

DEVELOPMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH SCHOOL SAFETY PROCEDURES, ACTIVITIES, AND DRILLS - National Association of School Psychologists and National Association of School Resource Officers

Schools must target crisis training activities to the developmental and awareness levels of students and also take into account the role and awareness levels of staff. Awareness levels are for general guidance purposes only. Individual awareness and capacity will vary depending on individual factors.

Awareness Levels	Developmental Levels	Developmentally Typical Knowledge/Understanding	Developmentally Typical Capabilities	Developmentally Appropriate Safety Explanations/Activities
Early Awareness	Preschool–Kindergarten Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate basic understanding of “danger.” • Require adult guidance to determine what is, and is not, dangerous. • Have difficulty distinguishing probable dangers from all possible dangers, and between reality and fantasy. • Understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Get Out” or evacuate; ▪ “Hide Out” or stay out of sight with lights off; ▪ “Keep Out” (i.e., that adults will lock and barricade classroom doors to keep danger out and students safe). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent on adult management and direction during emergencies. • Able to follow basic safety directions (e.g., “Get-Out” or evacuate; and “Hide Out” or stay out of sight with lights off). 	<p>Appropriate school safety <i>explanations, procedures, activities, and/or drills</i> for this developmental level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that adults at school work hard to keep school safe. • Offer concrete examples of common dangers that adults address (e.g., a stray dog on campus and not knowing if it is a good or sick dog). • Use the word <i>safety</i> when describing/conducting drills (e.g., use “Get Out Safety Drill” to describe an evacuation). • Practice following atypical adult directions associated with elements of safety drills (e.g., during art, ask students to quickly line up at the door). • Conduct “Get Out” and “Hide Out” safety drills.
Developing Awareness	Early Elementary Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate evolving understanding of “danger.” • Require some adult guidance to determine what is, and is not, dangerous. • Have difficulty distinguishing probable dangers from all possible dangers, and may have difficulty distinguishing between reality and fantasy. • Understand: “Get Out,” “Hide Out,” and “Keep Out.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need adult management and direction during emergencies. • Able to follow basic safety directions. • Can provide assistance with simple safety tasks in an emergency (e.g., following adult direction to turn off lights, close blinds). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that teachers and school staff members always work to keep school safe. • Offer concrete examples of common dangers that adults address. • Use the word <i>safety</i> when describing/conducting drills. • Practice following atypical adult directions associated with elements of safety drills. • Conduct “Get Out” (evacuations) and “Hide Out” (lockdown) safety drills.

Awareness Levels	Developmental Levels	Developmentally Typical Knowledge/Understanding	Developmentally Typical Capabilities	Developmentally Appropriate Safety Explanations/Activities
Practiced Awareness	Upper Elementary Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require limited adult guidance to determine what is, and is not, dangerous. May have some difficulty distinguishing probable dangers from all possible dangers. Capable of understanding why school safety drills are conducted. Understand all safety directions and instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need adult direction during emergencies. Able to follow all safety directions and instructions. Can assist with many safety tasks during an emergency (e.g., following adult direction to turn off lights, closing blinds and doors, moving furniture, barricading doors, calling 911). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain that teachers and school staff members always work to keep school safe. Offer examples of common dangers that adults address. Teach the difference between possible dangers and common dangers. Use the word <i>safety</i> when describing/conducting drills. Conduct “Get Out” (evacuation) “Hide Out” (lockdown), and “Keep Out” (barricade) safety drills.
Proficient Awareness	Intermediate, Junior High, and Middle School Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have all <i>Practiced Awareness</i> knowledge and understanding. Able to distinguishing probable dangers from all possible dangers. Capable of understanding why school safety drills are conducted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefit from adult direction, but able to perform practiced actions independently during emergencies. Can assist with most safety tasks during an emergency. May or may not demonstrate the ability to disrupt the actions of an intruder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in discussions regarding the need for school safety procedures. Allow students to generate examples of common dangers that school safety procedures are designed to address (verify understanding of the difference between probable and possible dangers). Use the word <i>safety</i> when describing/conducting drills. Conduct evacuation and lockdown safety drills. If indicated, conduct options-based safety drills (e.g., drills wherein the option to lockdown, barricade, evacuate, or fight back/encounter are considered).
Independent Awareness	High School Students, Adult Students, and Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have all <i>Proficient Awareness</i> knowledge and understanding. Have knowledge of a range of emergency safety actions and can match them to the appropriate situation (e.g., know the situations that require evacuation versus lockdown). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefit from adult direction, but able to perform practiced actions independently during emergencies. Able to help identify probable dangers confronting a school. Able to assist in the development of school safety protocols. Able to appropriately adapt safety actions to a range of dangers. Can assist with all safety tasks during an emergency. May or may not demonstrate ability to disrupt the actions of an intruder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in discussions regarding the need for school safety procedures. Engage in discussions regarding the specific types of school safety procedures required at a given school. Use the word <i>safety</i> when describing/conducting drills. Conduct evacuation and lockdown safety drills. If indicated, conduct options-based safety drills.

<i>Awareness Levels</i>	<i>Developmental Levels</i>	<i>Developmentally Typical Knowledge/Understanding</i>	<i>Developmentally Typical Capabilities</i>	<i>Developmentally Appropriate Safety Explanations/Activities</i>
<i>Advanced Awareness</i>	<i>Professionally Trained School Staff Members</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all <i>Independent Awareness</i> knowledge and understanding. • Have knowledge of the probable dangers confronting a given school. • Have detailed knowledge of all school emergency safety protocols. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to identify probable dangers confronting a school. • Able to develop school safety protocols. • Able to direct student safety actions and leading others in an emergency. • Capable of independent decision making during an emergency. • Have first aid training and skills. • May or may not demonstrate the ability to disrupt the actions of an intruder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct threat assessments to identify the specific dangers specific schools confront. • Engage in conversations about the specific school safety protocols needed. • From threat assessment data, develop specific school safety protocols. • Engage in advanced training in the selected school safety protocols. • Engage in first aid training. • Practice managing and directing the selected school safety protocols (e.g., conduct evacuation, lockdown, and options-based safety drills).
<i>Professional Awareness</i>	<i>First Responders and School Safety Professionals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all <i>Advanced Awareness</i> knowledge and understanding. • Have knowledge of tactical responses and counterattack measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable of high-level decision-making during an emergency. • Trained and equipped to provide tactical response and counterattack measures to protect self and others in an emergency. • Trained and equipped to provide advanced emergency medical assistance to others. • Have the ability to disrupt the actions of an intruder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a process to screen potential school-based law enforcement officer's decision-making ability in high stress events. • Provide training in specific tactics for confronting and ending an active shooter event. • First responders should be trained in tactical first-aid strategies.

Note. Adapted from Development Levels of Safety Awareness, 2016a. Safe and Sound Schools: A Sandy Hook Initiative.