Rabbits in the Hole: A Story about Earthquake Preparedness



Once upon a time, there was a family of rabbits.



They all lived and played together in a big green meadow.

These rabbits lived in a part of the world that sometimes has earthquakes – times when the ground suddenly starts to shake. Sometimes it trembles for just a moment and the bunnies barely notice the shaking, but sometimes the ground shakes really hard for a long time. The bunnies need to know how to stay safe if this happens.



So, their parents taught them how to be safe. The rabbits would practice their drill sometimes so they would remember how to act if an earthquake happened.

I want you to learn how to stay safe too, and to know what to do if you ever feel the ground shaking. Their parents told them that if you're standing up on two legs, you're all wobbly, and it's easy to get knocked over.







So, the first thing you should do if you feel the ground shaking is drop to all four feet.



For humans, that means get down on your hands and knees.



Then the bunny rabbits were told to find cover – something to hide underneath.



Look around you now: can you find something to hide under?



If possible, crawl under a table, and hold on to the table leg.

If there's nothing to hide under, crawl away from things that could fall on you, then cover your head and the back of your neck with your hands.





Stay safe like that till the ground stops shaking and a grown-up tells you that it's safe to move.

Now the bunny rabbits knew just what to do to stay safe.



Anytime their parents called "Rabbits in a Hole" or any time the bunnies felt the ground shake, they knew to drop to all four feet and find cover.

You may never experience an earthquake. Most adults have only felt a few earthquakes in their whole lives.

But, I need you to know how to be safe just in case the ground starts shaking.

Let's practice now. When I say "Rabbits in a Hole", I want you to:



That means, drop down to your hands and knees.

Try to find a table to hide under and hold onto.

If you can't find a table, cover the back of your neck with your hands.

OK, ready? Rabbits in a Hole!

How to Use: Read this story about once a month so your child(ren) will remember it. Each time you read it, have them practice being rabbits in a hole, using these safety tips. You can also play the "rabbits in a hole" game from time to time without any warning as an earthquake drill.

To do the drill, call out loudly "rabbits in a hole." Then calmly remind them to "Drop, find cover, and hold on." Once they are under the table, or have their head and neck covered, have them stay there for a minute or two. Talk to them about how they are safe there, and what a good job they are doing. You can sing a song or tell a story while they're there. If there's enough room under the table, you can provide extra protection by covering your child's body with your own, all of you under the table.

Be sure to occasionally practice in rooms without tables, and remind them to use their hands to cover their necks. Practice outdoors sometimes, so they know to drop and cover outside too.

Optional: you could explain that if they're in their bed when an earthquake happens, they can stay in bed and cover their head with a pillow.

Outdated Recommendations (i.e. what we've learned NOT to do): Don't hide in a doorway. In modern buildings, doorways are no safer than the rest of the room. Don't try to run to an interior room. It is safer to drop and cover where you are. Don't try to run outside. If you're outside, don't run away from trees. Drop first, only move a few feet, and cover.

Copyright note: This book is written by Janelle Durham, www.GoodDaysWithKids.com, but it is not my original idea. A "rabbits in the hole" story is referred to multiple web pages about earthquake preparedness, but the only text I've found is at:

http://thechildcareconsultinggroup.com/pdf/RabbitsInTheHole.pdf. Their story is good, but they recommend using it in other emergency situations, such as intruders. I would recommend using it for only earthquakes. For other emergencies, you might tell other stories, and teach other games that go with them. But, for earthquakes, we want to teach one simple ritual so that if we ever have to use it, the response comes quickly, with no confusion.

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