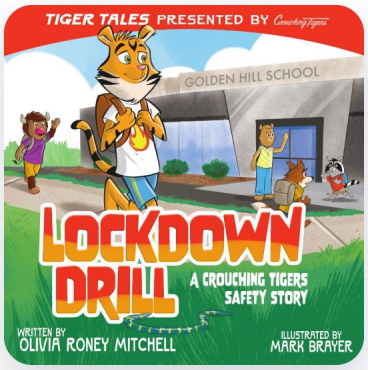

LOCKDOWN DRILL

Administrator Guide

A Crouching Tigers Safety Resource for ages 3 through 1st grade

A note to administrators

The *Lockdown Drill* book and companion resources are designed to help schools introduce and practice lockdown procedures with young children in a calm, simple, and developmentally appropriate way.

This resource does not replace your school's emergency preparedness plan, state requirements, licensing regulations, or local procedures. Before conducting a drill, administrators should review the requirements that apply to their specific school or child care program.

Requirements vary by state and by type of program. Please check with your state licensing agency, Department of Education, school district, and/or other appropriate authority to ensure your program is following all required procedures for lockdown or emergency preparedness drills.

Your school's existing emergency plan should always take priority.

THE WORDS FROM THE BOOK

"We practice Lockdown Drills to keep us safe if someone or something that doesn't belong is at our school."

Every resource in this toolkit uses this one sentence to explain why we practice. Ask every teacher to use these same words, so children hear one clear, consistent explanation in every classroom.

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At a glance

The whole drill, from planning to follow-up, and the resource that supports each step.

Before scheduling	Review state, district, and licensing requirements and your school's emergency plan.	**This guide, page 3**
Before the drill	Prepare staff and classrooms. Confirm each classroom's Special Safety Spot and hang the poster.	**Teacher Guide, Safety Spot Poster**
Several days before	Send families the Before the Drill parent letter.	**Parent letter: Before the Drill**
Drill day	Teachers read the book, answer questions, show the safety spot, practice your procedure, and celebrate.	**The book, Teacher Guide**
Same day	Send the After the Drill parent letter with the Family Guide attached.	**Parent letter: After the Drill, Family Guide**
After the drill	Check in with teachers, document the drill, and improve the plan before the next practice.	**Follow-up questions, page 9**

Your Lockdown Drill toolkit

The book
One copy per classroom

Teacher Guide
For every participating teacher

Administrator Guide
This guide

Safety Spot Poster
One per classroom

Parent letters
Before and after the drill

Family Guide
Sent home after the drill

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BEFORE THE DRILL

1 Review your state and school requirements

Before scheduling the drill:

- [ ] Confirm your state's current requirements for lockdown, manmade occurrence, armed intruder, or other emergency preparedness drills.
- [ ] Review your school's written emergency or safety plan.
- [ ] Confirm the drill procedure with appropriate school leadership.
- [ ] Determine whether your state, district, or licensing agency has specific requirements regarding parent notification, staff notification, documentation, or drill frequency.
- [ ] Confirm any procedures for children with disabilities, medical needs, or other accommodations.
- [ ] Determine whether local law enforcement, emergency responders, your school district, or another agency must be notified or involved.
- [ ] Make sure all staff members understand their responsibilities.

⚠ **Do not use this guide as a substitute for state regulations or your school's emergency procedures.**



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2 Prepare your staff

Teachers should know exactly what is expected before introducing the drill to children. Provide each participating teacher with the **Lockdown Drill Teacher Guide** and confirm that they:

- [ ] Know their classroom's designated Special Safety Spot.
- [ ] Understand your school's lockdown procedures.
- [ ] Know how doors, lights, blinds, and other classroom features should be handled according to your school's plan.
- [ ] Know how attendance and accountability will be handled.
- [ ] Know how the drill begins and how the "all clear" will be communicated.
- [ ] Understand procedures for children who are outside the classroom when a lockdown begins.
- [ ] Know how to respond if a child becomes upset or needs additional support.

Teachers should speak with administration before conducting the lesson or drill if they are unclear about any part of the school's procedure.

3 Prepare the classroom

We recommend that each classroom:

- [ ] Receive a copy of *Lockdown Drill: A Crouching Tigers Safety Story*.
- [ ] Print the Special Safety Spot Poster and place it in or near the classroom's designated safety spot.
- [ ] Have the Teacher Guide available.
- [ ] Review the Kid FAQ in the Teacher Guide before the lesson.
- [ ] Identify any children who may need additional support or accommodations during the drill.

Children should practice in their own classrooms and their own designated safety locations so they are learning the procedure they would actually use.

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What makes a good Special Safety Spot?

In most lockdown procedures, each classroom's safety spot is out of sight of the door and any hallway windows, so the room appears empty from the hallway. When the door is locked and the lights are off, no one passing by should be able to see the class.

Try this: before the drill, walk your hallways and look in through each classroom's door window. If you can see the safety spot, work with that teacher to adjust it according to your school's plan.

Communicating with families

Clear communication can make lockdown drills feel less frightening for families as well as children. Whenever permitted by your school's policies and state requirements, we recommend notifying families before the drill and following up after the drill.

Before the drill: send the parent letter

Send the included **Before the Drill** parent letter several days before the scheduled drill, so families know what their child will be practicing and have an opportunity to contact the school with questions. If your state, district, or licensing agency has specific requirements regarding advance notification, follow those instead.

The letter explains:

- That the school will be practicing a lockdown drill.
- That children will first read *Lockdown Drill*.
- The simple, age-appropriate approach being used with children.
- The four skills children will practice.
- That families will receive a Family Guide after the drill.

Avoid including unnecessary frightening details or hypothetical violent scenarios when communicating about a routine drill for young children.

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Conducting the drill

For young children, the goal is to practice the procedure, not simulate the danger.

Before beginning, children should clearly understand that they are practicing. Teachers will follow these steps, detailed in the Teacher Guide:

1. **Read the book**
   Read *Lockdown Drill: A Crouching Tigers Safety Story* together.

2. **Answer questions**
   Allow children to ask questions, using the words from the book and the reassuring answers in the Teacher Guide.

3. **Find the Special Safety Spot**
   Show children exactly where their classroom's Special Safety Spot is located.

4. **Practice the lockdown**

   Follow your school's established lockdown procedure. Children practice the four skills from the book:

   - **Calm bodies:** deep breaths, still and slow.
   - **Locked lips:** lips "locked" with an invisible key.
   - **Listening ears:** following the teacher's directions.
   - **Together, we are safe:** staying with the class in the Special Safety Spot until the drill is finished.

⚠ **The drill should remain calm and predictable.** Do not introduce frightening surprises, simulated violence, fake injuries, weapons, gunfire, or other realistic threat simulations into a child-focused drill.

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5 **Clearly end the drill**

Use your school's established "all clear" procedure. Teachers should clearly tell children when the drill is finished and reinforce that they successfully practiced their school safety plan.

After the drill

Celebrate successful practice

Safety practice does not need to end on a frightening or overly serious note. Once the drill has been successfully completed, we recommend transitioning into a familiar movement game. Our favorite is **Red Light, Green Light** (instructions in the Teacher Guide).

It reinforces many of the same skills children just practiced:

- **Listening carefully**
- **Stopping when asked**
- **Controlling their bodies**
- **Following directions**
- **Responding to an adult's signal**

It also helps return the classroom to its normal rhythm after the drill.



AFTER THE DRILL

Send the After the Drill parent letter

Send the included **After the Drill** parent letter **on the day the drill is completed**, with the Family Guide, *Talking to Young Children About Lockdown Drills*, attached.

The letter lets families know:

- The drill was completed, and the class read *Lockdown Drill* before practicing.
- The four skills children practiced.
- Why the story uses pretend snakes.
- Conversation starters and simple answers to common questions at home.
- Where families can find the Family Guide and the book.

Sending the letter the same day helps parents understand the context if their child mentions the drill, the book, snakes, the Special Safety Spot, or “locking their lips” at home.



Administrator follow-up

After the drill, check in with participating teachers. Consider asking:

- [ ] Did every child know where to go?
- [ ] Could everyone fit safely in the designated location?
- [ ] Were doors and other classroom security measures handled according to our plan?
- [ ] **From the hallway, did each classroom appear empty?**
- [ ] Could teachers account for every child?
- [ ] Were there any children who needed additional assistance?
- [ ] Were there situations we had not considered, for example a child in the restroom, hallway, playground, or another location?
- [ ] Did staff know how the drill ended?
- [ ] Is there anything about our procedure that should be clarified before the next drill?

Document the drill and any required information according to your school's policies and applicable state requirements.

If a problem is discovered, use it as an opportunity to improve the plan before the next practice.



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Parent FAQs

Questions families may ask your school, with suggested answers. For more language families can use at home, share the Family Guide.

Why are young children practicing a lockdown drill?

Schools practice different types of safety plans so teachers and children know what to do if they ever need them. Just like practicing a fire drill helps children learn how to safely leave a building, practicing a lockdown helps children learn how to listen to their teacher, move to their classroom's safety location, and stay together.

What did you tell my child a lockdown is for?

We use one simple sentence from the book: **"We practice Lockdown Drills to keep us safe if someone or something that doesn't belong is at our school."** We do not need to introduce frightening scenarios for children to successfully learn the procedure.

Did you talk to my child about school shootings?

No. This program was specifically created for young children and does not use violent imagery or detailed descriptions of frightening events. The focus is on what children should do, rather than frightening them with explanations of what could happen.

Why does the book use a story?

Young children learn through stories, play, repetition, and practice. The story gives children a way to understand the procedure without asking them to imagine a frightening real-world scenario.

My child says there are snakes at school. Are there really snakes?

No. The snakes are part of the fictional story used to help children understand why a teacher might ask everyone to stay safely inside a classroom. You can reassure your child that the story was pretend and that their school was simply practicing its safety plan.

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PARENT FAQS, CONTINUED

Should I talk about the drill at home?

Yes, if your child brings it up. Keep the conversation simple and follow your child's lead. You might say:

> **"Your teachers practice lots of ways to keep you safe. You practiced calm bodies, locked lips, listening ears, and staying together in your Special Safety Spot. You did exactly what you were supposed to do."**

There is usually no need to introduce additional scenarios or details your child has not asked about.

What if my child seems worried afterward?

Listen to what your child is actually asking before offering additional information. Reassure them that the adults at their school have safety plans and that practicing helps everyone know what to do.

If your child continues to show significant worry about the drill, contact their teacher or school administrator so you can work together to support them.

Why do you tell children to stay quiet?

Being quiet helps children hear their teacher's directions. In the story, children practice "locking their lips" with an imaginary key, giving young children a concrete and playful way to remember this important direction.

Will every lockdown drill be done this way?

The *Lockdown Drill* resources help introduce and practice the concept in an age-appropriate way. Your school must always follow its own emergency procedures and applicable state requirements. Procedures may vary depending on the school, classroom, situation, and state.

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Remember

A successful lockdown drill for young children should leave them knowing:

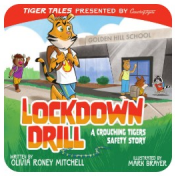
- **Where do I go?**
- **Who do I listen to?**
- **What does my body need to do?**
- **How do I know when we're finished?**

Children do not need to understand every possible danger in order to learn how to follow a safety plan.

OUR GOAL IS SIMPLE

Prepared, not scared.





Lockdown Drill: A Crouching Tigers Safety Story and its companion resources were created by Crouching Tigers for preschool through first grade.

crouchingtigers.com/lockdowndrill