



## Prepare for Emergencies: It's Never Too Early

You're never too young for safety training. Just ask Cheryl and Jim Durand. On February 3, 1996, while the young couple was milking cows at their Wisconsin farm, their seven year old son Bobby smelled smoke coming out of their home's basement. Remembering fire safety information from a Sesame Street video, he calmly told his three year old sister Whitney that they had to get out of the house.

Bobby quickly dressed, assisted his sister, and then they rushed outside into the -35 degree air. Cheryl noticed her children running toward the barn (Whitney wearing the only headgear they could find - an Easter bonnet) and Bobby calmly told her the house was on fire.

Cheryl dialed 911 and the fire was put out by the local firefighters. The blaze, which started in the basement's fuse box, caused major smoke damage. Bobby's quick thinking won praise and citations. Cheryl proudly says, "We're surprised he stayed calm. But we're even more surprised that his sister listened to him."

Would your children know what to do? Here are some simple questions to ask yourself.

### *Fire Safety*

Would my children know:

- What to do if they smell smoke or hear the fire alarm sound?
- How to dial 911 in case of an emergency?
- Where the fire extinguisher is kept?
- Emergency routes to use to get out of the house and where to meet other family members safely outside?
- How to "stop, drop and roll?"

### *Home Safety*

Can my children:

- Identify leading causes of preventable injuries in the home (falls and burns)?
- Explain what dangerous play or activities are and why?
- Put into plain words what to do if there is an injury?

### *Cool safety ideas*

- Post emergency numbers for police, fire and 911 by the phone, along with your home's address and phone number.
- Host a "Scooby Doo Safety Check". Go through your home with appropriately- aged youngsters and look for "clues" (things that are dangerous such as power tools, loose boards on steps, frayed electrical cords, etc.) Set "don't touch" ground rules - they can only look for the clues and immediately tell you or another adult as soon as they find a "clue" (something dangerous). Get them into the habit of accident prevention and into practicing safety.
- Be proactive about safety. Have a fire drill, a tornado drill or earthquake drill.
- Safety points. Have rewards for practicing safe behavior and preventing injuries.

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