

The monthly FEMA *Children & Disasters Newsletter* is a resource for youth preparedness practitioners, educators, parents, children, and teens. It shares timely research, examples of successful youth preparedness programs, safety tips, and resources related to youth preparedness. To subscribe to the *Children & Disasters Newsletter*, please visit www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness.

CHILDREN & DISASTERS NEWSLETTER



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Welcome to the September issue of the *Children and Disasters Newsletter* and National Preparedness Month! In this newsletter, we provide you with information about getting involved in the America's PrepareAthon! National Day of Action on September 30. We also recap this summer's unveiling of the *National Strategy for Youth Preparedness Education*. As students return to the classroom this fall, we provide resources for creating a multi-hazard emergency plan for your school. We also highlight Save the Children's 2014 Disaster Report Card and link to a FEMA Youth Preparedness Council member's recent blog post about her experience during the August 24 California earthquake. Lastly, we share a series of stories from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that highlight the actions that doctors and families can take to improve disaster preparedness for children.

AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON! DAY OF ACTION SEPTEMBER 30

On September 30, individuals from across the United States will participate in preparedness drills, group discussions, and exercises as part of this year's second [America's PrepareAthon!](#) National Day of Action. This event represents a fantastic opportunity for youth to practice preparedness measures for hazards in their communities. The hazards for the fall National Day of Action are:

- Earthquake
- Flood
- Hurricane
- Tornado
- Wildfire
- Winter Storm

The [America's PrepareAthon! website](#) provides instructions for educational discussions, drills, and exercises for each featured hazard, and there are even materials specifically tailored to institutions of higher education, K-12 schools, workplaces, and local leaders.

Across the country, people will plan community events; participate in online discussion forums; plan for hazards related to their school, workplace, or community; conduct drills; and hold critical conversations with neighbors, family, friends, and colleagues about disaster preparedness. Be sure to [register your America's PrepareAthon! activity!](#)

Please email prepareathon@fema.gov if you have any specific questions.

NATIONAL STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN YOUTH PREPAREDNESS

This July, FEMA unveiled the *National Strategy For Youth Preparedness Education* (National Strategy). The National Strategy, which was created in coordination with the American Red Cross and the U.S. Department of Education, aims to engage government and non-governmental organizations in order to provide comprehensive disaster education to children nationwide. The National Strategy offers private and public sector organizations the ability to publicly collaborate in this movement.

Youth comprise approximately 25 percent of the U.S. population and preparing young people is one of the most effective ways to create more resilient communities for the future. The National Strategy seeks to achieve its goals through the fulfillment of nine priority steps, with each priority step associated with one or more “pillars” or activities.

For more information about the National Strategy, including a list of the nine priority steps, please visit the National Strategy tab at <http://www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness> or contact the FEMA Youth Preparedness Technical Assistance Center at FEMA-Youth-Preparedness@fema.dhs.gov.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS STORIES: LESSONS LEARNED

The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) (AAP) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) collaborated to compile stories that highlight lessons learned or steps that doctors and families can take to improve disaster preparedness for children. Here are a few samples:

- [Children Are Not Little Adults](#): Dr. Steven Krug discusses how children have a number of unique characteristics that make them different from adults in disaster situations. He shares how pediatricians can help respond to and plan for disasters, so that the distinct medical needs of children are met.
- [The Storm is Over, But Not Its Effects](#): Dr. Grant Allen shares his experiences with the tornadoes that struck Alabama in 2011. He discusses how pediatricians can help families cope with the emotional trauma of a disaster by helping them prepare in advance.
- [Pediatrician for Preparedness](#): Dr. Karen Landers suggests that pediatricians join emergency planning efforts in their communities and states to ensure the needs of children are addressed in disasters.
- [Remembering Boston](#): Dr. Natalie Stavas recalls her response to the Boston Marathon bombings. Her story emphasizes the importance of pre-disaster planning and the need to leverage medical skills in disaster situations.

- [Mental Health and Recovery](#): Dr. Dennis Cooley remembers his experience with the 2011 Joplin, Missouri, tornadoes. His story reinforces the importance of understanding the psychological effects of a disaster.

The CDC has also compiled stories from families sharing their preparedness experiences. These are available at [Real Stories - Special Needs and Emergency Preparedness](#).

For more information, please e-mail DisasterReady@aap.org.

SAVE THE CHILDREN RELEASES ANNUAL DISASTER REPORT CARD

Each year, Save the Children evaluates the 50 states and the District of Columbia on their efforts to protect children before disasters. This year's report also includes the results of a survey of parents about their attitudes and actions related to their children's preparedness. Save the Children has developed an [interactive map](#) on which you can view the results for individual states, and [highlights key report findings on its website](#).

By signing the [Promise to Prepare](#), you can also gain access to the full report, *What are You Waiting For?: 2014 National Report Card on Protecting Children in Disasters*.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL IS A GREAT TIME TO PREPARE

The beginning of the school year is a great time for schools to review or develop their emergency operations plans. To support schools in this planning process, FEMA offers a [Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools](#) training. The accompanying comprehensive [Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools Toolkit](#) is available online.

The Toolkit provides course materials as well as sample exercises and checklists, planning materials, and a variety of other resources. The website also includes a [Sample School Emergency Operations Plan](#). As you begin to flesh out your plan, FEMA recommends preparing for the following scenarios: floods, severe storms, fires, intruders, chemical hazards, civil disturbances, and terrorist attacks. Depending on where you live, you may also want to consider planning for region-specific scenarios (e.g., hurricanes on the Gulf Coast).

Think your school is prepared? Join the Red Cross' [Ready Rating™ Program](#) to find out. The Ready Rating™ program provides preparedness tools and resources to schools, as well as businesses and other organizations. The first step in joining the Ready Rating™ program is to take the "123 Assessment" to measure your school's level of preparedness.

FEMA YOUTH PREPAREDNESS COUNCIL MEMBER WRITES ABOUT HER EXPERIENCE WITH CALIFORNIA EARTHQUAKE

When a 6.0 magnitude earthquake rocked Northern California on August 24, Navjot Hansra, a Region IX representative of the FEMA Youth Preparedness Council, put her preparedness training to use to keep her family safe. Once the earthquake passed, however, Navjot used the incident to spread the

word to others about being prepared.

Navjot is also a member of the American Red Cross National Youth Council, and she penned a [blog post](#) for that organization based on her reaction to the earthquake. In addition to recounting the harrowing experience, Navjot provided some valuable preparedness tips for readers.

CONTACT US

Email: FEMA-Youth-Preparedness@fema.dhs.gov

Online at <http://www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness>

Disclaimer: The reader recognizes that the federal government provides links and informational data on various disaster preparedness resources and events and does not endorse any non-federal events, entities, organizations, services or products. Please let us know about other events and services related to youth preparedness that could be included in future newsletters by contacting FEMA-Youth-Preparedness@fema.dhs.gov.

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