



Consumer Education Website Continuous Improvement Series Spotlight on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Content

Leveraging Your Child Care Consumer Education Website During Emergencies and Disasters: An Assessment Tool

Purpose

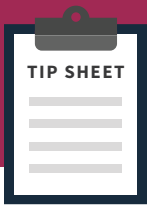
The purpose of this resource is to help Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies (1) assess how well your agency used your consumer education website to communicate with stakeholders during an emergency, (2) identify successes and challenges to inform your ongoing consumer education efforts, and (3) develop an improvement plan to support planning and preparedness for the next emergency or disaster.

A jurisdiction's CCDF-supported child care consumer education website should be the trusted source for useful, up-to-date child care information for stakeholders. This information should be easy to find and understand. This is particularly crucial during and after any emergency or disaster when stakeholders may urgently need accurate, time-sensitive information. While other organizations may share emergency-related information across multiple websites, your child care consumer education website should synthesize all information related to child care in one place for your consumers. By providing well organized, timely, accurate, and easy-to-understand information, you will strengthen your website's credibility with your audience as the "go-to" child care resource for your jurisdiction.

After any major incident that significantly affects your child care system, it can be helpful to assess how well your agency leveraged your child care consumer education website to prepare, inform, respond to, and support your stakeholders. Each emergency and disaster event presents a different set of challenges, but reflecting upon lessons learned is invaluable in helping you be prepared for the next event. This tool will help you identify successes you achieved and challenges you faced so that you may strengthen your strategies and processes to more effectively use your consumer education website as a communications tool and resource.

SCBC's Spotlight on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Content Suite Resources

- [Leveraging Your Child Care Consumer Education Website During Emergencies and Disasters: An Assessment Tool](#)
- [Responding to Disasters and Emergencies: Helpful Child Care Information to Share](#)
- [Recovering from Emergencies and Disasters: Helpful Child Care Information to Share](#)
- [Considerations for Emergency Child Care: Information and Tips for Families and Providers](#)
- [Leveraging Child Care Consumer Education Websites During Emergencies and Disasters: Tips and Best Practices](#)



Leveraging Your Child Care Consumer Education Website: Emergency Response Assessment Tool

Instructions

This tool is intended to help you evaluate how well you used your consumer education website to share urgent child care information with families, providers, and other stakeholders during an emergency or disaster. This tool focuses entirely on how your agency leveraged your consumer education website before, during, and after a crisis. The website you assess with this tool should be the consumer education website you identified in your state or territory CCDF Plan as the consumer education website for your jurisdiction. If you have changed your consumer education website address since you initially submitted your state or territory CCDF Plan, please be sure to submit an amendment.

Note: For the best results, use this tool after your agency has progressed to the recovery phase of an emergency or disaster.

I. General Information

Provide a general description of the emergency or disaster in table 1.

Table 1. General Description of Emergency or Disaster

Topic	Response
Type of emergency or disaster event	
Start date of event	
Duration of event	
Geographic areas affected	

II. Emergency or Disaster Summary

Provide a general description of the crisis, highlighting how the crisis specifically affected child care. Describe how the emergency affected your jurisdiction’s child care system, such as child care closures, workforce challenges, service outages, or unmet needs. The summary should also describe how your agency used your consumer education website to communicate emergency-related child care information to families, providers, and other stakeholders.

III. Preparedness Assessment

These questions pertain to how you leveraged your consumer education website to provide emergency preparedness, response, and recovery information **before** the crisis:

1. Did you have an emergency preparedness, response, and recovery plan posted on your consumer education website before the start of the crisis?
2. Did you have a process in place to post urgent information on your consumer education website?
3. Did you have a process in place to communicate quickly with your all segments of your provider population?



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IV. Response Assessment

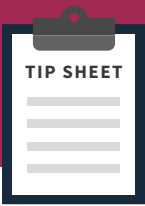
Tables 2 through 4 are designed to help you assess the range of emergency information your agency shared with stakeholders through your consumer education website. You should include any information that was posted on your consumer education website in the form of actual content or as a simple link to another website that provided key information.

A. Posted Information

What information did you share via your consumer education website?

Table 2. Information Shared on Consumer Education Website

Element	Was This Information Posted (Yes or No)?	If Yes, on Which Page of Your Consumer Education Website?	Content (text or PDF) or Link?
Broad jurisdiction-level emergency information			
One or multiple links to the jurisdiction's primary emergency response web page			
Other broader jurisdiction-level guidance			
Provider-specific information			
Changes to child care subsidy processes and requirements			
Changes to licensing administrative processes (for example, monitoring visits, renewals)			
Changes to health and safety requirements			
Information about providing emergency care			
Provider resources			
Emergency relief funding or supplies			
Communicating with families during emergencies			
Other			
Family-specific information			
How to find emergency or open child care			
Changes to child care subsidy processes and requirements			
Updated health and safety requirements and processes			
Other			



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Element	Was This Information Posted (Yes or No)?	If Yes, on Which Page of Your Consumer Education Website?	Content (text or PDF) or Link?
Family resources			
Supporting children during emergencies			
Resources on supporting children during child care transitions			
Resources on family supports, such as basic needs, mental health resources, food assistance, and so on			
Other			

B. Data

Were you able to share any emergency-related data on your consumer education website?

Table 3. Data Shared on Consumer Education Website

Element	Yes or No	If Yes, on Which Page of Your Consumer Education Website?	Content (text or PDF) or Link?
Broad jurisdiction-level emergency information			
Data on how the emergency impacted the local child care system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of child care facilities impacted by the emergency (closures, reduced capacity) • Number of families and children financially impacted by the emergency • Child care capacity • Child care demand • Location-specific child care vacancies 			

C. Processes

This series of questions will help you assess the processes you used to leverage your consumer education website to support its use as a communication and resource tool during this specific emergency or disaster. As you respond to these questions, think about what worked well, what challenges you faced, and how you can apply lessons from this experience to improve your response to future events.

1. Did you use a previously developed process to communicate with stakeholders during this emergency or disaster? How well did it work?
2. What changes would you make to this process to make it work more effectively?



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3. Were you able to use your child care consumer education website to respond to the urgent needs of families and providers in a timely manner? For example, if families needed child care during the emergency, were they able to use your current child care search tool to locate open facilities?
4. What internal resources did you find most critical in your crisis response (for example, agency communications team, information technology team, web development team)? What challenges did you face, in terms of expertise, resources, and capacity?

D. Promotion Strategies

This section will help you reflect upon the strategies you used to promote the information you provided on your consumer education website during the emergency or disaster.

1. Did you already have a communications plan in place to promote key elements of your consumer education website before this emergency or disaster?
2. How did you promote the information available on your consumer education website to your stakeholders during this event? What promotion strategies did you use (social media, cross-posting, text messaging, email blasts, and so on)?
3. How did you use your website to share information from key partners (for example, the main state emergency web page, disaster relief resources, state health and fire departments)?

E. Collaboration With Partners

This section will help you reflect upon how collaboration with partners helped your ability to share information via your consumer education website.

1. What external partners—other state departments, child care resource and referral agencies, governor’s office, early childhood advisory council—did you work with to share emerging information through your consumer education website? Examples of what you could enter are listed in Table 4.
2. Which other partners would be helpful to collaborate with to broaden your reach?

Table 4. Collaborating Partners and the Support They Provided

Partner	Support Provided
State department of health and human services	Posted a link to our consumer education website on its family resource page
Governor’s office	Cross-promoted our child care search tool and emergency response information page
City urban planning department	Helped us use geographic information system data to more effectively map our providers in our child care search tool
Child care resource and referral agency	Helped us prepare an online provider survey to collect availability information



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V. Reflection

Use this section to help you think through your successes and challenges in using your consumer education website to communicate during the identified emergency. This information will be used to help you develop an action plan to strengthen your consumer education website as your communication vehicle for information about child care.

A. Successes

Use table 5 to capture the successes you achieved. Consider the following questions:

- What successes did you experience with your consumer education website during this event?
- What contributed to your success?
- How can you apply those elements to other areas of your consumer education website?

Table 5. Successes

Success	What Contributed to This Success?	How Can You Leverage This Success in Future Events?
Example: Our process for providers to report emergency closures and other updates went well, and we were able to quickly update our child care search tool to exclude all closed providers from the search.	Example: Our newly developed provider self-service portal allowed providers to report their status and other program information in real time. When providers updated their information via the provider portal, their provider profiles were immediately updated on our child care search tool.	Example: We will be working to promote the provider self-service portal to our child care provider community to increase participation. We will also be enhancing access to the provider portal through the development of a smartphone application.
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		



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B. Challenges

Use table 6 to capture challenges you experienced. Consider the following when thinking about how best to address those challenges before another emergency or disaster:

- What challenges did you experience when trying to use your consumer education website during this event?
- What contributed to these challenges?
- How can you address these gaps or barriers?
- What were the barriers that prevented posting information directly on the consumer education website?
- What steps need to be taken to lift these barriers? Who can help resolve these issues?
- Did you create a separate child care search tool or website during the crisis? How can you integrate this information on your consumer education website or link to that information from your consumer education website?

Table 6. Challenges

Challenge	What Contributed to This Challenge?	How Can You Leverage This Challenge in Future Events?
<p>Example: We did not have a plan for how and where to post emergency information on our website, so information was posted haphazardly. It also took a lot of time and effort to coordinate content development, content approval, and posting.</p>	<p>Example: We did not have an approved plan in place that delineated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where should emergency information be posted on the website? • Who will develop content? • Who will review and approve content? • Who will facilitate posting with web support staff? 	<p>Example: We will develop a plan that clearly describes these elements and develop templates and draft materials that can be customized for posting during any type of emergency or disaster.</p>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		



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VI. Improvement Plan

This section is intended to help you identify goals and tasks to support continuous improvement and preparedness.

Use your assessment results and the challenges and successes you identified in the previous section to develop an improvement workplan. Table 7 includes examples that can help you complete tables 8 through 10.

Table 7. Example Goal: Streamline Process for Posting Emergency Information on Our Consumer Education Website

Supporting Task	Team	Priority (low, medium, high)	Time Frame
1. Determine consistent format and location for emergency posts, including a banner and dedicated section at the top of each topic page.	Web development and policy team	High	September 2020
2. Formalize processes for content development, content quality assurance check, and content approval (by management).	Policy staff	High	October 2020
3. Streamline workflow to facilitate urgent posting to live website.	Information technology and web development team	High	September 2020

Table 8. Goal 1

Supporting Task	Team	Priority (low, medium, high)	Time Frame
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			



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Table 9. Goal 2

Supporting Task	Team	Priority (low, medium, high)	Time Frame
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Table 10. Goal 3

Supporting Task	Team	Priority (low, medium, high)	Time Frame
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Do You Have Questions?

If you have questions about whether your planned website enhancements meet CCDF requirements, please consult with your [Office of Child Care regional office](#) for guidance.

If you would like technical assistance on developing and enhancing your consumer education website, contact the Child Care State Capacity Building Center (CapacityBuildingCenter@ecetta.info).

The State Capacity Building Center (SCBC) works with state and territory leaders and their partners to create innovative early childhood systems and programs that improve results for children and families. The SCBC is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care.

State Capacity Building Center, A Service of the Office of Child Care

9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031

Phone: 877-296-2401

Email: CapacityBuildingCenter@ecetta.info

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