or loss of appetite, disobedience and antisocial behavior. Parents and teachers can respond to such problems by encouraging interaction with family members and friends, by providing additional attention and physical comfort and by providing structured but undemanding responsibilities. Contact your local mental health agency for more information.

## Child Emergency Information

Have the following information available by all telephones and inside diaper bags.

Child's name

Parents' names

Home telephone, Work telephones, Cellular phone

Birthdate

Blood type

Doctor/Hospital

Police, Fire department

Poison Center (800) 523-2222

Grandparents

Earthquake plans

Family friends

Home Address

Description of where house is located and the cross street

Medical Release Form: We authorize any duly licensed physician, dentist, or hospital to render necessary emergency service as requested by \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_