



Summary: Research-into- Action Brief

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Research-into-Action Brief series

The series provides concise summaries of academic and grey literature on a range of topics for practitioners working in the fields of child-centred risk reduction (CCRR), climate change adaptation, and school safety. This summary highlights the main messages in the full Research-into-Action Brief about children's impacts on household safety.

Find the full Research-into-Action Brief series at:

www.gadrrres.net/resources

Children's Impacts on Household Safety

The importance of including children as partners and agents of change for risk reduction has been globally acknowledged. Many child-centered risk reduction (CCRR) programs have improved the safety of children and their families by empowering them with knowledge about hazards and safety-related skills. However, more research is needed to identify what types of programs are most effective and which activities and household interventions have long-term impacts. This summary outlines what is known about how CCRR programs prompt behaviour changes that improve household safety.

Behaviour Change and DRR

Although research about risk reduction and resilience education in schools has increased, measurement of the impacts of this education on household safety is rare. Evaluation of DRR education usually measures children's and adults' knowledge and awareness of hazards, rather than changes in behaviour or actions taken to reduce risks (Johnson et al. 2014). Similarly, there are few findings on child-parent interactions and how they influence household risk reduction (Johnson et al. 2014; Ronan et al. 2015, 2016). What drives and what blocks effective communication about risks involving children is also not well understood (Mudavanhu et al. 2015; Haynes and Tanner 2015).

The broad literature on both household safety and children's impacts on risk reduction and resilience provide some valuable insights. These include:

- **Knowledge versus action:** Research shows that children who participate in risk reduction education have greater *knowledge* of hazards and risk mitigation, but little is known about whether children and households take actions to reduce risks.
- **Child and household interactions:** Children can, and do, share knowledge that influences the decisions of their parents. Children need specific guidance to encourage them to do this.
- **How children bring information home:** If take home material is provided, and if information is presented in a structured or recognised way, it may be given more credibility by caregivers. Efforts that require parent interaction – like filling completing a household safety plan – also increase the potential for impact of these programs. Consistent information with clear instructions, and which comes from trusted sources, is more likely to lead to behaviour change.
- **Active ingredients for household impact:** Disaster preparedness education programs start to have an impact at home when children discuss what they have learned in schools with adults. Parents helping children with relevant homework may also lead to greater influence.

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Practical Applications

Starting risk reduction in homes is a strong foundation for building community resilience activities. Research shows that children, and adults, are more likely to share information and take action to reduce risks when they are confident that their actions will make a positive impact, and when they feel personally capable of tackling these actions. They are most confident as agents of change in their own homes. When empowered, they can then be encouraged to reach out to peers, and to participate in further action in school, the community and at work.

Assessing program impacts requires research before and after the CCRR program. To properly monitor changes, risk reduction projects need to gather baseline data on both children's and adults' knowledge and understanding, and on household safety measures, before a program begins. This should be gathered again once a program has been completed so that changes can be identified. Involving children as partners in this research can empower and engage them in the goals of increased safety and resilience.

Using evidence- and consensus-based action-oriented messages supports and increases safety behaviour in homes. IFRC and Save the Children's *Public Awareness and Public Education for Disaster Risk Reduction: Action-Oriented Key Messages for Households and Schools* (2018) provides a valuable starting place for national level adaptation and adoption of this information. This, in turn, means that information provided to schools, children, and caregivers can be consistent and carry the logos of both organisations for stronger impact.

Dialogue between family members should be encouraged. Best practices more likely to result in households undertaking preparedness measures include: providing quality education materials for children to take home; encouraging children and youth to share their knowledge and information with family and friends; incorporating experiential and interactive learning; seeking family input and feedback (e.g., complete a family safety and resilience plan).

Practice-based research is vital to improve program effectiveness. Measuring and understanding household risk reduction and the potential influence of children requires both quantitative data (e.g., questionnaires) and qualitative methods (e.g., interviews and group discussions). Program staff and beneficiaries can all be involved in research design and implementation. Staff should also be encouraged to experiment with program design to test the effectiveness of different interventions.

Related fields should also be examined to understand children's influence on household safety. Public health campaigns, games and apps, use of social media and voluntarism may have implications on how children impact household safety, and deserve further exploration.

More information

All the references in this *Research-into-Action Brief*, and many more, can be found in the *CCRR and Comprehensive School Safety Bibliography* at:

https://www.zotero.org/groups/1857446/ccrr_css

Find all the references on this topic by using the tag "Household Impacts"

Readings

Amri, A., et al. (2016), '[Disaster Risk Reduction Education in Indonesia: Challenges and Recommendations for Scaling Up](#)', *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences*, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 595-612, online <<http://www.nat-hazards-earth-syst-sci.net/17/595/2017/nhess-17-595-2017.pdf>>.

IFRC and Save the Children, (2018), *Public Awareness and Public Education: Key Messages* 2nd Edition.

Johnson, V et al. (2014), 'Evaluations of disaster education programs for children: a methodological review', *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, vol. 9, pp. 107–123, DOI: 10.1016/j.ijdr.2014.04.001

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Ronan, K et al. (2015), 'Disaster Preparedness for Children and Families: a Critical Review', *Current Psychiatry Reports*, vol. 17, no. 7, DOI: 10.1007/s11920-015-0589-6

Ronan, K et al. (2016), 'Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction: Can Disaster Resilience Programs Reduce Risk and Increase Resilience of Children and Households?' , *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 49-58.