



Tornado... Earthquake... Winter Storm...

Wind makes kites fly. Fire can keep us warm. And rain helps flowers grow.
But sometimes the wind blows too hard, fires get too big or it rains too much.

Natural Disasters

Disasters can strike quickly and without warning. While a disaster is frightening for adults, it can be traumatic for children if they don't know what to do.

Help children understand the concept of a disaster...

- Explain that nature sometimes provides “too much of a good thing” — fire, rain, wind, snow. Tell them that a disaster is when something happens that could hurt people, cause damage or cut off utilities such as water, telephones or electricity.
- Give examples of several disasters that could happen in your community. To get this information, contact your local office of emergency management or local American Red Cross chapter. Ask what disasters are most likely to happen and request information on how to prepare for them.
- Talk about typical effects that children can relate to, such as loss of electricity, water and telephone service.
- Explain that when people know what to do — and practice in advance — everyone is better able to handle emergencies. That's why we need to create a family disaster plan.

Emergencies

Even very young children can be taught how and when to call for help.

Action Steps for Adults

- Help children recognize the warning signs for the disasters that could happen in your community. You can get this information from your local emergency management office or Local Red Cross chapter.
- Tell children that in a disaster there are many people who can help them. Talk about ways that an emergency manager, Red Cross volunteer, police officer, fire-fighter, teacher, neighbour, doctor or utility worker might help following a disaster.
- Teach children how and when to call for help. Check the telephone directory for local emergency telephone numbers. If you live in a 9-1-1 service area, teach children to call 9-1-1. At home, post emergency telephone numbers by all phones



and explain when to call each number. In South Africa dial 1-0-1-1-1 or 1-0-1-1-8

- Even very young children can be taught how and when to call for emergency assistance.
- If a child can't read, this emergency telephone number chart has pictures that may help him or her identify the correct number to call. As you explain each picture, have the child colour the symbol on the chart.
- Take a first aid and CPR course. These are critical skills, and learning can be a fun activity for older children. Contact your local office of emergency management, Local Red Cross chapter or hospital for information.
- At home, ask an out-of-state friend to be your family "check-in" contact. After a disaster, (This applies internationally and not in South Africa since there is only one service provider which, sadly, is unreliable at the very best of times) long-distance telephone lines often remain in service even when local lines are down. Tell children to call this "check-in" contact if they are separated from the family in an emergency. Help them memorise the telephone number, or write it down on a card they can keep with them.
- Particularly in South Africa and African countries where infrastructure is compromised by theft and poor maintenance, it is advisable to have a reliable cellular phone provider, in the event of a disaster it is more likely that you will be in a position to make use of this service rather than the local State Owned (and unreliable) Telkom

Earthquakes

Earthquakes can happen anywhere, anytime.

An earthquake is a sudden, fast shaking of the earth. One can strike without warning — causing fires, explosions and landslides. Earthquakes happen when rock that is below the earth's surface breaks and shifts. People in all states are at some risk from earthquakes.

Safety Messages for Kids

- "If you're indoors during an earthquake, drop, cover and hold on. Get under a desk, table or bench...hold on to one of the legs and cover your eyes. If there's no table or desk nearby, sit down against a wall. Pick a safe place where things will not fall on you, away from windows, bookcases or tall, heavy furniture."
- "Wait in your safety spot until the shaking stops, then check to see if you are hurt."
- Check the people around you too. Move carefully and watch out for things that have fallen. Be ready for smaller earthquakes called aftershocks."



- “Be on the lookout for fires. Earthquakes can cause fire alarms and fire sprinklers to go off. If you must leave a building after the shaking stops, use the stairs, not the elevator.”
- “If you’re outside in an earthquake...stay outside. Move away from buildings, trees, street lights and power lines. Crouch down and cover your head.”
- “If you are in a car, stay there with your seatbelt fastened.”

Action Steps for Adults

- Help children understand what to expect in an earthquake and how to protect themselves.
- With children, find safe places in every room of your home or the classroom. Practice “drop, cover and hold on”...getting under a table or other sturdy object. Look for safe places inside and outside of other buildings where you spend time.
- Explain that it is dangerous to run outside when an earthquake happens because falling objects can hurt people.
- Tell children to be prepared for aftershocks — smaller earthquakes that can happen over a period of weeks (and sometimes months) after the first earthquake. Be sure they know to go to a safe place during aftershocks.
- At home, bolt down water heaters and gas appliances. Place large or heavy objects and fragile items (such as glass or china) on lower shelves. Securely fasten shelves to walls. Brace or anchor high or top-heavy objects.



Disaster Supplies Kit

Assemble Disaster Supplies Kits with Your Children.

Following a disaster, basic services — electricity, water, gas, telephones — may be cut off for days. Or, you may have to evacuate at a moment's notice. You probably won't have time to shop or search for the supplies you'll need.

Gather the supplies you'll need to deal with the situation *now*, before disaster strikes.

Action Steps for Adults

Plan an activity with children to put together disaster supplies kits.

At home, your kits should contain:

- One gallon (at least 2 ½ litres) of water per person per day
- Non-perishable food: ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables; canned juices, milk and soup; sugar, salt and pepper; high energy foods such as peanut butter, jelly, crackers, nuts, health food bars, trail mix; comfort foods such as cookies, hard candy and sweetened cereal.
- Don't forget a non-electric can opener!
- A first aid kit that includes your family's prescription medications (ask your doctor about proper ways to store medicine)
- Emergency supplies and tools including a battery-operated radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries
- One change of clothing and footwear per person, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person
- Sanitation supplies: toilet paper, soap, personal hygiene items
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members
- An extra set of car keys and cash, traveller's checks and a credit card
- Store enough supplies to last at least three days. Keep them in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers such as backpacks, duffle bags or covered trash containers. Store your kits in a safe, convenient place known to all family members — preferably in a cool, dry, dark place. Keep a smaller version of this kit in the trunk of your car. You should also keep important family documents in a waterproof container.

In the classroom, your kit should contain:

- class roster



Family Disaster Plan

Practice your plan so everyone will remember what to do!

- Hold emergency escape drills.
- Test smoke detectors and change the batteries.
- Keep disaster supplies kits up-to-date.

Quiz children every few months to help them remember what to do.

Here are some questions you can ask right now to make sure they've learned key concepts:

- What will you do if you're in your room and smell smoke or hear the smoke detector go off? Where will you go?
- What will you do if you see dark clouds and hear thunder?
- How might you know that a tornado is coming? If a tornado is coming, where will you go? What will you do to protect yourself?
- If we are told that a hurricane is coming, what are some of the things we will do to get ready?
- Why should you stay away from flood waters?
- What will you do if your clothes catch fire?
- When you play outside in the snow, what will you do to make sure you don't get too cold?
- If the earth starts to shake, what will you do?
- Who will you call for help in an emergency? Where can you find these telephone numbers?
- What are some things you want to put in your disaster supplies kit?
- What will you do if you see a friend playing with matches?



Nature is beautiful...and powerful!



Emergency Phone Numbers

My Family Name: _____

My Phone Number: _____

My Address: _____

My Town: _____



Ambulance



Fire



Police/Sheriff



Mother



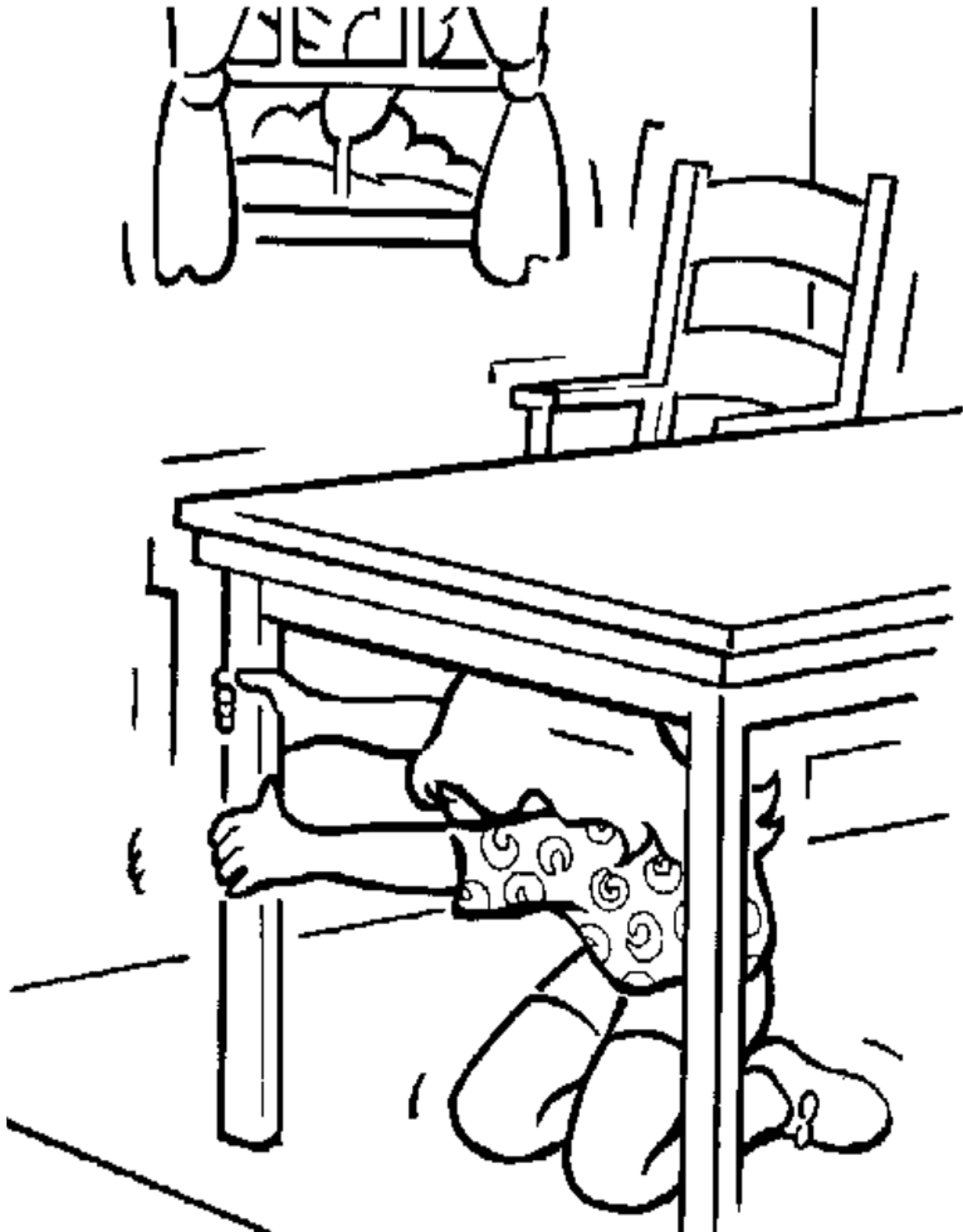
Father



Other



If you're indoors during an earthquake,
drop, cover and hold on.





We can keep supplies that will help us if a disaster happens. Put together a disaster supplies kit today!

