

Fact Sheet— Babysitter's Disaster Plan

Your babysitter's disaster plan should include ways to reduce hazards, a family contact list and a supplies kit to meet the needs of everyone in your care in case of a disaster or emergency.

It is very important that you discuss all of the steps in your disaster plan with the families for whom you babysit and to practice safety drills in the event of an emergency. Planning and practicing will keep everyone safe.

1. Connect with the Existing Family Plan

- Know the disaster plan of the family you are babysitting.
- If an emergency happens while you are babysitting, follow the directions of the family disaster plan.
- If the family you are babysitting does not have a disaster plan—
 1. Share your plan with the family, so that the parents and children know what to expect if you are babysitting during an emergency.
 2. Apply what you learned in the handbook and in class about leadership skills and styles to help the family create one.

2. Prepare for an Emergency

- Keep an up-to-date copy of the family emergency contact list and communication plan with the family's disaster plan and with your disaster plan.
- Know the location of the family's disaster supplies kit, if the family has one, or keep your own disaster supplies kit ready for use. (**Note:** The Babysitting Essentials Kit can be the beginning of a disaster supplies kit.)
- Check and restock the disaster supplies kit regularly.

3. Know What to Do If a Disaster Strikes

- Know if you should stay where you are or go to a safer place.
- Drop, cover and hold on if there is an **earthquake** or **explosion**.
- Move to a safe place, in the basement and/or away from windows, and drop, cover and hold on if there is a **tornado**.
- Get out and get help, if there is a **fire**.
- Get to higher ground, if there is danger of **flooding**.
- Get inside, if you hear **thunder**.
- Stay inside, if there is **danger outside**.
- Activate and follow the family emergency contact list.

4. Take Action After the Emergency

- Supervise the children at all times. Never leave the children alone.
- Check everyone around you: give first aid when possible and get help for seriously injured people.
- Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes to avoid getting hurt from debris, if available.
- If the building is unsafe for any reason, get everyone outside quickly.
- If you smell gas or suspect a leak, get everyone outside quickly.

Next steps you should take include—

- Listening to radio and television reports for instructions. Follow the directions of local emergency officials.
- Carefully confining or securing any pets with a carrier or leash. Remember, they may be frightened and might bite or scratch.
- Staying away from downed power lines.
- Expecting aftershocks that might cause more damage, if there was an earthquake. Stay away from things that can fall on you or cause injury.

For more detailed information about a disaster plan, check the American Red Cross Web site at www.redcross.org/images/pdfs/code/family_disaster_plan.pdf

Make a copy of this sheet to share with families that you babysit and keep your copy with you whenever you babysit.