



## PREPAREDNESS TIPS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

### Beyond Back to School Night: Helping Students and their Families Prepare for Emergencies

#### ARE YOU PREPARED?

Would you know what to do if a disaster struck or an emergency occurred when your child was in school? Where will your child go if the school needs to be evacuated in the middle of the day? What will you do once you are reunited? What if your school is closed for a few days? Do you know how often your child takes part in a fire or other type of drill? Do you know how that makes your child feel?

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- About 50 million children are enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools across the country
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) wants to help ensure you, your children, and the schools they attend are safer during an emergency by helping them prepare before one occurs.



### What to Ask

This toolkit was designed to reinforce the emergency management activities taking place in your student's school. One way to learn more about your school's emergency management planning is by talking to school personnel. Here are some questions you may want to ask at Back to School Night, during PTA meetings, and throughout the year:

- How can I find out about closures, reopening, and evacuations?
- If my child is evacuated off-site, where will he or she be taken? What are your procedures for reunification?
- How do you explain alerts or codes and drills to students and their families?
- Are parents and guardians notified every time an alert is sounded? If not, when?
- How many fire drills do you conduct each year? Do you conduct other kinds of drills (e.g., tornado, earthquake)?
- Do you have emergency kits stored around the school with supplies and food to be given to my child during an evacuation or shelter-in-place event?
- Are school staff trained in basic emergency management? CPR?

**“The ideal scenario is children will experience several years of preparedness education”**

*-- Bringing Youth Preparedness Education to the Forefront*

### Family Emergency Planning

Similar to schools, families need plans in the event of an emergency. Does your family have a plan? For example, if you had to evacuate from your home quickly, where would you meet? [Ready.gov](#) shares information on [being informed](#) about different disasters, [making a family plan](#), [building a disaster kit](#), and [getting involved](#) in community preparedness.

**Communication.** FEMA's Ready.gov provides some great [family communication tips](#) for you to consider before an emergency occurs. And we know that traditional communication channels might be overloaded just after a disaster—you can download and print this sample [Family Emergency Plan](#) where you can list contact information, evacuation locations, meeting places, and other key information for you and your family to help with post-emergency communication and reunification if separated. We also suggest you subscribe to your school's alerts and warning system which would allow you to receive automated voice mail and/or text messages or emails in the event of an emergency. If your school does not use a system, check with your county and subscribe to theirs.

**Practice Makes Perfect.** When is the last time you ran a fire drill in your home? [Here are tips](#) on how to create and practice a fire escape drill at home.

**TIP: Don't limit your practice to fire drills—add to your list tornadoes, earthquakes, hurricanes, or any other hazards or risks for your community (include shelter-in-place drills) and you'll be ready for all hazards!**

**Rainy Day Activities...and More!** Looking for fun and educational preparedness activities? [Sesame Street](#) characters can help your young one learn about preparedness. And [Flat Stanley and Flat Stella](#) are always fun friends to include in drills and planning activities. Take a look through [FEMA's Catalogue of Youth Disaster Preparedness Education Resources](#) which has a list of activities categorized by age group.

And what teen doesn't like zombies? See the Centers for Disease Control and Preparedness' [Zombie Preparedness](#) program for podcasts and other age-appropriate materials.



You can also learn about [Teen Community Emergency Preparedness Teams](#) (Teen CERT) as they gain momentum across the country. Teen CERT trains and empowers youth through emergency preparedness and response training. [Materials specifically geared toward parents and guardians](#) can also be found on the Department of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Website at <http://rems.ed.gov/>.

## FEMA YOUTH PREPAREDNESS

Youth preparedness is a FEMA priority; we've provided technical assistance workshops nationwide in preparedness education, adaptability, partnership engagement, promotion, fundraising, inclusion and evaluation and sustainability. For information on implementing a youth preparedness program click the youth preparedness link below.

**Get Involved, Share Your Stories!** Do you want to learn more about what other parents and guardians like you are doing to increase school and youth emergency preparedness? Do you want to share your own story about a program you've been impressed with or found success with?

Visit [Ready.gov](#), where you can register for news updates and sign up to be a [National Preparedness Month Coalition member](#). [FEMA's Collaboration Community](#) allows users to submit new emergency preparedness ideas; [this link](#) takes you directly to those focused on youth. Finally, check out the [FEMA Blog](#), where you can learn more about the FEMA Administrator's work, and submit your comments and ideas. .

## Links to More Information

- [Citizen Corps](#)
- [Community Emergency Response Teams \(CERT\)](#)
- [FEMA Youth Preparedness](#)
- [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools \(REMS\) Technical Assistance Center](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education \(ED\) Emergency Planning Website](#)
- [Ready Campaign](#)
- Email: [citizencorps@dhs.gov](mailto:citizencorps@dhs.gov)