



## Summer Safety Activity: "It's an Emergency"

Help children understand emergency procedures

By [Ellen Booth Church](#)

**SKILLS:** Children use social and language skills in dramatic play to understand emergencies.

### **MATERIALS:**

- dramatic-play props, including a toy phone

**IN ADVANCE:** Before beginning a discussion of emergencies with children, send a note home informing parents how important it is that they follow up this activity with talks about emergency situations and practice how to get help at home. Also explain that often emergencies are scary for young children. As adults, it is our responsibility to help them feel prepared. It is also extremely important that we do so in a calm, reassuring, and gently serious manner.

### **ACTIVITY**

1 Gather children to talk about emergencies. Ask, "What is an emergency?" Together, list emergencies that children have experienced or heard about: a fire, someone choking, someone who is lost. Write their responses on an experience chart and read them back. Summarize their thoughts into a few basic "emergency statements," such as "It's an emergency when someone is hurt or won't wake up or when someone can't get help themselves." Talk about actions children can take in an emergency, including telling an adult.

2 Explain to children, "We're going to take turns pretending there is an emergency. When you think you see an emergency, come sit near me." Go over your emergency plans once more.

3 With a volunteer, act out one of the examples you listed together. Perhaps the child could pretend to fall, her eyes would close, and she wouldn't wake up to your calls. You could say, "Dietra, Dietra, are you OK?" When Dietra does not answer, pretend to call 911 or the emergency phone number in your area. Later, act out various other emergencies listed on your chart, allowing children to dramatize the situations.

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*You can sing this song to help children remember 9-1-1.*

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*(Sing to the tune of "Bingo!")*

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*There is a number you can call when you need someone's help*

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*You call 911, you call 911, you call 911*

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*And someone will help you!*

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**For younger children:** Provide an assortment of toy emergency vehicles children can use to further explore emergency situations.

**For older children:** Give them additional emergency situations to solve. Be sure that these scenarios are not too intense or frightening but will allow children to consider appropriate ways of addressing the emergencies.

**Remember:** This is just the first step in learning about emergencies. You might prepare further activities to help children practice saying their first and last names clearly, reciting their addresses, and using a phone to call for help.

### **SPIN OFF**

To help familiarize children with a phone dial pad, draw oversize numbers as they appear on the phone, including the \* and # signs, on a large piece of chart paper. Show children how this display corresponds to the numbers on the phone. As a group, count the numbers in order. Then place the paper on the floor and one at a time ask children to take a turn jumping on a particular number. Later, you might ask, "Peter, will you dial 9-1-1 with your feet?"

### **BOOKS**

***Danger Ahead!*** by Justine and Ron Fontes

***Rescue Vehicles*** by Andre Stephens, Paula Borton

***To the Rescue: Funtime Rhymes*** by Ray Bryant

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