

## **COMFORT KITS AND THE HEALING BUDDIES COMFORT KIT TO HELP CHILDREN AFFECTED BY HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES**

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### **History**

Timothy Culbert, a pediatrician, Maura Fitzgerald, RN, CNS and Lynda Richtsmeier Cyr, PhD developed comfort kits at Children's Hospital of Minnesota. The original purpose was to help children who had problems of pain, anxiety and/or sleep. The kits include small items with instructions about how the items can be used to help a child feel better and cope with his/her problems. Thousands have been given to children with chronic illnesses in the US.

After the tsunami Dr. Srivieng Pairojkul, Professor of Pediatrics at Khon Kaen University, assembled thousands of kits in Thailand and translated the instructions into Thai for children impacted by the tsunami. In 2010 Dr. Culbert arranged to send thousands of kits to children affected by the earthquake in Haiti. The instructions were translated into Creole. We learned that children in North America, Thailand and Haiti all enjoyed the kits and benefitted from them. At the present time kits are being assembled to be given to Lao children displaced by recent floods in Laos.

Dr. Culbert also developed an online version called Healing Buddies Comfort Kit. [www.healingbuddiescomfort.org](http://www.healingbuddiescomfort.org) This is available for free download throughout the world but we recognize that not all families have easy access to the internet. Therefore, we are placing a list of the items with photographs and instructions in English on the IPA website for free download by child health professionals who might wish to prepare similar comfort kits in their own settings. The instructions for specific skills may be used by older children or by parents, teachers, and other child caretakers.

Dr. Culbert and I appreciate receiving feedback from those of you who assemble and donate comfort kits to children affected by humanitarian emergencies. Our email addresses are:

[Karen.olness@case.edu](mailto:Karen.olness@case.edu) and [tculbert@prairie-care.com](mailto:tculbert@prairie-care.com)

**LIST OF TYPICAL ITEMS IN COMFORT KITS**

**FINGER PUPPET  
MINI PINWHEEL OR BUBBLES  
MINI SQUEEZE BALL  
PENCIL  
CRAYONS  
SMALL NOTEBOOK  
STICKERS  
SMALL TOY SUCH AS PLASTIC FIGURE**

**PLACE ALL ITEMS IN BIODEGRADABLE BAG.**

**OPTIONAL ITEMS**

**AGE and DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE BOOK  
SMALL AROMATHERAPY VIAL**

**ITEM TO BE USED WITH SPECIFIC SKILL PRACTICE**

**SKILL #1 PINWHEEL OR BUBBLES, FINGER PUPPET**

**SKILL #2 MINI SQUEEZE BALL, FINGER PUPPET**

**SKILL #3 WE SUGGEST THAT CHILD JUST USE HIMSELF**

**SKILL #4 FINGER PUPPET, A DRAWING OR PHOTO, STICKERS**

**SKILL #5 PENCIL OR CRAYONS, NOTEBOOK**