



How States and Territories Can Plan for Recovery

This brief is part of the Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery (EPRR) discussion brief series. These briefs are provided to Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) grantees and their partners to offer guidance regarding strategies and options for consideration in the development of state and territory child care disaster plans.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 requires Lead Agencies to develop state- and territory-wide child care disaster plans. These plans must demonstrate how each state and territory will address the needs of children—including the need for safe child care—before, during, and after a major disaster or emergency, including a state of emergency declared by the governor.

Specific requirements for these plans include guidelines for continuation of child care subsidies and child care services, which may include the provision of emergency and temporary child care services and temporary operating standards for child care providers during and after a disaster. Lead Agencies must also describe how they will coordinate postdisaster recovery of child care services.

This discussion brief provides CCDF Lead Agencies and those working with child care programs with suggestions and considerations for planning to recover from an emergency.

Child care is a vital service to the community. The speed at which child care is able to recover can affect the overall pace of the community's recovery, and quick recovery can offer the stability of continuity of care to children and families. Recovery of child care services can minimize the psychological impact of disaster and promote resiliency in children and adults.

Recovery activities and initiatives must be planned in advance of an emergency situation or disaster. Consider the following questions:

- ◆ What partnerships and resources can Lead Agencies put in place that help providers rebuild and reopen?
- ◆ How can resilience and recovery services be designed to focus on affected providers and families?
- ◆ What data are needed to support recovery planning and activities?
- ◆ How can donations be requested, received, stored, and disbursed to support affected families, providers, and communities?

Factors Affecting Recovery

- Recovery is a stage-based process for individuals and communities.
- Individuals will respond according to their emotional and social resources.
- Communities will rally in response to outside support.
- Recovery efforts should be withdrawn slowly as individuals and communities demonstrate comfort with the “new normal.”



Preparation

Communication supports response and recovery. How will your state or territory communicate with providers? What emergency contact information does your agency collect, and how will this information be accessed? What information will providers need? Is this information available for providers in languages other than English?

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) document [Post-Disaster Child Care Needs and Resources](#) may be a starting place to help develop a list of the resources that will be most relevant for families and providers in an emergency. In addition, the agencies and stakeholders who collaborated in the development of your state or territory's child care disaster plan can help identify resources, support, and information about services at the local level. Knowing what information and data these partners are collecting will help identify and inform recovery efforts.

Lead Agencies may also want to consider planning for children's issues in a recovery taskforce such as the one described in the ACF Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response (OHSEPR) publication [Children and Youth Task Force in Disasters: Guidelines for Development](#). For instance, New York State initiated a statewide taskforce following 2012's Hurricane Sandy (this group's "lessons learned" document is included in the resource list at the end of this brief).

One component of the required state and territory disaster plan is guidelines for continuation of child care services, which may include temporary operating standards for child care providers in affected areas. An initial facility assessment, developed in conjunction with the state licensing agency, can be used as part of the agency's postdisaster data collection, and can also serve to identify whether a facility is safe for children. The information gathered from such assessments can also help identify needs for resources and services.

The 2016 CCDF Final Rule includes a requirement that providers plan for continuity of child care subsidies and services. How are providers ensuring that business, financial, and personnel documents are backed up in another location? Do their records include personally identifiable information that must be secured? If food is lost as a result of a power outage, how will providers who participate in the USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) document and supplement the food shortage? What is the plan for coordination with CACFP lead agencies following disaster?

States and territories may consider what child care services are needed during recovery, such as child safe spaces in shelters and local outreach to providers in affected areas. Lead Agencies should develop strategic partnerships with national, local, and regional organizations that may provide important social and emotional support following emergencies. They should also consider adding language to contracts that describes emergency-related tasks for local child care resource and referral agencies as well as access to early childhood mental health consultation for affected providers, children, and families.

Response

Through planning and preparing with partner agencies and stakeholders, data about emergencies can be quickly compiled and analyzed. States and territories may use these data to respond to requests for information about the impact of the emergency or disaster, as well as to respond to charitable organizations and individuals who offer donations.

New York State published a list of resources for recovery following Hurricane Sandy. The list included resources in the following categories:

- ◆ Federal resources (such as those from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Small Business Administration)
- ◆ State resources (including food assistance, disaster unemployment, and the like)



- ◆ Local resources (including 2-1-1 resources and nonprofit assistance)
- ◆ Resources from child care resource and referral agencies in affected counties
- ◆ Mental health resources
- ◆ Legal resources
- ◆ Available space and equipment

Recovery

Recovery activities may extend from several months to more than a year following a major disaster. Getting child care providers and staff back to work is critical in helping families return to normal routines. What contracts and other resources are available to provide recovery assistance for child care caregivers, teachers, and directors? How can training be revised to include discussion of the disaster's impact on children, families, teachers, and child care staff? The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) has many emergency response and recovery resources for providers and families.

Infant and early childhood mental health consultant services might be tasked with following up with support for recovery (according to contract specifications). These consultants may help teachers deal with their own responses to disaster as well as children's responses, which may include more frequent challenging behaviors or changes to typical behavior.

National and regional organizations have a part to play, but partners in recovery may be local.

One example from Louisiana illustrates how outreach at the local level is an important part of the recovery plan. The Knock Knock Children's Museum (KKCM) partnered with Teaching Strategies, Inc. to reprint 10,000 copies of the book *Helping Children Rebound* following the 2016 flooding in and around Baton Rouge. These practical guides helped teachers respond to the emotional needs of children who experienced a traumatic event. KKCM also received a grant from a local foundation to provide *Rebounding through Play* kits—designed to support the emotional needs of children—to support teachers in 47 classrooms following the flood. Teachers participated in training and then received books, music, and other materials for children that support social and emotional development, as well as resources that support teachers in helping children reduce stress and promote self-regulation.

People are willing to help.

Is your agency prepared to respond to offers of assistance and to manage and store donations? Could another agency or stakeholder support efforts on behalf of child care providers and the children they serve? Consider developing a brief survey that could be sent to affected providers asking questions about the emergency's impact on staff, as well as materials and supplies lost. This information can inform donations made and, when resources are available, a plan for distribution.

This discussion brief is meant to support planning efforts in the development of state and territory child care disaster plans. The [State Systems Specialists](#) in each ACF Region are available to provide technical assistance and supplementary [resources](#). Emergency preparedness resources are also available from the [Office of Child Care](#).



Resources

Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2013). *Children and youth task force in disasters: Guidelines for development*. Retrieved from

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ohsepr/childrens_task_force_development_web.pdf

Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2014). *New York Children's Issues Task Force: Lessons learned from response and recovery in Superstorm Sandy in New York*. Retrieved from

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ohsepr/new_york_childrens_issues_task_force_web.pdf

Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). *Post-disaster child care needs and resources*. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohsepr/resource/post-disaster-child-care-needs-and-resources>

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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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