



How Do States and Territories Plan for and Respond to Hostile Intruder Incidents?

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 the recovery of child care services following disaster.

This discussion brief provides suggestions to Lead Agencies on actions that should be considered as disaster plans are developed. The scenario described in the box on the right did not happen, but might have. What policy, requirements, and resources can Lead Agencies put in place to help providers ensure the best outcomes for staff, children, and families?

Lockdown

Lockdown procedures are meant to keep children away from harmful people or situations that are inside a child care facility by restricting children's movement to safe spaces and classrooms while keeping the hostile intruder away from children and staff. These procedures may also be used when a potential shooter is in the community. Lockdown should not be confused with sheltering in place, which is used when there is a threat outside the facility, such as a gas leak. Shelter-in-place procedures are used when evacuation would be dangerous.

What Does a Hostile Intruder Incident Look Like?

A father in our program who is recently separated from his wife came in as naptime was ending. Since we had recently received a copy of the restraining order, we knew that we could not release the children to him. When he asked and then demanded to take his children, we implemented our hostile intruder (lockdown) plan.

Our cook and custodian had seen the father enter the building and was aware of the situation and his agitation. Because of our training, on my signal she notified all the classrooms to lock down and called 911.

Teachers locked their classroom doors and moved the children as far from the doors as possible and began doing a "picnic snack" activity while sitting on the floor. Stories were brought out and teachers quickly engaged the children in their favorite quiet books.

Since we had practiced lockdown drills, the older children were not surprised and moved quickly.

Police arrived quickly and quietly helped this father understand the center's responsibilities. The cook delivered the "all clear" and the children moved to enjoy time on the playground.

Via email and a note on the front desk, we notified our families about the incident. Boy, am I glad we took the training and practice drills seriously!



Preparation

State and territory CCDF leadership must work with partners and stakeholders to develop strategies and response options before an emergency occurs. This preparation includes setting requirements for provider planning, training, and drills; encouraging or requiring communication with families; and exploring how to use contracts with child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies and infant and early childhood mental health consultants to support response and recovery.

Section 658E(c)(2)(U) of the CCDBG Act of 2014 requires CCDF grantees to have requirements for providers regarding evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, and lockdown procedures; communication and reunification with families; continuity of operations; and accommodation of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions. These requirements must apply to providers of CCDF-funded services, but states and territories may determine that these requirements apply to all providers. Examples of state requirements may be found in the resource [Emergency Preparedness and Child Care Facility Lockdowns: Examples of Licensing Regulations, Procedures, and Trainings](#). Please note that this resource was published prior to the passage of the CCDBG Act and does not reflect the requirements around disaster plans. However, many of the recommendations are still relevant and useful.

Emergency drill procedures involving children should be carefully considered and planned to increase their knowledge without increasing their anxiety.¹ Announced and unannounced drills with children present conducted at various times throughout the day provide an opportunity to put the providers' training into practice and point out needed procedure changes. It is important to include children with disabilities in drills since additional attention or accommodations may be needed to provide for their safety. Encourage providers to involve local first responders as part of their planning, training, and drills.

Communication with families is important when planning or practicing emergency responses. Regulations often require providers to inform parents of drills conducted as well as actual emergencies that have taken place. Informing and notifying families about requirements may also be part of orientation for new families and staff, as well as ongoing communication throughout the year in newsletters or during conferences or events.

CCR&R agencies can play an important role in training providers and observing during drills to identify improvement strategies. State and territory leaders can plan for these activities (in contracts or statements of work) as well as identify specific roles for CCR&R agencies in emergency and disaster response.

Many states and territories and their partners are making infant and early childhood mental health consultants (IECMHCs) available to child care providers. Though these services may be targeted to quality improvement strategies or efforts to reduce and prevent suspension and expulsion, it can be helpful to include a contract contingency that allows the IECMHC to make a visit to a program following a lockdown or other emergency situation. These visits support recovery and resiliency in children and staff.

Response

It is important to plan for the state or territory's response to a lock-down occurrence in a child care program or home. State and territory staff may find it helpful to engage their agency partners in conducting tabletop exercises to work through scenarios in order to develop a procedure or protocol. Some questions to consider for each scenario include the following:

- ◆ How will the Lead Agency be notified of the lockdown emergency?
- ◆ Will the agency learn of the emergency from a media source, local law enforcement, or other first responder?
- ◆ Should providers be required to report when they have responded to an emergency with a lockdown?



- ◆ Where and when does communication with licensing occur? What steps does the agency take upon notification?
- ◆ How and when does communication with families take place?

Recovery

Planning for recovery should also be included in state and territory plans because children and staff may struggle to cope with memories of the event. Licensing consultants could visit the provider to debrief the incident, discuss any changes to the provider's emergency plan for lockdown, and provide suggestions and support.

Consider adding language to contracts that describes emergency-related tasks for local CCR&R agencies as well as access to early childhood mental health consultation for affected providers, children, and families. The licensing consultant could notify the local CCR&R agency and put IECMHC services into motion, per contract specifications, requesting outreach to the program to follow up with support for recovery.

In order to develop a comprehensive and effective response plan to a hostile intruder in an emergency situation (or any other emergency or disaster), state or territory CCDF leadership must collaborate with other state agencies and also with stakeholders. This is especially true if the state's licensing function and staff are in another agency. The resource [CCDF Agency Emergency Preparedness Planning Tool: Coordination with Key Partners](#) can help identify and document the participation of collaborative partners, as well as other agencies, resources, and individuals.

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

Child Care State Systems Specialist Network. (2013). *CCDF agency emergency preparedness planning tool: Coordination with key partners*. Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/1301_emergency_preparedness_planning_coordination_tool_doc.pdf

Child Care State Systems Specialist Network. (2014). *Emergency preparedness and child care facility lockdowns: Examples of licensing regulations, procedures, and trainings*. Retrieved from <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/emergency-preparedness-and-child-care-facility-lockdowns-examples-licensing-regulations>

National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance. (2016). *CCDF health and safety requirements brief #6: Emergency preparedness and response planning*. Retrieved from <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/ccdf-health-and-safety-requirements-brief-6-emergency-preparedness-and-response-planning>



Endnotes

¹ Almendrala, A. (2014, February 19). The harsh dilemma of preparing kids for the worst at school. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/02/19/active-shooter-drills-at-school_n_4785349.html

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