

When Stuff happens



Resource for parents and children on the autism spectrum.

This workbook is designed for parents to go through with their child/ young person following an earthquake. It is a general resource that you can adapt/simplify/extend, based on the learning needs of your child, and how they best understand information. It is intended as a resource only to be used with an adult, and it is not appropriate to give it to a child without a parent assessing suitability and guiding them through the workbook with additional information relevant to their level of understanding.

All information provided in this booklet is for educational & informational purposes only. Although we have made every effort to keep our information accurate and up-to-date, the information contained in this booklet is not intended and must not be taken to be the provision of health claims or provision or practice of medical advice or services nor a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. If you have questions or concerns about your child's health or treatment or would like more information, contact a qualified health professional. Contact a qualified health professional before starting or changing any treatment.

Indicators that you child may be reacting to the experience of being in an Earthquake.

"Pay close attention to cues children with autism may provide regarding their fears and feelings and provide them with ways to communicate. Try to maintain as much of the normal routine as possible. Many children with autism can be helped to understand different or unexpected behaviour through stories. Thus, explaining what is happening through a social story may help them understand what has happened. Provide very concrete information about the situation and appropriate ways to respond that are within the child's skill level.

The following list includes some of the reactions you may see in your child:

- Crying/Depression
- Bedwetting
- Thumb-sucking
- Nightmares
- Clinging/fear of being left alone
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Regression to previous behaviours
- Fighting
- Increase in physical complaints
- Excessive fear of darkness
- Inability to concentrate
- Withdrawal and isolation
- Not wanting to attend school
- Headaches

Some things that will help your child recover are:

- Hug and touch your child often.(If this is something that reassures them)
- Reassure the child frequently that you are safe and together.
- Talk with your child about his/her feelings about the disaster. Share your feelings too. Give information the child can understand.
- Talk about what happened.
- Spend extra time with your child at bedtime.
- Allow children to grieve about their lost treasures; a toy, a blanket, a lost home.
- Talk with your child about what you will do if another disaster strikes. Let your child help in preparing and planning for future disasters.
- Try to spend extra time together in family activities to begin replacing fears with pleasant memories.
- If your child is having problems at school, talk to the teacher so that you can work together to help your child.

Usually a child's emotional response to a disaster does not last long. Be aware that some problems may not appear immediately or may recur months after the disaster. Talking openly with your children will help them to recover more quickly from the loss.” <http://www.trauma-pages.com/chld-res.htm>

Following a natural disaster there have been excellent guidelines for supporting children developed by the Red Cross - In summary their suggestions are:

- Encourage children to ask questions – don't feel that you need to have all the answers , but say that you will try to find an answer for the child.
- Give children factual information in a simple way
- Respect the children's concerns- validate their fears
- Offer comfort- model a sense of calm.
- Monitor media use.
- Children may express feelings through actions rather than words.
- Empower children by thinking about things they can do to help.

<http://www.redcross.org.nz>

If your child is having an ongoing response to the earthquake it is vital that you seek professional assistance from your Health professional.

All pictures for this resource have been sourced from GOOGLE PICTURES. Thanks also to KIDSREACH www.Kidsreach.org.nz.

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This booklet is divided into the following sections:

1. What is an earthquake (this is designed to de-mystify what an earthquake is for a child, replace any incorrect information the child may have)
2. A social story about an earthquake.
3. A social story about how people might feel after an earthquake.
4. An action plan about what to do when there is an earthquake.
5. An exercise to reinforce the things that are still the same after the earthquake.
6. An exercise to look at what I did right when the earthquake happened and what I can do differently if there is another earthquake.
7. An exercise to look at what there is to look forward to.
8. What I can do when I feel bothered – a worksheet to determine your child has preferred methods of relaxation.
9. A social story about what I can do to help. (Research suggests that children can feel empowered about their situation if they can contribute on a practical level.)

How to use this booklet.

Read the information first and delete any information that is not relevant for your child or that you would think is inappropriate for your child.

Go through the information with your child over a period of time. Consider making visuals about any actions that you want to encourage your child to repeat .

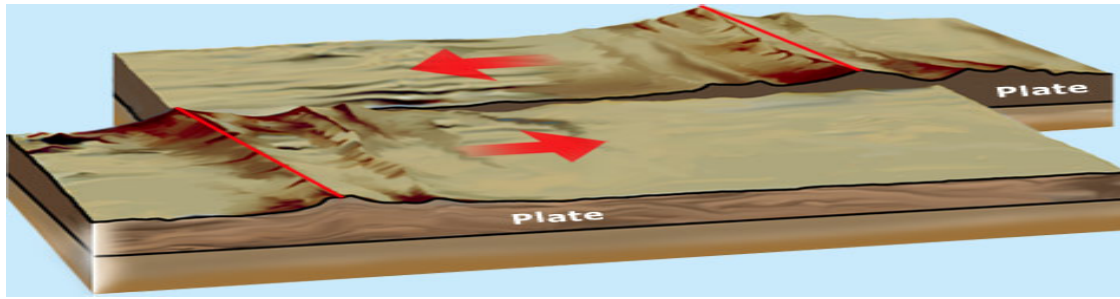
What is an earthquake?

There are about 20 plates along the surface of the earth that move slowly past each



other.

When the plates squeeze or stretch, huge rocks form at their edges and the rocks shift with great force, causing an earthquake.



When the force is large enough, the crust is forced to break.



When the break occurs, energy is released which moves through the Earth in the form



of waves, which we feel and call an earthquake.

<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/learn/kids/eqscience.php>



No one can tell when an earthquake is going to happen

and there is nothing that people can do to start an earthquake or stop an earthquake - it is no one's fault.

When there is an earthquake people try and remember what the safe thing to do is in



an earthquake - quietly and quickly get under a table



or stand in a door way
to keep safe.

until the earthquake is finished- this can help us

An Earthquake in Christchurch.



When an earthquake happens, it can often take us by surprise as no one really knows when an earthquake will happen.



In New Zealand, people try to build buildings in a safe way, so when there is an earthquake, the buildings might break, or be damaged, but they are the safest they can possibly be.



In Christchurch when there was a big earthquake and some buildings were badly damaged, but also a lot of buildings were ok .

After the earthquake, some things were different for some people.



Some kids missed school for a while,



Some parts of the city were closed until they were checked by engineers to



make sure they were safe.

Some people had their power off for a while, and some people did not have water in their house.

Some people had damage to their homes and had to live somewhere else for a while, while their



house was being fixed or they get a new house.

When something happens like an earthquake, there are people whose job it is to get things back to the way it used to be.



There are people who fix the drains to get the water back on.



Some people fix the power to get power back on in the houses.



Some people fix houses.

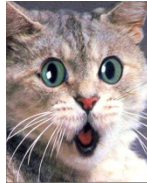


People are working hard to get Christchurch back to the way it used to be.

Feelings about an earthquake

When an earthquake happens people have feelings –

- some people might be shocked



- Some people might be frightened

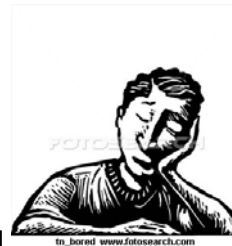


excited

- Some people might be excited



- Some people might not be bothered



- Some might be sad



Some people might have a mixture of all those feelings, even after the earthquake has happened.



This is ok and is a normal thing to happen to a person after something unexpected has happened.

Sometimes people might have the same types of feelings when there is another earthquake, this is



ok too



Its good to remember that these feelings will not last forever, and will get less and less.



Sometimes people talk about feelings being like waves on a beach , the feelings might come and go like waves on a beach , sometimes big feelings sometimes little feelings.

When we have feelings about an earthquake, it can be helpful to tell someone we care about how



we are feeling . This might be our mother, or father, or the person who takes care of us, or a teacher or a member of our family.

Talking about how we are feeling can sometimes make people feel better, and helps people who care about us to know what we are feeling.

What to do when there is an Earthquake.

PLAN FIRST!

The best thing to do in an earthquake is to have a plan

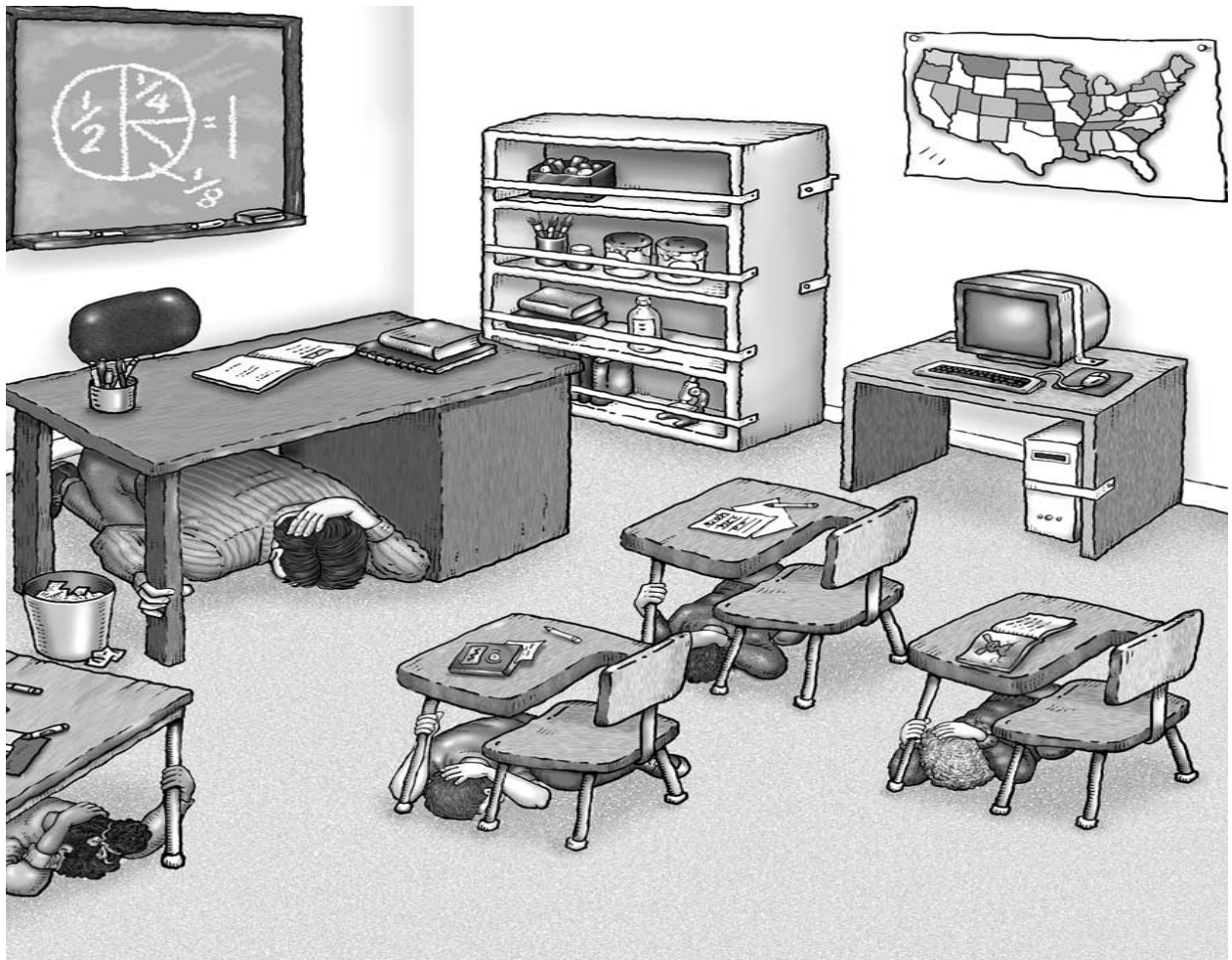
A plan is a practice of what you would do when there is an earthquake.

It is best to have a plan for the places you usually are: at school , at home , at a visitors house.

What to do when there is an earthquake

Drop, Cover, and Hold

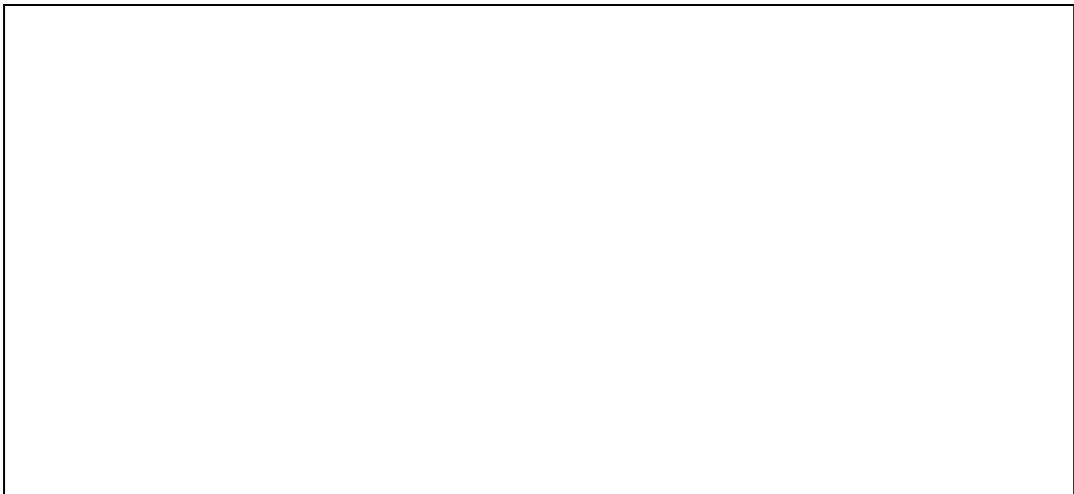
Take cover under a sturdy desk or table, hold on to the desk or table leg so that the desk or table stays on top of you, and keep your head down until the shaking stops.



It's good to think about where you might be safe in different places – draw a picture of where you think a safe place is:



In your Bedroom

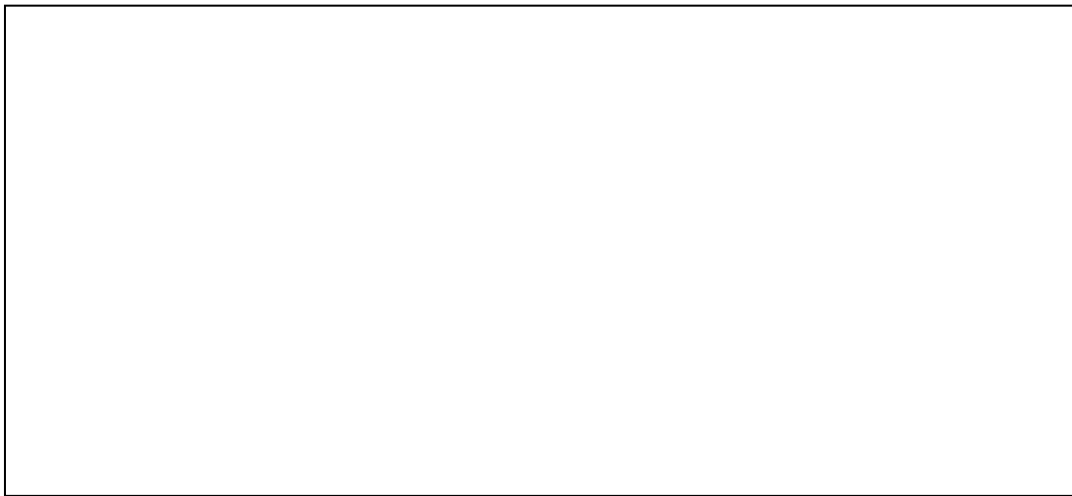


In the lounge

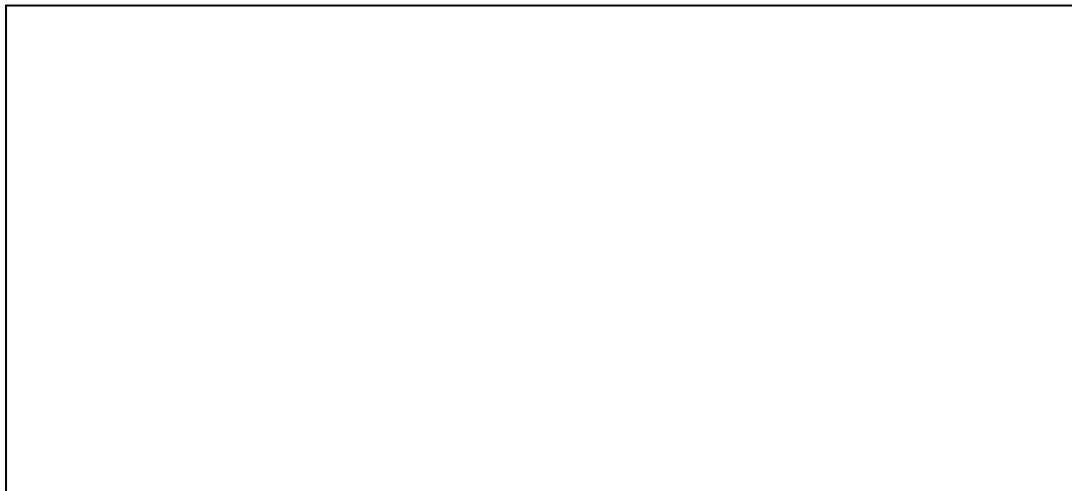




At school :

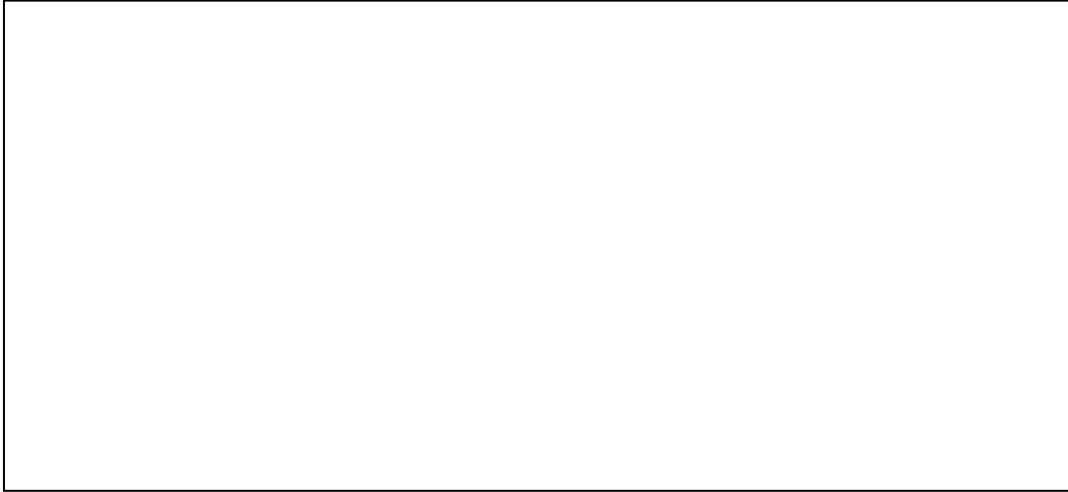


At someone's else's house .

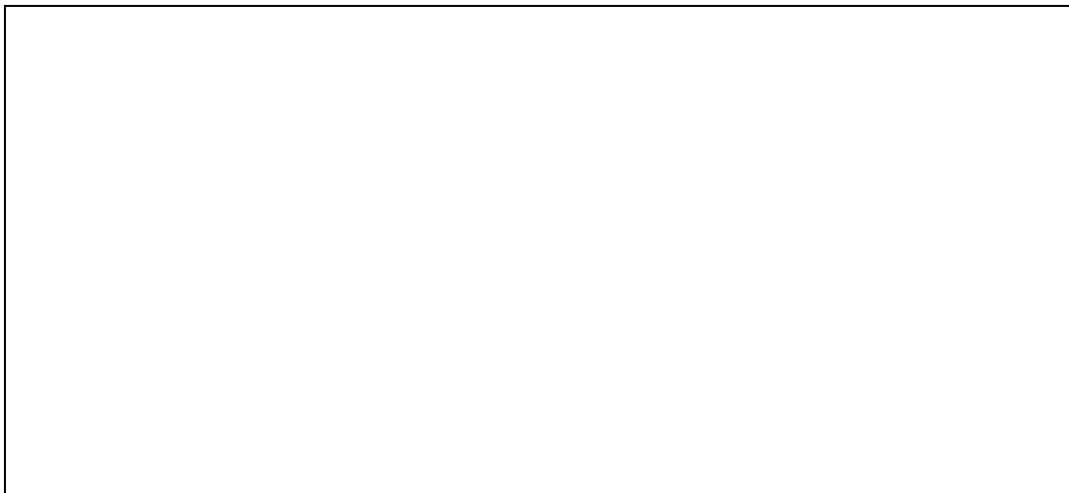




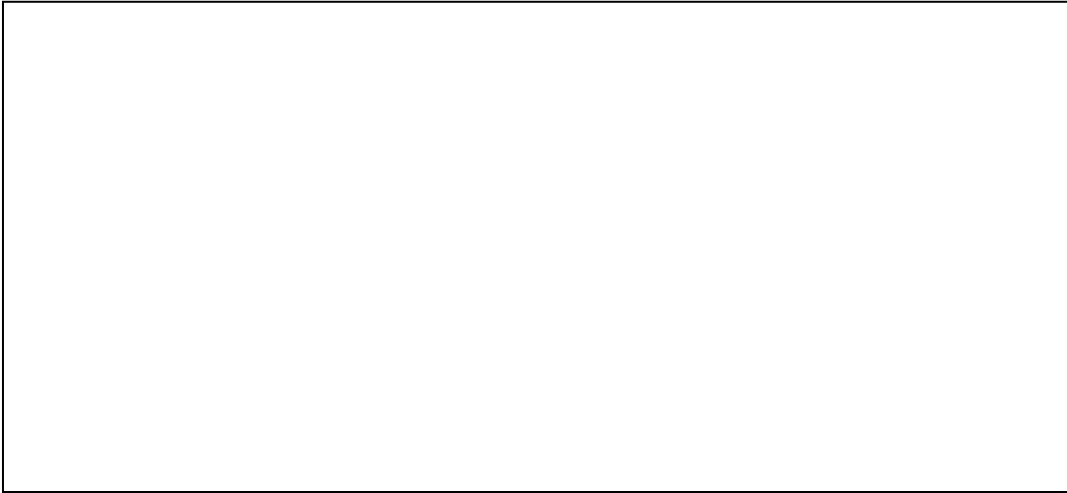
At night time



When I am out side



Draw a picture or show someone how you would take cover in an earthquake.



What things are still the same?

Sometimes when something like an earthquake happens people notice all the things that are different and they might forget all the things that are the same! Draw a circle around all the things that are still the same for you after the earthquake.



School



Playing



dinner



Video shop



Computer time



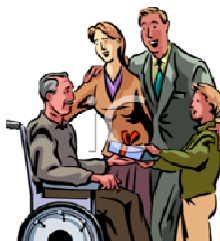
Watching TV



Playground



Grocery shopping



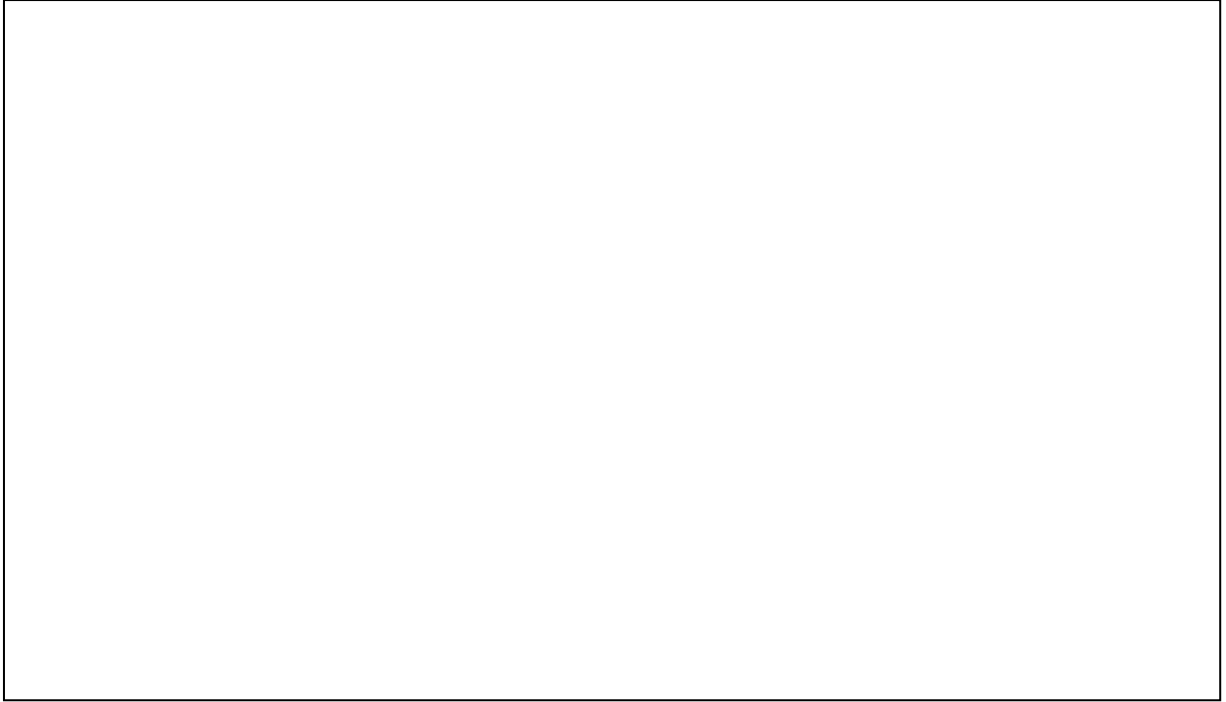
visiting family

What other things can you draw that are still the same?

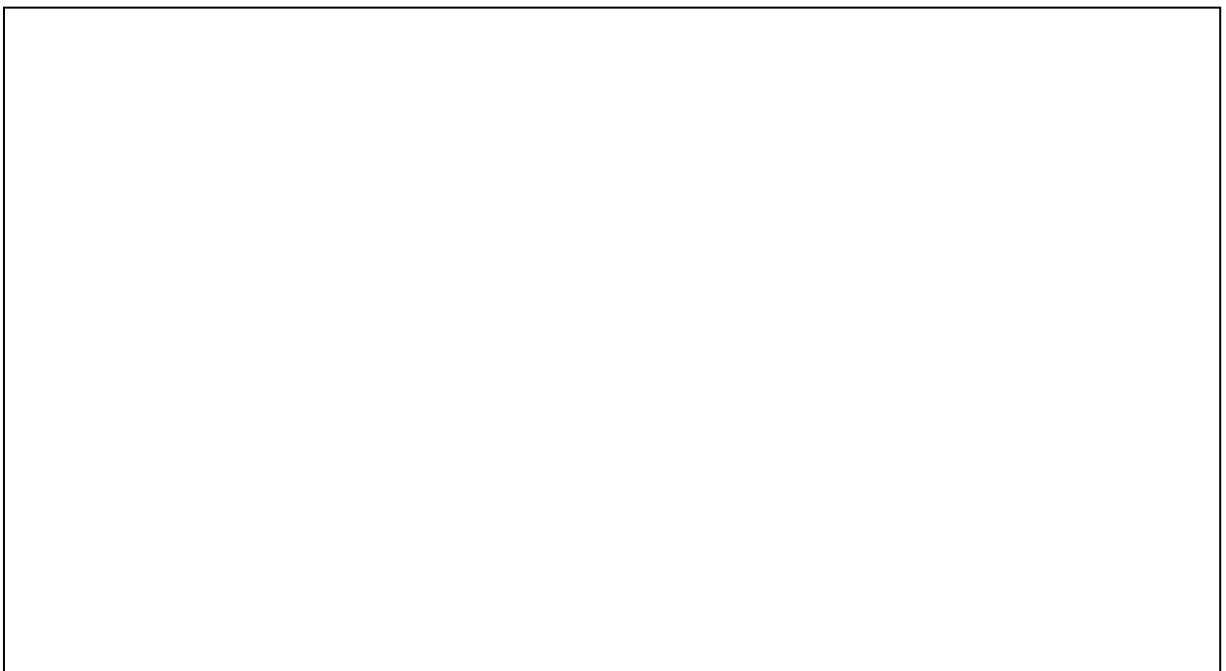


When an earthquake happened.

Earthquakes often are a surprise and sometime it can be hard to remember to do the right thing, Draw a picture of what you did right when there was an earth quake.



What other things can I do right if there is another earthquake ?



What good things have you got to look forward to ?

Draw a circle around good things that might be happening soon .



Christmas



Birthday



Sports day



Swimming



A Picnic



A Holiday



My favourite TV Programme



Holiday Programme

What other things can you look forward to – draw a picture here:

Four empty rounded rectangular boxes arranged in a row, intended for drawing pictures of things the user is looking forward to.



What can I do when I feel bothered

Everyone gets bothered sometimes – its just part of life! The trick is to remember what to do when you feel bothered. Sometimes when we relax when we are bothered it can help the bothered feeling to go away.

Circle what things help you feel better when you are bothered.



Going for a walk



reading a book



Watching TV



Checking my schedule



Talking to someone



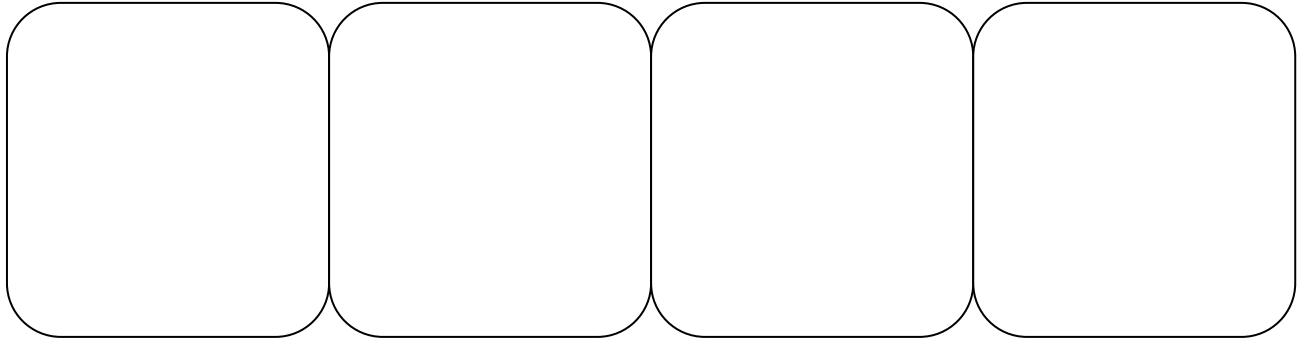
Playing with my toys

In my family



Doing some deep breathing

On the next page , draw some pictures of other things that help you to relax.

Four empty rounded rectangular boxes arranged horizontally, intended for drawing pictures of things that help with relaxation.

What I can do to Help

Sometimes when something happens like an earthquake, people feel better if they can help.

What is something that you can do to help .



Put bluetack on the bottom
of a vase to make it less
likely to fall down.



Donate a coin to people raising money .



Help someone in my family Clean up

Draw a picture of some other ideas you have.

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a child to draw their idea.A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a child to draw their idea.A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a child to draw their idea.

