

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



Considerations for Emergency Child Care: Information and Tips for Families and Providers

During a public health emergency, families' and providers' ability to successfully transition to emergency child care when necessary is crucial. This resource provides a list of tips and considerations for transitioning to using or providing emergency child care.

Considerations for Emergency Child Care for Families

Tips for Using Emergency Child Care

Focus on Communication Essentials

- Confirm the days that providers are open for care, their hours of operation, and their availability to enroll children of certain ages who need care.
- Provide emergency contact information and children's relevant medical and nutritional needs.
- Talk to providers about children's interests, temperament, unique needs, and home language.
 - **Infants and toddlers:** What makes your children happy and helps soothe them when they are upset? Which words are used for common things? What can your infants or toddlers do, and where do they need support (in other words, are they able to feed themselves, sit up without help, or use words to ask for things they need or want)?
 - **Preschoolers:** How do your preschoolers communicate their needs? Which types of games or activities do they enjoy? What do they worry about, and what helps calm them?
 - **School-age children:** What do your children enjoy doing that keeps them engaged? Which routines or activities can they help with?
- Ask what you will need to provide for your children, such as meals, snacks, nap items, or changes of clothes.
 - **Infants and toddlers:** Discuss who will supply diapers, wipes, formula, and bottles.
 - **School-age children:** Discuss who will provide materials for remote learning (for example, pens, pencils, paper, or electronic learning devices) and other items for entertainment.

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](#)



Responding to Disasters and Emergencies: Helpful Child Care Information to Share

- Discuss children’s typical daily schedules, including routines for sleeping, eating, and arrival and departure times.
 - **Infants and toddlers:** Confirm that the provider will be using safe sleep practices (in other words, placing infants on their backs to sleep). Discuss the frequency and duration of nap times and the number of bottles or amount of solid foods needed.
 - **Preschoolers:** Talk about your children’s cues for signaling that they need to use the restroom and whether they need rest or nap times.
 - **School-age children:** Talk about remote learning activities and any support your children may need to complete assignments or schoolwork.

Prepare for the Transition

- Prepare your children for attending a new location by talking to them about what to expect.
- Pack individual supplies (in other words, prescribed medications, changes of clothes, bottles, diapers and wipes, nap items, any school-age remote learning materials, and so on).
- Allow children to bring items from home to support and comfort them (such as a family picture or favorite blanket, book, or object).

Establish Consistency and Build Relationships

- Create predictable routines for children at drop-off time.
- Communicate regularly with new caregivers to establish and foster trusting relationships.

Considerations for Children Requiring Special Accommodations

- Share medically relevant information (in other words, allergies, prescribed medications, detailed care instructions, and so on).
- Involve established specialists in the transition process to the new care location (in other words, occupational, physical, behavioral, or speech therapists).
- Provide the caregiver with information and strategies on how best to support your child’s individual developmental, behavioral, or social-emotional needs.

Considerations for Emergency Child Care for Providers

Tips for Providing Emergency Child Care

Focus on Communication Essentials

- Share daily operation policies and other relevant program information with families.
- Obtain emergency contact information and children’s relevant medical and nutritional needs.
- Discuss what the family will need to provide or bring on the first day of care, such as health or emergency forms, nap items, changes of clothes, and snacks or meals.
 - **Infants and toddlers:** Discuss who will supply formula, diapers, wipes, bottles, and so on.
 - **School-age children:** Talk about materials for remote learning (pens, pencils, paper, electronic learning devices) and other items for entertainment.



Responding to Disasters and Emergencies: Helpful Child Care Information to Share

- Ask about children’s interests, temperament, unique needs, and home language, as well as typical daily schedules and routines such as feeding and meals, naps, and arrival and departure times.
 - **Infants and toddlers:** Discuss what makes them happy and what helps soothe them when they are upset, which words are used for common things, and what they can do and where they need support (in other words, are they able to feed themselves, sit up on their own, or use words to ask for things they need or want).
 - **Preschoolers:** Discuss how they communicate their needs, which types of games or activities they enjoy, what they worry about, and what helps calm them.
 - **School-age children:** Discuss what they enjoy doing and which routines or activities they can help with.

Support the Transition

- Create a welcoming space for newly enrolled children (for example, provide a special place for their belongings).
- Encourage families to share successful supports used to comfort children in stressful situations, such as providing special objects, songs, or books, and implement these strategies when needed.
- Establish predictable routines for daily care and be mindful of children’s home language and culture.
- Implement responsive strategies such as building relationships with children, sharing stories of resilience, and encouraging and modeling emotional wellness.
- Communicate with families often to establish and foster trusting relationships.

Create a Safe and Appropriate Environment

- Ensure the safety of children by maintaining watchful oversight and adequate supervision.
 - **Infants and toddlers:** Ensure all accessible materials are safe and developmentally appropriate (in other words, restrict access to items that pose a choking hazard and provide a safe sleep environment).
 - **School-age children:** Ensure online safety practices are followed when using electronic devices.
- Follow a play-based schedule and provide a variety of engaging materials and experiences for all age groups enrolled, including outdoor play when appropriate.
- Consistently follow sanitizing and disinfecting protocols to ensure health precautions are taken to reduce the transmission of disease.



Responding to Disasters and Emergencies: Helpful Child Care Information to Share

Considerations for Children Requiring Special Accommodations

- Ensure that complete, medically relevant information is provided by the parent or guardian (in other words, allergies, prescribed medications, detailed care instructions, and so on).
- Communicate with specialists involved in the care of the child to determine how to support continuation of services.
- Discuss information and strategies with the parent or guardian on how best to support the child's individual developmental, behavioral, or social-emotional needs.

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).

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.

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