



# JoJo's Place

A large earthquake can be quite a shock. You and your child might be going through some strong feelings at the moment. You may be asking yourself:

"What is a normal way to feel after an earthquake?"


"How long will these feelings last?"

"Will my child be OK?"

"What can I do to help?"

Lots of people ask these questions after an earthquake. This booklet will let you know about some things that kids might think, feel or do after an earthquake. It also has some tips for things that you could do to help your kids.

But an earthquake can also have a very big effect on the whole whānau. You may find that you, or other members of your family are really upset by what has happened. So this booklet is also for you. It can help you through what can be a really tough time.



# What are normal ways to act after an earthquake?

After an earthquake, kids can act in lots of different ways. Some of the ways that kids often act or feel are:

- **Emotional things:** grumpy, feeling helpless, scared or sad.
  - **Physical things:** really tired, bad sleeping, being 'wired', aches and pains, not feeling hungry.
  - **Ways of Thinking:** hard to focus at school or at home, forgetting things, worrying a lot, thinking about the earthquake when you'd least expect it, nightmares about the earthquake.
  - **Social things:** not wanting to be with people as much as before, being afraid to be alone.
- wets themselves
  - plays with toys they haven't touched for years
  - plays dangerously
  - asks questions about the earthquake
  - plays a game over and over again (especially about the earthquake)
  - goes off on their own
  - is clumsy
  - is really quiet and doesn't want to talk.

You may also find that your child may do things that they haven't done for ages or act a little differently. You may find that he or she:

Some of these ways of acting may seem strange. But all of the things in the list above are normal ways to think and feel after an earthquake.

Good things are also common. One good thing might be that your child learned just how well they can deal with something scary like an earthquake. You and your child may grow even closer together. Some kids may not seem worried at all and may move on quickly.

**BUT** remember that every child is different. There is no right or wrong way to act after an earthquake.

## Tips

Your child also has their own special internet site to help them understand how they are feeling and acting. Why not sit down with them while they go through the website?



# How long will my child act or feel this way? Will my child be okay?

Most kids will get over things pretty quickly after the earthquake. Even if your child has big problems at the start, very few kids will keep having problems in the long run.

But some kids do take longer to feel okay about having gone through an earthquake. Sometimes it can take many months for them to get used to it. A few kids have problems that don't go away. These kids might need some expert help to cope with being in the earthquake.

## What can I do to help my child?

- Let your child talk about how they are thinking, feeling or acting after the earthquake.
  - Don't act like the earthquake never happened.
  - Give your child the chance to talk about the earthquake.
  - Let them know that, if they need to talk, you are there when they are ready.
  - Help your child in writing a story about

### Tips

The website for your kids will have ways to help them with some of the feelings that they may be going through. Have a look at what they are reading and learning about. Maybe you could help them!



their life before and after the earthquake if your child wants to do this. There are suggestions for the sorts of things that your child can write about in their website.

- Let people help you if you need it. Try to work together as a whānau.
- Go back to normal ways of doing things as much as possible.
- Sometimes the best way to get over something is to start doing some fun and normal things with your child.
  - Take a walk with your child
  - Tell funny jokes
  - Play a board game together
  - Read a story
  - Go to a movie together
  - Stick to normal ways of doing things.

***MOST IMPORTANTLY***, continue to give your love and support to your kids.

# What about you?

After the earthquake, your child might be feeling or acting a bit different. But you too might have some strong feelings. Lots of people feel helpless, lost, confused, stressed out and sometimes even guilty. These are all totally normal ways to feel. These feelings usually go away after a while. But, sometimes, these feelings stick around for a long time. They can end up getting us down.

We all have thoughts going through our heads. Sometimes we say good things to ourselves like "I did it, I got through that". But sometimes we are stressed and down (like you might be now). Your thoughts might now sound like this: "I can't cope, I let him/her down, I am not being a good parent". These thoughts make you feel bad about yourself and your life. So what can you do about these thoughts?

You can replace these bad thoughts with thoughts that can help calm you down when you are stressed. Good thoughts can lift you up when you are feeling down.

Examples of good things to say to yourself:

When upset or down:

- "I have gotten through this before, I can do it again"
- "I can always talk to..."
- "It will be over soon"
- "Just relax"
- "I can get through this"
- "I am going to be alright"
- "It is not the end of the world"
- "I am strong enough to deal with this"

But there are some really simple things you can do for yourself as well, like relaxing. You could go for a walk, watch a movie, have a long bath or talk to a friend. Whatever you do, it is important that you take care of yourself.

Remember that your child will only get through as well as you get through. So take some time to look after yourself.



## Where can I go for help?

If you or your child needs help or simply someone to talk to, there are people and services out there who can help you.

- **Kids Help Line:** 0800 54 37 54 (freecall)  
[www.kidsline.org.nz](http://www.kidsline.org.nz)
- **Youthline:** 0800 376 633 (freecall) Text 234 (freetext)  
[www.youthline.co.nz](http://www.youthline.co.nz)
- **Special Christchurch earthquake referral helpline:** 0800 777 846 (freecall)
- **Life Line:** 0800 543 354 (freecall)
- **Someone in your whānau whom you trust**
- **Your family doctor**
- **Your child's teacher or School Counsellor**