

# Preparing for Shelter-in-Place Emergencies Issues for Parents of School Children to Consider

## ***Sheltering in place means:***

- Staying inside whatever building I am in at the time of an emergency
- If I'm outside, going into an undamaged building nearby for shelter
- Staying sheltered for a period that may last hours to days

## **I. The Need to Shelter at School**

1. In what kinds of emergencies will my children's school protect students and staff by keeping them inside the building for a period that may last hours to days?
  - a. A toxic explosion (like a dirty bomb) or chemical spill?
  - b. A tornado?
  - c. A snowstorm?
  - d. A shooter in the building?
  - e. An electrical blackout?
  - f. Something else?
2. What if any of these incidents happened at my workplace or other site that would make me unavailable to care for my children because I would need to protect myself by sheltering at work or somewhere else?

## **II. Communication**

1. How will I know if my children's school is protecting students and staff in an emergency by keeping them inside?
2. How will the school and school bus drivers know if an emergency elsewhere in the community is requiring parents, like me, to stay wherever we are?
3. If cell or other phones don't work during the emergency, how will I communicate with my children and know how they are?

### III. My Children's Needs in School

1. Will my children need care for medical conditions while sheltering in their school?
  - a. Does the school have a record of my children's medical problems, allergies, and medications?
  - b. Have I provided the school with a several-day supply of my children's medications and medical supplies (including medications they take at night)?
  - c. Have I provided the school with written permission to administer medications to my children in the event of an emergency?
2. Do I need to store other emergency supplies for my children at their school, such as:
  - a. Water?
  - b. Non-perishable food, including food for special dietary needs?
  - c. An extra pair of eyeglasses?
  - d. A comfort toy or blanket?
  - e. Something to keep them entertained and occupied?
  - f. Other items?
3. Have teachers and other staff been trained to keep children calm and help them deal with the stress of shelter-in-place emergencies?

### IV. Alternate Providers of Care

1. Have I given my children's school a list of all of the people who are authorized to pick them up?
2. If neither I, nor any of my authorized back-ups can pick up my children or meet them at home during an emergency, what will the school and school bus drivers do to assure my children's supervision and safety?
3. Does my neighborhood have a "safe house" where children who are home alone can go during an emergency?
4. Has my neighborhood organized a buddy system or teams to check on children who may be home alone during an emergency?
5. Do my children know about these alternate care plans?

*Appreciation and credit for the issue set concepts go to the Redefining Readiness project ([www.redefiningreadiness.net](http://www.redefiningreadiness.net)).*