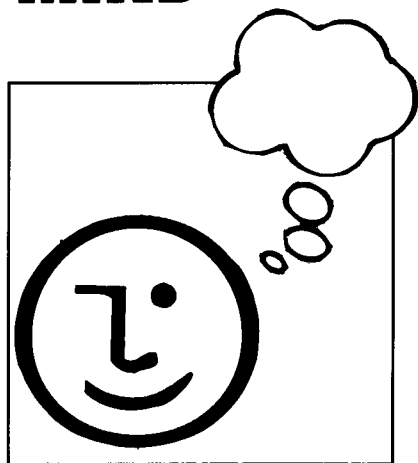


ESP FOCUS



PREPARING YOUR MIND



WHY

Knowing what to do can reduce your fear!

Damaging earthquakes and aftershocks can rattle the nerves of adults and children. You can't do anything to prevent earthquakes and aftershocks, but you can take steps before an earthquake to help reduce its stressful effects.

Incorporate into your family earthquake plan the recommendations on the reverse side of this Focus Sheet. The recommendations have been extracted and adapted from a curriculum developed by Lissa Peterson Samuel, an instructor at Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena. Samuel's Master's thesis focuses on helping to prepare children for an earthquake. Following these tips can reduce anxiety and provide a sense of security for you and your children.

Courtesy of

County of Los Angeles - Office of Emergency Management

SEPTEMBER

● **Learn what earthquakes are and what causes them.** Explain why the ground and buildings shake. Go to a museum, a theme park, or an expo that has an earthquake simulator so everyone can experience the shaking sensation. Remind everyone that the shaking will stop. Incorporate the discussion into everyday events. Read stories or sing songs and let your children ask questions. Learn the difference between fact and fiction.

● **Discuss aftershocks.** Talk about the possibility that aftershocks as strong as the earthquake itself may occur and continue for some time. Make sure everyone understands that aftershocks are normal.

● **Develop a family earthquake plan.** Develop your earthquake plan and conduct a home hazard hunt as family projects. Eliminate potential hazards in your home. Check out possible evacuation routes. Locate utility shutoff valves and teach responsible family members how to turn them off if necessary. Identify an out-of-town contact and discuss plans for reuniting if family members are separated. Discuss the possibility that it may take time for everyone to reunite. Talk about plans for reuniting if your children are at school and you are unable to pick them up. Determine alternates. Also discuss plans with your children's schools.

● **Assemble earthquake kits.** Include water, food, battery-operated flashlights and radios, medications, first aid kits, as well as cooking and sanitation supplies. Also include food for pets and persons with special dietary needs, as well as photos, games, treats, and other items that will reduce anxiety.

● **Learn first aid and CPR.** Enroll responsible family members in a first aid and CPR class. Practice with friends and family members.

● **Learn to operate a fire extinguisher.** Show responsible family members where fire extinguishers are located and demonstrate how to use them. Have family members simulate operating one.

● **Practice earthquake procedures.** Conduct earthquake drills during the day and at night to test your plan. Have everyone duck, cover, and hold, or physically place themselves in a "safe" spot. Doing so will enable everyone to react instinctively when an

earthquake strikes. Check for "damage" to your home and for gas "leaks." Simulate turning off the utilities if there's a "leak." Practice evacuating the house. Call your out-of-state contact to ensure that the number is correct and to remind your contact of their role.

● **Conduct camp outs.** Conduct "camp outs" in the back yard so that everyone can become accustomed to living outdoors. Cook and eat food that will be part of your emergency food supply. Include foods that you like. Practice using a toilet that is inoperable by lining the toilet with a heavy plastic trash bag. Make sure you have plenty of disposable diapers for infants and toddlers. During the night, have everyone assemble a flashlight, replace the batteries, and operate the flashlight.

● **Accustom everyone to living without electricity.** Go through an entire evening without using electricity to prepare everyone--especially children--for the possibility of having to live without it. Conduct a "flashlight" walk around the block; hold a candlelight or "flashlight" dinner; tell stories instead of watching television.

After an earthquake, monitor family members--particularly children--for behavioral changes, including withdrawal from family and friends, overeating or loss of appetite, disobedience, and antisocial behavior. Parents and teachers can respond to such problems by encouraging interaction with family members and friends, providing additional attention and physical comfort, and by providing structured but undemanding responsibilities. Contact your local mental health agency for more information.

Extracted and adapted from "What To Expect After A Disaster: Typical Children's Reactions," jointly developed by the National Institute of Mental Health and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health.

This action sheet is produced as part of the Earthquake Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an awareness campaign designed to increase individual and home earthquake preparedness. ESP was developed by the County of Los Angeles and is coordinated by the California Office of Emergency Services (OES) and representatives from Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties.



"Preparedness is the Key For 1993"



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