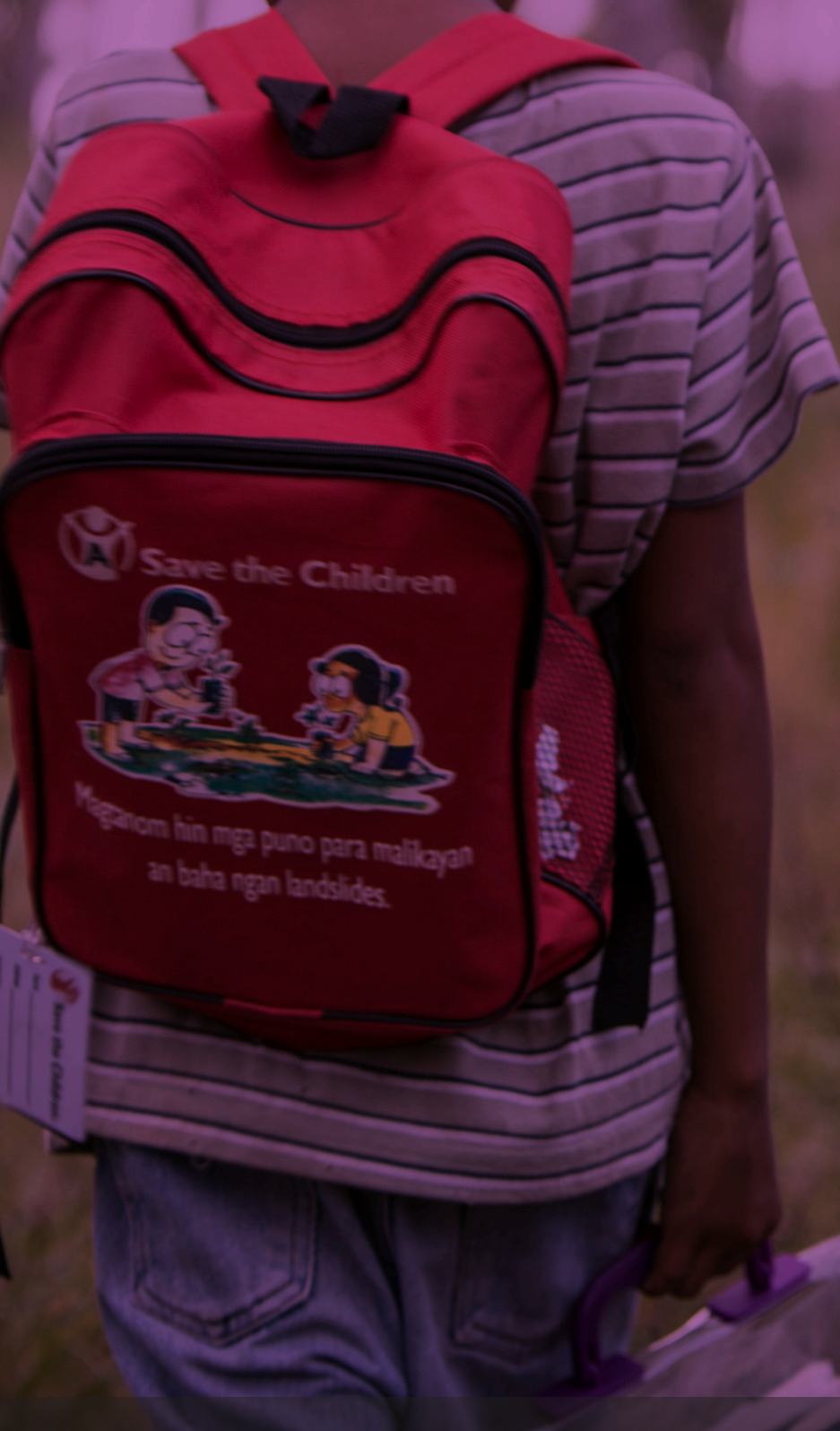


PART B.3

CHILD PROTECTION IN DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES





Child protection in disasters and emergencies

Child protection in disasters and emergencies refers to the prevention and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children in times of emergency caused by natural or manmade disasters, conflicts, or other crises.⁴ This includes all forms of physical and psychological abuse, sexual and gender-based violence, and deprivation of basic needs. The age of a child is defined, to reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, as any person under the age of 18 years.

To optimize impact, all actions listed below should consider the following six principles.⁵ For more information about each principle, see the [Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action](#).

Principle 1: Avoid exposing children to further harm as a result of your actions. This includes recognizing that conversations about protection issues can trigger emotional reactions; as such all conversations should be made safe and support systems made available.

Principle 2: Ensure children's access to impartial assistance. This involves taking deliberate action to involve community members, families and children that might otherwise be marginalized, socially excluded, or discriminated against such as children with disabilities, orphans, street children and children at risk of being unaccompanied. Specific efforts should be made to have equal participation from women and men, and girls and boys.

Principle 3: Protect children from physical and psychological harm arising from violence and coercion.

Principle 4: Assist children to claim their rights, access available remedies and recover from the effects of abuse. This includes having in place, ensuring accessibility to, and communicating referral systems to ensure any child protection concerns are reported and survivors are supported.

Principle 5: Strengthen child protection systems. Considerations for this include coordinating with key child protection agencies and influencers within the community.

Principle 6: Strengthen children's resilience in humanitarian action. Essential to this is empowering girls and boys to be active agents in their own protection through involving their participation in the assessment, design implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of child protection activities.

⁴ Adapted from Child Protection Working Group. *Minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action*. Child Protection Working Group. 2012.

⁵ Ibid.



Assess and plan

Key messages	Context-specific details
Introduce safety concepts to children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help children to learn to identify trusted adults in the community; people who can help them with different needs in disaster situations, and learn how to dial help on a mobile phone. Be sure that children are familiar with their community surroundings. For example, check important buildings like schools, sport centres, libraries, etc. and find alarms and exits, first aid materials, light switches, supplies, off-limits areas, and evacuation routes.
Involve parents and teach children the key mechanisms for child protection: family, school, community, and peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk with children about the hazards they face and seek their perception about these risks (what they think are the highest risks and why, what questions or concerns they have, how they would want to be treated, etc.). Reassure and remind children that there are caring adults working to keep them safe in all types of emergency situations. Ensure adult participation in school and community-based child protection coordination mechanisms. Provide information to children on existing local child protection mechanisms with key contact information and how to access services, if necessary.
Teach children their rights in emergencies and disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach children principles of non-discrimination, and that <i>all</i> children have the right to be safe and protected, including in the event of an emergency or disaster. Discuss with children how girls and boys might be affected differently by different hazards. Explore how hazards might affect children with disabilities.
Ensure that every child (and family member) knows safe places to go to, and safe ways to get there	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that <i>all</i> children are aware of safe spaces in case of different types of hazards. Include children and adults in mapping risks, safe spaces, and safe routes to get home, to school, or to access support system in disasters. Learn about and discuss any different perspectives between adults, children and youth.
Teach children their identification information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach younger children their full name, parents' names and their contact information (including address, province, district, village). Teach older children their school name and out-of-area contact.

Keep copies of identification documents and family books in alternate locations to avoid destruction and loss

- Obtain a birth certificate for every child.
- Record births accurately in a family record book.
- Keep certified copies of the family book in a safe place, separate from the original in case of loss or damage.
- Keep a copy of any other information that is important for educational continuity, for example immunization records, school information, individualized education plans for children with disabilities.



Mitigate risks: physical or environmental

Key messages	Context-specific details
Take responsibility for protecting children, especially through disaster risk reduction and response-preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act appropriately, with respect, and nonviolence towards children. • Work with your community to make it clear that violence, social exclusion, or discrimination against children is not acceptable. • Prevent and stop any child from being abused physically, sexually or emotionally, or exploited. Make certain <i>all</i> adults understand this responsibility. • Ensure that parents, carers and teachers are clear about their responsibilities and duty of care to protect children. • Encourage schools and other organizations, to have child protection policies in place that define the roles and responsibilities of adults to protect girls and boys. • Help to put prevention and awareness mechanisms in place for child protection.
Ensure that children's work is age-appropriate, is not harmful or hazardous to their development physically, intellectually or emotionally and does not interrupt their education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sure that all household members are aware of children's rights, which are valid even in cases of disasters and emergencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the right to be educated, participate, to play, and to be protected. • Children should not have to work long hours or do dangerous tasks, inside or outside of their family and community. • All violence, such as physical, sexual and emotional, against children of any age, gender and background is unacceptable, including in work settings. • Child labour and trafficking is unacceptable and is against the law. • Neither girls nor boys should be forced to drop out of school to work.



Prepare to respond: develop skills

Key messages	Context-specific details
Ensure that children are never left without a capable and trusted caregiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ways that children can be supervised when parents are working in fields or doing other tasks. Plan and practice to establish child friendly spaces during and in the aftermath of a disaster that are managed by trusted, well-trained, and screened caregivers in the community.
Allow children to participate in disaster recovery in age-appropriate ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support girls and boys of all backgrounds to participate in community, school and family decisions that affect them. Allow children to participate in disaster response activities only when these are safe from physical danger. Support children to participate, where appropriate, in peer-to-peer education on child protection themes as part of disaster risk reduction.
<p>Teach and practice standard operating procedures – especially for <i>safe family reunification</i></p> <p>(See section on School Safety for more details)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach children to listen carefully for safety directions. Teach and practice standard operating procedures to be able to making safe decisions in disaster and emergency situations. Parents or guardians inform school of adults with permission to pick-up children in case of emergency or disaster. Check that children know to wait at school for <i>safe family reunification</i>. Plan with children in advance, places where they can meet their families, should children become separated during a disaster. Ensure that training for children reflects their needs, is age-appropriate, and is sensitive to prior traumatic experiences, special needs, and children's personalities. Allow children to provide feedback and to opt out if they feel unsafe. Increase complexity of practice drills as children develop. Select age appropriate educational tools emphasizing positive actions. For example, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginners: Videos, scenario discussions and walk-through slow-motion drills. Intermediate: Pre-announced and unannounced drills. Advanced: Full scale drills and simulations.

<p>Teach children response options for disasters that involve violent intruders:</p> <p><i>Get out. Stay out. Hide out.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the following three options for safety in case of a violent intruder. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get out: If it is possible to get away from danger, go to a safe place. Teachers, leaders and first responders will come to find you in your meeting or another place. • Keep out: If it is not possible to get out of the building or harm's way, keep danger out of the room by locking and blocking doors and staying away from windows. This is similar to the <i>lockdown</i> standard operating procedure at school. • Hide out: Stay out of sight from danger by hiding behind large pieces of furniture. Try to stay as quiet. An <i>all clear</i> signal will be made to indicate that the danger has passed.
<p>After an incident, support children to feel protected and comforted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide understanding, patience and support. • Respect children's thoughts, feelings and opinions, and discuss those with them. • Make sure children have time to play and relax. • Make sure children get enough food, water and sleep. • Avoid that children are repeatedly exposed to images of death, injuries and destruction. • Share information about the incident. • Provide familiarity and stability, and resume normal routines as soon as possible. • Provide access to safe places where children can play, connect with others and feel protected (e.g. child friendly spaces). • Encourage peer-to-peer learning groups for older children. • If children are exposed to injuries, violence or death during disasters, seek psychosocial support from professional providers.⁷
<p>Learn to recognize normal responses under abnormal situations, and signs of distress and trauma</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear is the normal human response to danger. • Some anxiety is positive and to be expected, for example during emergency drills. • Normal human responses to danger include freeze, flight and sometimes fight. • Practice healthy coping strategies to handle fear and stress. For example, being with others, expression and solidarity through conversation, arts and mutual aid, mediation, physical exercise, participation in risk reduction and recovery activities. • If a child appears extremely fearful, angry or withdrawn, or if a child's responses are getting worse rather than improving, seek help from a mental health professional.
<p>Teach children the difference between safe and unsafe means of migration, if that becomes necessary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize potential vulnerabilities and risks, like separation, violence, injuries, and psychosocial trauma that children may face due to migration. • If adults and children find themselves forced to be separated or migrate for purposes of safety, work or education, discuss risks and protection factors for unaccompanied or separated children. Seek training on the safe channels through which to migrate. • Minimize disruption to children's schooling and prevent entry into harmful and hazardous work. • Facilitate integration of children into new schools, sports and cultural activities, and neighbourhoods.



Children learning about standard operating procedures for earthquakes at their elementary school, Pidie Jaya, Aceh

Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children



Children participating in disaster risk reduction education at their school in Leyte, Philippines.

Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children