

**Summer vacation disaster prevention training “Enjoy learning and prepare for disasters!” ~ From the Hirobuchi District of Ishinomaki City ~ (August 10, 2012)**

A first grader in elementary school called Kanon showed her smiling face saying, “The disaster prevention training also had games, so it was fun.” Kanon was one of the children who participated in the school and community joint disaster prevention training in Hirobuchi District of Ishinomaki City that took place on July 26, 2012. “I came together with my mom and younger sister from home. Today is different to usual.” Unlike the disaster prevention training that usually takes place in schools, the children evacuated from their homes to school. It is very important to confirm how to evacuate from home if a disaster strikes during the weekend or long holidays.



Kanon (first grader) shows her smiling face during disaster prevention training.

The most important point of this disaster prevention training is that the community and schools came together to hold the practice. This was large scale disaster prevention training with a total of more than 300 people participating together with municipal authorities, the fire department, hospitals and schools.



Employees from the fire department also participated.

Children lined up in response to the roll-call from their teachers.

At this disaster prevention training, Save the Children provided support in relation to an exhibition of emergency supplies and disaster prevention education. Together with teaching first and second grade students about the method of dealing with disaster prevention using the card game “disaster prevention duck game,” we held a session with the students of making cups out of newspapers that can be used in the event of an emergency.



The children in the upper grades experienced making a stretcher together with the fire brigade and participated in a firefighting practice. Nobuaki (sixth grader) participated in the firefighting practice for the first time. When asked whether he thought he would actually be able to use a fire extinguisher in the event of an emergency, he responded with, “I am a little unsure about that. But, I think I could do it, if I remember today’s practice.”



Nobuaki added, “After the big earthquake, my family talks about disaster prevention and has electric torches ready at home.” Hirobuchi District has experience of earthquakes in the northern district in Miyagi Prefecture and so has a high level of awareness about disaster prevention. There is a cooperative structure not only within schools but also within the community. According to Mr. Takeo Sato, the principal of Hirobuchi Elementary School, “It is thanks to the people cooperative toward schools in the neighborhood council that this training was possible.” The existence of key person connecting the relationship between the community and schools is essential. Close communication in communities on a routine basis has led to the disaster prevention training being successfully held this time.

Furthermore, Eri, the mother of the previously mentioned Kanon said, “I feel that there is a deep sense of community as a matter of course in Hirobuchi and children are carefully raised while being watched over in the community. I feel I have peace of mind because someone will always be able to tell me where my child is, even when commuting to school.” This was a disaster prevention training in which people could really feel the importance of organizing a system of preparing for emergencies across the community, in order to build a truly safe environment for children from the perspective of disaster prevention.