International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

WORLD FIRST AID DAY 2016:

FIRST AID FOR CHILDREN AND BY CHILDREN

Key messages and call to action / 10 September 2016

# Background

On 10 September 2016, the world marks World First Aid Day, an opportunity to promote first aid as one of the core activities of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) around the world.

The IFRC is the largest first aid educator and provider in the world. In 2014, more than 15 million people were trained worldwide by 116 National Societies, and for more than 150 years, first aid has been one of the principal services provided by Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers.

Themed *“First aid for and by children”,* we are focusing on children this year. Child injuries are a global health issue. In many countries, injuries are the leading cause of death for children after their first birthday. The IFRC recognizes children as important first aid providers and they also represent a large portion of the population that receive first aid support in emergencies. We believe that providing children with life-saving skills can help build a more resilient future generation. On this occasion, we reiterate our call for the introduction of mandatory first aid training and education in schools, as part of our goal in ensuring universal access to first training at all phases of life.

**Key messages**

**First Aid and Children**

**Children can play a crucial role during emergencies by providing first aid assistance to their peers, families and the people around them**.

* Children can be trained in first aid which will enable them to react effectively in emergencies and provide assistance to their peers and families if needed. First aid skills enable children to become more responsive and alert to alarming situations.
* Children learn more quickly during their early years than at any other time in life.8 Providing first aid education to children in their early ages will contribute to building their base of knowledge for first aid skills that they can recall in the future.

**Training children in first aid is a crucial investment for now and the future**.

* Educating children in first aid contributes to building a healthier and more resilient society and initiates a lifelong learning process.
* In 2015, 26 per cent of the world’s people are under 15 years of age. And by 2050, there will be nearly 10 billion people more than 2.6 billion of them younger than 18.5
* Children learn more quickly during their early years than at any other time in life.8 Providing first aid education to children in their early ages will contribute to building their base of knowledge for first aid skills that they can recall in the future.
* First aid education also helps children to become more responsible especially as first aid becomes a relevant social responsibility.

**Child injuries are a global public health issue. In many countries injuries are the leading cause of death for children after their first birthday.**

* Children are particularly susceptible to accidents in their daily life. Every year, nearly 1 million children die from injuries. Tens of millions more require hospital care for non-fatal injuries. Many are left with permanent disabilities or brain damage.6
* Each year approximately 950,000 children under the age of 18 die as a result of an injury or violence. Nearly 90 per cent of these – about 830 000 – are due to unintentional injuries. Most of these unintentional injuries are the result of road traffic crashes, drowning, burns, falls and poisoning, with the highest rates occurring in low-income and middle-income countries.7
* Drowning is among the ten leading causes of death of children and young people in every region of the world, with children under the age of 5 disproportionately at risk.10

**Adults who deal with children should be equipped with life-saving skills including first aid training**.

* More adults trained in first aid will increase the survival rate for children and lessen the severity of child injuries**.**
* Governments should make first aid training and education for teachers and students mandatory at schools. Children trained in first aid can help their peers, families, and the wider community.
* First aid training should also be available and easily accessible by parents. It will enable parents to identify risks and take appropriate action in emergencies and disasters.

**Universal Access to First Aid**

**First aid is a humanitarian action that should be accessible to all.**

* Disasters and daily emergencies effect everyone around the world, therefore first aid training and education should be provided to all individuals at all stages of their life and not just to those who can afford it.
* First aid education and training should be an integral part of a wider development and resilience approach.

**Governments should promote quality compulsory first aid training and education.**

* More laws and legislation should be established tomake first aid training and education compulsory at different stagesof life.

**At least one person per household should be equipped with lifesaving skills in every country around the globe.**

* This will better prepareindividuals and communities to react to every day emergencies.

**At your disposal**

[**Global First Aid Reference Centre**](https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/health-and-care/first-aid/europeran-ref-cent-for-fa-education/)**:** the IFRC Global First Aid Reference Centre (GFARC) aims to develop first aid training in accordance with the Movement’s recommendations and international scientific guidelines. The GFARC also focuses on supporting National Societies in delivering first aid training in their respective countries and facilitate network-wide information sharing, ensuring quality management of first aid and supporting first aid harmonization within the Movement. For more information, contact: [first.aid@ifrc.org](mailto:first.aid@ifrc.org)

**References**

1. The World Population Prospects the 2015 Revision <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/files/key_findings_wpp_2015.pdf>
2. World report on child injury prevention <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/43851/1/9789241563574_eng.pdf>
3. World report on child injury prevention <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/43851/1/9789241563574_eng.pdf>
4. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents <http://www.rospa.com/home-safety/advice/child-safety/accidents-to-children/>
5. The World Population Prospects the 2015 Revision <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/files/key_findings_wpp_2015.pdf>
6. Facts for life Fourth Edition; <http://www.factsforlifeglobal.org/resources/factsforlife-en-full.pdf>
7. Injury prevention and the attainment of child and adolescent health: <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/87/5/08-059808/en/>
8. Facts for life Fourth Edition; <http://www.factsforlifeglobal.org/resources/factsforlife-en-full.pdf>
9. Facts for life Fourth Edition; <http://www.factsforlifeglobal.org/resources/factsforlife-en-full.pdf>
10. Global report on drowning, World Health Organization <http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/global_report_drowning/Final_report_full_web.pdf>