

## **Global Climate Change: Safe Lives**

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Each year my class enters the Jiminy Cricket Environmental Challenge. This year the children wanted to focus on disaster preparedness, human safety and health in the community. They are quite enthusiastic and engaged in this topic. They need to do a service-learning project and make a difference in their world. It is important for them to ask questions, research, make a plan, make a timeline, implement their project and figure out how to measure the impact they have had on the environment. I wanted to have an in depth focus to guide them on their journey. There is quite an opportunity here to tie together natural disasters and global climate change. There are many resources, lessons and activities for the children to engage in to learn and understand the many facets involved in these topics.

The children are concerned about their community and especially with safety. They realize that in their own homes they are not as prepared as they could and should be. They want to feel empowered to help their families make good decisions and understand how to survive in events beyond their control. But what if we take it one step further and learn that some of the climate changes and disasters as a result are in their control to some degree? After studying about the effects of greenhouse gases and how to minimize our impact they can take a different approach-one of being proactive in addition to being prepared. The children have an opportunity to learn about weather patterns and predictions. We will be able to use an interdisciplinary approach to learning about climate changes and the effects it has on our community and those around the world. The children will be able to research a variety of scientific points of view on the topic and create a debate to further their understanding.

Their service-learning project will be to create a PowerPoint presentation for the larger community (including the Goleta School Board about how we as a community can be prepared for a disaster and make changes in our daily lives to prevent it. They can implement the "Pollution Punchcard" incentive program to get people to walk, bike,

carpool etc. to school or adapt the program as part of the Safe Routes To School Program which they will understand is meaningful after studying the effects of global climate change and the difference each person can make.