

Report to PARENTS

Prep for Emergencies

School safety has recently been at the forefront of everyone's minds. Schools have emergency plans to keep students safe from threats of violence or natural disasters—and your family should, too. Preparation is key to ensure that you and your family members can react quickly and calmly if a serious threat arises. Take these steps to ensure your family is prepared for emergencies.

Talk it out. Discuss, in an age-appropriate way, the emergencies your family might encounter, including the natural disasters your area may be susceptible to. You may be reluctant to talk about emergencies with your children because you don't want to alarm them. But discussing situations ahead of time will not only help your children know what to do, it will also help them cope with the stress if something does happen.

Know your school's plan. Every school should have an emergency plan in place. Make sure you and your child know what students should do and how parents will be notified of a crisis.

Memorize the essentials. Make sure your children know their full name, address, phone number, and parents' full names. Kindergarteners should have this memorized before their first day of school.

Know the numbers. Teach your children how to dial 911, but stress that they should only do so in case of an emergency. Post a list in your kitchen of home, cell, and work numbers for parents, caregivers, and trusted neighbors. Give copies to teachers and the school office, childcare providers, and other emergency contacts.

Make a plan. Create your family's escape plan to be used in case of a fire or other home emergency. Establish a meeting place outside your home, and make sure to devise a secondary plan in case the first exit is blocked or unsafe. In your plan, address the needs of pets and any family members who need extra assistance.

Practice the plan. Conduct fire drills and emergency evacuation drills. Teach older children how to use a fire

extinguisher, or sign them up for a first-aid class. Quiz your family members every six months to make sure they remember what to do.



Build a disaster kit. Make sure you have a stocked first-aid kit at home, and gather the supplies for an emergency kit, including water, nonperishable food, a flashlight, medicines, and batteries.

Check your equipment. Make sure your home's smoke detectors are always in working order and that your fire extinguishers have not passed their expiration date and are

easily accessible. Buy drop-down window ladders if your apartment or bedrooms are not on the first floor.

Web Resources

Use **Ready.gov's** disaster supply list to stock your kit.
www.ready.gov/kit

Learn facts about specific types of emergencies on the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's** emergency page.
www.emergency.cdc.gov/planning/

The American Red Cross has checklists for every type of disaster (in a variety of languages).
www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster-safety-library