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Disaster Prepared School: Today's Need of the Society

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Letter to the Editor

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Dear editor,

Disasters can happen at any time and place and affect the physical, psychological and social aspects of our lives in different ways. The impact of disasters on children is far greater than on other members of the society. Children spend almost a third of their daily time learning in schools. (1)

A disaster-ready school is a school whose risks have been minimized and has acquired the ability to deal with accidents and will suffer the least losses and damages in dealing with accidents (2). The ready school intends to take steps to create a safe and secure environment for the education of students with the help of all officials and stakeholders. (3)

Training of representatives of school crisis management, training of school personnel, formation of crisis management group, preparation of risk documents, implementation of risk reduction measures, maneuvers, training of students, formation of student sustainability group, participation of parents in planning and equipping the school are part of the implementation and important steps which is considered in line with achieving a disaster-prepared school. (4)

The importance of schools in the society is so great that the 10 principles for making the cities of the world resilient against disasters have also addressed this issue and has emphasized on school safety assessment, adjusting curriculum and training programs regarding disaster risk reduction, promoting and including knowledge of disaster risk reduction in school curricula. (5)

In many schools in Japan, the celebration of the first day of school is accompanied by an earthquake evacuation exercise. Even the Prime Minister participated in this exercise and emphasized the importance of mutual cooperation in times of crisis. (6)

Schools are the perfect place to effectively transfer information, knowledge and skills to the community and can provide opportunities to help children develop the knowledge and skills they need to keep themselves safe in disaster situations. Therefore, it is important to develop strategies that support schools in creating a culture of disaster prevention and increasing public awareness. (7)

As an environment and a place where students, teachers, staff and school administrators spend a lot of time, the school should be as safe as possible and have minimal risks. (8) In such a way that parents send their children to school with peace of mind and students, as one of the key and effective groups in changing the attitude of the family and society, study and grow without worrying about possible accidents and injuries. (9)

The best and most suitable target community for change and evolution in the style of education and attitudes towards safety issues are children and students. (1) Undoubtedly, education and preparation of students will have a tremendous impact on the future safety of any society, the role of children is very effective in creating community

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resilience and creating public awareness about disasters. (9) Because children keep the lessons they learn at school permanently in their minds and pass them on to their families. (10)

Improving the society's safety culture is the key to success in crisis management. Scientific studies show that training people in the field of crisis management and disaster preparedness will save thousands of lives and reduce costs, preserve assets and prevent secondary complications. Based on this, the training of managers and people at risk is one of the essential parts of the disaster preparedness program. These trainings should be designed in a way that leads to changes in people's knowledge, attitude and skills. (11)

Education is a strategy that is implemented with a specific goal and direction over time, and schools are one of the most effective places to achieve this goal. In addition, during disasters, schools can be a safe haven for people if the necessary care and safety standards are taken into account in their construction. Students are one of the factors of sustainable development of any society, because the construction of tomorrow's society will be on their shoulders. What is a source of comfort and encouragement for students and their families is studying in a safe and calm environment away from the constant threat of dangers; therefore, it is necessary to plan in order to assess the risks that threaten schools and take effective measures for their resilience.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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