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Get Out: Preparing Families for Emergencies

Megan Fletcher

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Abstract

The focus of this Capstone project is on the effects of natural disasters on families and young children. This is an important issue because parents have to prepare to take care of themselves and their children if an emergency strikes. An argument is made that preparing children for emergencies can reduce the negative physical and emotional impact of the traumatic event. Considerations of the issue, should include the perspective of parents at Mimi's Daycare in California because they are primary caregivers of young children. Three action options emerged from the data and explored as ways to address the issue presented: educating parents on how to communicate with their children when a disaster happens, providing parents with a list of items to put in an emergency kit, and inspiring parents to create an evacuation plan and practice it with their family. Based on the findings, action was taken to provide parents with resources that will help them prepare their families for emergencies.

Get Out: Preparing Families for Emergencies

You're woken up by a thumping sound on your front door, the knocking then moves to your bedroom window. As you open your eyes, you notice an orange haze, red and blue lights are flashing through your window. You roll over to look at the clock, it's 2:37 a.m. As you wake up, you notice the strong smell of smoke and you realize what's happening. A fire. You wake up your partner sleeping next to you and run to the front door. As you open it, you are momentarily blinded by a rush of smoke. A fireman in an airmask is standing at your door but all you can focus on is the chaotic scene and wall of fire behind him. He tells you to evacuate immediately and you don't have much time. You throw on the closest pair of shoes you can find, and grab your two children. Without a moment to hesitate or think about what to pack, you get into your car and strap the kids in their car seat. Terrified, shaking, and confused you start driving; without a destination, following the cars of your neighbors and friends, just simply far enough away from the fire to keep your family safe. Eventually you get information about the nearest evacuation center. Once you arrive, you are greeted by dozens of other families who are grieving, scared, lost. Early the next morning you receive information that your entire neighborhood has been engulfed by the fire and none of the houses are in tact. You've lost everything; pictures, furniture, clothes, and toys. With just the clothes on your back and the car you drove, you have to rebuild your entire life and replace everything you own, no idea where to start.

Now, imagine that scenario a little differently. In your rush to leave the house you grab the emergency kit that your family put together. Inside, you have comfort items for your children, emergency contacts, insurance information, a flash drive full of pictures and important documents, and food and water. The food and water in your emergency pack is enough to keep you and your family alive until help arrives. The comfort items and toys for your children help

calm them down and reduce the stress and trauma of the situation. The file containing your insurance information helps you start a claim faster and will allow you to begin rebuilding your home and your life. None of these items can stop the fire. However, they can provide a piece of mind and a place to begin getting your life back.

Literature Synthesis and Integration

Chaotic scenes from natural disasters have recently plastered our social media news feeds, tv news channels, and newspapers. Wildfires have plagued many states and caused millions of dollars in damage, most recently the fires raging Northern California. The death and injury rate continues to rise in Mexico as a result of the earthquake in September 2017. Although these natural disasters cannot be prevented, people can reduce the damage and risk of harm by being prepared. Parents have an extra task of making sure they are prepared to handle emergencies and prepared to take care of their children when a disaster happens. In this literature review, the researcher analyzes the negative effects on children who experience natural disasters, how families should prepare children for natural disasters, and how parents should communicate with children when they occur.

Why is it an Issue?

California's residents are most susceptible to earthquakes and wildfires ("Plan Ahead for Disasters", n.d.). An earthquake is defined as a sudden rapid shaking caused by a shift in the upper most layer of the earth's surface. The main shock is often followed by episodes of minor shaking called aftershocks. Injuries related to earthquakes are most often caused by falling objects. Wildfires occur in natural areas such as forests, grasslands, or prairies and cause the most damage when urban neighborhoods are bordered by these natural areas. Wildfires can cause extensive property damage, and the smoke can cause severe health concerns. Wildfires can start

naturally, usually from lightning. However, they are usually started by human on accidents from cigarettes, barbecues, or campfires.

One quarter of the United States population is made up of children (“Children & Disasters”, n.d.). And fourteen percent of children between the ages two and seventeen will experience some type of natural disaster (“Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster”, n.d.). According to the National Commission on Children and Disasters (2009), children require a unique and special level of need during a disaster and require extra support. The disruption of children’s schooling, housing, friendships, and family networks slows down a child’s social, emotional, and academic success (“Still at risk: U.S. children 10 years after Hurricane Katrina”, 2015). This issue relates to the theory of risk and resilience in early childhood. Children’s exposure to trauma puts them at risk for developing acute or chronic psychological disorders (“Risk and protective factors in early childhood”, n.d.). Resilience impacts children’s emotional development because resilient children are less likely to be negatively affected when they are exposed to risk factors (Whittaker, Harden, See, Meisch, & Westbrook, 2011). Children require a certain level of protective factors that adults do not. Being separated from family makes children vulnerable to predators and other dangers. Children also have different needs than adults. For example, they may require baby formula, diapers, and cribs. Protective factors are elements that help children build resilience (“Risk and protective factors in early childhood”, n.d., & Whittaker, et. al., 2011). Some examples of protective factors for children’s mental health are community involvement, large support group of friends and family, and parental attentiveness/warmth (“Risk and protective factors in early childhood”, n.d., & Whittaker, et. al., 2011).

Lack of support for children. There are major deficiencies in disaster preparedness plans on the federal, state, and local government levels (Baker & Baker, 2010). Many community preparedness programs do not consider children in Emergency plans and fail to provide age-appropriate materials for children to learn about how to prepare for emergencies (English, 2002). Children are the most vulnerable population because they cannot support themselves (Baker & Baker, 2010). In 2007, in response to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Congress created the National Commission on Children and Disasters to identify the gaps on the nation's disaster preparedness, planning, response, and recovery for children to investigate the disparities of how our nation prepares for children who are victims of natural disasters ("Children & Disasters", n.d.). The commission's assessment concluded that children were more often an afterthought than a priority in disaster planning ("Still at risk: U.S. children 10 years after Hurricane Katrina", 2015). According to the Commission, "for every ten dollars in federal emergency preparedness grants, less than one cent has gone toward activities targeting children's safety" ("Still at risk: U.S. children 10 years after Hurricane Katrina", 2015, p. 4). The Commission designated 81 recommendations in eleven different categories (which are demonstrated in Figure 1) to ensure that children's safety is accounted for in the United States' disaster preparedness and recovery plan ("Still at risk: U.S. children 10 years after Hurricane Katrina", 2015).

The lack of community support and preparedness means that children are not receiving the protective factors from their communities to build their resilience to handle the trauma of a natural disaster. This absence of a protective factor can lead to severe emotional distress for children. Ten years after the Commission sent out its report, 79% of the recommendations remain unfilled. Figure 1 represents the number of suggestions that have been met, are in

progress, or have not been met in each category (“Still at risk: U.S. children 10 years after Hurricane Katrina”, 2015). Gover

Figure 1

	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
Disaster Management and Recovery	1	8	3
Mental Health	2	4	2
Child Physical Health and Trauma	3	11	4
Emergency Medical Services and Pediatric Transport	0	5	1
Disaster Case Management	1	2	0
Child Care and Early Education	4	2	1
Elementary and Secondary Education	0	4	3
Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice	2	3	4
Shelterin Standards, Services, and Supplies	3	0	0
Housing	0	3	1
Evacuation and Reunification	1	2	1
TOTAL	17	44	20

Psychological damage. Children who experience an emergency or natural disaster may exhibit a variety of symptoms in response to the trauma. About twenty-five percent of children who experience a natural disaster suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Anxiety, depression, and panic attacks (“Getting your Family Prepared for a Disaster”, n.d., & “Still at risk: U.S. children 10 years after Hurricane Katrina”, 2015). Children may demonstrate fear, sadness, and behavioral problems (“Coping With Disasters, & Earthquake preparedness”, n.d.). They also might revert to younger behaviors such as bedwetting, sleep problems, and separation anxiety which causes children to become more clingy (“Coping With Disasters”, & “Earthquake

Preparedness”, n.d.). Sometimes children go through an extreme personality shift (“Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster”, n.d.). Children that were once quiet and shy become loud and hard to control. Parents can anticipate that their children might lose some trust in the adults around them because they were unable to stop the disaster from happening. In other cases, children feel an extreme sense of guilt because they may feel responsible for the disaster based on something they did or said.

What Should Be Done?

Most fatalities, injuries, and deaths related to natural disasters are preventable (Levac, Toal-Sullivan, & O'sullivan, 2011). Fortunately, adequate preparedness can decrease the negative consequences of natural disasters (Levac, Toal-Sullivan, & O'sullivan, 2011). Prepared children exhibit less symptoms of anxiety after experiencing an emergency or disaster (English, 2002). The best ways to prepare children for disasters is by making and practicing a family plan, creating an emergency kit, and talking to children (“Disaster Safety for Children”, n.d., & Levac, Toal-Sullivan, & O'sullivan, 2011). Preparing children for natural disasters and maintaining a warm and open flow of communication after it has occurred helps children build resilience and can decrease the emotional impact of the situation. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is one leading resource for disaster preparedness (“Children & Disasters”, n.d.). FEMA provides resources for parents and children to prepare them for emergencies and natural disasters.

Make a plan. Making a family plan includes talking about likely disasters and how to prepare for them, making sure every family member knows where to go when a disaster hits, and teaching children about danger signals (smoke alarms, community warning systems, etc) and what to do when they hear them (“Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster”, n.d.). While

making a family plan, it is important to explain to children that a disaster is something that can happen at any time and could possibly cause damage and hurt people (“Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster”, n.d.). Parents should prepare children for possible outcomes that could happen during an emergency (e.g. loss of power) (“Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster”, n.d.). Parents are encouraged to teach children how to call for help, when to use emergency phone numbers to call a family friend if the family gets separated, and to not be afraid of emergency personnel because they are there to help. A family emergency plan should also include an out of state contact and a set meeting place away from the home in case the family members get separated (“Tools, Publications, & Resources”, n.d., & “Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster”, n.d.). Families should practice their emergency plan with the whole family every six months (“Earthquake Preparedness”, n.d., & “Tools, Publications, & Resources”, n.d., & “Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster”, n.d.). It is also important to regularly check smoke alarms and fire extinguishers, secure all heavy objects, and make sure every family member knows how to shut off the gas and electricity in the home (“Earthquake preparedness”, n.d., & “Tools, Publications, and Resources”, n.d.).

Emergency kit. Creating an emergency kit is important because many natural disasters occur without warning and families do not have a lot of time to gather their belongings (“Emergency Supply Checklist”, n.d.). Emergency kits should have enough supplies to take care of the family for two to three days after the event because sometimes it takes a few days for emergency medical personnel to reach the victims (“Earthquake Preparedness”, n.d., & Levac, Toal-Sullivan, & O'sullivan, 2001). Every emergency kit should include basic necessities for life including food and water, batteries, a flashlight, plastic bags, extra clothes, and a radio to stay updated on the situation (“Earthquake Preparedness”, n.d.). Emergency kits for families with

children should include: children's contact information and medical information, a recent picture of the child or children, comfort food and treats, activities for the children (books, crayons, paper, board games, card games, puzzles), comfort items (stuffed animals, small toys, dolls, blankets/pillows), nursing supplies/ formula, pre-packed baby food, cereal or protein bars, vitamins, baby wipes and diapers, nursing pads, feminine products, fever reducer, anti-bacterial ointment, rash ointment, and any medications the child takes ("Emergency Supply Checklist", n.d., "Disasters Happen", n.d., & "Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster", n.d.).

Talk to children. Talking to children about their experience can help them cope with the disaster effectively and minimize psychological damage ("Disaster: Helping Children Cope", n.d.). This form of coping is also referred to as "Psychological First-Aid" ("Plan Ahead for Disasters", n.d.). When experiencing an emergency or natural disaster, it is best to explain to children what is going on at an appropriate age level ("Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster" n.d.). Parents should stay calm and collected because children's trauma may be exaggerated if they feel like the parents are not in control. Parents should avoid watching TV or the news after a traumatic events to reduce damage to children. Parents should acknowledge their children's fears, comfort their children, keep the family together, emphasize to children that you love them, calmly explain the situation, encourage their children to talk about their fears without judging them, sort out what is real and what their children are imagining or assuming, include children in recovery activities, let children have some control (what they wear or what to eat for dinner), and return to a normal routine as soon as possible ("Earthquake Preparedness", n.d., "Disaster: Helping Children Cope", n.d., & "Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster", n.d.). Parents can also encourage children to write about their fears or draw about them ("Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster", n.d.). Parents can help them write a story with this simple

outline, “Once upon a time there was a terrible _____ and it scared us all _____. This is what happened _____” and end the story by explaining how things are getting better (“Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster”, n.d).

In conclusion, the lack of support for families and children and the psychological damage that natural disasters can inflict have long term effects on children. Families can prepare for natural disasters by creating a family emergency plan, an emergency kit, and being prepared to talk to children at an appropriate level if an emergency happens. Being prepared for a natural disaster can help reduce the the risk of harm and damage a family may suffer from.

Method

For this Capstone Project the researcher investigated how parents view their family’s emergency preparedness plans and what they think could be done to improve them. After interviewing parents, the researcher used what she learned to provide parents with access to information that will help them be prepared to keep their young children safe during an emergency. This is important because proper emergency preparation can avoid serious injury, loss, or death.

Context

Mimi’s Daycare¹ is located in South Farmville, inland of Oceanside, CA. The day care serves children ranging from newborns through elementary school students. The daycare is a full-day program that runs Monday through Friday all year round. The main playroom is located on the side of the house. From the playroom, there is a door that leads out to the side yard, which has playhouses and a kitchen set for dramatic play, and play structures, slides, fake grass, rubber mats, and tricycles for active play. Breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack are

¹ Pseudonyms have been used for the names of people, places, and organizations

served in the kitchen. The children nap in the bedrooms with a baby monitor in each room. The demographics of the families that attend the daycare are all caucasian and are in the middle-upper socioeconomic class. A large number of parents work in the agricultural-business field. The families that live in the area are at risk for natural disasters like fires and earthquakes.

Participants and Participant Selection

All parents at Mimi's Daycare were invited to participate. This group of parents was invited to participate because they have at least one child that attends the daycare that is between 0-7 years old.

Participant Information

K.B. - a stay at home mother, and former elementary school teacher. K.B. and her spouse have a two year old daughter and she is pregnant with their second child. They are part of the middle socioeconomic class.

L.P. - mother of two boys in elementary school. She works for the local government and her spouse works at a local produce company. They are part of the upper socioeconomic class.

C.H. - a single mother of two children in elementary school. She is an administrator at a local high school. She is part of the middle-low socioeconomic class.

M.P. - mother of an 18 month old daughter, and two sons who are four and six years old. She and her spouse work in the agriculture and seed business. They are part of the middle socioeconomic class.

C.P. - father of a three year old son and 5 year old daughter. He works for the construction company his family owns, and his spouse is a physician's aid at a local hospital. They are part of the middle socioeconomic class.

Researcher

After the recent natural disasters that have hit the southern United States and Mexico, and large fires that have been caused by the drought, the researcher believes it is important for families to be prepared in case a natural disaster happens. The researcher has experience working

with children of all ages and have completed multiple first aid and emergency preparedness trainings throughout her career. The researcher's ethnicity might be different from the informants. And her child care experience and knowledge may be different than the informants. Some parents were uncomfortable talking about the grave nature of natural disasters and struggled to answer some questions.

Semi-Structured Interview and Survey Questions

Parent Semi-Structured Interview (Webb, 2004)

1. What are your experiences with fires, earthquakes or other natural disasters and emergencies?
2. What are your experiences with developing an emergency plan for your family?
3. What sort of evacuation plan do you have for at home and do you practice it with your children?
4. What sort of plan do you have for emergencies that occur when your children are at school and you are not there?
5. What do you think should be included in an emergency survival pack? Do you have one?
6. What do you see as the problem with your current emergency readiness plan or preparedness?
7. What is currently being done to improve families' emergency preparedness - by whom - and what do you think of these efforts? Why?
8. What do you think should be done to improve your family's emergency plan and/or preparedness?
9. What do you think are the obstacles/drawbacks/disadvantages to implementing/improving a family emergency readiness plan or increasing preparedness?

10. Is there anything else that you would like to say about emergency plans or preparedness for families?

Procedure

Participants were interviewed. All interviews were done individually. When it was not possible to interview participants in person, they were invited to complete a phone interview or paper and pencil survey of the same questions. Face-to-Face interviews took less than one hour, were audio-recorded (with participant consent), and took place at Mimi's Daycare. A semi-structured interview format was used for face-to-face interviews, to allow for follow-up questions to unclear, interesting or unexpected responses. All interviews/surveys were scheduled at the convenience of the interviewee and took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

Transcribed interviews will be coded and analyzed for emergent themes.

Results

For this Capstone Project, parents with children under seven years old at Mimi's Daycare were interviewed to see what they think could be done to improve their family's emergency preparedness. This is important because it can save the lives of their family members and reduce the emotional trauma that their children will be exposed to. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature three themes emerged: parents did not know where to start planning for a natural disaster because they had never experienced one, parents could not afford to make an emergency kit, parents were unaware about the information resources available (See Figure 2). After the emergent themes were identified, three Action Options were chosen to fulfill the needs of the parents interviewed (See Table 1). Evidence-based decision making required evaluating each potential Action Option by the following criteria: time, cost, and impact. Based on the evaluation of each Action Option an action will be recommended and justified.

Figure 2

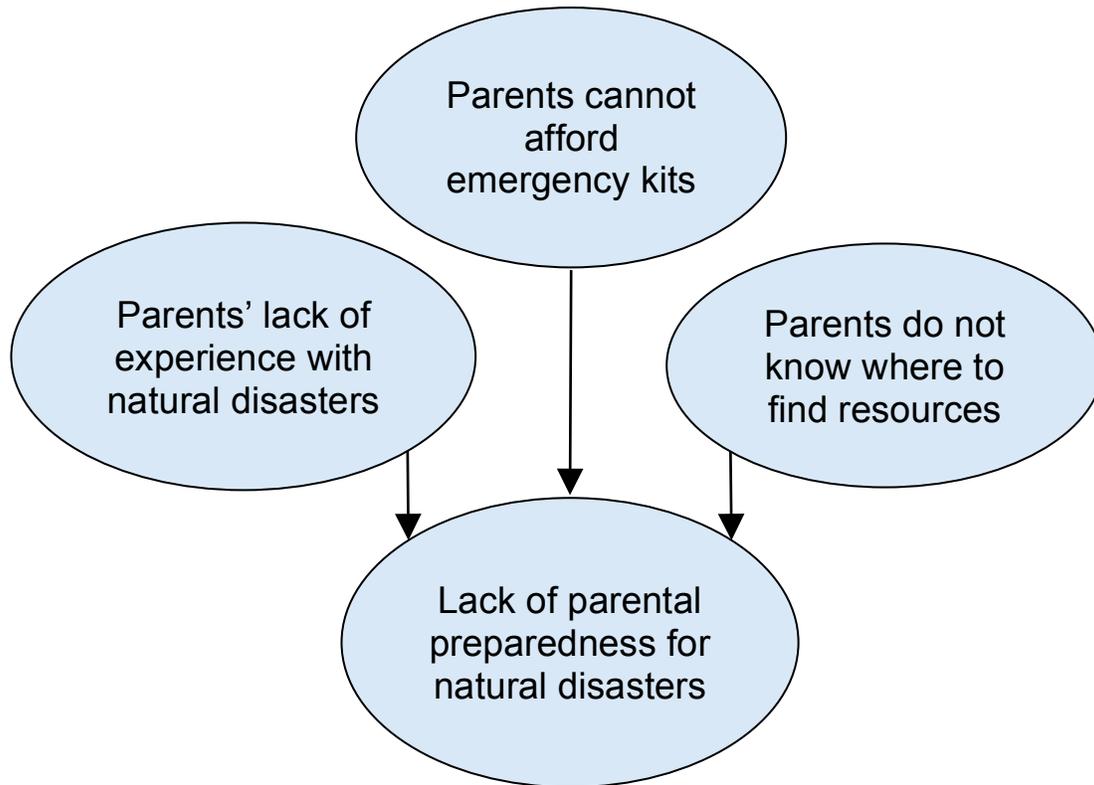


Table 1

Evaluation of Action Options

	Time	Cost	Impact
Emergency and First Aid classes for Parents	High	High	Medium
Informational Brochure	High	Low	Medium
Provide Emergency Kits for Parents	High	High	High

Emergency and First Aid classes for Parents

The researcher came to the conclusion that parents would benefit from emergency preparedness and first-aid classes after one parent said, “I know my children talk about emergencies, and practice fire drills and evacuations at school. But I wish schools would provide resources for parents to support what the children are learning at school” (M.P., personal communication, October 17, 2017). Another parent expressed concern about her family’s emergency preparedness, “I have never experienced any natural disasters, so I have no idea how to handle an emergency” (C.P., personal communication, October 17, 2017). A class put on by the Red Cross or another organization would help parents learn basic first aid skills, emergency response strategies, and how to prepare for an urgent evacuation. Parents who are confident and educated about how to respond to an emergency will be more likely to remain calm. Parents who are calm and collected, can help children cope better when a natural disaster occurs and minimize the emotional trauma the children experience (“Disaster: Helping Children Cope”, n.d.).

Arranging these educational classes can take a lot of time. Parents would also have to take time off work or find childcare in order to attend these classes. Finding trained professionals to lead the classes would be expensive, and parents may not want to pay for the classes. However, the researcher believes these classes would have a high impact on parents. If parents receive knowledge about emergency preparedness from a class that they signed-up for and paid a fee to attend, they are going to be highly invested in the issue. They will take the information they learned in the class and apply it.

Informational Brochure

An informational brochure would be handed out to the parents at the daycare. This brochure would include techniques for parents to use when communicating when an emergency occurs, a list of possible items to include in their emergency kit, and guidelines for creating an emergency family plan. The brochure will guide parents through making an emergency communication plan which could include identifying danger signals, evacuation plan, and emergency phone numbers (“Tools, Publications, & Resources”, n.d., & “Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster”, n.d.). The researcher believes it will be useful for parents to have a specific place to write their plan down. M.P. was one of the multiple parents who expressed, “We have an emergency plan but we don’t have it written down anywhere and we never practice it” (M.P., personal communication, October 17, 2017). The Brochure will also include a checklist for an emergency kit for children (formula, comfort items, toys, recent pictures) (“Emergency Supply Checklist”, n.d., “Disasters Happen”; & “Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster”, n.d). It will be a “go-to” guide for emergency preparation for parents because L.P. said, “I don’t even know where to start preparing for an emergency” (L.P., personal communication, October 17, 2017).

Preparing the list will take a significant amount of time, but will be a simple resource for families to look at. This option is also very low cost. The brochure could be sent out electronically or printed for a small fee. This option has a medium impact because some parents could forget to use it or the brochure could get lost.

Provide Emergency Kits for Parents

There are many websites that sell various premade emergency kits. This action option was chosen after it was suggested by K.B. She said, “I had an emergency kit in my classroom. I

should probably get one for my house too” (K.B., personal communication, October 17, 2017). These kits contain basic supplies to sustain the families for two or three days and provide a convenience for families who may not have a lot of time to grab their belongings if they have to evacuate immediately (“Earthquake Preparedness”, n.d., Levac, Toal-Sullivan, & O'sullivan, 2001, “Emergency Supply Checklist”, n.d.). Providing these kits for the parents would reduce the financial strain of buying supplies for the emergency kits. This action item was inspired by C.H. who said, “I’m a single mom on a limited income. So financing an emergency kit is the last thing on my mind” (personal communication, October 17, 2017).

Although this option would be cheap and convenient for the parents, it would be very costly to buy these kits for them because they range from \$60-\$200. This option is the most time efficient because the kits just need to be purchased online. This option offers a high impact for the focus group because the parents do not have to spend their own time and money to make the kit. The downside of these kits is the lack of comfort supplies provided for children because they only contain the most basic items (water, batteries, a blanket, etc).

Conclusion

Out of the three different options, the researcher chose the informative brochure. She recommends this action plan because it provides a wide variety of useful information and does not cost a lot of money to complete. The imitation to this option is the lower level of impact. Parents are very busy and can easily forget about the brochure and lose it or accidentally throw it out. The researcher identified multiple negative outcomes. The outcome that is most likely, is that the parents may try to over prepare their children and cause them to worry or be anxious about a possible emergency. The researcher may also encounter parents with specific religious beliefs that natural disasters are a sign from a divine being and will be resistant to doing anything

to prevent them. Parents may also encounter extra challenges when filling out the emergency communication plan or implementing psychological first-aid if they have a child with special needs or have an elderly relative living with them.

Action Documentation and Reflection

Natural disasters, like other traumatic experiences, can have vast negative emotional impacts on children. For this capstone project, I addressed the issue and examined preventative measures to protect children from the emotional stress of natural disasters. I interviewed parents at Mimi's daycare. I chose to interview parents about their emergency preparedness and their family evacuation plans. I was surprised by how many parents did not have any form of evacuation plan in place for their family and only one parent had an emergency kit in their house. From my interview, three action options emerged: schedule an emergency preparedness class for parents through the Red Cross; provide basic emergency kits for the parents at Mimi's Daycare; or provide the parents with a packet of information about emergency preparedness. I decided to implement the information packet. Although the other options had a higher level of possible impact, this option seemed to be the most reasonable option because it required the least amount of funding and time given the limited timeline provided for this project.

This packet of information is made up of four parts: A Family Communication Plan for parents (Appendix A), a Family Communication Plan for children (Appendix B), an Emergency Supplies Checklist (Appendix C), and a Psychological First-Aid booklet (Appendix D). All of the resources were pulled from FEMA's Read.gov website which provides a wide variety of emergency preparedness resources and tips. The Family Communication Plan is intended to guide parents through planning a basic evacuation plan. It also serves as a central location of all the important information and contacts that they may need in an emergency. The Family

Communication Plan for kids is designed to provide an interactive and simplified version of the parents' communication plan in Appendix A. Parents and children should fill this out together so that the family can start a dialogue about possible emergencies that could take place and making sure the children know what to do in case a natural disaster strikes. The Emergency Supplies Checklist provides parents with a comprehensive list of items that a family will need in an emergency. Although this list is rather long, I think it is more effective than most other emergency kit checklists or emergency kits that can be purchased because it includes comfort items for children along with the basic necessities. When I asked parents for a list of items that belong in an emergency kit, they all responded with similar answers (nonperishable food, water, batteries, blankets), but none of the parents considered items for their children (stuffed animals, card games, baby formula, diapers). Finally, the last item in the packet is a booklet that guides parents through psychological first aid when communicating with their children after a natural disaster or emergency occurs. This booklet offers parents prompts and suggestions for helping their children communicate about their experience and expected behaviors that children might exhibit. The purpose of Psychological First Aid aims to help children cope more effectively and reduce the psychological and emotional damage of the traumatic event. After these forms are filled out, they are meant to be kept in a specific location that is easily accessible in the event of an emergency kit. I suggested that parents keep them in their emergency kit so that everything was kept together.

The parents at the daycare seemed to respond well to the action plan I chose. The parents made comments about how appreciative they were for these resources because thinking and talking about emergencies with their children was very daunting and they were not sure how to approach it without scaring their children. I was particularly pleasantly surprised by their

response to the Psychological First Aid booklet. They were very receptive to the idea of Psychological First Aid because they had only considered preemptively preparing children for emergencies and had not considered how their interaction with their children following a natural disaster could affect their emotional health. The next steps for the success of this action plan rely on the parents. I have provided them with the resources, but they will be useless if the parents do not implement them. However, the optimal circumstance for this action plan is that parents and families will never have to use these resources because I would not want anyone to be faced with an emergency or natural disaster.

Critical Reflection

From this project I learned the scope of the lack emergency preparation expands beyond parents. Before completing this project, I was unaware of the major gaps in government preparedness for dealing with children after a natural disaster. I chose to interview and complete my action plan by interacting with parents because I have no idea where to begin trying to make governmental changes. Working towards change has a lot more hurdles than I anticipated. I only provided my action plan to a the parents at Mimi's daycare. That is an extremely small percentage of parents when compared to the number of families that a government plan could reach. Overall, I believe that my project did not have a huge impact because it served a small target population.

MLO 1: Human Development and Family Studies Content Knowledge

Throughout my time at California State University Monterey Bay, I have been exposed to a variety of developmental theories that apply to every age group in my Infancy and Toddlerhood class, Adolescence class, and Adulthood and Aging class. I have learned how to compare those theories to what I have observed at my service learning site so that I can use them

in a practical application at my current job and future career opportunities. I have also learned how abnormal development can affect youth and adolescents, and specific behavior disorders that I might encounter in my career working with children. I was exposed to the effects of parenting strategies and the family environment on a person's development, and had many opportunities to examine my own upbringing. Through the examination of how I was raised, I was able to identify how my experiences may have shaped my perspective and biases about human development. In my Research Methods of Human Development class and Program Development classes I was able to explore different research methods, data collection techniques, and evaluation options.

MLO 2: Diversity in Human Development and Family Studies

In my Parenting Across the Lifespan and Cross-Cultural Development classes, I examined how different cultures viewed child development and parenting. Their different views on topics such as toilet training, children in the workforce, involvement in children's lives, and the priority of academics was discussed in these classes. I also interviewed a fellow student who grew up in a different culture than I did. It was extremely interesting to compare how our different upbringings affected our views about relationships, school, and careers.

MLO 3: Human Development and Family Studies Integration and Application

My completion of this capstone project has shown my ability to identify issues in the community and act towards finding solutions. I interviewed members of the affected community and I was able to form three possible solutions to the problem based on the responses I received in the interview sessions. In my service learning class, I was also able to identify how my service learning site addressed inequalities.

MLO 4: Human Development and Family Studies Professional Application

My Service Learning for Human Development and Fieldwork in Human Development prepared for my future career. I was able to develop my resume and cover letter, learn about mandated reporting and child abuse, and different techniques for working with children (e.g. growth mindset, natural and logical consequences, and positive discipline). These are all skills I will need to have and have used to get a job after I graduate.

I have already achieved my next step toward my career goal. I will begin my position as a full-time preschool teacher after graduation. My plan is to stay in that position and save money as I start to look into Graduate programs. I am looking into school counseling programs or social work programs. I do not have any major career plans beyond that. My overall goal is to find a career where I feel like I can have a positive impact on children's lives.

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Family Communication Plan

Let them know you're OK!

Pick the same person for each family member to contact. It might be easier to reach someone who's out of town.

Emergencies can happen at any time. Does your family know how to get in touch with each other if you are not all together?

Before an emergency happens, have a family discussion to determine who would be your out-of-state point of contact, and where you would meet away from your home — both in the neighborhood and within your town.

Important Information

Fill in this information and keep a copy in a safe place, such as your purse or briefcase, your car, your office, and your disaster kit. Be sure to look it over every year and keep it up to date.

Out-of-Town Contact

Name: _____
Home: _____
Cell: _____
Email: _____
Facebook: _____
Twitter: _____

Neighborhood Meeting Place:

Regional Meeting Place:

Work Information

Workplace: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Facebook: _____
Twitter: _____
Evacuation Location: _____

Workplace: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Facebook: _____
Twitter: _____
Evacuation Location: _____

School Information

School: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Facebook: _____
Twitter: _____
Evacuation Location: _____

School: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Facebook: _____
Twitter: _____
Evacuation Location: _____

School: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Facebook: _____
Twitter: _____
Evacuation Location: _____



<http://www.ready.gov/kids>



Important Information (continued)

Family Information

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Important Medical Information: _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Important Medical Information: _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Important Medical Information: _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Important Medical Information: _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Important Medical Information: _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Important Medical Information: _____

Medical Contacts

Doctor: _____

Phone: _____

Doctor: _____

Phone: _____

Pediatrician: _____

Phone: _____

Dentist: _____

Phone: _____

Dentist: _____

Phone: _____

Specialist: _____

Phone: _____

Specialist: _____

Phone: _____

Pharmacist: _____

Phone: _____

Veterinarian/Kennel: _____

Phone: _____

Insurance Information

Medical Insurance: _____

Phone: _____

Policy Number: _____

Homeowners/Rental Insurance: _____

Phone: _____

Policy Number: _____



<http://www.ready.gov/kids>

Text, don't talk!

Unless you are in danger, send a text. Texts may have an easier time getting through than phone calls, and you don't want to tie up phone lines needed by emergency workers.



Family Communication Plan

Emergencies can happen at any time. Do you know how to get in touch with your family if you are not together?

Let them know you're OK!

Pick the same person for each family member to contact. It might be easier to reach someone who's out of town.

Text, don't talk!

Unless you are in immediate danger, send a text. Texts often have an easier time getting through during emergencies, and you don't want to tie up phone lines needed by emergency responders (like 911).



Know the Numbers!

Home: _____	Adult: _____
Parent: _____	Home: _____
Cell: _____	Cell: _____
Work: _____	Neighbor: _____
Parent: _____	Home: _____
Cell: _____	Cell: _____
Work: _____	Neighbor: _____
My cell: _____	Home: _____
Sibling: _____	Cell: _____
Cell: _____	Out of state friend/relative:
Sibling: _____	_____
Cell: _____	Home: _____
	Cell: _____

Memorize your home and parents' cell phone numbers!



Cut this out and keep it somewhere safe like your backpack, school notebook, or wallet. Or input these numbers into your cell phone if you have one.



<http://www.ready.gov/kids>



Know Where to Go... and How to Get There.

Pick a Meeting Spot

Where will you meet up with your family if you have to get out of your house quickly? Where will you meet if your neighborhood is being evacuated and you're not at home?

In your neighborhood:
(such as neighbor's house or big tree)

Out of your neighborhood:
(such as the library or house of worship)

Draw a Map

Put a Δ to show your home. Put a O to show your school. Mark your out-of-neighborhood meeting spot with an X and label it.

Know the Exits

Do you know two ways out of every room in your house in case of a fire? Draw a floor plan of your bedroom in the space below and circle the two ways to get out. Hint: one may not be a door!



<http://www.ready.gov/kids>



Are You READY!

Some disasters strike without any warning. Have you thought about those supplies you'll need the most? They will usually be the hardest to come by. Enlist your children to help gather supplies for your family's emergency kit. It'll bring you a sense of relief, and your kids a feeling of empowerment.

Make sure you have enough supplies to last for at least **three days**. Think about where you live and your needs. Consider having a large kit at home, and smaller portable kit in the car or your workplace.

If a big storm is coming...

- ✓ Fill your car with gas
- ✓ Fill plastic bags with water and place them in the freezer
- ✓ Get extra cash out of the bank
- ✓ Fill prescriptions

Emergency Supplies List

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-day supply of non-perishable food (dried fruit, canned tuna fish, peanut butter, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Whistle to signal for help |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can opener | <input type="checkbox"/> Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper (when diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paper plates, plastic cups and utensils, paper towels | <input type="checkbox"/> Local maps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash or traveler's checks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water – at least a gallon per person, per day for drinking and hygiene | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency reference material such as first aid book or information from www.ready.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, ID, and bank records in a waterproof, portable container |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prescription medication and glasses | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet supplies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping bag or warm blanket for everyone in your family | <input type="checkbox"/> Infant formula and diapers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change of clothes to last for at least 3 days, including sturdy shoes; consider the weather where you live | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper and pencil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matches in a waterproof container | <input type="checkbox"/> Books, games or puzzles (let your kids pick these out themselves!) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and other personal items | <input type="checkbox"/> Your child's favorite stuffed animal or security blanket |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feminine hygiene supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet food and extra water for your pet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguisher | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dust mask, and plastic sheeting and duct tape, to help filter contaminated air | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio and extra batteries | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlights and extra batteries | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone with charger, extra battery and solar charger | |

Don't forget to think about infants, elderly, pets, or any family members with special needs!



<http://www.ready.gov/kids>

Appendix D

**Listen, Protect,
and Connect**

**PSYCHOLOGICAL
FIRST AID FOR
CHILDREN AND PARENTS**



**Helping you and your child
in times of disaster.**

Getting Started: Understanding the Effect of a Disaster on Your Child

THINK ABOUT your child's
"DIRECT EXPERIENCE" with the
disaster.

"Direct experience" means a **FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE** of the disaster (physically experiencing or directly seeing the event as it happens).

After a disaster, changes can happen in a child's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Children may worry about family members, friends, or pets that they care about and worry if the disaster will happen again.

Common reactions to disasters include trouble sleeping, problems at school and with friends, trouble listening, and not finishing work or chores. Your child may become more irritable, sad, angry, or worried as they think about what has happened, and as they experience the recovery efforts after the disaster.

For more information, please visit www.ready.gov

1. Listen, Protect, and Connect

The first important step to help your child after a disaster is to **listen and pay attention** to what your child says and how he or she acts. Remember that your child may also show his or her feelings in nonverbal ways.

Let your child know you are willing to listen and talk about the disaster. You can use the following questions to talk with your child. Afterward, **write down how he or she answers:**



1. What does your child think happened and is now happening?

2. What does your child understand about the help disaster responders give to people during and after an event?

For more information, please visit www.ready.gov

3. What is your child most upset about?

4. What is your child most confused about?

5. Other items to note:

Listen, observe, and take notes about **changes in behavior** you see:

* Changes in behavior and/or mood:

* Changes at school:

* Changes in sleep and/or eating:

* Changes with family and/or friends:

* Other changes you note:

For more information, please visit www.ready.gov

Listen, 2. Protect, and Connect

You can **help make your child feel better** by doing some or all of the following:



- * **Answer questions simply and honestly (you may need to do this many times).**
- * **Try to clear up any confusion your child has. Let your child know that he or she is not to blame for the disaster.**
- * **Provide opportunities for your child to talk, draw, and play, but **don't force it.****
- * **Learn what is in place and what is coming up in your neighborhood in response to the disaster.**
- * **With your child's help, develop a family safety plan and practice it (http://www.ready.gov/kids/_downloads/familyplan.pdf).**
- * **Talk to your child about what is going on to make him or her safe at home, at school, and in your neighborhood.**

For more information, please visit www.ready.gov

- * **Limit access to television and newspapers that show disturbing scenes of the disaster. Remember that what's not upsetting to you and other adults may upset and confuse your child.**
- * Talk about common reactions that adults and children may have during and after a disaster.
- * **Maintain "normal" daily tasks and activities as much as possible; limit unnecessary changes.**
- * Encourage your child to express his or her thoughts and feelings about what has happened. Let your child know you are interested in what he or she thinks and feels, and listen attentively when your child talks to you.
- * **Take a break once in a while from talk and activities related to the disaster.**
- * Find ways for your child to feel helpful to your family and others (helping around the house, neighborhood, or school).

List other things you do that make your child feel better:

For more information, please visit www.ready.gov

Listen, Protect, and 3. Connect



Reaching out to family, friends, and people in your neighborhood will help your child after a disaster. These connections will build strength for both you and your child. Consider ways to make some or all of the following connections:

- * **Find people who can offer support to your child and your family.**
- * **Keep communication open with others involved in your child's life (doctors, teachers, coaches, etc.).**
- * **Check out school and community resources for disaster survivors.**
- * **Spend extra time with your child and family.**

For more information, please visit www.ready.gov

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- * **Encourage after-school activities for your child.**
 - * Have a family meeting and discuss how everyone can stay in touch if separated during or after a disaster. Create a Family Communications Plan (http://www.ready.gov/kids/_downloads/familyplan.pdf).
 - * **Set small goals with your child. Praise him or her for even small achievements.**
 - * Build on your child's strengths. Find ways to help your child use what he or she has learned in the past to help your child deal with the disaster.
 - * **Remind your child that a disaster is rare, and discuss other times when he or she has felt safe.**
 - * Learn and seek out other information that may be helpful to you, your child, and family.

List other **things you do** that connect you, your child, and family with the community:

For more information, please visit www.ready.gov