



Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Resources for Child Care Programs

Natural disasters and emergencies can be emotionally devastating and cause property damage that can be costly to repair. Child care programs are not immune to these risks, and they should plan and prepare for any event (minor as well as catastrophic) that may disrupt the day-to-day operations of their child care businesses. Emergency plans help ensure child care programs and staff are prepared to react in a manner that protects the safety of children and staff when an emergency occurs. Emergency plans also establish mechanisms to help programs during the recovery phase and get businesses up and running as soon as possible. This promotes continuity of care and reduces risks such as clientele and income loss.

This guide provides resources to help child care programs begin the process of developing or updating emergency plans. This guide may also be helpful for Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agency staff and their partners, such as trainers and child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies who are supporting providers as they develop their plans. This guide is divided into four sections—**planning and preparedness, response, recovery, and additional resources.**

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Information in each section is presented through a question-and-answer format with links to additional resources. This resource guide also provides selected examples of state documents (for example, emergency planning guides, templates, and checklists) that providers may find useful when developing or updating their emergency plans. Additional information about emergency preparedness resources for child care programs is available on the Child Care Training and Technical Assistance Network (CCTAN) website at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/topics/emergency-preparedness>.

While there are many resources available, be sure you are aware of the child care health and safety (licensing) requirements in your state or territory. Every state and territory has emergency planning and preparedness training to help you meet the requirements in your jurisdiction. Licensing regulations for child care settings are available from the National Database of Child Care Licensing Regulations at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/licensing>.

Before a Disaster or Emergency: Plan and Prepare

Is Your Child Care Program in an Area Impacted by Hazards?

Regardless of where your child care program is located, it is vulnerable to natural disasters and emergencies, as well as emergencies caused by people. The types of hazards you need to prepare for depend on the region of the United States in which you live or work.

Identifying the hazards that may affect your program can help you plan accordingly. The Emergency Management Agency in your state may provide more information about your area's risks. Contact information for these agencies is available at <https://fema.gov/locations>.

Be sure your plan describes processes that can be used regardless of the type of emergency. For example, you may need processes for evacuation and relocation if there is a gas leak, flood, or fire. A plan for communicating with and helping families get together after an emergency is also important.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the American Red Cross, and Save the Children also provide information about how to prepare for different hazards, such as infectious disease and health emergencies, as well as natural disasters and terrorist attacks. Below are links to their websites with more information:

- ◆ CDC (2022): <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/index.html>
- ◆ FEMA (2022): <http://www.ready.gov/be-informed>
- ◆ American Red Cross (n.d.): <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html>
- ◆ Save the Children (n.d.): <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/emergency-response>



Can Your Child Care Facility Withstand a Disaster or Emergency?

The internal and external structure of your child care facility can also create potentially dangerous situations during a disaster or emergency. Evaluate the internal and external structure of your facility and address any issues you find. Surveying your facility can help you reduce harm during a disaster or emergency from unstable fixtures, furniture, or other objects. You may also want to check your facility's electrical, gas, heating, and cooling systems to ensure they are in working condition. Evaluating your facility's landscape can also help reduce the spread of fires between grass, trees, and other vegetation, especially in wildfire-prone areas.



The following tools may help you conduct hazard analysis:

- ◆ “Hazard Analysis Checklist and Preparedness and Risk Reduction” in *Y.I.K.E.S.—Your Inventory for Keeping Everyone Safe: Planning Guide for Emergency Response Planning in Child Care* (2015), by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/documents/ocfs/childrens-licensing-and-investigation/documents/YIKES-Planning-Guide-2015.pdf>
- ◆ *Risk Assessment* (2021), by Ready.gov, <https://www.ready.gov/risk-assessment>
- ◆ *Risk Management* (2021), by FEMA, <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/risk-management>

It is also important to periodically survey the internal and external structure of the child care facility as it naturally ages, as wear and tear occurs, and as surroundings change.

What Should You Include in Your Child Care Emergency Plan?

The purpose of an emergency plan is to specify how you and your staff will protect children during a disaster or emergency. It should describe the steps that will be taken for different events that may threaten the safety of children and staff. Therefore, the specifics of what to include in your plan depend on what hazards affect your area. The licensing agency or emergency management agency in your state may provide information about what your emergency plan needs to address. The following are links with contact information for these agencies.

The Child Care State Capacity Building Center (SCBC) brief, [*How States and Territories Prepare to Support Special Populations in Emergencies and Disasters*](#), explores best practices that include children in special populations in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery planning.

- ◆ **National Database of Child Care Licensing Regulations** contains direct website links to state child care licensing regulation documents and licensing agency contact information. Users can access, download, and search state child care licensing regulations that apply to child care centers, family child care homes, and other licensed child care programs. The database is available at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/licensing>.
- ◆ **Emergency Management Agencies** is available at <https://fema.gov/locations>.
- ◆ **Checklist for Developing Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans** is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/form/appendix-checklist-developing-child-care-emergency-preparedness-and-response-plans>
- ◆ In general, an emergency plan should address the following:
 - ◆ The events for which the emergency plan will be activated.
 - ◆ How and when the facility will evacuate, shelter-in-place, or engage in a lockdown.
 - ◆ The shelter sites (onsite and offsite) that the facility will use.
 - ◆ The evacuation sites (both near and far) that the facility will use (these may be the same or different than the shelter sites).





- ◆ Some children may need specific support during an emergency. How will the infants in your program be evacuated? Some children may be very sensitive to loud noises or have limited vision. How will you and your staff plan for and meet these needs?
- ◆ How will the facility communicate with parents about an emergency and support parent-child reunification (including considerations regarding disabilities, language needs, communication needs, and so on)?
- ◆ Staff responsibilities related to evacuation, attendance, communicating with parents, and so on.
- ◆ Parent responsibilities related to providing updated contact information and emergency numbers, persons authorized to pick up children, and so on.
- ◆ The reasons for facility closures, including early dismissal, and how parents and staff will be notified.
- ◆ The reasons the facility will stay open late (for example, parents must pick up their children late because of work).
- ◆ The location of emergency supplies for evacuation, sheltering-in-place (at least 72 hours' worth of supplies are needed), and lockdown scenarios.

When developing or updating your emergency plan, you may also want to consider the following questions:

- ◆ Are your child care records portable, or can you access them from offsite? Do you have backups of your records? If they are online, do you have a way of accessing them if you lose electricity or Internet connection?
- ◆ Do you have partners in your community (for example, Head Start; prekindergarten; family, friend, and neighbor care; faith-based care; or center or family child care) to whom you can reach out? Do you have procedures in place to collaborate with them to meet child care needs and share supplies and resources?

While your emergency plan should be detailed enough to address all possible events, it should not be so complex that parents and staff will have difficulty remembering the necessary steps when a disaster or emergency arises. Also, since it is impossible to foresee every event that may occur, your emergency plan should be broad enough to cover widely varied situations.

The resources shared below can help you develop or update your emergency plan.

State Guides

The following guides and templates are included to illustrate the approaches and strategies used by some states. Providers are encouraged to contact their child care licensing representative for specific emergency plan requirements.

- ◆ *Child Care Emergency Plan Guidelines* (February 2020), by the South Carolina Department of Social Services, https://www.scchildcare.org/media/74761/Emergency-Plan-Guidelines_FEB2020.pdf
- ◆ *Connecticut Child Care Emergency Preparedness Manual* (September 2019), by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, <https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Connecticut-Child-Care-Emergency-Preparedness-Manual.pdf>
- ◆ *Child Care Provider Disaster Plan* (2018), by the Seattle Office of Emergency Management, https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Emergency/Preparedness/Child%20Care%20Providers/Child%20Care%20Provider%20Disaster%20Plan%20Template_Seattle%20OEM.pdf
- ◆ *Disaster Emergency Evacuation Preparedness: A Guide to Manage the Essential Elements of Disaster Preparedness Strategies (D.E.E.P.)* (n.d.), by the Arizona Department of Health Services, <http://azdhs.gov/documents/licensing/childcare-facilities/training/deep-manual.pdf>



- ◆ *Emergency Preparedness Planning Guide for Child Care Centers & Child Care Homes*, (January 2016), by Illinois Emergency Medical Services for Children, https://rcrctoolbox.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/EM_Preparedness-Planning_Guide_for_Child_Care_Centers.pdf
- ◆ *Indiana Emergency Response Planning Guide for Child Care Providers* (n.d.), by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security and the Family and Social Services Administration, <http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/4909.htm>
- ◆ *Infectious Diseases In Child Care Settings* (July 2013), by the Delaware Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology, <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/chca/files/childcaremanual.pdf>
- ◆ *Preparing Child Care Programs for Emergencies: A Six Step Approach* (February 2011), by the Tennessee Department of Human Services, https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/Preparing_CCP_for_Emergencies_-_A_Six_Step_Approach_-_Chklst.pdf
- ◆ *Your Inventory for Keeping Everyone Safe: Y.I.K.E.S. Planning Guide for Emergency Response Planning in Child Care* (n.d.), by Idaho STARS, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, <https://idahostars.org/portals/61/Docs/Providers/CCHC/YikesPlanGuide.pdf>

Templates

- ◆ Louisiana Early Learning Center Emergency Checklists (February 2018), by Louisiana Department of Education, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/child-care-providers/early-learning-center-emergency-checklists.pdf?sfvrsn=2>
- ◆ *Child Care Emergency Plan Template* (July 2015), by South Carolina Department of Social Services, https://dss.sc.gov/resource-library/forms_brochures/files/2974.pdf
- ◆ *Family Child Care Provider Emergency Plan Template* (February 2017), by Emergency Management Association of Ohio, http://www.emaohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Template_Day-Care-Safety-Plan_2.13.2017.pdf
- ◆ *Sample Childcare Emergency Action Plan* (November 2011), by FEMA, https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is36/handouts%20-sample%20plans/eap_sample.pdf

National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance Resources

- ◆ *CCDF Health and Safety Requirements Brief #6: Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning* (August 2020), by the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance, <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/ccdf-health-and-safety-requirements-brief-6-emergency-preparedness-and-response-planning>

Head Start Emergency Preparedness Resource

- ◆ *Head Start Emergency Preparedness Manual* (2020), by the Head Start National Center on Health, Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/emergency-preparedness-manual-early-childhood-programs.pdf>

In some instances, staying inside your facility (for example, shelter-in-place or a subset of sheltering-in-place—the lockdown) may be safer for children and staff than trying to evacuate. However, monitoring the television, Internet, social media outlets such as Facebook or Twitter, or the radio will help you decide when you need to evacuate your child care facility. When developing your evacuation plan, consider the type of disaster or emergency and the type of protection you will need.



What Should You Include in Your Evacuation Plan?

Your evacuation plan should specify how you will move children from one location to another (onsite and offsite) if their safety is threatened. The plan should go into detail on how children will be protected and accounted for and how staff will tell parents what is going on.

As stated earlier, the specifics of what to include in your plan depend on what hazards affect your area. In general, your evacuation plan should address the following:

- ◆ Who will decide when to evacuate or stay in the facility, and who will decide when it is safe to return to the facility?
- ◆ How will staff be informed about evacuation decisions?
- ◆ What are the specific evacuation routes and identified safe areas?
- ◆ Who will be responsible for moving children to the safe areas?
- ◆ How will staff inform and reunite parents with their children?

The following resources can help you develop an evacuation plan for your child care facility:

- ◆ *Be Prepared: A Guide for Disaster Emergency Evacuation Preparation: Emergency Evacuation Plan* (June 2012), by the Arizona Department of Health Services, <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/licensing/childcare-facilities/preparedness/emergency-evacuation-plan.pdf>
- ◆ *Evacuation Planning Form for Child Care Emergency/Disaster Preparedness* (August 2013), by the Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, http://training.chfs.ky.gov/Child_Care_Preparedness/html/DCC-Evacuation_Planning_Form_for_Child_Care_Emergency_Disaster_Preparedness_FINAL.pdf
- ◆ *Get Out Alive! Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Evacuation Plan* (January 2017), by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Documents/dpa/programs/ccare/forms/CC67-Get-Out-Alive-Evacuation-Plan.pdf>

What Should You Include in Your Emergency Supply Kits?

During a disaster or emergency, staff cannot waste time searching for emergency supplies. Emergency kits must be preassembled and always accessible. Do not wait until the last minute to assign staff responsibility and to assemble your supplies.

The following resources are available to help you prepare emergency supply kits:

- ◆ *Be Prepared: A Disaster Emergency Evacuation Preparedness Kit* (n.d.), by the Arizona Department of Health Services, <http://www.azdhs.gov/documents/licensing/childcare-facilities/preparedness/disaster-kit-brochure.pdf>
- ◆ *Build A Kit* (reviewed March 2021), by Ready.gov, <https://www.ready.gov/kit>
- ◆ *Emergency Supply Kit for Child Care Providers* (2021), by Child Care Aware of America, <https://www.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Emergency-Supply-Kit.pdf>
- ◆ “Standard 5.6.0.1 First Aid and Emergency Supplies” in *Caring for Our Children*, (modified on January 23, 2020), by the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education, <https://nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/5.6.0.1>

Schools, community partners, or businesses can provide emergency shelter and other essential services during a disaster or emergency. If you have not done so, develop collaborative relationships with these entities in your area.



You may also want to consider the following:

- ◆ Who will be responsible for preparing and maintaining the emergency supply kits?
- ◆ Will your emergency supplies and materials be portable, how will they be stored and carried, and who is responsible for carrying the kits during an emergency?
- ◆ Will important documents (for example, children's records, family contact information, parent authorization forms) be included in the emergency kits, and who is responsible for keeping them current?
- ◆ Should you include important business documents (such as your license, staff information, or lease)?
- ◆ If you care for children with special needs who need medication or special equipment, will you include these items and instructions for how to use them?
- ◆ Will you have supplies for short-term (a few minutes) and long-term (72 hours) emergencies?
- ◆ How will you communicate with parents, emergency personnel, or other staff within your program?
- ◆ Are your communication devices portable, and do you have a backup mode of communication if you discover that the one you planned to use does not work effectively?
- ◆ Do you have a plan to communicate with parents who have special needs?
- ◆ Are you including materials to entertain children?

Once you have prepared your emergency supply kits, check them at least once every 6 months to replace supplies that have expired. Also check parent contact information regularly.

Do Staff Members Have the Necessary Trainings?

Preservice and orientation training are required to ensure that staff and volunteers are prepared to handle different situations that might arise during a disaster or emergency. Your state licensing agency may require staff to be trained in emergency preparedness and response. The licensing agency may also require that you and your staff complete other trainings related to emergency preparedness, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or first aid, safe sleep practices, and how to respond to food allergies and food emergencies (such as choking). In addition, you may want to take advantage of any emergency preparedness trainings offered by the licensing agency, child care assistance agency, CCR&R agency, or emergency management agency in your state. Below, you will find links to contact information for these agencies:

- ◆ Child care assistance agencies, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/contact-information/state-and-territory-child-care-and-development-fund-administrators>
- ◆ Child care resource and referral agencies, <http://childcareaware.org/parents-and-guardians/childcarefinder#section=searchbyzip>
- ◆ Emergency management agencies, <https://www.fema.gov/locations>
- ◆ The **National Database of Child Care Licensing Regulations**, which provides direct website links to state child care licensing regulation documents and licensing agency contact information. Users can access, download, and search state child care licensing regulations that apply to child care centers, family child care homes, and other licensed child care programs. The database is available at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/licensing>.



The following are links to selected online trainings related to emergency preparedness:

- ◆ American Red Cross trainings, <http://www.redcross.org/take-a-class>
- ◆ FEMA's Independent Study Program, <https://training.fema.gov/is/>
- ◆ IS-36: Multihazard Planning for Childcare, https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is36/student%20manual/is-36_complete_sm_feb2012.pdf
- ◆ IS-366.A: Planning for the Needs of Children in Disasters
- ◆ <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-366.a>
- ◆ When determining whether staff members have necessary trainings, consider the following questions:
- ◆ Do all staff members know the location of fire extinguishers and understand how to use them properly?
- ◆ If you have a back-up generator, do you need a permit for a child care program or home to operate the generator? Note: Contact your licensing agency and ask if a permit is needed.
- ◆ Do at least two staff members know how to shut off the water, heating, cooling, and electrical systems in your facility?
- ◆ Are staff trained to meet the unique needs of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with health care conditions in emergency situations or when evacuating or relocating to another site?
- ◆ Have staff developed a plan for their own children and family in case of an emergency or disaster during work hours?

CCDF Health and Safety Training Requirements

Early care and education providers participating in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program are required by reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 to meet specific health and safety training requirements, including those for emergency preparedness and response. For more information about these requirements, visit <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/early-care-and-education-providers>.

Note: To verify which training options your state will accept to meet this requirement, contact your state's [licensing agency](#).

Do You Practice What Is In Your Emergency Plan?

If emergency plans are not used or put into practice, they are useless. Make time to put into practice what is in your emergency plan. Schedule monthly drills or practice sessions of different emergency scenarios and change plans accordingly. Monthly drills or practice sessions also help ensure staff know their responsibilities and respond according to your plan in the event of a disaster or emergency. State licensing regulations may require certain drills to be done on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis. As a best practice, you may want to exceed these requirements.

You may also want to rehearse evacuation procedures with children and inform parents about these procedures. This will help them know where to go and who to contact when a disaster or emergency occurs. After your drills or practice sessions, schedule time for staff and parents to debrief. Debrief sessions can help staff and parents talk about what works and what needs improvement.

The following resources may help you keep track of your drills:

- ◆ *Child Care Learning Center: Fire/Tornado Drill Documentation Form* (n.d.), by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, http://dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/FireandTornadoDrillForm_Center.pdf
- ◆ *Fire/Tornado/Emergency Preparedness Documentation Form* (n.d.), by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, <http://dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/FireDrillLog.pdf>



- ◆ *Fire Drill Log* (April 2016), by the Utah Department of Health, <http://health.utah.gov/licensing/forms/All/Fire&DisasterDrillLog.pdf>

During emergencies, people react on instinct. Therefore, the more your child care program (that is, staff, parents, and children) practice, the more likely everyone involved is to react according to the plan when it is put into action.

Do You Have a Plan to Protect Your Child Care Business?

Disasters and emergencies can cause damage to your child care facility that is costly to repair. This damage can put your business at risk of income and clientele loss. These risks can affect your ability to pay your staff and your facility bills, which can have implications for your facility's ability to stay open.

Relying solely on your insurance may not be the best choice since it may not cover all damages. For example, liability insurance does not cover damage caused by a disaster or emergency. This type of insurance covers your program in the event of bodily injury or death in your facility. Liability insurance also provides legal defense for any third-party lawsuits for medical bills, injuries, and loss of income because of the injury or death. Comprehensive insurance, on the other hand, may cover damages sustained from a disaster or emergency, but your premium is subject to your location (area in which you live or work). Some areas are considered high risk for certain disasters, and your premium may be higher.¹

Replacing clients can be time consuming. It can also be costly (due to lost revenue or extra business costs like advertising). If your budget is already being stretched to cover repairs, you may not have enough to invest in advertising your program and finding new clients.

A contingency plan or contingency fund can help you strategize how you will pay for repairs, pay staff, and continue to run your business after a disaster or emergency. Having a plan ensures you are not caught off guard when a disaster or emergency strikes your area, which can make a difference in the recovery of your business.

The following resource provides more information about developing contingency plans and funds:

- ◆ *What Is a Business Contingency Plan?* (2018) by Zach Lazzari, *Chron.com* <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/business-contingency-plan-1081.html>

Additional Resources

- ◆ "Flu Resources for Business" (2021), by CDC.gov, <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/business/>
- ◆ "Prepare for Emergencies" (n.d.), by the U.S. Small Business Administration, <http://www.sba.gov/prepare>
- ◆ "Preparedness Planning for Your Business" (2021), by Ready.gov, <https://www.ready.gov/business>
- ◆ "Protect Your Property from Natural Hazards Brochures" (2021), by FEMA, <https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/products-tools/know-your-risk/homeowners-renters/protect-property>

¹ Insurance is a standard consideration for any business, and you may want to contact your insurance provider to learn more about what is covered in your plan.

- A **contingency plan** is a plan of action that responds to an unexpected event that threatens the operation of a business.
- A **contingency fund** is money (either through savings, credit, or loans) that is available to use in the event of an emergency.

- ◆ “Workplaces and Organizations, Commit to Preparedness: Join the Red Cross Ready Rating Program” (n.d.), by the American Red Cross, <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/workplaces-and-organizations.html>

Do You Talk with Families about Your Emergency Plans and Drills?



The [Ready.gov 2022 Preparedness Calendar](#) highlights weather and other safety and potential emergency events that families should be informed about, such as winter safety, summer, and extreme heat safety, as well as earthquake and hurricane safety. It can be used as a planning tool and contains resources that can be customized for your business.

New family orientation is a wonderful time to talk about the emergency plans you have for your program. Be sure to mention how important it is to keep all contact information and any health information (allergies and medications) up to date.

Use newsletters to keep families thinking about emergency preparedness.

Be sure that classroom staff tell parents about practice drills that took place that day. The family can discuss what happened and how practicing helps everyone stay safe. Sharing this information will help build trust with parents and is much better than getting a call from a parent because a young child said, “We had a fire at school today.”

Including families in drills is helpful, especially when their child is new to your program or needs additional help during a practice evacuation or relocation drill. Notifying parents that you will conduct a reunification drill will highlight the need for current contact information and is a good reminder that you and your staff will release their child only to those on the list. It is also another chance to talk about where you will take the children if you need to evacuate the location.

The Child Care State Capacity Building Center (SCBC) brief, [How States and Territories Prepare to Support Special Populations in Emergencies and Disasters](#) (2017), explores best practices that include children in special populations in EPRR planning.

Do Program Staff Have Emergency Plans for Their Families?

Staff who have emergency plans for their families are better prepared for disasters and emergencies. This preparation is especially important if a disaster or emergency occurs while children are in care. Emergency plans for their families will ease some of the anxieties about their families’ safety and well-being. Unless you have policies about releasing nonessential staff and circumstances in which staff can leave, staff should not leave the program or abandon children in their care to tend to their families during a disaster or emergency. Staff should also be made aware of this employment expectation when they are hired.

The following resources can help staff develop emergency plans for their families.

Publication

- ◆ *My Emergency Preparedness Stockpile Checklist* (n.d.), by the American Public Health Association, <http://www.getreadyforflu.org/Plan-Ahead/Stockpiling-Checklist>

Websites

- ◆ “Be Red Cross Ready” (n.d.), by the American Red Cross, <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html>



- ◆ “Emergency Kit Checklist for Kids and Families” (reviewed September 2020), by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/checklists/kids-and-families.html>
- ◆ “Disasters and Your Family: Be Prepared” (reviewed July 2021), by Healthychildren.org, <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/How-to-Prepare-for-Disasters.aspx>
- ◆ “Facilities” (revised June 22, 2021), by Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/facilities/article/emergency-preparedness-disaster-recovery>

Video

- ◆ “Preparing Makes Sense” (December 2013), by FEMA.gov, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6D_MmRz8gsU

During a Disaster or Emergency: Put Your Plan into Action

Where Can You Get Important Information Such as Alerts and Updates During a Disaster or Emergency?

When there are warnings (due to severe weather or other disasters), it is best not to operate your child care program. When considering policies about opening and closing your facility, consider the following questions:



- ◆ How will you determine when to close your facility? Will you use your local school system’s procedures for when and how to close?
- ◆ How soon in advance will you inform parents?
- ◆ Who will call parents, staff, and the local news (if appropriate) to inform them of the closing?
- ◆ How will you receive weather and emergency updates?

If children are in your care when warnings are issued, make sure you monitor the television, Internet, or radio for official instructions. If you have access to social media, you may also want to monitor outlets such as Twitter or Facebook. You will also need to make decisions about closing early. However, in some instances, closing early may pose more danger to children and families than staying open. Monitor the television, Internet, radio, or reputable voices on social media to figure out the best course of action.

Alert Systems

- ◆ The Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau offers the **Emergency Alert System** (EAS), which is a public warning system used by the President to address the public during national emergencies. State and local authorities also use this system to provide emergency information (such as AMBER Alerts and weather information) in specific areas. More information is available at <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/emergency-alert-system-eas>.
- ◆ The Department of Homeland Security offers the **National Terrorism Advisory System** (NTAS), which provides timely, detailed information about terrorist threats to the public. More information is available at <http://www.dhs.gov/national-terrorism-advisory-system>.



- ◆ The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), **National Weather Service** provides local and regional weather forecasts and is the government's official voice for issuing warnings during life-threatening weather situations. More information about the National Weather Service is available at <http://www.weather.gov/>.
 - **NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards** (NWR), operated by the National Weather Service, is a nationwide network of radio stations that broadcast weather information and warnings 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. NOAA radios are particularly useful in rural areas or areas without sirens that alert about approaching storms. More information is available at <https://www.weather.gov/nwr>.
 - NOAA also operates the **National Hurricane Center and Central Pacific Hurricane Center**, which contains information about current hurricane and cyclone threats as well as hurricane preparedness resources. More information can be found at <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>.
 - The National Weather Service operates the **U.S. Tsunami Warning System** and the **TsunamiReady® Program** to help communities prepare for the threat of tsunamis. More information is available at <http://www.tsunami.gov/index.php>.
- ◆ There are also mobile apps (applications) that provide real time weather alerts. You may want to visit the Apple App Store, Google Play, or wherever you get apps for your mobile device for more information.
 - The American Red Cross offers various mobile apps at <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps.html>.
 - FEMA offers a mobile app and text message services at <https://www.fema.gov/mobile-app>.
- ◆ Many communities have local alert systems for a variety of hazards and emergencies. Check with local authorities for more information in your community.

After a Disaster or Emergency: Recovery Phase

The recovery phase and how long your program is in recovery mode depends on the nature of the disaster or emergency and the damage your facility sustained. It could take anywhere from a few days to a few years (in extreme cases). However, comprehensive emergency planning can make the recovery process easier and smoother. The goals of the recovery phase are to do the following:

- ◆ Rebuild your facility and restore services as quickly as possible.
- ◆ Meet the needs (physical, health related, and emotional) of children, families, and staff.
- ◆ Provide a supportive and caring environment that brings normalcy back into children's lives.

When planning for the recovery phase, consider the following questions:

- ◆ If your primary care site is destroyed or severely damaged, do you have a secondary site? Will you transport children to the secondary site? Will this site need to meet licensing regulations?
- ◆ If families are displaced, do you have procedures to share immunization records, birth certificates, and other documentation with other child care providers or schools?
- ◆ What communication systems will be in place to update the licensing agency and subsidy agency as well as families about your facility's status? How will you get updates from the licensing agency and subsidy agencies, families, and staff?

Local transportation companies may be willing to help with the transportation of children to secondary sites. You may want to consider developing a relationship with these companies to determine if this is a possibility.



- ◆ Do you have a plan if you or your staff are displaced? How will you replace staff? Do you have support networks in place for yourself, staff, and families?

Are Resources Available to Help Rebuild Your Facility and Restore Services?

Following an emergency, child care licensing staff will want to know about your operational status (are you open and able to care for children?) and conduct a damage assessment. Some emergencies, such as flooding and earthquakes, may leave damage that is not easily detected.

After a disaster or emergency, a building or licensing inspector should visit your facility to determine if it is safe to use. The inspector may also help you determine what else needs to be done (such as repairs or clean up) to prevent injuries or health risks. You may also need to assess the damages (internally and externally) to your child care facility. Damage assessments are useful when applying for disaster aid, which you should do regardless of whether you have insurance. Damage assessments are also helpful in making claims to your insurance company. However, you should not rely solely on your insurance to cover damages. Depending on the type of insurance and coverage, it may be inadequate when it comes to paying for damage caused by a disaster or emergency.

The following resources provide information to help you rebuild your facility and restore services.

Safety Precautions

- ◆ “Public Service Announcements for Natural Disasters & Severe Weather,” by CDC, <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/psa/>

Financial Assistance

- ◆ “Disaster Assistance,” U.S. Small Business Administration, <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance>
- ◆ “Disaster Financial Assistance,” USA.gov, <https://www.usa.gov/disaster-financial-help>
- ◆ “Disaster Loan Assistance,” U.S. Small Business Administration, <https://www.sba.gov/loans-grants/see-what-sba-offers/sba-loan-programs/disaster-loans>
- ◆ “Get Assistance After a Disaster,” FEMA, <https://www.fema.gov/assistance>
- ◆ U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance
- ◆ “COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan Application,” <https://covid19relief.sba.gov/#/>
- ◆ “Disaster Loan Assistance” application (unrelated to COVID-19), U.S. Small Business Administration, <https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/ela/s/>





Restore Services

- ◆ Depending on the licensing regulations in your state, you may need to contact the licensing agency or the local CCR&R immediately following a disaster or emergency to report your facility status. You may also need to meet certain licensing requirements to restore services in your facility. Contact the licensing agency for more information about your responsibilities pertaining to the licensing status of your facility. Contact information for all state licensing agencies is available at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/licensing>.
- ◆ If you are a paid provider through the child care assistance program, you may need to contact the child care assistance agency to reinstate payments. If you are not, you may be eligible to care for children from families receiving child care assistance to help meet the increase in demand. Contact the child care assistance (CCDF) Lead Agency for more information. Contact information for all agencies is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/contact-information/state-and-territory-child-care-and-development-fund-administrators>.

Are There Resources Available to Meet the Complex Needs of Children, Families, and Staff?

The aftermath of an emergency or disaster can be equally as devastating as the disaster or emergency itself. Communities may be so devastated that access to basic resources (such as water, food, shelter, and clothing) may be limited. Families may also need to apply for disaster assistance or other assistance programs to help supplement any losses they have experienced.

The following are resources that provide information about disaster assistance for families:

- ◆ DisasterAssistance.gov, <http://www.disasterassistance.gov/>
- ◆ *Disaster Relief and Recovery Services*, by the American Red Cross, <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services.html>

Are There Resources Available to Help Children and Families Cope with Trauma?

After an emergency or disaster, child care programs may be in the best position to help children, parents, and staff overcome any trauma they have experienced. Trauma may be from the direct exposure to the event or through secondary exposure via television or radio. Signs of trauma may be different for children and adults. In children, it may include depression, sleep disturbances, regression of toileting skills, clinginess, or hostility. For adults, it may include feelings of helplessness and inadequacy, chest pains, headaches, sleep disturbances, changes in appetite, or substance misuse.

Child care programs can provide safe and secure environments that help create stability in children's lives during times of chaos and unpredictability. In addition, program staff can provide opportunities for children to talk and share their feelings. Staff should listen to children's concerns and provide honest, developmentally appropriate answers about the event. Program staff should also seek professional consultation and intervention services.



The following are selected resources to aid child care providers with helping children overcome traumatic events. Additional resources are available in the *Emergency Preparedness Resources for Child Care Programs* page of the



Office of Child Care (OCC) website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/emergency-preparedness-resources-for-child-care-programs>.

Publications

- ◆ *10 Tips for Helping Kids Cope with Disaster* (n.d.), by Save the Children, <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/charity-stories/help-children-cope-with-disaster>
- ◆ *Early Childhood Trauma* (August 2010), by National Child Traumatic Stress Network, https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/early_childhood_trauma.pdf
- ◆ *Trauma and Resilience: The Role of Child Care Providers* (January 2020), by the National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment and the Child Care State Capacity Building Center, <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/trauma-and-resilience-role-child-care-providers>
- ◆ *What Happened to MY World? Helping Children Cope with Natural Disaster and Catastrophe* (2020), by Jim Greenman, Bright Horizons Family Solutions, <https://www.brighthouse.com/-/media/BH-New/What-Happened-To-MY-World-2020.ashx?la=en>

Websites

- ◆ “When Something Scary Happens: Resources to Help Families in Emergencies and Other Challenging Times” (2018), by PBS Kids, <http://pbskids.org/learn/when-something-scary-happens/>
- ◆ Parents and staff may also need support. The following are selected resources to share with parents and staff about recovering after a disaster or emergency:
- ◆ “Coping With a Disaster or Traumatic Event” (reviewed 2018), by CDC, <https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/index.asp>
- ◆ “Disaster Distress Helpline” (updated 2021), by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>

What Needs to be Revised in Your Emergency Plan? What Are the Lessons Learned?

Evaluate how your emergency plan worked when responding to the emergency event. Be honest. Review all the steps in your emergency plan to determine how well it works for children, parents, staff, and emergency personnel. Make changes to your emergency plan based on this information. Be sure your review reflects on the response to COVID-19, so you are prepared for an infectious disease outbreak (such as measles or flu).

The Office of Head Start created the “Practice-Review-Revise Cycle” to help programs practice their plans, review for needed changes, and revise accordingly. Programs should do the following:

- ◆ **Practice** their emergency plans (from impact to recovery) for all the disaster or emergency situations identified. If local governments in your area practice community-wide drills, you may want to develop relationships with these entities to make sure that your program takes part in the drills. You may also want to involve children, parents, staff, volunteers, and other key stakeholders in the community in these practice simulations.
- ◆ **Review** what happened in the practice simulations. Programs may want to bring together a working team of staff, families, and community partners to help them find any gaps in the emergency plan.
- ◆ **Revise** the emergency plan based on the working team’s findings in the review phase. Once revisions are made, the program will want to share the updated emergency plan with staff, families, and other community partners.



Additional Resources

The following are links to additional resources that may help you develop or update your emergency plan.

Publications and Toolkits

- ◆ *2022 Preparedness Calendar*, by Ready.gov, <https://www.ready.gov/calendar>
- ◆ *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 4th edition* (revised 2019), by the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Early Childhood Education, <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/ncase-resource-library/caring-our-children-national-health-and-safety-performance-standards>
- ◆ *Disaster Emergency Evacuation Preparedness (D.E.E.P)* (n.d.), by the Arizona Department of Health Services, <http://www.azdhs.gov/documents/licensing/childcare-facilities/training/deep-manual.pdf>
- ◆ *Earthquake Preparedness: Here's What You Can Do* (n.d.), by the Missouri Department of Public Safety, http://sema.dps.mo.gov/earthquake_preparedness/earthquake_preparedness.php
- ◆ *Emergency Financial First Aid Kit* (revised 2019), by FEMA in partnership with Operation Hope, https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_effak-toolkit.pdf
- ◆ *Emergency Preparedness for Families with Children with Special Health Care Needs* (updated February 2021), by the Texas Department of State Health Services, <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/mch/CSHCN/EmergencyPrep.aspx>
- ◆ *Emergency Preparedness Youth Activities* (n.d.), by the Ready in 3 Program, sponsored by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/pdf/youthactivities.pdf>
- ◆ *Flu & Young Children* (n.d.), by CDC, <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/children.htm>
- ◆ "Handling Emergencies," (n.d.), by the Sesame Workshop, <http://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits/emergencies>
- ◆ *Homeowner's Handbook to Prepare for Natural Hazards* (September 2019), by Dennis J. Hwang and Darren K. Okimoto, published by the Sea Grant College Program, University of Hawaii, <https://seagrantsoest.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Hawaii-Homeowners-Handbook-Fourth-Ed.-final1.pdf>
- ◆ *Hurricanes*, (n.d.), by Ready.gov, <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>
- ◆ *Louisiana Early Learning Center Emergency Plan* (February 2019), by the Louisiana Department of Education, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/child-care-providers/early-learning-center-emergency-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=2>
- ◆ *OST Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Toolkit* (n.d.), by the National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment, <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/ost-emergency-preparedness-response-and-recovery-toolkit>
- ◆ *Resources on Helping Youth and Children Recover from Traumatic Events & School Emergency Management Planning* (n.d.), Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, U.S. Department of Education, http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HPAnnounce_EPRResources03202013.pdf
- ◆ *Returning Home After a Hurricane or Flood* (n.d.), by American Red Cross https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF_s/Preparedness_Disaster_Recovery/Disaster_Preparedness/Hurricane/ReturningHomeChecklist.pdf



- ◆ “Emergency Preparedness,” (n.d.), Child Care Aware of America, <https://www.childcareaware.org/our-issues/crisis-and-disaster-resources/>
- ◆ “COVID-19 Guidance for Operating Early Care and Education/Child Care Programs,” (n.d.), by CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/child-care-guidance.html>
- ◆ “COVID-19 Resources for Child Care Providers,” (n.d.), by the Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System, <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/covid-19-resources-child-care-providers>
- ◆ “Health and Safety Training,” (n.d.), by the Child Care Technical Assistance Network, <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/health-and-safety>
- ◆ “Understanding Disasters,” (2020), by American Academy of Pediatrics, <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Understanding-Disasters.aspx>
- ◆ “Welcome to Ready Kids!” (n.d.), by Ready.gov, <https://www.ready.gov/kids>

Videos and Trainings

- ◆ *Child Care Emergency/Disaster Preparedness Technical Assistance Guide*, (n.d.), by the Kentucky Cabinet of Health and Family Services, http://training.chfs.ky.gov/Child_Care_Preparedness/html/index.html
- ◆ *Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Online Training* (n.d.), by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, <https://dese.mo.gov/childhood/child-care/emergency-preparedness>
- ◆ “How to Use a Portable Fire Extinguisher Training Video,” (2009), by the Fire Equipment Manufacturers’ Association, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLjoWjCrDqg>
- ◆ “Ready in 3 for Child Care Providers,” (2012), by the Ready in 3 Program, sponsored by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7Aal2uJxe8&feature=youtu.be>
- ◆ “Fire Extinguisher Training.Com,” (n.d.), by Fire Extinguisher Training.Com <http://www.fireextinguishertraining.com>

This document is updated annually. If you are aware of other resources that could be useful to child care providers who are planning for, handling, and recovering from disasters that are not included in this resource guide, please contact us at CapacityBuildingCenter@ecetta.info. SCBC does not endorse any nonfederal organization, publication, or resource.

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