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

TIP SHEET

Recovering from Emergencies and Disasters: Helpful Child Care Information to Share

As states and territories enter the recovery phase of an emergency or disaster, providing regular communication with families and providers remains critical. Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies should ensure that state- or territory-specific child care information on emergency and disaster recovery is included on their consumer education website. This tip sheet provides best practices and a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) that state and territory CCDF Administrators may consider when developing website content, resources, and communication strategies that address emergency and disaster recovery.

For more guidance on writing and formatting your emergency-related content, and for tips on helping families find your website, see the Child Care State Capacity Building Center's Leveraging Child Care Consumer Education Websites During Emergencies and Disasters: Tips and Best Practices.

General Considerations

Families and providers are likely experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety as they try to understand what recovery from an emergency or disaster will look like for their business, their children, and their day-to-day lives. By providing well organized, timely, accurate, and easy-to-understand information, your consumer education website can serve as a source of trusted, reliable child care information, which can help consumers better navigate this time of uncertainty. As you update information on your consumer education website to respond to the crisis, you can take a few actions to help strengthen the accuracy and usefulness of your website content:

- Regularly review posted information to ensure accuracy.

- Be sure to remove or archive outdated information.

- Ensure that you address emergency or disaster guidance and information specifically related to child care, such as health and safety precautions, and provide links to trusted sources for other related topics (such as K-12 education or public health); this will help you avoid posting any conflicting information.

- Make sure that any links you have posted to other disaster or emergency resources still work and continue to be relevant.

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

- Consider using a feature that allows families or providers to stay informed by receiving regular email or text updates on the particular disaster or emergency and child care; ensure that this feature provides only critical updates that are specific to child care.

Communicating With Families

As your Lead Agency transitions from emergency response to recovery support, child care policies and procedures created during the response will likely change. Families need ample time to understand these changes and how they affect their child care arrangements as they return to work or transition their children out of emergency care. By clearly communicating changes to child care policy and providing resources to support families with this transition, you can improve your Lead Agency's ability to prepare families to respond to changes and make informed child care decisions.

Recommended Resources for Families

- Include availability information in your child care provider search tool by, for example, offering the option to exclude closed providers until they reopen or providing some indication of slot availability in child care search results.
- Share resources for supporting children through child care transitions.
- Provide tip sheets on how to navigate subsidy requirements, such as information on eligibility, how to apply, and redetermination processes for current recipients.
- Include child care resource and referral contacts and resources for selecting quality child care.
- Post tools and resources for managing the mental and physical health needs of children and families.

FAQs for Families

Status of Program Operations and Finding Care

- How will I know when my child can return to our regular child care provider?
- How should I transition my child from emergency care back to regular care?
- If my emergency child care center is still operating, can I continue to send my child there instead of our regular provider?
- Will my regular child care provider continue school-age care while schools continue to be closed?
- How do I find new care if my regular provider remains closed and I have to return to work?
- Is there a chance that my provider will have to close again after reopening?

Safety and Precautions

- What precautions should I take when my child returns to care?
- How can I ensure that my child care provider is following proper health and safety precautions?
- What enhanced health and safety precautions are child care providers required to adopt?

Payment and Subsidies

- My state temporarily expanded subsidy eligibility and changed parent co-payment requirements in response to the emergency or disaster. How long will those changes be in effect? How will I know when they are ending?
- Do I need to reapply for a subsidy if I transfer my child from an emergency to a regular provider?

- Do I need to report changes in my schedule or income if I am returning to work or my hours have changed?

- If I am still paying my regular provider but also need emergency care, can subsidy cover both payments?

- What happens if my subsidy redetermination period has passed? Will I have an extension?

Communicating With Providers

Providers need to have up-to-date information to respond in a timely manner to changes in child care demand. Ensure that the information you share is organized and clear. Consider all the program areas that have been impacted and attempt to address questions for each area.

Recommended Resources for Providers

- If the emergency is public health-related, share recommendations for screening and prevention of illness, if applicable.

- If the emergency is public health-related, share procedures for communicating confirmed cases of illness, if applicable.

- Include recommendations for communicating information about closures, policy changes, and eligibility requirements to families.

- Share tools and resources for talking to children about disasters and emergencies.

- Share tools and resources for supporting child care providers, including a list of mental health resources.

- Distribute informational flyers and signage that providers can use to support proper health and safety practices related to the disaster or emergency, if applicable.

FAQs for Providers

Licensing and Monitoring

- How will providers be informed about evolving guidance and policy changes during this recovery period?

- When should emergency care providers expect to discontinue services?

- How will temporary policy changes be phased out?

- When will monitoring visits resume?

- Are there any benefits or supports available to open new child care centers or expand services?

- What new health and safety training and precautions will providers be required to implement?

Payment and Subsidy

- How will the Lead Agency manage the phase out of temporary subsidy expansion or changes?

- What is the cutoff date for submitting invoices for emergency subsidy payments?

- How will the Lead Agency communicate with families about changes in subsidy and enrollment processes?

- What is the process for CCDF subsidy or contract billing and reimbursement at this time? What is the timeline, and who do I contact with questions?

Operations

- Is there a process for emergency child care providers to apply for regular licensure?

- If providers were ordered to close, when can they reopen? Where will the reopening plan be posted—and updated—as needed?

- If providers operated under different ratio and group size guidelines during this time, when can they return to regular ratios and group sizes?

- Are any grants, subsidies, or programs available for providers to retain staff or fill staffing shortages?

- When will visits for monitoring and quality-rating review resume?

Safety and Prevention

- How can providers ensure children's safety after returning to regular operations?

- How can providers ensure staff members' safety after returning to regular operations?

- How should providers keep families informed about proper health and safety measures? Will you provide us with guidance that we can share with families and visitors entering my center or family child care home?

- Are providers still required to follow special health and safety guidelines (such as social distancing) that were issued in response to the public health emergency?

Do You Have Questions?

If you have questions about whether your planned website enhancements meet Child Care and Development Fund (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**).

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A Service of the Office of Child Care**

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