



EARTHQUAKES



Families play a critical role in helping to reestablish a sense of normalcy and safety for a child before, during and after a disaster occurs. Please take a moment to read through these suggestions on how to support your child.

▶ [Look for links to more activities and facts on our website](#)



DEVELOPMENTAL EXPLANATION



How to Explain Earthquakes to Children

Be honest with children and keep explanations simple. Encourage children to ask questions and lead the discussion.

Earthquakes are the earth's way of releasing stress and energy. The surface of the earth is covered in tectonic plates, these are like mismatched puzzle pieces that don't fit together. When tectonic plates move past one another they can get stuck. The energy that it takes to unstick the tectonic plates creates an earthquake.

▶ [Additional Facts About Earthquakes](#)

PREPARATION



Helping Children Prepare for Earthquakes

Encourage children to participate in planning as a family. Preparing for and talking about earthquakes helps children cope with fears and anxiety. Practicing the safety drill Drop, Cover and Hold On with children helps them feel prepared. Making it a game builds confidence to know how to respond in an emergency.

▶ [Go Bag Suggestions](#) | ▶ [Safety Drill Game](#)

COPING



All Feelings Are Okay

Using the following ▶ [Tools for Caregivers](#) will help children to feel safe, calm and relaxed. Talking with children about family values/faith/love/traditions will help children feel connected and support healing. Encourage children to think about what helps them feel hopeful, who helps them feel hopeful and how to help others regain hope?

▶ [Hope Activity](#)

PLAY



Play Is The Best Way

Play is how children understand their world and learn to process difficult experiences. Some children may want to "recreate" the event that has occurred. It is typical for children to build structures only to knock them down or bury toys and dolls to work through their anxiety and grief. Allow them the time, space and materials to do so.

EXPRESSIVE ART



Express Yourself

Children need opportunities to express themselves. Encourage children to express emotions through movement, play, art or talking with a trusted adult. Using broken dishes, cups, and other household items or even torn paper to create art encourages understanding that what is broken can be rebuilt as something new.

▶ [Earthquake Activity](#)