



## HOW TO ORGANIZE A NEIGHBORHOOD EGG HUNT

**Step One:** Decide on the area you want to cover – it should be a short enough distance for young children to walk and not need to be carried. A single street or portion of a street often works best.

**Step Two:** Count the number of houses on your street or around your block that you want to invite to participate and pick up that number of door hangers from **First 5 Lake's Lakeport office** (1173 Eleventh Street), or the **First 5 Early Learning Center in Clearlake** (14085 Lakeshore Dr), the **Family Support Center in Middletown** (21389 Stewart St., Suite E), **The Big Oak Peer Support Center in Clearlake Oaks** (13340 E. Hwy 20, Suite O) or **Lucerne Elementary School**.

**Step Three:** Fill in the information on the back of each door hanger with the date of your event, time to meet up and where you want everyone to gather to begin the hunt – usually at the end of the street is best, or at a corner. Be sure to write in a method of contacting you in case people have questions. FAQ's include:

1. Is this just for kids or do adults come too? Children from each family should be accompanied by an adult or older sibling.
2. What ages are included? That is up to you and your neighborhood.
3. What if I don't really have a good front yard for hiding eggs? Maybe have a cookie or cocoa station in front of your house or hand out eggs or candy instead, like trick-or-treat.
4. How long will it last? That depends on how many houses participate. Usually 30-60 minutes. Families can walk home whenever they decide to.
5. What if it is raining? That is up to you and your neighborhood to decide.
6. Is this a religious event? No. It is just for fun and isn't connected to Easter or a specific religious tradition.

**Step Four:** On the day of the hunt, arrive 15 minutes early at the meet-up location so that people see a friendly face and aren't afraid to gather. **Take pictures!** Remind kiddos about safety rules of walking near a road. Work your way up the street or around the block together as a group, letting the littlest ones have a head start at each house. Don't go to the next house until everyone is done searching. At the end, you might want to set up a table with hot drinks outside to give people a chance to socialize and get to know each other before heading back home.



## WHY ORGANIZE A NEIGHBORHOOD EGG HUNT?



### **To form more healthy social connections with people in your neighborhood!**

Having healthy, positive social connections are hugely important for our mental health and wellbeing. Social connections are a protective factor that reduce the likelihood of child abuse, and social connections in neighborhoods lay the framework for peaceful living, safety, emergency preparedness, and camaraderie.



### **To help your children make new friends and to meet the other children and parents who live near you!**

One building block to good mental health in adulthood is feeling a sense of belonging as a child. When everyone comes out of their homes for an egg hunt, you get to know each other and start to determine who might be good playmates, who is on what sports team or who attends what community activities together.



**To establish a community tradition!** An informal egg hunt can be an easy tradition to pull off year after year. Easy and informal gatherings are the best ways to build community because they don't cost anyone much and they don't require people to do much planning or work to pull them off. If everyone has a good time at your event, talk about whether or not to make it an annual tradition. Children love having something to look forward to each year, and research shows that being involved in community traditions helps give them a sense of connectedness which is a buffer to the tough stuff life can throw their way.



**To HAVE FUN right in your own neighborhood!** Childhood is short. Let's help our children have fun in the context of our communities. You don't always have to drive to theaters, festivals or fairs to have fun and connect with other families – you can build fun opportunities right on your own street.