



# "Rabbits in the Hole!"

Regularly conduct emergency drills with the children in your care. Monthly emergency drills train you and the children to act quickly and appropriately in the event of an emergency. Regularly scheduled drills help you and the children not to panic when the fire alarm sounds or an intruder enters the building and to do what needs to be done, to stay together while remaining alert and attentive.

However, you do not want to routinely frighten young children or remind them that there are bad people in the world, so we recommend using the Rabbits In The Hole Story to prepare children for an intruder emergency. **Read this story to your children at least once a month and have them practice hiding.** You can change the suggestion of hiding under tables to whatever is applicable to your situation. Then, if an intruder ever does enter the building, you simply say, "Rabbits in the hole!" and the children will automatically hide.

*In the forest there were little rabbits that went to a little rabbit school. One day the teacher rabbit told the little rabbits about woodcutters who came and cut down the forest trees. "When the trees fall down it is not safe for the little rabbits," she said, "so they need to hide behind or under the surrounding rocks. So little bunnies, when you hear someone say the special words, 'rabbits in the hole,' run as fast as you can into your hole under the rocks where it's safe." The little bunnies listened to their teacher rabbit and even practiced going into their holes under the rocks. Then one day, the woodcutters came into the forest and started cutting down the trees! The teacher rabbit called out "Rabbits in the hole!" and all the little bunnies ran into their holes under the rocks, where it was safe. They did such a fantastic job, that not a single little rabbit got hurt.*

*An emergency is when something happens that we do not expect and we have to act quickly to keep ourselves safe. When we hear a siren from a police car or a fire truck, that siren is telling us that there is an emergency and help is on the way.*

*Did the bunnies fight over the rocks or did they help each other be safe? They helped each other and there was no fighting or arguing or hogging! Let's pretend like we are the bunnies in the story and our tables are the rocks. So, anytime you hear a teacher say, "Rabbits in the hole! Rabbits in the hole!" you need to hurry to a hiding place and stay there very quietly until I tell you to come out.*

Regular practice of emergency drills is essential to building muscle memory and automatic responses in the event of an actual emergency. The high turnover of both staff and children, in addition to the changing developmental abilities of children who participate, makes frequent practice drills critical.