A family’s need for safe, dependable child care becomes even more important after an emergency or disaster. Ensuring that providers and staff have access to an up-to-date CCDF disaster plan will help everyone know that you have planned for these unpredictable situations.

As you work on your preparedness planning, you may have wondered what the Office of Child Care means by continuity in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) disaster plan. This term appears in two parts of the disaster plan: (1) the Lead Agency part—or continuation of child care services and subsidy—and (2) child care provider requirements Lead Agencies must have in place—or continuity of operations. You can find these references in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) final rule in § 98.16 (aa) Plan Provisions. Here are the basic and simple differences in the two ways continuity is used for the purpose of emergency preparedness and disaster response and recovery:

- **Continuation of child care services and subsidy**
  - These are steps the CCDF Lead Agency will take to ensure safe child care is available after an emergency or disaster.
  - You will also want to include your procedures for how the financial assistance (subsidy) program will operate after a disaster.

- **Continuity of operations**
  - These are steps that providers must take to demonstrate that they are prepared to resume business following an emergency.

**Continuation of Child Care Services and Subsidy**

Your state, territory, or Tribal CCDF Plan must address these topics, demonstrating your best ideas for what you might do if a disaster happened. Think about what you and your agency did during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) public health emergency. Add these strategies to your disaster plan. That way, you can remember them when a disaster happens.

To see more about CCDF Lead Agency response strategies, look at this discussion brief: *Continuation of Child Care Services: Louisiana’s Experience*. Changes implemented in Texas to support families and providers following the Robb Elementary School shooting in Uvalde are included in the summary from *Lessons Learned: Responding to a Disaster During the Pandemic*. 

“All these [disaster response] policies are defined in the Texas statewide disaster plan, and these flexibilities allow staff to make decisions quickly and respond to events such as the winter storm and the recent school shooting to support families and providers.”

Allison Wilson, Texas CCDF Co-Administrator describing their response in *Lessons Learned: Responding to a Disaster During the Pandemic*.
You may also find the following resources helpful:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency Continuity Resource Toolkit includes templates and resources to support different levels of continuity planning.
- OCC Information Memorandum (CCDF-ACF-IM-2017-01) Statewide Disaster Plan for Child Care Guidelines for Continuation of Child Care Subsidies and Services is included in Appendix A.
- Disaster Preparedness Series: Session 3 - Guidelines for Continuation of Child Care Subsidies and Services This resource was developed for Tribal CCDF programs and includes additional considerations for states and territories.
- Tip Sheet: CCDF Flexibilities in Disaster Response and Recovery includes policy information and flexibilities you may also want to consider.
- Summary of Lessons Learned: Responding to Disaster During the Pandemic describes the lessons Texas, Louisiana, and Alaska CCDF leaders shared about their experiences from 2020 to May 2022.

Continuity of Operations by Child Care Providers

Your CCDF disaster plan must include how CCDF providers are prepared for emergencies and disasters by developing emergency preparedness plans, participating and providing orientation/pre-service and ongoing training to staff, and conducting drills. These requirements are part of the licensing or regulatory portion of the
CCDF program. All CCDF providers must meet these requirements and Lead Agencies may also require that they apply to all providers and all settings.

Consider adding a requirement that providers report emergencies and closures, so you and your local partners can reach out to help. Following an emergency or disaster, providers will need emotional support, options and strategies for reopening. Flexibilities and waivers changing the age groups in a classroom can help them get back into operation as quickly as possible.

**Figure 2. Ideas for Child Care Continuity of Operations for Child Care Providers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Develop plans for accommodating infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions should include information such as child/age-specific mobility needs when evacuating. These plans should also address ensuring adequate supplies are in place.</td>
<td>• Describe the process for contacting staff after a disaster to determine if they and their families are safe (both physically and emotionally) and if they are available for work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Document the types of emergency drills conducted, and that children know what to do.</td>
<td>• Plan with teachers and support staff so plans are in place for their own families, so they can focus on the children in care.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Describe the process for updating contact information is in place, and families know how to contact the provider in case of an emergency.</td>
<td>• Explain the plan for communication with the licensing or regulatory agency about operational status, plans for reopening, and help needed. The plan should include who will communicate if the director or owner is not available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Draft communications for staff and families so that messages about reopening, hours, and so on are ready for use.</td>
<td>• Identify the important documents that should be stored online and accessible via mobile phone. These may include computer and Internet log-on codes and passwords, as well as operational expenses, parent charges and payments, and banking statements and information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Include Child and Adult Care Food Program, child care subsidy records, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure access to passwords and important phone numbers for property insurance, rental agreements, and appliances information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prepare to document damage with dated assessments and photos. Include lists of vendors for services provided, equipment inventory, as well as food, materials, and supply lists to support filing a claim.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following resources may also be helpful.

- The child care disaster planning for special populations discussion brief—*How States and Territories Prepare to Support Special Populations in Emergencies and Disasters*—includes suggestions for preparedness steps with staff and families.
- Child Care Aware of America includes a number of suggestions for child care providers’ business continuity preparation.
- Tribal Child Care Capacity Building Center’s *Disaster Preparedness Series: Session 5 – Requirements for CCDF Providers and Other Child Care Providers* explores requirements for disaster plans in a Tribe’s service area.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency’s *Continuity Essential Records Management* covers records management during emergencies for continuity of services.
An up-to-date CCDF disaster plan that includes the collaboration of staff, providers, and partners will help everyone know that you have planned for these unpredictable situations. Providing options and flexibilities through continuation of services, subsidy, and providers’ emergency planning supports competence and confidence to face emergency situations.

Would You Like Help to Revise Your CCDF Disaster Plan?

Technical assistance is free and available. Please contact the Office of Child Care Regional Office, the Child Care State Capacity Building Center’s State Systems Specialist, or the Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response and Recovery team member for your Region to learn more.