



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Creating Your Family Emergency Plan

Do you and your keiki know what to do in case of an emergency? It's important to make a family plan now so that you know what to do, how to find each other, and how to communicate in an emergency.

Start with these three steps:

- ♥ **Know your contacts.** Electricity and communication networks could be disrupted in an emergency. In addition to your contacts on your phone or computer, create a paper copy of your important contact information (phone number and email address), such as family, doctors, or schools. Make sure everyone carries a copy (in a backpack or wallet). You should also post a copy in your home, such as your refrigerator or family bulletin board.
- ♥ **Make a home plan.** Decide on a familiar place to go for protection or to reunite. Identify the following places for different emergency situations:
 - Indoors – In case the danger is outdoors, identify a small, interior, windowless room in the house such as a closet or bathroom,
 - In your neighborhood – If you need to leave your home, identify a big tree, mailbox at the end of the driveway, or a neighbor's house, and
 - Outside your neighborhood – If you can't get back to your home, choose a library or family friend's home. Make sure everyone knows the address of the meeting place and ways you would get there.
- ♥ **Build a "To Go" kit** stocked with food, water, and other supplies that you may need for several days. Place the items in an airtight plastic bag or in easy-to-carry containers or a



duffle bag. Use the resources from Ready.gov for a detailed list of supplies.

In addition to the information above, this newsletter will share how to develop a family emergency plan, giving tips on how to plan with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in mind.

This newsletter includes:

- ♥ **Age-specific information and suggestions** about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ **Featured activities** for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of your child's development by doing these activities together,
- ♥ **Resources:** for more information, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

Infants

In any type of stressful situation, including an emergency, infants will show their distress. Some will cry loudly; others may hide under a crib; others may show aggression, such as hitting or biting. Many young children exhibit a combination of all of these behaviors. Your consistent, responsive, warm, and nurturing caregiving provides calm reassurance so infants know they are safe.

As you prepare your family plan, think about addressing your infant's needs:

- ♥ **Limited mobility:** In an emergency, infants need to be carried to safety. Items such as evacuation cribs, pack & play with wheels, or strollers can assist. However, do practice runs with bags of rice in place of your child to check that it fits through your door and that you can successfully push it over any terrain to your meeting place.
- ♥ **Comfort items:** Think of ways to keep a routine for your infant in an emergency. A familiar blanket, pacifier, stuffed animal, or



book can help infants soothe themselves in a stressful situation. These items reassure infants that you are there and they are safe.

- ♥ **Nutritional needs:** Think of your particular situation and plan to include these items in your emergency supply kit: nursing pad, breast pump, and ready-to-feed instant formula. You may also consider a small camp stove, fuel, and a pot for boiling water which you can use to make water safe and to sanitize infant feeding supplies.

Activity for Infants: Soothing Rhymes

(Adapted by Vroom)

What You Need:

None

What to Do:

1. When your infant seems fussy, try singing a rhyme or a song.
2. As you sing, look to see if she calms down when your voice is quiet or if she responds to a big facial expression and an enthusiastic voice.
3. Try different rhymes and songs to find her favorites. Here's one to try:

You are my sunshine

My only sunshine

You make me happy

When skies are grey

You'll never know, dear

How much I love you

Please don't take my sunshine away.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



Toddlers

The toddler years are a time when they are building skills in all areas. They understand the word “no” but don’t fully understand what is safe and not safe. You still have to provide them with lots of supervision, guidance, and reminders. Therefore, now is a great time to introduce safety tips as well as the people who keep them safe. Here are some ways to do that:

- ♥ **Introduce first responders** (firefighters, EMTs with an ambulance, police officers). If you can visit a fire station or see an emergency vehicle, your toddler can learn about the equipment the responders might use in an emergency and she can see them in full uniform. In addition, you can introduce “911” as a way to call for help.
- ♥ **Use safety devices.** Get and use a smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector. Let her hear the smoke detector, talk about what to do in an emergency (e.g., get low and go), and lead her to your meeting places. Explain that this



was a practice session and if there was a real emergency, first responders would help.

- ♥ **Start with simple rules** such as using walking feet in the house or holding hands with an adult when crossing the street. When talking about emergencies, keep it simple such as when the alarm sounds, find an adult and go to your meeting place.

Activity for Toddlers: *All About Me Book (for Emergencies)*

What You Need:

Index cards or blank sheets of paper, large metal rings, string, or yarn, hole puncher, pencil, pen, or washable markers

What to Do:

1. After talking about safety, have your toddler create a book about themselves and ways to be safe. For example, write her first and last name and have her draw pictures of what helps her feel safe.
2. Ask her about the pictures she drew and as she describes what was drawn, write down what she says.
3. Next, have her draw people she would call in an emergency. Write down the corresponding phone number (e.g., 911, mom’s phone number).
4. Put the book together by making two holes with a hole puncher on the top of the paper. Fasten the pages together with large rings, or tie them together with string or yarn.
5. Read the book together or ask your toddler to tell you about the pictures in the book. Keep the book in a place she can access and use this as part of your safety activities to remind her about how to be safe. As she gets older and more familiar with the safety procedures, teach her the important information that can help in an emergency (name, address, contact information, and dialing 911).



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

Preschoolers

Preschoolers can contribute to emergency preparedness in different ways. When children are involved in emergency preparedness planning, they know what to expect which can make it less scary. Here are ways your preschooler can help:

- ♥ **Learn about safety together.** Books about emergencies and disasters can help children learn about what causes them and what to expect. This can also help them be less scared. For example, if children know about how hurricanes form and what steps to take to stay safe, they will feel more confident in the event of a hurricane watch or warning.
- ♥ **Talk about your plan.** Preschoolers can help by identifying evacuation routes and building your supply kit (see activity below).



- ♥ **Practice your plan.** One way to prepare is to do drills or run-throughs with your child. You can reinforce the experience by creating a practice drill book where you take pictures of elements of the drill (e.g., smoke detector sounds, where to exit, meeting spot) and review it with the whole family.

Activity for Preschoolers: *Emergency Supply Scavenger Hunt*

Adapted from Ready.gov

What You Need:

- Airtight plastic bag or in easy-to-carry containers such as plastic bins or a duffel bag
- Access to emergency supplies around the home



What to Do:

1. Together with your preschooler, build a family emergency kit. Refer to the Emergency Supply List and collect items from around the home. Make it a scavenger hunt that includes items she is familiar with such as:
 - 3-day supply of non-perishable food (dried fruit, canned fish, peanut butter, etc.)
 - Can opener
 - First aid kit
 - Sleeping bag or warm blanket for everyone in your family
 - Change of clothes
 - Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap
 - Water
 - Flashlights with batteries
 - Books, games, or puzzles
2. After the items are found, talk about how these supplies will keep your family safe.
3. Together, gather the items up in the containers and choose a safe place that your family can easily find the items in an emergency.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

Physical Development

- ♥ Learn to use her body with intention
- ♥ Develop eye-hand coordination

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Develop her unique identity
- ♥ Develop a close bond with you

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Increase her observation, listening, and understanding skills
- ♥ Build verbal skills and vocabulary

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Develop her thinking and problem-solving skills
- ♥ Understand cause and effect



Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons such as math (quantities, measurement), science (how matter changes), fine motor (stirring, pouring), and literacy (print awareness). As you make this recipe with your child, talk about kitchen safety. Show her how to handle items safely and allow her to do as much as she is capable of. Praise her efforts, and ask questions throughout the process to encourage her thinking skills. Most of all, have fun!

Dried Fruit and Cereal Snack Mix

Adapted from *Child Nutrition Recipe Box* www.theicn.org

Ingredients:

- 1 cup + 2 T apples, dried, slices or rings, 1/2" chopped
- 1 cup + 2 T cherries, red tart, dried, whole, without pits
- 1 1/2 cups shredded wheat cereal, frosted, bite-sized
- 3 cups toasted whole grain oats cereal, o-shaped
- 1 1/2 cups multigrain cereal squares



Directions:

1. This crunchy snack mix is made with cereals and dried fruit which are non-perishable items that you can keep in your emergency supply kit.
2. In a medium bowl, have your child help pour and mix all the ingredients together.
3. Talk about the different shapes, colors, and textures you see.
4. Serve 1-1/4 cups per person. This recipe makes 6 servings.

Resources

Ready Kids

<https://www.ready.gov/kids/prepare-your-family>

The official site of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is where you'll find materials to build your family emergency plan, information for how you can help children cope if they've experienced a disaster, and tips to help your children be ready when disaster strikes.

Sesame Workshops - Emergencies

<https://sesameworkshop.org/topics/emergencies/>

Resources to help families gather supplies to talk about and prepare for emergencies.



Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the **Hawai'i State Public Library** www.librarieshawaii.org.

Infants and Toddlers

Rapid Responders by Finn Coyle

Community helpers keep us all safe and they have special machines that help as well. Learn about police cars, coast guard cutters, ambulances, rescue helicopters, and fire trucks that serve the community in their own way.

When I Feel Scared by Cornelia Maude Spelman

This book will help children address emotions of feeling scared and fearful and help them learn some new ways to cope with being afraid. As you talk about safety and emergency preparedness, this book will help keiki think of ways to think of ways to feel better.

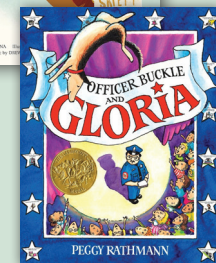
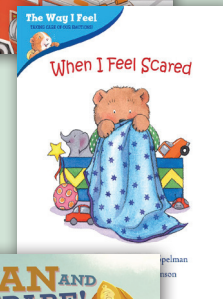
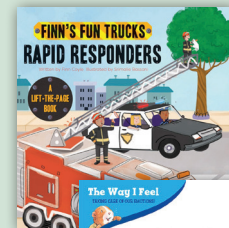
Preschoolers

Plan and Prepare by Charles Ghigna

This sing-along picture book has a catchy song to remind keiki how to plan and prepare for the possibility of a fire.

Officer Buckle and Gloria by Peggy Rathmann

Learn safety tips from Officer Buckle and his dog, Gloria, who acts out his safety tips with silly demonstrations behind Officer Buckle. Together, they make learning about how to be safe fun!



Learning to Grow is a project of the University of Hawai'i, Windward Community College, with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services. Visit our website at www.learningtogrowhawaii.org or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/learningtogrowhawaii and Instagram @uhlearningtogrow