

Children's reactions to earthquakes

Children will usually become frightened, tearful and clinging. They will want their parent(s). Even toilet-trained children may have accidents.

It is natural for children and adults to be afraid.



1. Let the children know that you understand why they are scared. Comfort them, repeat that their parents know where they are or where they may go. Their parents will come to get them as soon as they can. They are safe with you. You will look after them.

2. Encourage the children to talk about their fears. Help them sort out what is real from what is unreal. Encourage them to draw or write about their feelings. Children are less afraid of things that they understand. Return to routine as soon as possible.

3. Parents frequently look to you for advice, so help them understand their children's behavior. Some parents get angry or upset when their children act frightened. Tell the parents that the behavior is natural and will not last. If the child continues to be disturbed for a long period of time, the family may need to seek professional counseling.

"I had lots of bad dreams after."

Carlos, age 4

April 25, 1992
Earthquake