

## Toyooka Village Municipal Toyooka Kita Elementary School, Grade 4

### Let's Make Disaster Preparedness Fun – Creating Original Games to Save Lives

At Toyooka-Kita Elementary School, 14 fourth-grade students used their integrated studies time to create educational games to teach disaster preparedness in an engaging way. As they researched past disasters, local geography, and hazardous areas in their community, the students began to think about what they themselves could do to protect lives. Their journey evolved into student-designed games filled with creativity and purpose.

#### Making Disaster Prevention Personal

Located in Toyokoka-mura, a village with steep slopes and active rivers, their school is designated as a local evacuation center. However, it may be unusable in the event of a landslide. Seeing news reports of heavy rain and earthquakes, students began to feel that disasters could affect them too.

They learned about emergency kits from local firefighters and volunteers, and played a disaster game called Namazu School, provided by a professor at Shinshu University. They realized that fun and learning can go hand in hand.

#### Sharing What They Learned and Then Going Further

Last year, the students held a school-wide quiz event to raise awareness about emergency kits. Using Google Forms for a pre- and post-event survey, they saw positive results. However, they were not fully satisfied: “Using internet resources is not the same as making something ourselves.” So, this year, they set out to create original games from scratch.

#### Three Disaster Games, Three Ways to Learn

With advice from the director of the NPO Plus Arts, students focused on combining fun and learning:

- **Dress-Up Game Team:** A quiz-based game that helps players choose proper attire for different emergencies. It challenges common misconceptions, such as sneakers are better than rain boots during floods.

- **Card Battle Team:** A role-playing card game where various types of disasters and survival items are turned into characters with stats like HP. It is both exciting and educational. The key to winning lies in using the right “preparedness cards” to counter powerful “disaster cards.”
- 
- **Cardboard Relay Team:** A new twist on the bucket relay, using cardboard and newspaper instead of water. Students developed a lightweight and safe version of the relay and promoted the idea school-wide.



### **From Fun to Impact**

At the end of their presentation, students asked the audience: “Want to try our games with us?” Their playful designs carry serious messages and a hope that more people will learn how to protect lives through joy and creativity.