



Emergency recovery lesson plans

Early childhood
for students aged 3 to 5

These resources are part of Australian Red Cross's non-hazard-specific REDIPlan program and complement Red Cross's 'Emergency REDIPlan Get Ready!' activity book designed to assist children to prepare for emergencies. REDIPlan resources are available at www.redcross.org.au.

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RECOVERY Introduction

How to use these RECOVERY lesson plans

Emergencies – big or small – are destructive and can be very stressful for people of every age. The following lesson plans have been designed to help childcare staff educate young children about important emergency preparedness information.

The plans have been designed to assist children to prepare for emergencies, including being aware of the feelings they may have during an emergency.

The content of these plans has been developed by teachers with advice and support from experienced emergency managers and a psychologist experienced in emergency recovery.

Important note

Children attending your centre may have experienced a variety of emergencies and may have varying degrees of psychological stress. It is recommended that you seek the advice of a school counsellor or psychologist before proceeding with these lesson plans. When doing so, discuss what reactions might be expected from students who have experienced an emergency and what to implement if these reactions are displayed.

You should also inform parents that you are undertaking these activities, so that they can watch for any reactions and support their children.

Colour guide

The following document includes a unit overview and five comprehensive lesson plans specific to young children. Each section has been colour-coded as follows:



Unit overview



Lesson plans 1–5

RECOVERY Introduction

Unit overview

Purpose

The purpose of this unit is to provide opportunities for young children to understand that:

- how they can prepare for emergency situations
- how to minimise the impact of an emergency on them, if one occurs.

Structure and content

The unit is made up of 10 lessons divided into two sections. Section one relates to early childhood preparedness and section two relates to early childhood recovery.

Staff can determine their own order for the five lessons. It is important to teach every lesson, although it is not essential to teach every aspect of these lessons. Staff should also be aware of the needs of the children within their centre.

The key concepts covered in the lessons are summarised in the following diagram.

RECOVERY **Early childhood**

Unit overview

Key Concepts

Lesson one – Change and transitions

Change can be positive. Change brings new beginnings.



Lesson two – Memories, hopes and the future

Memories are valuable reminders of people, events and things in our lives. Even though physical reminders may no longer exist, memories around these still exist and are important.



Lesson three – How to help myself and my friends

Feelings are natural. We need to share our feelings with others.



Lesson four – How can I help my family

Family members may need support or assistance after an emergency. Young children can assist family members after an emergency in simple ways.



Lesson five – Reactions to emergencies

We may experience sad, angry or frightened feelings long after being in an emergency. There are ways to make our body feel calm and safe.

RECOVERY Introduction

Unit overview

The unit includes a variety of learning opportunities, and each lesson provides pointers for teachers and suggestions for further activities.

Before commencing the unit

It is important to be aware of the students prior experience with emergency situations, as this experience may have been traumatic. Students who have had a traumatic experience in the past will need extra care. It is essential that being involved in this unit does not aggravate or worsen any prior trauma.

Emergencies can take place in the home, at school and in the local area. Therefore, it is important to inform the students families that this unit of work is being undertaken and to encourage their participation in take-home activities.

During the unit

Student's emotional responses to emergency situations will vary. Some might find an emergency exciting, even game-like, while others might find it traumatic and display behaviours that reflect this.

Throughout the unit, reassure students by frequently reminding them that:

- emergencies do not happen very often to individual people
- being prepared makes a big difference in an emergency
- there are always adults to look after them
- they can work together to help each other.

If you are concerned about a student's behaviour or reaction at any time, discuss the matter with the family.

After completion of the unit

An emergency can happen at any time, so it is important that there is an ongoing approach to reinforcing the learnings taught in the unit. Ways to do this include:

- posters displayed permanently in the room and around the centre
- practice evacuation drills
- monitoring of emergency kit contents
- revision activities.

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Unit overview

Useful sites

The sites listed below have been reviewed and are excellent sources of information.

Australian Red Cross

www.redcross.org.au

Red Cross is the world's largest independent humanitarian organisation. Teaching and learning resources

for the primary educational environment available through this website include:

- Emergency REDiPlan (emergency preparedness and recovery)
- Y Challenge (community engagement)
- International Youth Project (international aid).

Emergency Management Australia

www.ema.gov.au

Emergency Management Australia is an Australian Government agency that provides a range of suggested activities for different audiences, including educators. Follow the 'Resources' link on the website menu to access educational materials.

What's the plan, Stan?

www.whatstheplanstan.govt.nz/teacher.html

This New Zealand site promotes emergency preparedness in primary and intermediate schools by providing teachers and students with the knowledge and skills to act in a safe manner when an emergency occurs.

The Australian Child & Adolescent Trauma, Loss & Grief Network (ACATLGN)

www.earlytraumagrieff.anu.edu.au

ACATLGN aims to promote understanding of child and adolescent trauma, loss and grief. Based at the Australian National University, its work is supported by Australian Government funding aiming to provide early intervention services for parents, children and young people. The web portal provides tip sheets and information on emergencies and a wide range of social issues facing school communities.



RECOVERY Introduction

Unit overview

Useful sites (continued)

State Emergency Services

Australian Capital Territory:	www.ses.act.gov.au
New South Wales:	www.ses.nsw.gov.au
Northern Territory:	www.pfes.nt.gov.au/index.cfm?ses
Queensland:	www.emergency.qld.gov.au/ses
South Australia:	www.ses.sa.gov.au
Tasmania:	www.ses.tas.gov.au
Victoria:	www.ses.vic.gov.au
Western Australia:	www.fesa.wa.gov.au

Fire services

ACT Emergency Services Agency:	www.esa.act.gov.au
Country Fire Authority, Victoria:	www.cfa.vic.gov.au
Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia:	www.fesa.wa.gov.au
Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Victoria:	www.mfb.vic.gov.au
NSW Fire Brigades:	www.fire.nsw.gov.au
NSW Rural Fire Services:	www.rfs.nsw.gov.au
Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service:	www.pfes.nt.gov.au/index.cfm?fire
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service:	www.fire.qld.gov.au
South Australian Country Fire Service:	www.cfs.sa.gov.au
South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service:	www.samfs.sa.gov.au
Tasmanian Fire Service:	www.fire.tas.gov.au

These easy to navigate sites contain information on a range of natural disasters and materials for teachers, students and families.



RECOVERY **Early childhood**

Lesson one: **Change and transitions**

(Estimated time: 30 minutes)

Purpose

The purpose of this unit is to provide opportunities for young children to understand that:

- change is a natural part of life
- change can be dramatic and unexpected, even traumatic
- people can adapt to, and recover from, change.

This unit supplements 'After the emergency', a Red Cross REDiPlan activity book designed to help children in primary school to cope with emergencies. 'After the emergency' is available for download from the Red Cross website <http://www.redcross.org.au/emergency-resources.aspx>.

Many of the activities in this unit can be used to help young people recover from the effects of an emergency. It is advisable to undertake the activities on a hypothetical basis before any emergency occurs. This will reassure children that recovery is possible and will help them to be prepared for recovering from such events and to build skills for recovery, before they are needed.

Key concepts

- Change can be positive.
- Change brings new beginnings.

Prior to the lesson

- Prepare pictures of caterpillars and butterflies.
- Prepare craft materials.

Be aware!

Your students may have had a variety of experiences with emergencies and may have varying degrees of psychological trauma. It is recommended that you seek the advice of the school counsellor or welfare officer before proceeding with this lesson.

Ensure that participation in the lesson does not exacerbate or aggravate prior trauma. To do this, you may need to speak with parents and/or ask the students to let you know if they have been involved in an experience that has been distressing.

It is important that you ensure students are given the opportunity to opt out of activities that might cause distress.

Aim

To introduce children to the concept of change and discuss that change can be positive.

Objectives

Participation in this lesson will assist children to:

- describe the changes that may occur as a result of an emergency
- make a model that illustrates renewal.



RECOVERY Introduction

Lesson one: Structure

Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Show children a photo flashcard of a caterpillar.
2. Ask the children what changes will happen to the caterpillar as it grows.
3. Show a photo flashcard of a butterfly to introduce the idea that change can bring new beginnings and can be positive.

Elaborate and explore (20 minutes)

4. Explain that the change from the caterpillar to the butterfly can be similar to the way things look and feel before and after an emergency.
5. Using a 'talking toy', get the students to discuss how things looked before and after an emergency, and express how the 'talking toy' may have felt.
6. Have the students draw pictures or use craft materials to show how damage caused by an emergency could be repaired. For example, children could draw or build a new house, create a new forest or bushland, or create farm paddocks and crops.
– Note, this could be an ongoing activity over several sessions or days.

Closure (5 minutes)

7. Prepare a display of the renewed houses, community or farms with the students.



RECOVERY **Early childhood**

Lesson two: **Memories, hope and the future**

(Estimated time: 20–30 minutes)

Key concepts

- Memories are valuable reminders of people, events and things in our lives. Even though physical reminders and possessions may no longer exist, memories about these will still exist and are important.

Resources

- *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox.
- Treasure box stencil – large enough for children to draw in or paste pictures into (at least A3 size).
- Treasure box or basket containing seashells, a puppet, a medal, a football and an egg.
- Scissors.
- Glue.
- Pencils.

Prior to the lesson

- Prepare pictures of caterpillars and butterflies.
- Draw a picture of a treasure box onto A3 paper and copy one for every student.
- Prepare craft materials.

Be aware!

Your students may have had a variety of experiences with emergencies and may have varying degrees of psychological trauma. It is recommended that you seek the advice of the school counsellor or welfare officer before proceeding with this lesson.

Ensure that participation in the lesson does not exacerbate or aggravate prior trauma. To do this, you may need to speak with parents and/or ask the students to let you know if they have been involved in an experience that has been distressing.

It is important that you ensure students are given the opportunity to opt out of activities that might cause distress.



RECOVERY Introduction

Lesson two: Structure

Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Read *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*.

Elaborate and explore (20 minutes)

2. Show each of the items identified in the book, e.g. sea shells, puppet, medal, football and egg and ask the children:
 - What memories do you have of items like these?
 - What treasures would you keep to remind you of people, events or things?
3. Lead a discussion about the importance of memories.
4. Provide students with the treasure box stencil and have them draw pictures or cut out items from magazines that remind them of special people, events or things in their lives. Alternatively, you could ask the children to bring special items from home to place in their own treasure box or bag.

Closure (5 minutes)

5. Remind the children that while treasures may have been lost in an emergency, new treasures will be found in the future and new memories will be created.

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Lesson three: How to help myself and my friends

(Estimated time: 30–40 minutes)

Key concepts

- Feelings are natural.
- We need to share our feelings with others.

Resources

- Photographs or cards showing a range of emotions.
- Large tree trunk poster.
- Leaf cut-outs.

Prior to the lesson

- Collect photographs or cards showing emotions.
- Make a large tree trunk poster.
- Cut out leaf shapes.

Be aware!

Your students may have had a variety of experiences with emergencies and may have varying degrees of psychological trauma. It is recommended that you seek the advice of the school counsellor or welfare officer before proceeding with this lesson.

Ensure that participation in the lesson does not exacerbate or aggravate prior trauma. To do this, you may need to speak with parents and/or ask the students to let you know if they have been involved in an experience that has been distressing.

It is important that you ensure students are given the opportunity to opt out of activities that might cause distress.

Aims

- To help children identify feelings and emotions experienced after an emergency.
- To develop strategies to seek help.

Objectives

Participation in this session will assist children to:

- identify a range of natural feelings and emotions associated with experiencing an emergency
- identify the people in their lives who can assist them by listening to their feelings and emotions.

RECOVERY Introduction

Lesson three: Structure

Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Show the photographs or cards of emotive faces, e.g. scared, happy, angry, sad.
2. Ask the students to identify the feelings expressed in the photographs or on the cards and describe a time in their life when they felt that emotion. Monitor the discussion and interrupt if required.

Elaborate and explore (20 minutes)

3. Lead a discussion around the following questions using the 'talking toy':
 - How might the 'talking toy' be feeling after the emergency?
 - Who can the 'talking toy' talk to about these feelings?
4. Help the students make a 'new growth tree' poster. Get them to write feelings on the trunk of the tree poster and list the people in their support network on a leaf cut-out.

Closure (5 minutes)

5. Display the students leaves on the 'new growth tree' poster. Ask each student to individually come to the tree and say 'I can talk to ... about my feelings and that makes me feel safe', while attaching their leaf to the tree.

RECOVERY **Early childhood**

Lesson four:

How can I help my family

(Estimated time: 30–40 minutes)

Key concepts

- Family members may need help or assistance after an emergency.
- Young children can assist family members after an emergency in simple ways.

Resources

- Photo flashcards of different types of families participating in a variety of activities, e.g. fishing, watching a movie, playing music, throwing a ball.
- Strips of paper to form paper chains.
- Glue.

Prior to the lesson

- Prepare flashcards of families participating in different activities together.
- Prepare strips of paper for the paper chain.

Be aware!

Your students may have had a variety of experiences with emergencies and may have varying degrees of psychological trauma. It is recommended that you seek the advice of the school counsellor or welfare officer before proceeding with this lesson.

Ensure that participation in the lesson does not exacerbate or aggravate prior trauma. To do this, you may need to speak with parents and/or ask the students to let you know if they have been involved in an experience that has been distressing.

It is important that you ensure students are given the opportunity to opt out of activities that might cause distress.

Aim

To introduce children to the importance of helping family members after an emergency.

Objectives

Participation in this session will assist children to develop strategies to assist family members cope after an emergency.



RECOVERY Introduction

Lesson four: Structure

Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Show students flashcards of families participating in different activities.
2. Invite each student to discuss the activities they do with their family.
3. Ask the students whether any of these activities have changed since the emergency.

Elaborate and explore (20 minutes)

4. Discuss why and how things have changed since the emergency.
5. Explore why these family activities may have changed, e.g. physical injury, emotional health, financial status.
6. Discuss how families might help each other with these changes.
7. Have the students draw people and pets that are important to them on a strip of paper. On another strip, help them to write: 'My family can help each other by ...'

Closure (5 minutes)

8. Join the loops together to make a class paper chain.



RECOVERY **Early childhood**

Lesson five: Reactions to emergencies

(Estimated time: 35 minutes)

Key concepts

- You may experience sad, angry or frightened feelings long after being in an emergency.
- There are ways to make your body feel calm and safe.

Resources

- Children's activity: Relaxation ('The Butterfly on My Nose') Hunter Institute of Mental Health www.zemirahj.wordpress.com/2010/08/29/progressive-relaxation-the-butterfly-on-my-nose/
- *When I'm Feeling Scared* by Trace Moroney.

Be aware!

Your students may have had a variety of experiences with emergencies and may have varying degrees of psychological trauma. It is recommended that you seek the advice of the school counsellor or welfare officer before proceeding with this lesson.

Ensure that participation in the lesson does not exacerbate or aggravate prior trauma. To do this, you may need to speak with parents and/or ask the students to let you know if they have been involved in an experience that has been distressing.

It is important that you ensure students are given the opportunity to opt out of activities that might cause distress.

Aim

To introduce children to the need to accept, express and address their emotional responses to emergency situations.

Objectives

Participation in this session will assist children to:

- identify a range of feelings and emotions associated with experiencing an emergency
- develop personal strategies to use when experiencing stress after an emergency.



RECOVERY Introduction

Lesson five: Structure

Introduction (10 minutes)

1. Read *When I'm Feeling Scared*, by Trace Moroney.
2. Discuss the body's physical responses to being scared.

Elaborate and explore (20 minutes)

3. Give students the 'talking toy' to hold and invite them, one at a time, to share stories of being scared during or after an emergency. The students may elect to talk from the perspective of the 'talking toy', e.g. 'teddy was scared when the fire burnt our roof'.
4. Introduce the idea that relaxation activities can help us feel less scared as they calm our body.
5. Lead the relaxation activity 'The Butterfly on My Nose'.

Closure (5 minutes)

6. Ask the children to identify a place or time when they felt calm and safe.



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