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Prepare Your Children

Children need to be prepared for a disaster as much as adults, if not more. Below are suggested tips to prepare your children for emergencies.

Infants and Toddlers

For infants and toddlers, special emphasis should be placed on making their environment as safe as possible.

- Cribs should be placed away from windows and tall, unsecured bookcases and shelves that could slide or topple.
- A minimum of a 72-hour supply of extra water, formula, bottles, food, juices, clothing, disposable diapers, baby wipes and prescribed medications should be stored where it is most likely to be accessible after an emergency.
- Also keep an extra diaper bag with these items in your car.
- Store strollers, wagons, blankets and cribs with appropriate wheels to evacuate infants, if necessary.
- Install bumper pads in cribs or bassinets to protect babies during the shaking of an earthquake or explosion.
- Install latches on all cupboards (not just those young children can reach) so that nothing can fall on your baby during an earthquake or explosion.

Preschool & School-age Children

By age three or so, children can begin to understand what earthquakes are, as well as fires and floods, and how to get ready for them. Take the time to explain what causes these types of emergencies in terms they'll understand. Include your children in family discussions and planning for emergency safety.

Conduct drills and review safety procedures every six months.

- Show children the safest places to be in each room when an earthquake hits or explosion occurs. Also show them all possible exits from each room.
- Use sturdy tables to teach children to Duck, Cover & Hold during an earthquake or explosion.
- Make sure that children are ready to protect themselves with Stop, Drop and Roll during a fire. Also make sure that you practice emergency exit drills in the house (EDITH) regularly.
- Teach children what to do wherever they are during an emergency (at school, in a tall building, outdoors).
- Make sure children's emergency cards at school are up-to-date.
- Although children should not turn off any utility valves, it's important that they know what gas smells like. Advise children to tell an adult if they smell gas after an emergency.