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Sent: Monday, September 12, 2011 3:03 PM
To: licensinglistserv@virginiainteractive.org
Subject: Emergency Preparedness: Earthquake Safety Checklist & Helping Children Cope with Disaster

This file is being sent to providers of child day centers, short term child day centers, religious exempt child day centers, certified preschools, family day homes, voluntarily registered family day homes, family day systems, child placing agencies and children's residential facilities from the Virginia Department of Social Services Email Distribution Service.

Please do not reply to this email.

The attached files are being sent to you by The Virginia Department of Social Services, Division of Licensing Programs as informational resources to assist you and the families and children you serve in responding to recent emergencies and with future emergency preparedness planning.

In addition, the Department of Social Services would like to remind you to visit the following emergency planning and response websites:

Virginia Department of Emergency Management: www.vaemergency.gov

Ready Virginia: www.vaemergency.gov/ReadyVirginia

Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov

National Hurricane Center: www.nhc.noaa.gov

Thank you.

SCROLL DOWN TO VIEW ATTACHMENTS

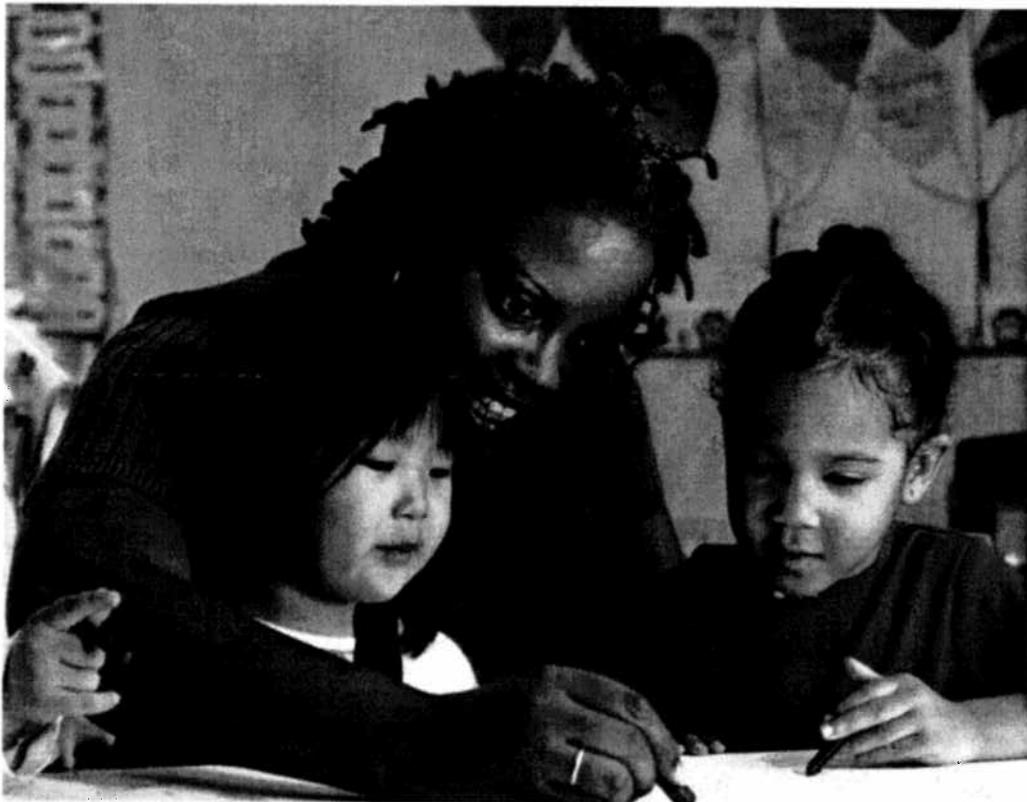
Helping Children Cope with Disaster



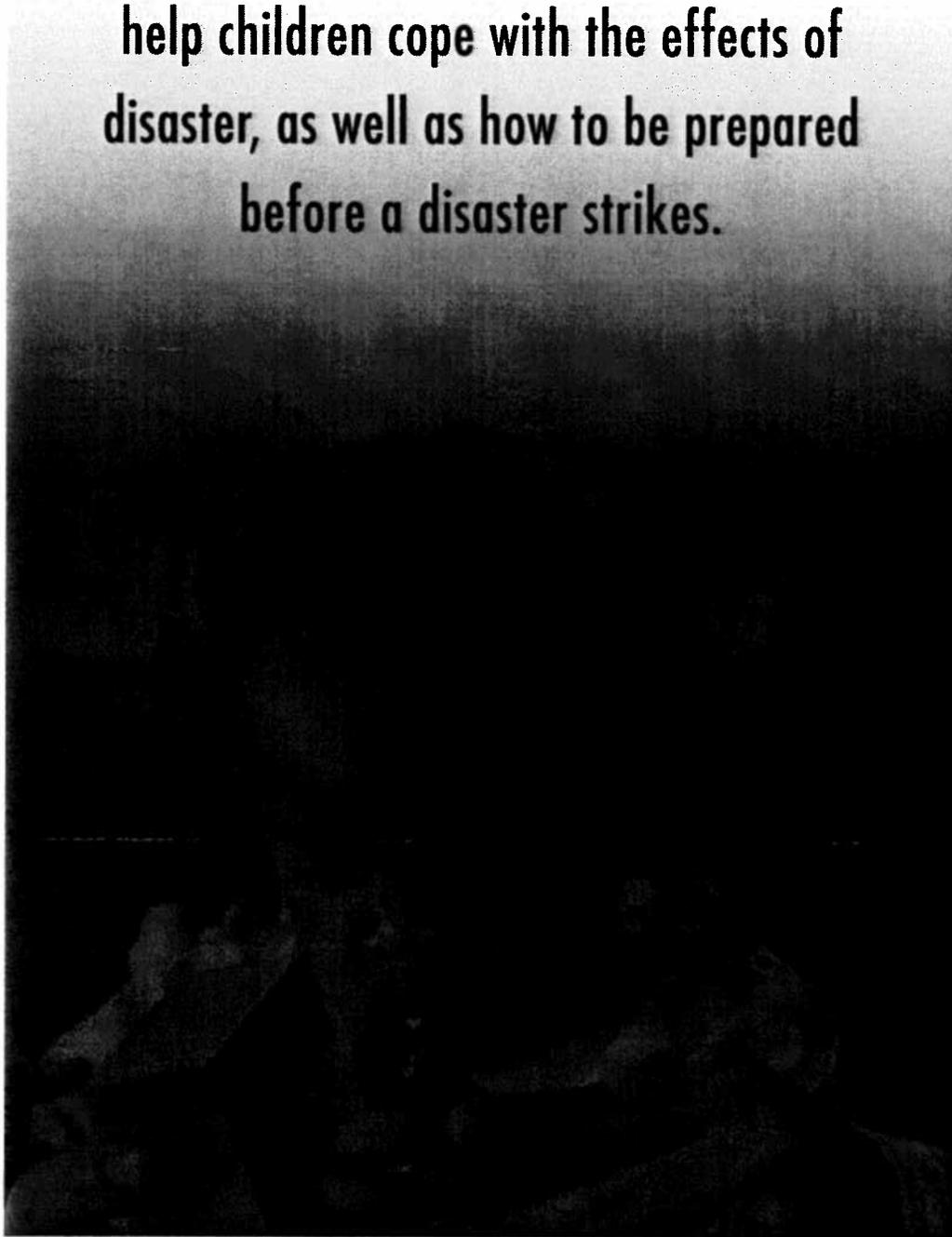
FEMA



**American
Red Cross**



**This booklet offers parents, caregivers,
and other adults suggestions on how to
help children cope with the effects of
disaster, as well as how to be prepared
before a disaster strikes.**



Helping Children Cope with Disaster

Children can feel very frightened during a disaster and afterward some children will show temporary changes of behavior.

For most children these changes will be mild, not last long, and diminish with time. However, reminders of what happened could cause upsetting feelings to return and behavior changes to emerge again. Watching scenes of the disaster on television can be distressing for children, especially for younger children.

Younger children may return to bed-wetting, have difficulty sleeping, and not want to be separated from their caregivers. Older children may show more anger than usual, find concentrating at school harder, and want to spend more time alone than usual.

Some children are more vulnerable, and their reactions can be more severe and last for a longer period of time.

Factors that contribute to greater vulnerability include:

- ◆ **Direct exposure to the disaster**
This includes being evacuated, seeing injured or dying people, being injured themselves, and feeling that their own lives are threatened.
- ◆ **Personal loss**
This includes the death or serious injury of a family member, close friend, or family pet.
- ◆ **Ongoing stress from the secondary effects of disaster**
This includes temporarily living elsewhere, losing contact with their friends and neighbors, losing things that are important to them, parental job loss, and the financial costs of re-establishing their previous living conditions.
- ◆ **Prior exposure to disaster or other traumatic event**

How parents and caregivers react to and cope with a disaster or emergency situation can affect the way their children react. When parents and caregivers or other family members are able to deal with the situation calmly and confidently, they are often the best source of support for their children. One way to help children feel more confident and in control is to involve them in preparing a family disaster plan (refer to page 7).

CHILDREN'S REACTION TO DISASTER

The following are common reactions that children may exhibit following a disaster. While the following descriptions are typical, some children may exhibit none of these behaviors and others may behave in ways not mentioned here.



BIRTH THROUGH 6 YEARS

Although infants may not have words to describe their experiences, they can retain memories. They may react by being more irritable, crying more than usual, or wanting to be held and cuddled more. Preschool and kindergarten children can feel helpless, powerless, and frightened about being separated from their caregivers.

7 THROUGH 10 YEARS

Older children can understand the permanence of loss. They may become preoccupied with the details of the traumatic event and want to talk about it continually. This preoccupation can interfere with their concentration at school and affect their academic performance. Children may hear inaccurate information from their peers, which parents can clarify. They may fear that the disaster will happen again and have sad or angry feelings.





11 THROUGH 18 YEARS

As children mature, their responses become more similar to those of adults. Much of adolescence is focused on moving out into the world. Following a disaster, that world can seem more dangerous and unsafe. Teenagers may react by becoming involved in dangerous, risk-taking behaviors, such as reckless driving and alcohol or drug use. Others may become fearful of leaving home and avoid social activity.

Teenagers can feel overwhelmed by their intense emotions, yet unable to talk about them.

WHAT PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS CAN DO

It is important for parents and other caregivers to understand what is causing a child's anxieties and fears. Following a disaster, children are most afraid that:

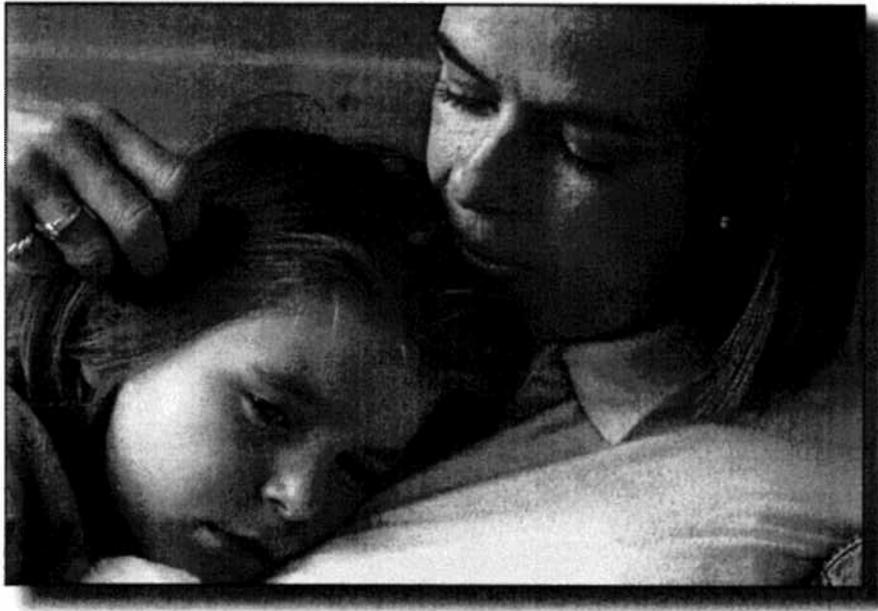
- ◆ The event will happen again.
- ◆ Someone close to them will be killed or injured.
- ◆ They will be left alone or separated from their family.

Parents and caregivers can clarify misunderstandings of risk and danger by acknowledging children's concerns and perceptions. Discussions of preparedness plans can strengthen a child's sense of safety and security.

Listen to what a child is saying. If a young child asks questions about the event, answer them simply without the elaboration needed for an older child or adult. Children vary in the amount of information they need



and can use. If a child has difficulty expressing his or her thoughts and feelings, then allowing them to draw a picture or tell a story of what happened may help.



Parents and Caregivers Can Take the Following Actions:

- ◆ Encourage your children to talk and listen to their concerns.
- ◆ Calmly provide factual information about the disaster and plans for ensuring their ongoing safety.
- ◆ Involve your children in updating your family disaster plan and disaster supplies kit (refer to pages 7-9).
- ◆ Practice your plan.
- ◆ Involve your children by giving them specific tasks to let them know they can help restore family and community life.
- ◆ Spend extra time with your children.
- ◆ Re-establish daily routines for work, school, play, meals, and rest.

Monitor and Limit Your Family's Exposure to the Media

News coverage of the disaster can cause fear, confusion, and anxiety in children. This is particularly true for a large-scale disaster or terrorist event in which significant property damage and loss of life has occurred. Especially for younger children, repeatedly watching images of an event can cause them to believe the event is occurring again and again.

Parents and caregivers should be available to encourage communication and provide explanations when children are permitted to watch television or use the Internet if images or news about the disaster are being shown.

Parents can also limit their own exposure to anxiety-provoking information.



Use Support Networks

Parents and caregivers can best help children when they understand their own feelings and have developed ways of coping themselves. One way of doing this is to build and use social support systems of family, friends, community organizations, faith-based institutions, or other resources. In the event a disaster strikes, they can call on these support systems to help them manage their reactions. In turn, parents and caregivers are more available and better able to support their children.

If a child continues to be very upset by what happened or if reactions interfere with school work or relationships at home or with friends, it may be appropriate to talk with the child's primary care physician or a mental health provider who specializes in children's needs.

PREPARE YOUR FAMILY

Preparing for disaster helps everyone in the family accept the fact that disasters do happen and that they can do something about it. Families should work together to identify and collect the resources needed to meet basic needs during and after disaster. When people feel prepared, they cope better.

Take the following actions with your family to get prepared:

Get Informed

- ◆ Call your local emergency management office or local American Red Cross chapter and ask about the specific hazards in your community and about your risk to those hazards. Also learn about community response plans, evacuation plans and routes, community warning systems, and nearby buildings that are designated as disaster shelters.
- ◆ Learn about the emergency plans and procedures that exist in places you and your family spend time. Priority locations include places of employment, schools, and child care centers.

Create a Family Disaster Plan

- ◆ Discuss with your family the hazards that could impact your local area, the potential for community evacuation or sheltering, and your community's warning systems and what to do if they are used.
- ◆ Determine where to meet in the event of an emergency. Designate one location right outside your home in case of a

sudden emergency, like a fire, and another location outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.

- ♦ Ask an out-of-town friend or relative to be your emergency contact. Following a disaster, family members should call this person and tell them where they are.
- ♦ Make a communication plan where all family members know how to contact each other. A form for recording this information can be found at www.ready.gov or at www.redcross.org/.
- ♦ Include provisions for your pets in your family disaster plan.
- ♦ Practice the plan.

Once you have developed your plan, you need to practice and maintain it. For example, ask questions to make sure your family remembers meeting places, phone numbers, and safety rules. Conduct routine fire and emergency evacuation drills, test fire alarms, and replace and update disaster supplies.



Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit

Every household should assemble a disaster supplies kit and keep it up to date. A disaster supplies kit can help your family stay safe and be more comfortable during and after a disaster. Though local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, they cannot reach everyone immediately. Also, if you need to evacuate at a moment's notice, you probably will not have the opportunity to shop or search for the supplies you and your family will need.

- ◆ Pack disaster supplies in an easy-to-carry container, such as a duffel bag or backpack, and label the container clearly.
- ◆ Ask your children to think of items that they would like to include in the kit, such as books, games or non-perishable snack food items.
- ◆ Include such items as:
 - Three-day supply of non-perishable food and manual can opener.
 - Three-day supply of water (one gallon of water per person, per day).
 - Portable, battery-powered radio or television and extra batteries.
 - Flashlights and extra batteries.
 - First aid kit and first aid manual.
 - Photocopies of credit cards and identification cards.
 - Sanitation and hygiene items (hand sanitizer, moist towelettes and toilet paper).
 - Matches in a waterproof container.
 - Whistle.
 - Clothing, blankets, kitchen accessories, and cooking utensils.
 - Special needs items, such as prescription medications, spare eyeglasses, and hearing aid batteries.
 - Items for infants, such as formula, diapers, bottles, and pacifiers.
 - Tools, pet supplies, a map of the local area, and other items to meet your family's unique needs.
- ◆ Ask your children to help you remember to keep your kit updated by marking dates on a calendar to regularly review and update your kit.
- ◆ Consider having emergency supplies in each vehicle and at your place of employment.

Learn More

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community and Family Preparedness Program and American Red Cross Community Disaster Education are nationwide efforts to help people prepare for disasters of all types.

For more information, please contact your local emergency management office or American Red Cross chapter. This booklet and the preparedness materials listed below are online at www.fema.gov and www.redcross.org. Other preparedness materials are available at these sites, as well as at www.ready.gov.

These publications are also available by calling FEMA at 1-800-480-2520, or writing:

**FEMA
P.O. Box 2012
Jessup, MD 20794-2012**

Publications below are available from your local American Red Cross chapter.

- ◆ Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness (IS-22)
- ◆ Preparing for Disaster (FEMA 475) (Red Cross 658615)
- ◆ Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs (FEMA 476) (Red Cross 658618)
- ◆ Food and Water in an Emergency (FEMA 477) (Red Cross 658613)

Local sponsorship provided by:

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Be Red Cross Ready

Earthquake Safety Checklist

An earthquake is a sudden, rapid shaking of the earth caused by the breaking and shifting of rock beneath the earth's surface. Earthquakes strike suddenly, without warning, and they can occur at any time of the year, day or night. Forty-five states and territories in the United States are at moderate to very high risk of earthquakes, and they are located in every region of the country.

Are you at increased risk from earthquakes?

- Contact your local emergency management office, local American Red Cross chapter, state geological survey or department of natural resources.
- Mobile homes and homes not attached to their foundations are at particular risk during an earthquake.
- Buildings with foundations resting on landfill and other unstable soils are at increased risk of damage.

Did you know?

Doorways are no stronger than any other part of the structure. During an earthquake, get under a sturdy piece of furniture and hold on. This will provide some protection from falling objects that can injure you during an earthquake.

How can I prepare?



- Become aware of fire evacuation and earthquake plans for all of the buildings you occupy regularly.
- Pick safe places in each room of your home, workplace and/or school. A safe place could be under a piece of furniture or against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases or tall furniture that could fall on you.
- Practice drop, cover and hold on in each safe place. If you do not have sturdy furniture to hold on to, sit on the floor next to an interior wall and cover your head and neck with your arms.
- Keep a flashlight and sturdy shoes by each person's bed.
- Make sure your home is securely anchored to its foundation.
- Bolt and brace water heaters and gas appliances to wall studs.
- Bolt bookcases, china cabinets and other tall furniture to wall studs.
- Hang heavy items, such as pictures and mirrors, away from beds, couches and anywhere people sleep or sit.
- Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Install strong latches or bolts on cabinets. Large or heavy items should be closest to the floor.
- Learn how to shut off the gas valves in your home and keep a wrench handy for that purpose.
- Learn about your area's seismic building standards and land use codes before you begin new construction.
- Keep and maintain an emergency supplies kit in an easy-to-access location.

What should I do during an earthquake?



If you are inside when the shaking starts ...

- Drop, cover and hold on. Move as little as possible.
- If you are in bed, stay there, curl up and hold on. Protect your head with a pillow.
- Stay away from windows to avoid being injured by shattered glass.
- Stay indoors until the shaking stops and you are sure it is safe to exit. If you must leave the building after the shaking stops, use stairs rather than an elevator in case there are aftershocks, power outages or other damage.
- Be aware that fire alarms and sprinkler systems frequently go off in buildings during an earthquake, even if there is no fire.

If you are outside when the shaking starts ...

- Find a clear spot and drop to the ground. Stay there until the shaking stops (away from buildings, power lines, trees, streetlights).
- If you are in a vehicle, pull over to a clear location and stop. Avoid bridges, overpasses and power lines if possible. Stay inside with your seatbelt fastened until the shaking stops. Then, drive carefully, avoiding bridges and ramps that may have been damaged.
- If a power line falls on your vehicle, do not get out. Wait for assistance.
- If you are in a mountainous area or near unstable slopes or cliffs, be alert for falling rocks and other debris. Landslides are often triggered by earthquakes.

What do I do after an earthquake?



- After an earthquake, the disaster may continue. Expect and prepare for potential aftershocks, landslides or even a tsunami. Tsunamis are often generated by earthquakes.
- Each time you feel an aftershock, drop, cover and hold on. Aftershocks frequently occur minutes, days, weeks and even months following an earthquake.
- Check yourself for injuries and get first aid, if necessary, before helping injured or trapped persons.
- Put on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes and work gloves to protect against injury from broken objects.
- Look quickly for damage in and around your home and get everyone out if your home is unsafe.
- Listen to a portable, battery-operated or hand-crank radio for updated emergency information and instructions.
- Check the telephones in your home or workplace to see if you can get a dial tone. Make brief calls to report life-threatening emergencies.
- Look for and extinguish small fires. Fire is the most common hazard after an earthquake.
- Clean up spilled medications, bleach, gasoline or other flammable liquids immediately.
- Open closet and cabinet doors carefully as contents may have shifted.
- Help people who require special assistance, such as infants, children and the elderly or disabled.
- Watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines and stay out of damaged areas.
- Keep animals under your direct control.
- Stay out of damaged buildings.
- If you were away from home, return only when authorities say it is safe to do so. Use extreme caution and examine walls, floors, doors, staircases and windows to check for damage.
- Be careful when driving after an earthquake and anticipate traffic light outages.

Let Your Family Know You're Safe

If your community experiences an earthquake, or any disaster, register on the American Red Cross Safe and Well Web site available through RedCross.org to let your family and friends know about your welfare. If you don't have Internet access, call 1-866-GET-INFO to register yourself and your family.



For more information on disaster and emergency preparedness, visit RedCross.org.