



Family Preparedness Activity Guide

Kids growing up in earthquake country need a well-prepared household. Having children prepare with you now will help them be calmer and more comfortable in a real emergency. Choose the activities here that work for you or your group.

5-Minute Activities

1. Practice “Drop, Cover, Hold On.”



Free/
Low-cost



Kid-friendly



Easy

Did you know that standing in a doorway or running outside is *not recommended* during an earthquake? You are more likely to be injured by falling or flying objects than to die in a collapsed building. You’ll be safest under a strong piece of furniture that will protect you from flying objects.

TO DO NOW:

Practice taking cover like this:

- **DROP** to your hands and knees
- **COVER** your head and neck with your arms. Crawl for cover under a sturdy desk or table. Stay away from windows, outdoor walls, or anything that could fall on you.
- **HOLD ON** to your shelter. Stay sheltered for 30 seconds to simulate a real earthquake. Then slowly leave your shelter and call out to family members in other rooms. Move carefully because there could be an aftershock soon!

2. Get in Touch with Your Out-of-Area Contact.



Free/
Low-cost



Kid-friendly



Easy

After a major disaster, local phone lines may be overloaded. Calls may get through to someone out-of-state when local lines are blocked. An out-of-area family member or friend can be in touch with everyone in your household. This way, you can find each other and know that everyone is safe!

Text if possible. Texts may go through even when phone lines can’t handle voice calls. Texting also keeps phone lines open for 911.



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Everyone in the family should know who the Out-of-Area Contact is (and that person should know their role in an emergency) and be prepared to call or text the contact with brief messages including:

- Where you are
- How you are
- What you plan to do next

Spend a few minutes setting up an Out-of-Area Contact now to gain peace of mind for your family in a real emergency!

TO DO NOW:

- Contact your Out-of-Area Contact with a brief message, preferably a text message if you are able to send texts. Be sure to clearly state that this is an exercise. Here is an example:

THIS IS AN EXERCISE. All four of us are OK and at home. We are staying home tonight.

- Post the Out-of-Area Contact information by every phone in your home.
- Make sure all family members have the phone number in their wallets or backpacks.
- If you do not have an Out-of-Area Contact, now is the time to choose one! Call and/or email the person you think will be best to relay information about you to other members of your family. Explain to them their role in an emergency, and get their agreement. Now send a test message.



If you do not have a mobile phone to text, or if the mobile doesn't work, get in touch using a landline, pay phone, or any other way you can. Borrow a phone if you need to. There's no way to know which forms of communication will work, so think now about having a variety of options.

3. Post an "OK" or "Need Help" Sign.



Free/
Low-cost



Kid-friendly



Easy

After a disaster you can post an "OK" or "NEED HELP" sign or door hanger in a visible location so responders will know if you need help right away.

TO DO NOW:

- Gather the members of your household to account for everyone.
- Using a thick marker, create a sign reading "OK" and one reading "NEED HELP" in large, clear letters.



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- During the exercise, post the sign in a window that is visible from the street, or on your exterior door handle if your window is not visible from the street. You can also post both a window sign and a door hanger.
- Walk out of your unit to verify that the sign is visible and readable.

You can print out a door hanger sign here (created for Los Angeles but can be used here): http://5steps.la/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/8_5Steps_Toolkit_Emergency_Door_English.pdf

Here are window signs you can print (created for British Columbia but can be used here): http://www.embc.gov.bc.ca/em/hazard_preparedness/HELP-OK_sign.pdf

4. Practice Memorizing Phone and Contact Info.



Free/
Low-cost



Kid-friendly



Easy

Children as young as 3 or 4 years old can memorize their full name, address, and emergency phone number. This information is important for them to know in case they are separated from you in an emergency.

Children will feel more calm and safe in a real emergency if they know how to get in touch with their parents or caregivers.

TO DO NOW:

Test each child in the family on their knowledge by asking them these questions:

- Can you tell me your first and last name?
- What is our address?
- What is (your grown-up's) phone number?

This is also a good time to show children your Emergency Communication Card (if you have one) and show them where the Card is kept.

5. Put a Flashlight Where Each Child Sleeps.



Free/
Low-cost



Kid-friendly



Easy

Every member of the family should have his or her own flashlight in a readily accessible spot where they sleep. Glow-in-the-dark flashlights or stickers can make it easier for children to find them in the dark.



Children will be less frightened in a power outage if they've practiced ahead of time and know how to get their flashlight and turn it on.

TO DO NOW:

Give a flashlight to each child. Together with the child, choose a good place to store the flashlight that they can easily find and reach in darkness. Check the batteries regularly.

Have the children practice finding the flashlight with the lights out.

6. Remove Falling Hazards Over Beds and Play Areas.



Free/
Low-cost



Kid-friendly

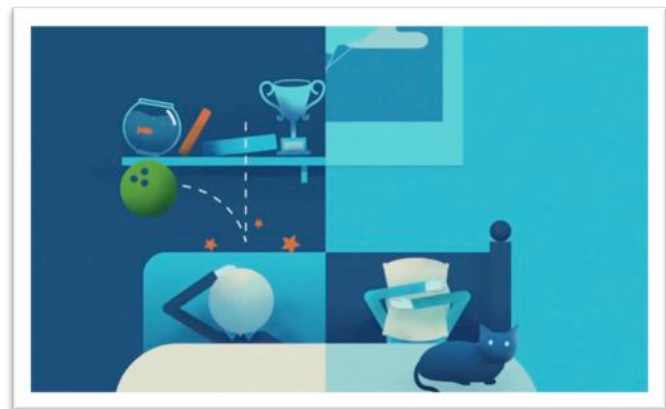


Easy

A simple way to improve the safety in your home is to move anything that can fall on a bed or play area during a quake.

TO DO NOW:

- Walk into each room of your home.
- Imagine the room is picked up by a giant and given a **huge** shake.
- What could fall on the bed or a play area? Heavy furniture, chimneys, vases & mirrors, shelves of books or toys, & art, big picture frames, or light fixtures? Move these items or reposition the beds for safety



30-Minute Activities

7. Make Emergency Communication Cards.



Free/
Low-cost



Easy

If an earthquake took place on a Thursday at 6 pm, where would you be? Where would your children be? What about a Tuesday at 10 am?

An emergency communication card provides important phone numbers and meeting place information for loved ones to stay connected and be reunited.

TO DO NOW:

Download and fill out the Emergency Communication Card template from:



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http://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/Family_Emergency_Plan.pdf

Print a copy for each family member and laminate it with clear packing tape. Put copies:

- in every purse, backpack, or briefcase
- in the car
- in a place accessible by caregivers
- attached to all of your pet carriers and emergency leashes

If you aren't able to print at home, you can also download and print these cards at any Berkeley Public Library, or you can pick up a copy at the Public Safety Building, 2011 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, 2nd Floor.

8. Choose Two Family Meeting Places.



Free/
Low-cost



Kid-
Friendly



Easy

In an emergency, families may not be able to access their home due to hazards such as downed power lines or trees. In these situations, it helps for families to have two meeting places: one near the home and one several blocks away.

TO DO NOW:

Involve your children in choosing one meeting place near home and one at least a few blocks away but within walking distance.

Good locations might be the following:

- A tree outside your house
- A park near your home
- A home of a trusted friend, neighbor, or family member
- A nearby church, community center, library, or store
- The children's school (be specific about which entry)
- Your neighborhood group meeting place

Once you have chosen two meeting places, walk to those places together to firmly establish the memory. Experiment with walking different routes to the meeting place, in case one route is blocked.

9. Check and Restock Disaster Supplies.

If your family already has a disaster supply kit, this yearly Exercise is a good time to check it and update it. You'll want to rotate out any food that's been in there for a year.



If you don't yet have a disaster supply kit, refer to the 2-hour activity to begin creating a disaster kit now.

TO DO NOW:

Check your emergency supplies such as food, water, and medicine. Make sure you have enough supplies for 3 - 14 days and that supplies are not outdated. Include pet supplies in this assessment.

Children can be included in checking stock in the disaster kit, updating their clothing supplies as they grow, and choosing what foods and toiletries should go in the kit.

10. Create a Kids-Only Disaster Kit.



Kid-Friendly

Your family's disaster kit probably contains food, water, medicine, and hygiene supplies, but does it contain a comforting stuffie or toys for the children?

Creating a special kids-only disaster kit can help kids feel more in control of scary situations and may help them cope with disasters when they happen.

TO DO NOW:

Ask each child to choose several items they want with them in a disaster. Because these items will be packed away, the kit can't include their nightly "blankie" or other toys that they keep with them at all times, but should include substitutes:

- Stuffies
- Toys and books for entertainment
- Puzzles or games
- Soft blankets or pillow
- Comforting PJs, slippers, or other comforting clothing
- Photos of family or pets
- An old handheld game, iPod, or similar portable device (with extra batteries or solar charger)

Pack the special items separately for each child (a pillowcase or old day pack can be a good size for each) and add them to your disaster supply kit.

11. Do a Home Earthquake Hazard Hunt.



Free/Low-cost



Kid-friendly



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Heavy items that can fall, shift or break in an earthquake can be dangerous for your family. A “Hazard Hunt” helps you find hazards and remove them if possible. In many cases, reducing a hazard can be as simple as moving a heavy item from a higher shelf to a lower shelf.

TO DO NOW:

Walk through each room of your home and look for safety hazards. Ask yourself these questions:

- Look for heavy items such as water heaters, tall bookshelves, televisions, heavy furniture, and wall hangings that need to be secured.
- Check and see if your cabinet doors have latches that will help prevent the doors from opening in an earthquake and the contents falling on the floor. Many items in the cabinets are glass that can end up broken on the floor creating a hazard.
- Look above beds and play areas for anything heavy that could fall in a quake, including heavy books, glass items, or brick chimneys.
- Are there heavy items that could block exit doors if they fall?

For more info see these resources:

<http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1666>

<http://www.shakeout.org/downloads/HomeHazardHunt.pdf>

Reduced-cost help is available to Berkeley households from the Community Energy Services Corporation (CESC). See information here <http://ebenergy.org/residential-services/seismic-safety-services/> or call (510) 981-7752.

Renters: To learn more about getting permission to brace heavy furniture, read the Renters’ and Apartment Dwellers’ Activity Guide.

Children can join adults in walking room by room and reviewing each room for hazards. Ask your children to imagine that each room is picked up by a giant and shaken – what would happen to the items inside?

Children may be particularly interested in checking their own rooms and the areas over their beds for falling hazards. Your kids could notice a hazard you never thought of!

12. Practice an Exit Drill in the Home (E.D.I.T.H.).



Free/Low-
cost



Kid-friendly

Waking up to a fire alarm can be disorienting for people of all ages. Practice your fire escape plan with your family now, so that getting out safely will be second nature in case of a real fire.



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TO DO NOW:

- Have a family meeting to draw up your fire escape plan, and practice it together.
- Practice not only leaving the home, but also where to meet up together outside.

Here are links for more information about home exit drills:

http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/downloads/fact_sheets/EDITHBrochure.pdf

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnHfncmPyHo>

13. Write a “Comfort Letter.”



Free/Low-
cost



Easy

Kids respond to the calm and confidence of the adults around them in emergencies. A letter from you can ease your childrens’ worries and help them cope with the situation. Many K-12 schools will hold onto comfort letters in a classroom disaster kit, or you can put the letter in your children’s bags.

TO DO NOW:

- Write a comfort letter for each child, then deliver it to their teachers, and/or put it in their bags and ask them to find it (and keep it there!).
- Keep it simple, stay positive, and try including a happy memory and photos.

Here is some sample text:

Dear Sammy,

If you are reading this, something has happened that might be scary. We want you to know that you are safe at school with your teacher.

Don't worry about us! We will come and get you as soon as we can. Remember to look at the emergency contact card that we put together, okay? We love you very much.

Love. Baba

P.S. Quigley the Cat will see you soon! Remember that time he knocked over the spaghetti? That was so funny. {include photo of pet}



2-Hour Activities

14. Make a “Preparedness Punch” Stand.



Kid-
friendly



Neighborhood
Group Activity

Children who have been involved in preparedness tasks are likely to feel calmer and more in control when an actual emergency occurs. This activity serves several functions:

- Allows children to actively take part in group preparedness activities
- Shows that kids can be an asset in an emergency and not just a group that requires help
- Familiarizes children with the command post and members of the Neighborhood Group.
- Occupies children during the exercise so that parents can take part in other activities
- Teaches a disaster skill to all participants

TO DO NOW:

Create a classic “lemonade stand” near the command post. Children can staff the stand and give away lemonade, while also teaching adults a disaster skill.

One possible disaster skill for children to teach at the stand is how to purify water with bleach. Children at the stand can demonstrate how to purify 1 gallon of water by adding 8 drops of bleach (using simulated bleach). Berkeley CERT volunteers have created materials to support this lesson.

The following materials are available for download from the Exercise website:

- “Preparedness Punch” sign
- Instructions for children
- Instructions for adults
- Water Storage handout
- Water Purification handout



Find Preparedness Punch materials for download at CityofBerkeley.info/prepare/preparedness-punch/



We have found that this activity works best with children aged at least 9-10 years old. At least one adult should remain present with the stand.

15. Start a Disaster Kit.



Kid-
friendly

Every family should have a disaster supply kit in or outside the home. Being prepared for a disaster means not only surviving the initial event, but also keeping your family calm, comfortable, fed and clean in the days and weeks following an event.

Keep your disaster kit in a place where you can be reasonably sure you'll have easy access to it if your house shifts. You also want to have it locked and not easily noticed from the street.

Your kit should contain enough food, water, clothing, medicine and supplies to last for at least three days, and preferably up to two weeks.

Involving your children in what you store for your emergency supplies gets them engaged and can help them feel more calm and prepared when a disaster strikes.

TO DO NOW:

Create an emergency kit as a family:

- Make it fun. Create a list together, then have a scavenger hunt to gather supplies for the kit. A kit checklist can be found here: <http://readymarin.org/readymarin/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/ReadyMarin-Checklist-Bundle.pdf>.
- Discuss why it is important to have each item in the kit.
- Include kids' toys and activities in your kit.
- Engage children by having them help you choose foods and extra clothes for the kit.

More resources for families can be found here: <http://readymarin.org/get-ready/ready-kids/>

Do you have any of the following items already? You can start your disaster kit now by collecting them together in one box, plastic bin or duffle bag:

- Copies of important documents such as birth certificates, adoption papers, and insurance papers
- Vaccination and microchip records for pets; extra pet food



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- A supply of prescription medications for all family members and pets (3-day minimum, 14-day recommended). Do not put prescription medications in your car or anywhere they can get hot. Keep them in a cool location.
- An extra pair of eye glasses or contact lenses and cleaning solution if you use them
- Solar-powered, hand-crank, or battery operated radio
- Flashlights and/or lamps and batteries
- Something to keep you from getting bored: cards, books, or games
- First Aid Kit
- At least three days worth of nonperishable food; water in bottles, cans, or pouches (read the Food and Water Activity Guide for more info)
- Plastic bags for trash and sanitary needs
- Work gloves

A more complete list of disaster kit items can be found here:

<http://ncdisaster.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/handbook.pdf>

More Kids' Preparedness Tips

1. Don't have a hardhat? Use a bicycle helmet. Put the kids' bike helmets on after an earthquake to help protect them during aftershocks.
2. Every public school in Berkeley has an emergency plan. Ask your child's teacher to explain it to you at the next parent-teacher conference.
3. If anyone in your family sleeps with the door closed, have a crowbar (also known as pry-bar) nearby. Doors can become jammed during earthquakes.
4. Practice texting with your kids. Texting is best in a disaster. A text uses much less bandwidth than a phone call, and a text can sometimes get through when a phone call can't.
5. If you work in San Francisco or anywhere that requires highway travel to get home, be sure that your school emergency contact list includes people who can get to the school easily. You may be delayed in a disaster.
6. Make sure every caregiver knows "Drop, Cover, and Hold On."
7. Disaster planning can sometimes fall down during summer months when children are in a variety of summer schools and camps. Be sure that you know the emergency plan of each camp and your contact list includes an out-of-area contact, even if the camp doesn't ask for one.



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