

Emergency Preparedness Manual for Early Childhood Programs



*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Head Start*

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HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This manual is intended to assist early childhood education programs in making a plan that will help keep their program, center, or home safe during an emergency. The manual is designed to be a workbook-style document that includes information about emergency preparedness as well as corresponding worksheets that allow you to customize an emergency plan for your program, center, or home. As you go through the manual, consider the points below as a way to guide you through the process of creating your emergency preparedness plan.

- + Complete the *Emergency Preparedness Self-Assessment* questionnaire (p. 6) to determine the steps your program, center, or home may need to take to develop a comprehensive emergency-preparedness plan.
- + Use the *What Types of Emergencies Could You Experience?* checklist (p. 7) to help ensure that you are prepared for all possible emergencies.
- + Learn who in your community can help you make and practice your emergency plan with the *Whom to Consult in Your Community* worksheet (p. 10).
- + Establish your communications procedures during the preparedness phase with the *Establishing Your Communication Procedures* worksheet (p. 12).

- + Designate staff responsibilities and determine evacuation sites and emergency response in the preparedness phase with the *Making Your Emergency Response Plan* worksheet (pgs. 14-20).
- + Make your emergency kit using the *How to Build an Emergency Kit* worksheet (p. 21).
- + Use the Mitigation Checklist (pgs. 27-28) to consider changes that could be made to reduce damage or injuries in your program.
- + Follow the relevant *Procedure Checklist* for early childhood education programs (pgs. 31-36) to ensure each part of your emergency response is completed.
 1. After practicing your emergency procedures, follow the *Practice, Review, and Revise Framework* (pgs. 38-39) to reflect on how to improve your procedures in the future.
 2. Find resources focusing on how to begin the process of returning your program to normalcy for children, families, and staff after an emergency.

A complete plan includes:

- + Communication procedures with first responders, staff, and families
- + Response options for each type of emergency you may experience
 - Evacuation: routes, gathering sites, means of evacuating (e.g., walking, cribs, car seats, wheelchairs)
 - Shelter in place: safest place to shelter for the given emergency, how to protect yourself and children
 - Lockdown: safest place to lock down in a classroom or home, how to secure a room
- + Reunification procedures and emergency contacts for each child

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Emergencies often happen suddenly and can be devastating to programs and communities. Emergency preparedness is the process of taking steps to ensure your early childhood education program is safe before, during, and after an emergency. Whether a natural disaster such as a tornado hits or a man-made emergency such as the appearance of a violent intruder occurs, early childhood educators need to know how to respond quickly and appropriately to situations that could happen in their program, center, or home. The purpose of this manual is to help child care providers and Head Start staff create an emergency preparedness plan specific to their program, center, or home.

Early childhood education programs play an important role in supporting children and families in their local communities before, during, and after an emergency through three phases of emergency management:

- +** **Preparedness**—Takes place before an emergency. It includes being informed about any likely emergencies in your area; mitigating any existing concerns at your facility that could make an emergency worse; making plans to respond to emergencies before they happen; and building, maintaining, and updating supply kits you will take or keep with you during an emergency.
- +** **Response**—Begins the moment you are alerted to an impending emergency and continues as the emergency occurs.
- +** **Recovery**—Happens as soon as the emergency is over, when efforts are focused on food, water, shelter, safety, and the emotional needs of those affected. Recovery is also the process of rebuilding your program and returning to normalcy after an emergency, which is why it can last hours, weeks, months, or even years in the most extreme cases.

This manual will guide you through creating an emergency response and initial recovery plan for your program, center, or home.

Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) (§1302.47.b.4.ii) require emergency preparedness and response activities for all Head Start programs. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-47-safety-practices>

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 requires both center-based and family child care providers to prepare written plans for responding to emergency situations or natural disasters. <http://usa.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CCDBG-Moving-Forward-Disaster-Preparedness-S.10861.pdf>

While emergency preparedness requirements for providers will vary based on state laws, this manual will help you incorporate national recommendations and best practices to keep children and adults safe during emergencies. https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/state_regulatory_requirements_for_emergency_preparedness_planning_final.pdf

Three reasons to prepare:

1. Emergencies, large and small, can occur in every community, even **yours**.
2. Child Care Development Block Grant (**CCDBG**) **health and safety standards** and **Head Start Program Performance Standards (45 CFR 1302.47[b][8])** require all providers to prepare written plans for responding to emergency situations or natural **disasters**.
3. Emergency preparedness saves lives! Your emergency preparedness helps children and families.

Key Terms

Alert: Signal, sound, or other indication that warns of an emergency.

All clear: Signal given by officials that the danger is over for the time being.

Emergency: An unexpected and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action.

Emergency kit: Collection of basic items your early childcare education program may need in the event of an emergency (e.g., food, water, medications) in sufficient quantity to last for at least 72 hours. Additional information: www.ready.gov/build-a-kit

Emergency preparedness: Procedures you develop to make sure you are safe before, during, and after an emergency. These response-and-recovery plans are important for your safety in both natural and man-made emergencies. Additional information: <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/emergency/>

Evacuation: When emergency conditions require that you seek immediate protection at another location. Additional information: www.ready.gov

FEMA emergency declaration: Authorizes FEMA to identify, mobilize, and provide equipment and resources to assist with the emergency. www.fema.gov/faq-details/Applying-for-Assistance-under-an-Emergency-Declaration-1370032124284

First responder: Any individual who responds to help others in an event, such as fire, law enforcement, and emergency medical personnel. Additional information: <https://www.fcc.gov/first-responders>

Lockdown: A shelter-in-place procedure that is used in situations with intruders or emergencies that involve potential violence. Lockdown requires children and adults to shelter in a safe room, lock doors, and remain quiet until the event is over. Additional information: www.publicsafety.upenn.edu/pennready/procedures/lockdown

Mitigation: The effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of emergencies. For mitigation to be effective, action needs to be taken before an emergency. Additional information: www.fema.gov/what-mitigation

Recovery: What happens as soon as the emergency is over, when efforts are focused on food, water, shelter, and the safety of those affected.

Response: What happens beginning the moment you are alerted to an impending emergency and continues as the emergency occurs.

Reunification: Bringing children and their families together after an emergency.

Safe room: Space where children and adults can hide during lockdown or shelter-in-place responses. Additional information: www.fema.gov/safe-rooms

Lockdown safe room: If you cannot evacuate, lock the door of the room you are in. In the room, your safest location is out of the intruder/shooter's view (away from doors and windows). If you are able, spread out to make it more difficult for the intruder. Additional information: www.ready.gov/active-shooter

Shelter-in-place safe room: Ideally, a small, interior windowless room on the lowest level, below ground in a basement or storm cellar, is best. Stay away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Additional information: www.ready.gov/tornadoes

Shelter-in-place: When emergency conditions require that you seek immediate protection in the building you are in. Potential shelter-in-place situations include tornadoes, earthquakes, severe weather, landslides, or debris flow. Shelter-in-place entails closing all doors, windows, and vents and taking immediate shelter in a readily accessible location. Additional information: www.ready.gov

Tornado-safe position: A position that keeps you and children safe during a tornado that involves getting low to the ground, covering your head, and, if there are infants in your program, center, or home, holding them close to you and protecting their heads.

Tornado-safe room: Ideally, a small, interior windowless room on the lowest level, below ground in a basement, or storm cellar. www.ready.gov/tornadoes

Warning: Issued when a hazardous event that poses a threat to life or property is occurring, is imminent, or has a very high probability of occurring. emilms.fema.gov/IS0242b/COM0103240text.htm

Watch: Issued when the risk of a hazardous event has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location, and or timing is still uncertain. It is intended to provide enough lead time so that those who need to set their plans in motion can do so. emilms.fema.gov/IS0242b/COM0103240text.htm

Emergency Preparedness Self-Assessment

Ensuring you are prepared and ready for everyday activities is essential, and it is something you do every day in your program. Preparing and planning for emergencies is no different. Use this self-assessment to determine the steps you may need to take to develop a comprehensive and effective emergency-preparedness plan that works for your early childcare education program.

Question	Yes	No	If No, Go to Page...
1. Have you done an assessment of the types of emergencies your early childcare education program could experience based on your geographic region?			7
2. Has your early childcare education program developed specific procedures for preparedness, response, and recovery for each type of emergency indicated as a possibility, including how to be informed and how to communicate?			13-17
3. Does your plan account for practicing and revising your emergency response?			37
4. Do you have a list of emergency contact information for first responders that is visible in your facility?			9-10
5. Do you have updated emergency contact information for each child in your early childcare education program?			23-26
6. Do you have an emergency kit that is updated monthly and has enough supplies to last for up to 72 hours, including emergency contact information for each child in your early childcare education program and daily attendance sheets?			21
7. Does your program have plans in place to train children, families, and staff (if applicable) about emergency-preparedness plans and procedures?			13
8. Does your plan address continuation of services for children and families?			47
9. Does your plan include how to address the mental health and emotional needs of children, families, and staff (if applicable) before, during, and after an emergency?			47

What Types of Emergencies Could You Experience?

What types of emergencies have occurred in your area? Is your early childcare education program in a flood zone? Do you experience severe weather events? Is there a history of violence in your community?

Use this checklist to assess what types of emergencies you could experience in your program and region. The document, *Disaster-Specific Recommendations for Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery in Early Childhood Education Programs* also provides useful information. Consult with your state or local emergency-management office for emergency plans specific to your area. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohsepr/information-for-providers>

	Yes	No	Maybe
Tornado			
Earthquake			
Hurricane			
Flooding			
Tsunami			
Thunderstorm			
House Fire/Wildfire			
Active Shooter/Violent Intruder (Prepared for?)			
Blackout/Power Outage			
Extreme Heat			
Winter Storm/Extreme Cold			
Landslide/Mudslide			
Volcanic Eruption			

In addition to assessing what types of emergencies may occur, consider assessing your building and outdoor space to mitigate hazards in your environment, using the *Mitigation Checklist* on pages [27-28](#).

Chapter 2:

PREPAREDNESS

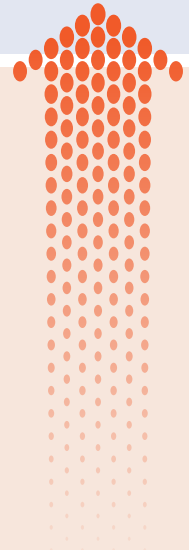
What Is Preparedness?

When a early childcare education program prepares for emergencies in advance, it can save the lives of children, staff, and families. Being prepared may allow you to reopen your early childcare education program sooner, meaning you and the families in your community can get back to work faster and children can return to a familiar routine, caregiver, and setting.

CCDBG Regulations and HSPPS require early childcare education programs to establish, follow, and practice, as appropriate, procedures for emergencies. They also require a disaster-preparedness plan, *Caring for Our Children*, 3rd Edition (CFOC3) (<http://nrckids.org/CFOC/>) has best-practice standards for providers to incorporate into their programs, centers, or homes. See the graphic below for CFOC3 Standards relevant to emergency preparedness that are appropriate for your Head Start program or that align with your CCDF state plan (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/state-plans>).

Table 1. National Requirements and Recommendations for Child Care Emergency Preparedness

Requirements		
<p><u>CCDBG, Sec. 5 (b)(U)(iii)</u></p> <p>A disaster plan shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, and lockdown procedures, as well as procedures for communication and reunification with families, continuity of operations, and accommodation of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions. (ii) Guidelines for continuing CCDF assistance and child care services after a disaster, which may include provision of temporary child care and temporary operating standards for child care after a disaster. (iii) Procedures for staff and volunteer emergency preparedness training and practice drills. 	<p><u>HSPPS § 1302.47.b.7.</u></p> <p>Programs establish, follow, and practice, as appropriate, procedures for, at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Emergencies. (ii) Fire prevention and response. (iii) Protection from contagious disease, including appropriate inclusion and exclusion policies for when a child is ill and from an infectious disease outbreak, including appropriate notifications of any reportable illness. (iv) The handling, storage, administration, and record of administration of medication. (v) Maintaining procedures and systems to ensure children are released only to an authorized adult. (vi) Child-specific health care needs and food allergies that include accessible plans of action for emergencies. For food allergies, a program must also post individual child food allergies prominently where staff can view wherever food is served. 	<p><u>HSPPS § 1302.47.4.i.G.</u></p> <p>All staff should receive training in emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies.</p> <p><u>HSPPS § 1302.47.b.8.</u></p> <p>The program has all-hazards emergency management/disaster-preparedness response plans for more and less likely events including natural and man-made disasters and emergencies and violence in or near programs.</p>
Recommendations		
<p><u>CFOC3 Standard 5.1.4.2</u></p> <p>Evacuation of Children with Special Health Care Needs</p>	<p><u>CFOC 3 Standard 5.6.0.1</u></p> <p>First Aid and Emergency Supplies</p>	<p><u>CFOC3 Standard 9.2.5</u></p> <p>Transportation Policies</p>
<p><u>CFOC3 Standard 9.2.4.6</u></p> <p>Use of Daily Roster During Evacuation Drills</p>	<p><u>CFOC3 Standard 5.4.5.2</u></p> <p>Cribs</p>	<p><u>CFOC3 Standard 9.2.4.3</u></p> <p>Disaster Planning, Training, and Communication</p>
<p><u>CFOC 3 Standard 9.2.4.5</u></p> <p>Evacuation Drills/Exercises Policy</p>		<p><u>CFOC3 Standard 9.4.1.16</u></p> <p>Evacuation and Shelter-in-Place Drill Records</p>



Whom to Consult in Your Community When Making Your Plan (Tip Sheet)

Your emergency plan should address all aspects of your early childcare education program, including the number and ages of enrolled children and any special health care needs or concerns of children and staff. While developing your emergency plan, use community resources for different perspectives and recommendations on preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. These resources can include but are not limited to:

- + Child care health consultants and health managers for Head Start programs
- + Mental health consultants
- + Child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs)
- + First responders, such as fire, law enforcement, and emergency medical personnel
- + State/territory child care licensing agency
- + Head start manager
- + Emergency management agency
- + Transportation partners (e.g., bus companies)
- + Public health departments
- + School district personnel, if your child care center or Head Start program is located within a school
- + Community physicians who are disaster experts

Remember, your community is here to help you!

Here are some questions community members may be able to answer:

- + What hazards are most likely to occur?
- + What can be done to mitigate risks?
- + What is the best way for your program to receive alerts and warnings?
- + Are there emergency contact numbers for specific emergencies?
- + Are there opportunities for preparedness education and training?
- + Does your community have a plan and what should you know about this plan?

Links you might find useful:

- + Agencies in your community: www.fema.gov/emergency-management-agencies
- + Regional emergency management specialist (for Head Start programs): www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohsepr/early-childhood or email ohsepr@acf.hhs.gov

Whom to Contact in Your Community During an Emergency (Worksheet)

Use this worksheet to help you find people in your community who can help you make your emergency plan. You can also post it in your ECE program, center, or home.

	Contact Name (If Applicable)	Phone of Local Agency	Email
Medical Emergency (911)			
Police (911)			
Fire (911)			
Rescue (911)			
Hospital or Clinic			
Poison Control (800) 222-1222			
Local Emergency Management Agency			
Electric Company			
Gas Company			
Water Company			
Waste Disposal			
Insurance Provider			
Off-site Evacuation Location			

Know your Communication Equipment Needs (Tip Sheet)

Communication is an extremely important part of your emergency plan, and it is often overlooked in the preparedness phase. Use the **Establishing Your Communication Procedures** worksheet to plan how you and your staff will interact with each other, first responders, children, and families during an emergency.

Consider whether you need the following:

- ⊕ Signaling devices such as whistles that can be used to alert staff about an emergency or to give an all clear that the event is over.
- ⊕ Battery-powered megaphone/bullhorn to communicate with children and staff.
- ⊕ Battery- or hand-powered weather radio to receive information from emergency officials.
- ⊕ Battery-powered walkie-talkies to communicate with staff (if applicable) and search-and-rescue teams, especially if cell phone service is down because of the emergency.
- ⊕ Emergency back-up power for intercom system¹



- ⊕ Cell phones fail!
Plan for multiple forms of communication.

¹ UCLA Center for Public Health and Disasters. Head Start Disaster Preparedness Workbook. 2004; http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1056/Headstart_Disaster_Preparedness.pdf

Establishing Your Communication Procedures (Worksheet)

Use this worksheet to plan how you and your staff will interact with each other, first responders, children, and families during an emergency.

Who will alert children and staff about an emergency?

How will staff be alerted?

Who will call emergency services?

Using what device?

If cell service, phone lines, and/or power is out, how will you contact emergency services?

Who will communicate necessary information to parents/guardians?

How will parents/guardians be contacted and/or updated?

Text message Social media Email

What device will you use to receive information from emergency officials?

Battery-powered weather radio Mobile emergency alerts Television in office

How will you communicate with and provide updates to staff during an emergency?

What is your back-up communication plan if the power is out?

Once the all clear is received from first responders, who will alert staff about resuming normal activities?

How will the all clear message be communicated to families?

Preparedness: Making Your Emergency Response Plan (Tip Sheet)

Working together and communicating what to do during an event is essential. Understanding everyone's role during an emergency before the emergency occurs helps make the response procedure quicker and more efficient. Establishing responsibilities can be addressed during training sessions and planning meetings before an emergency or drill, to ensure staff are comfortable with the procedures.

Questions to consider:

- + Who will alert staff and children about an emergency?
- + Who is responsible for taking the emergency kit?
- + Who will count heads and take attendance?
- + Who will communicate with families?
- + Who will work with first responders?

Answers to these questions will help define responsibilities around what needs to be done during an emergency, so children and adults can proceed safely.

There are many types of emergencies. In some situations, you may need to safely evacuate (example: fire). However, there are other emergencies, when it's best to shelter in place (example: tornado or severe weather) or lockdown (example: danger in your neighborhood).

The key to remember is that each is a method to put effective barriers between you and a threat. The difference is in the types of threat and what kind of barrier is called for.

Evacuating is a means to leave a dangerous situation or area (e.g., because of a fire).

Sheltering in place is the use of a structure and its indoor atmosphere to temporarily separate you from a hazardous outdoor atmosphere (e.g., tornadoes, earthquakes, severe weather, landslides, or debris flow). It entails closing all doors, windows, and vents and taking immediate shelter in a readily accessible location.

A **lockdown** is a shelter-in-place procedure that is used in situations with intruders or emergencies that involve potential violence. Lockdown requires children and adults to shelter in a safe room, lock doors, and remain quiet until the event is over.

If you are in a child care or Head Start center, use the worksheets, **Evacuation Response in Centers, Shelter-in-Place Response in Centers**, and **Lockdown in Centers** to help answer those questions and formulate your emergency response plan. Follow the steps and assign roles to staff for each type of emergency response that your program may experience.

If there is only one adult in a family child care home, use the worksheets, **Evacuation Response in a Family Child Care Home, Shelter-in-Place Response in a Family Child Care Home**, and **Lockdown in a Family Child Care Home**, to help formulate your emergency response plan. If there are multiple adults in a family child care home, use the worksheets for Center-Based Programs to define roles of adults in the program during an emergency.

Evacuation Response in Centers (Example)

Use this sheet to determine what each person in the center is responsible for during an evacuation response. Fill this out for the emergencies that you selected as a “Yes” or “Maybe” on page 7.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY: Fire



Declares emergency:

Center Director

Selects plan of action as evacuation:

Center Director

Alerts staff about emergency and to evacuate:

Center Director or second in command

Evacuation site:

Library across the street

Calls emergency services (911):

Center Director or second in command

Grabs emergency kit, including medications:

Staff member from each classroom grabs classroom emergency kit

Provides first aid; gives medication as needed:

Nurse

Assists with first aid; operates medical devices and equipment:

Staff member A

Communicates necessary information to parents:

Center Director

Using:

Cell phone

Communicates all clear to staff, children, and parents/guardians:

Center Director

Using:

Cell phone

Begins evacuation procedures as practiced:

Teacher A in each classroom

Children who can walk hold walking rope and follow teacher to evacuation spot.

Infants and toddlers moved in evacuation cribs.

Cribs can also be used to evacuate children with special health care needs or disabilities, as needed.

Calms the children:

Teacher B

Accounts for all children/staff present today:

Teacher A

Takes attendance periodically:

Teacher A

Evacuation Response in Centers and (Worksheet)

Use this sheet to determine what each person in the center is responsible for during an evacuation response. Fill it out for the emergencies that you selected as a “Yes” or “Maybe” on page 7.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY: _____

Declares emergency:

Selects plan of action as evacuation:

Alerts staff about emergency and
to evacuate:

Evacuation site:

Calls emergency services (911):

Grabs emergency kit including medications:

Provides first aid; gives medication as
needed:

Assists with first aid; operates medical
devices and equipment:

Communicates necessary information
to parents:

Using:

Communicates all clear to staff, children,
and parents/guardians:

Using:



Begins evacuation procedures
as practiced:

Children who can walk hold
walking rope and follow teacher
to evacuation spot.

Infants and toddlers moved
in evacuation cribs.

*Cribs can also be used to evacuate
children with special health care
needs or disabilities, as needed.*

Calms the children:

Accounts for all children/
staff present today:

Takes attendance periodically:

Shelter-in-Place Response in Centers

Use this sheet to determine what each person in the center is responsible for during a sheltering response. Fill this out for the emergencies that you selected as a “Yes” or “Maybe” on page 7.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY: _____

Declares emergency:

Selects shelter in-place as plan of action:

Alerts staff about emergency and to shelter in place:

Calls emergency services (911):

Secures classroom emergency kit, including medications:

Provides first aid; gives medication as needed

Assists with first aid; operates medical devices and equipment:

Communicates necessary information to parents:

Using:

Communicates all clear to staff, children, and parents/guardians:

Using:



Begins shelter-in-place procedures as practiced:

Calms the children:

Accounts for all children/ staff present today:

Instructs children to assume safe position for the event, such as tornado-safe position (sit on floor and protect head) or earthquake-safe position (drop, cover, and hold on)

Takes attendance periodically:

Lockdown Response in Centers

Use this sheet to determine what each person in the center is responsible for during a lockdown response. Fill this out for the emergencies that you selected as a “Yes” or “Maybe” on page 7.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY: _____

Declares emergency:

Selects lockdown as plan of action:

Alerts staff about emergency and to lock down in the classroom if unable to evacuate:

Calls emergency services (911):

Secures classroom emergency kit, including medications:

Provides first aid; gives medication as needed

Assists with first aid; operates medical devices and equipment:

Communicates necessary information to parents:

Using:

Communicates all clear to staff, children, and parents/guardians:

Using:



Begins lockdown procedures:

Locks classroom door:

*If in a room that does not lock, stay in the room and out of sight

Calms the children:

Accounts for all children/ staff present today:

Takes attendance periodically:

Evacuation Response in Family Child Care Homes

Use this sheet to establish your emergency response in your family child care home by filling in the blanks. Fill this out for the emergencies that you selected as a “Yes” or “Maybe” on page 7.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY: _____

Emergency is declared.
Emergency services (911) called.
Begin evacuation procedures.

Gather children to evacuate; count heads.
Grab emergency-preparedness kit.

Evacuate as practiced using planned route. If blocked, use secondary evacuation route.

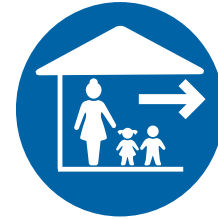
Gather children at designated meeting place:

Take attendance to ensure all children are safely evacuated. If a child is missing, alert first responders.

Calm the children. Communicate necessary information to parents using:

Ensure children are drinking water and eating.

Wait for all clear before returning to building.



Children who can walk hold walking rope and follow teacher to evacuation spot.

Infants and Toddlers moved in evacuation cribs.

Cribs can also be used to evacuate children with special health care needs or disabilities, as needed.

Shelter-in-Place Response in Family Child Care Homes

Use this sheet to establish your emergency response in your family child care home by filling in the blanks. Fill this out for the emergencies that you selected as a “Yes” or “Maybe” on page 7.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY: _____

Emergency is declared.
Begin shelter-in-place procedures.

Count heads, grab emergency preparedness kit, and guide children to shelter:

Implement shelter-in-place procedures as practiced, depending on the emergency.

Take attendance to ensure all children are safely sheltered. If a child is missing, alert first responders using:

Calm the children. Communicate necessary information to parents using:

Ensure children are drinking water and eating.

Wait for all clear before leaving shelter and resuming daily activities, or begin evacuation procedures if the building is no longer structurally safe.



Instruct children to assume safe position for the event, such as tornado safe position (sit on floor and protect head) or earthquake safe position (drop, cover, and hold on).

Lockdown Response in Family Child Care Homes

Use this sheet to establish your emergency response in your family child care home by filling in the blanks. Fill this out for the emergencies that you selected as a “Yes” or “Maybe” on page 7.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY: _____

Emergency is declared.
Begin lockdown procedure if unable
to evacuate. Call 911.

Close and lock door from inside room.
Direct children to sit in designated
safest area:

Count heads.

Calm the children and help
them stay quiet.

Communicate with first responders to
ensure all children are in safe locations.
Communicate necessary information to
parents using:

Wait for all clear from first responders
before resuming daily activities.



If in a room that does not lock
when alert occurs, stay in
the room and out of sight.

How to Build an Emergency Kit



Building an emergency supply kit is an important part of preparedness. This kit ensures that your program has sufficient supplies and food if you and the children need to shelter in place or evacuate in an emergency. [Ready.gov/kits](https://www.ready.gov/kits) recommends having enough supplies and food to last at least 72 hours.

Make sure that all items are up to date and not expired. If you are in a center, consider appointing someone to be responsible for routinely checking expiration dates of the food in your kit. If you are a family child care provider, make a note of the expiration dates and keep them in a visible place in your home. If snacks are about to expire, consider serving them to the children a month before the expiration date and replacing them with new snacks.

Here are some items you might consider including in your kit:²

Information Sheets		Other	
Emergency contact information for children and staff		Medications ⁴	
Attendance sheet (daily)		Fully charged, portable cell phone charger and charging cord	
Facility floor plan with evacuation route outlined		Flashlight and batteries	
Printed directions to safe evacuation site		Winter and/or work gloves	
Medication list with dosing instructions for each child who takes medication		Paper towels	
Hygiene/Sanitary Needs		Blankets	
First aid kit ³		Alternative power sources for electric medical devices	
Diapers, toilet paper, diaper wipes		Whistle	
Sanitary wipes and hand sanitizer		Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities (program director only)	
Non-latex medical gloves		Non-electric can opener (if formula or canned food requires it)	
Food		Matches in waterproof container	
Dry or canned infant formula (ideally with easy-open tabs)		Games or activities to entertain children	
Bottled water			
Snacks			

Additional items to include can be found at: www.healthychildren.org/english/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Family-Disaster-Supplies-List.aspx

2 Disaster supplies kit accessed from www.ready.gov/kit

3 A first aid kit should differ from your emergency kit. Recommendations for the contents of your first aid kit can be found here: cfoc.nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/5.6.0.1

4 Supply list for children with special health care needs (pg. 4): childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/how-states-and-territories-prepare-support-special-populations-emergencies-and-disasters

Practice Your Plan

Practicing your emergency plan in advance helps everyone respond quickly and appropriately when an emergency situation arises. You won't know if the plan works unless you try it out, so practice with all children and adults, including community partners. If you have enrolled children or staff with special health care needs or disabilities, address these specific needs with community partners during practice. <https://cshcn.org/resources-contacts/emergency-preparedness-for-children-with-special-needs/>

Regular emergency drills, both announced and unannounced, help everyone become familiar with emergency procedures and activities. This can reduce panic and fear during an actual emergency, freeing participants to focus on how to evacuate, shelter in place, or lockdown.

Emergency drills should be planned to include community partners, including first responders, and to ensure that procedures are accomplished in accordance with state regulations and HSPPS.

How to effectively practice your plan is discussed at greater length in Chapter 3.

Reunification Procedures

An effective method of reuniting children with their parents and guardians after an emergency is an often-overlooked component of an emergency plan, but it is very important. Including up-to-date emergency contact information for each child in your emergency kit can help provide structure around this process.

Reunification procedures that should be communicated to parents/guardians:

- + Evacuation or shelter-in-place locations
- + What the program will do during a lockdown response
- + What parents should do during a lockdown response
- + Who will contact parents/guardians before, during, and after an emergency
- + How parents/guardians will be contacted (e.g., text, email, phone call)
- + Procedures if a child needs to be transported for medical care (e.g., who will accompany the child, where they will go)⁵

It is important for programs to have procedures in place if children cannot be reunited with their parents/guardians immediately. Roads close, care gets delayed, and work shifts go into overtime during emergencies for parents/guardians working in hospitals or as first responders. Having a plan in case you need to take care of a child overnight is a critical part of your reunification procedures.

⁵ UCLA Center for Public Health and Disasters. Head Start Disaster Preparedness Workbook. 2004



- + Consider saving valuable, important information for families and staff in digital/ electronic as well as print formats.

Chapter 2: Preparedness

Reunification Procedures (Worksheet)

If our emergency response requires an evacuation, we will go to: _____
Evacuation site

Our back-up site will be: _____
Secondary evacuation site

If our emergency response requires us to shelter in place, we will shelter in: _____
Location in building

If an emergency occurs, _____ will contact you about how we responded and
Staff member
give you any information you might need.

If your child needs to be transported for medical care:

⊕ The child will be accompanied by _____.
Staff member

⊕ The child will be taken to _____, if possible.
Hospital name

If you and/or your emergency contacts are unable to pick up your child after the all-clear is announced, the following staff member, _____, will stay with your child until they can be picked up (but no longer than _____).
Time frame

Remember:

Different emergencies require different response. How will you communicate with parents and guardians during an evacuation? What about during shelter-in-place or lockdown response? Will you send an “all-clear” message?

Communication is key! Be sure your plan includes steps and guidance to keep parents and guardians informed during your response.

Chapter 2: Preparedness

Child Information Sheets

Use these sheets for every child in your care. Check in with parents/guardians to ensure the contact information is up-to-date.

Child's Information

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Address: _____

Allergies: _____

Medications and dosages: _____

Special health care needs or disabilities*: _____

Additional special instructions: _____

*Refer to individualized care plan if provided.

Parent/Guardian Information (1):

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Address (if different from child's): _____

Cell phone: _____ Home phone: _____

Work phone: _____ Work Email: _____

Work name and address: _____

Supervisor name: _____ Supervisor phone: _____

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Parent/Guardian Information (2):

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Address (if different from child's): _____

Cell phone: _____ Home phone: _____

Work phone: _____ Work Email: _____

Work name and address: _____

Supervisor name: _____ Supervisor phone: _____

Emergency Contact Information (if parent/guardian cannot be reached) (1):

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Address: _____

Cell phone: _____ Home phone: _____

Work phone: _____ Work Email: _____

Emergency Contact Information (if parent/guardian cannot be reached) (2):

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Address: _____

Cell phone: _____ Home phone: _____

Work phone: _____ Work Email: _____

Emergency Contact Information (if parent/guardian cannot be reached) (3):

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Address: _____

Cell phone: _____ Home phone: _____

Work phone: _____ Work Email: _____

Chapter 2: Preparedness

People with Permission to Pick Up Child:

*Identification will always be required

First name: _____ Last name: _____

First name: _____ Last name: _____

First name: _____ Last name: _____

First name: _____ Last name: _____

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Doctor Information:

Pediatrician name: _____

Pediatrician address: _____

Pediatrician phone: _____

Additional medical information: _____

Other instructions, concerns, restrictions: _____

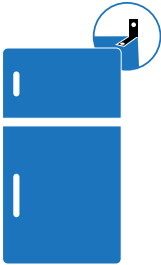
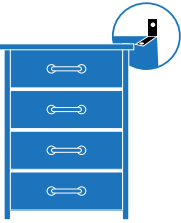
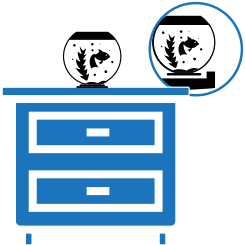
What is Mitigation?

Mitigation is similar to preparedness and involves reducing the seriousness or severity of disasters or emergencies. It is also a way of preventing future emergencies or disasters. Use the following checklist to ensure you are mitigating your program's risks.

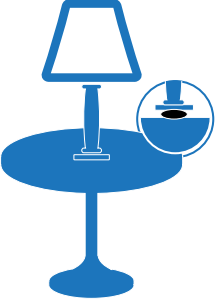

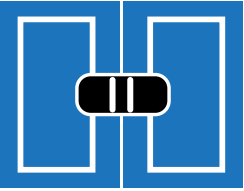
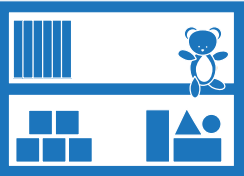
Mitigation Checklist

Program name: _____ Date: _____

This checklist identifies common structural and nonstructural hazards for early care and education programs. Use this list to prepare a work order for your program. After review, consider what changes can be made in your program that can reduce damage or injury in the event of an emergency.

	Issue	Yes	No	Steps to Mitigate Risk
	Large appliances (refrigerators): braced to wall?			Large appliances should be anchored to wall studs or masonry, not drywall.
	Cabinets: braced to wall?			Cabinets should be anchored to the wall studs or masonry, not drywall.
	Shelves/bookshelves: braced to wall?			Shelves/bookshelves should be anchored to wall studs or masonry, not drywall.
	Dressers: braced to wall?			Dressers should be anchored to wall studs or masonry, not drywall.
	Changing tables: braced to wall?			Changing tables should be anchored to wall studs or masonry, not drywall.
	Blackboards/projection screens/televisions: safely hung on a stud?			Make sure that blackboards/projection screens/televisions are secured safely to a stud.
	Fish bowls/animal habitats: safely secured so they do not slide off shelves?			If you have fish bowls/animal habitats, ensure that the shelf has a lip to prevent the bowls/habitats from slide off and injuring the animal and/or children.
	Fire extinguishers: mounted to wall?			Make sure that fire extinguishers are mounted to the wall using clips that make them easy to take down and use in case of a fire.

Mitigation Checklist continued...

	Issue	Yes	No	Steps to Mitigate Risk
	Lamps: safely secured so they do not slide off shelves?			Secure lamps with hooks or earthquake putty.
	Pictures: braced to wall or safely secured so they do not slide off shelves?			Use closed hooks or earthquake putty to secure pictures to walls. Move heavier items to lower shelves.
	Lightweight or tall room dividers: braced by interconnecting them?			Lightweight room dividers are safer in case of emergency. Interconnecting them will help brace them.
	Exit signs and emergency lights: safely secured and functioning?			<p>For Centers, check that exit signs and emergency lights are working and can be seen from the hallway.</p> <p>For Child Care Homes, check that exit signs and emergency lights are working and are placed above the exits where it can easily be seen.</p>
	Chemicals and/or cleaning products: secured in cabinet?			<p>Use baby-proof cabinet locks to secure cabinet doors to prevent chemicals and/or cleaning products from falling out.</p> <p>Alternatively, use latching cleaning cabinets to hold chemicals and/or cleaning products. Remember to brace all cabinets on wall!</p>
	Blocks and heavy objects: stored on lowest shelves?			Store blocks and other heavy objects on the lowest shelves to prevent injuries.
	Heavy or sharp items (such as metal trucks or dollhouses): stored on shelves with ledge barriers?			Store heavy or sharp items on shelves with ledge barriers to prevent injuries from falling objects.

Chapter 3:

RESPONSE

What Is Response?

The goals of the response phase are to:

- + Determine that an emergency is occurring
- + Determine appropriate response (evacuation, shelter in place, or lockdown)
- + Activate the emergency-response plan
- + Maintain communication with all staff and first responders
- + Establish what information needs to be communicated to staff, teachers, assistants, children, families, and the community
- + Provide emergency first aid as needed

<https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/crisisplanning.html>

Response is directly related to preparedness—the more you prepare and practice your emergency response, the more efficient your response will be.

Now that you've developed your plan, it's time to practice!

The three types of responses discussed in this chapter are:

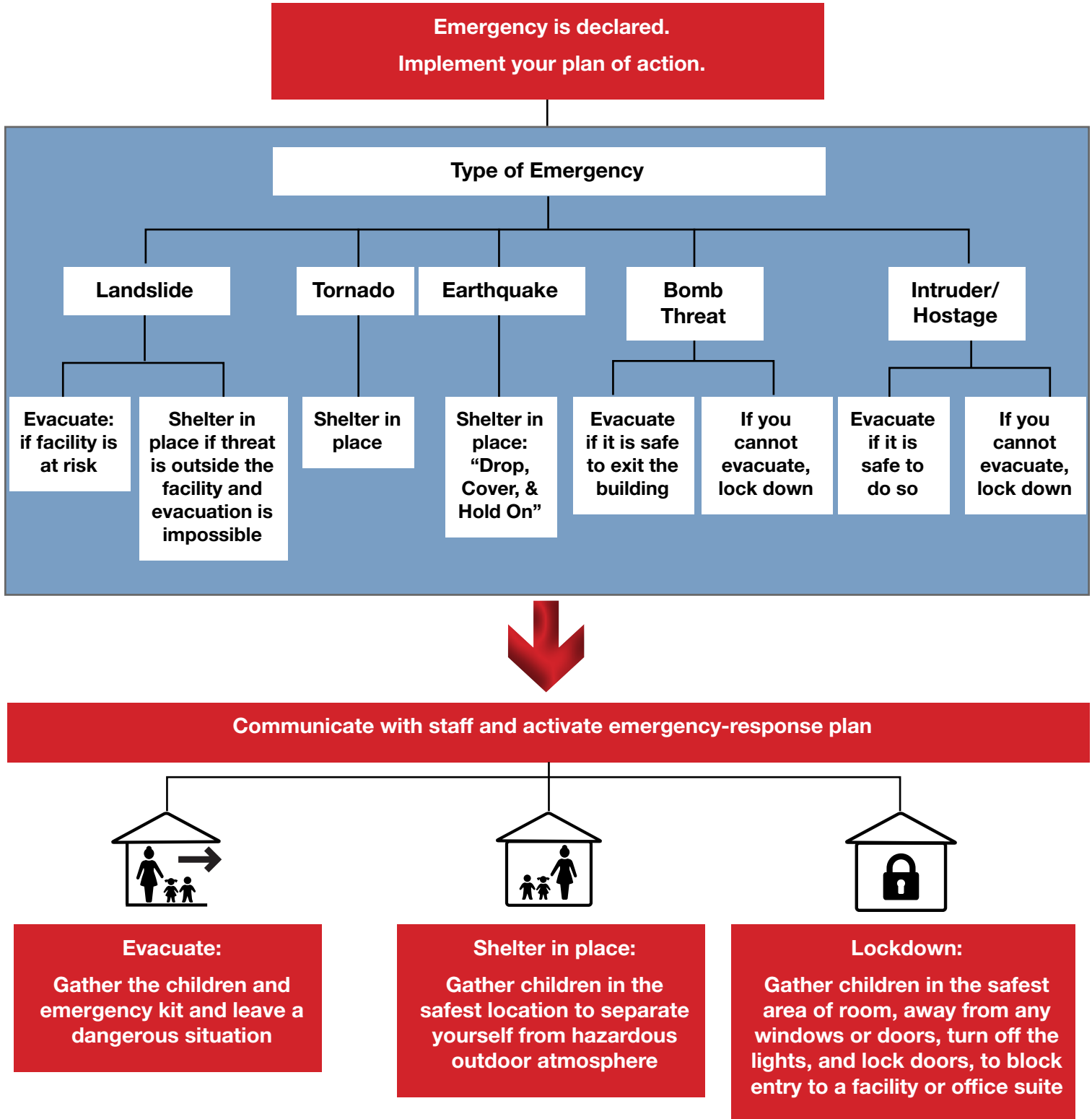
- + **Evacuation:** when emergency conditions require that you seek immediate protection at another location. www.ready.gov
- + **Shelter in Place:** when emergency conditions require that you seek immediate protection in the building you are in. In this chapter, we use shelter in place to describe responses to weather events such as tornadoes, earthquakes, severe weather, landslides, or debris flow. www.ready.gov
- + **Lockdown:** a shelter-in-place procedure that requires children and adults to shelter in a safe room, lock doors, and remain quiet until the event is over. A lockdown requires children and adults to shelter in a safe room, lock doors, and remain quiet until the event is over. In this chapter, we use lockdown to describe violent attacks or other potentially dangerous situations. www.publicsafety.upenn.edu/pennready/procedures/lockdown/



What Is the Appropriate Response?

Standard Response Plan Chart

Use this diagram to help determine your response for different types of emergencies.



Evacuation Procedure Checklist for Centers

Use this checklist when practicing your evacuation response. Emergency situations that warrant an evacuation include, for example, fire, explosion, gas leak, and hurricane.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY: _____

Emergency is declared.

- Alert staff about emergency and to begin evacuation procedure. Call emergency services (911).



- Staff gather children to evacuate; count heads. Grab emergency-preparedness kit.



- Evacuate as practiced using planned route. If blocked, use secondary evacuation route.



- Gather children at designated meeting place. Staff take attendance to ensure all children are safely evacuated. If a child is missing, alert first responders.



- Calm the children. Communicate necessary information to parents. Ensure children and adults are drinking water and eating.



- Wait for all clear before returning to building.



Children who can walk hold walking rope and follow teacher to evacuation spot.

Infants and toddlers moved in evacuation cribs.

Cribs can also be used to evacuate children with special health care needs or disabilities, as needed.

Shelter-in-Place Procedure Checklist for Centers

Use this checklist when practicing your shelter-in-place response. Emergency shelter-in-place situations include tornadoes, earthquakes, severe weather, landslides, or debris flow.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY: _____

Emergency is declared. Alert staff about emergency and begin shelter-in-place procedure.

Count heads, grab emergency preparedness kit, and guide children to shelter.

Implement shelter-in-place procedures as practiced.

Communicate with staff to ensure all children and staff are safely sheltered. If a child or adult is missing, alert first responders.

Wait for all clear before leaving shelter and resuming daily activities, or begin evacuation procedures if the building is no longer structurally safe.



Instruct children to assume safe position for the event, such as tornado-safe position (sit on floor and protect head) or earthquake safe position (drop, cover, and hold on).

Lockdown Procedure Checklist for Centers

Use this checklist when practicing your lockdown response. Emergency lockdown procedures include, for example, bomb threat, intruder (potential violence), or weapon on site.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY: _____

Emergency is declared. Alert staff of emergency and that they should begin lockdown procedure. Call 911.

If you are able to evacuate children safely, initiate evacuation procedures. If not, begin lockdown procedure.

Each staff member is responsible for the child(ren) in their care at that moment.

Close and lock door from inside room. Direct children to sit in designated safe area. Grab emergency preparedness kit.

If in a room that does not lock when alert occurs, stay in the room and out of sight.

Teachers calm children and help them stay quiet. Remember to take attendance periodically.

Communicate with first responders and with staff to ensure all children and staff are in safe locations.

Wait for all clear from first responders before resuming daily activities.



Evacuation Procedure Checklist for Family Child Care Homes

Use this checklist when practicing your evacuation response. Emergency situations that warrant an evacuation include, for example, fire, explosion, gas leak, and hurricane.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY: _____

- Emergency is declared.
Emergency services (911) called.
Begin evacuation procedures.

- Gather children to evacuate; count heads.
Grab emergency preparedness kit.

- Evacuate as practiced using planned route.
If blocked, use secondary evacuation route.

- Gather children at designated meeting place. Take attendance to assure all children are safely evacuated. If a child is missing, alert first responders.

- Calm the children. Communicate necessary information to parents, ensure children are drinking water and eating.

- Wait for all clear before returning to building.



Children who can walk hold walking rope and follow teacher to evacuation spot.

Infants and Toddlers moved in evacuation cribs.

Cribs can also be used to evacuate children with special health care needs or disabilities, as needed.

Shelter-in-Place Procedure Checklist for Family Child Care Homes

Use this checklist when practicing your shelter-in-place response. Examples of emergency shelter-in-place situations include tornadoes, earthquakes, severe weather, landslides, or debris flow.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY: _____

Emergency is declared. Begin shelter-in-place procedures.



Count heads, grab emergency preparedness kit, and guide children to shelter.



Implement shelter-in-place procedures as practiced.



Take attendance to assure all children are safely sheltered. If a child is missing, alert first responders.



Calm the children. Communicate necessary information to parents. Ensure children are drinking water and eating.



Wait for all clear before leaving shelter and resuming daily activities, or begin evacuation procedures if the building is no longer structurally safe.



Instruct children to assume safe position for the event, such as tornado-safe position (sit on floor and protect head) or earthquake safe position (drop, cover, and hold on).

Lockdown Procedure Checklist for Family Child Care Homes

Use this checklist when practicing your lockdown response. Emergency lockdown procedures include bomb threat, intruder (potential violence), and weapon on site.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY: _____



Emergency is declared. Begin lockdown procedure. Call 911.

If you are able to evacuate children safely, initiate evacuation procedures. If not, begin lockdown procedure.

Close and lock door from inside room. Direct children to sit in designated safest area. Count heads. Grab emergency preparedness kit.

If in a room that does not lock when alert occurs, stay in the room and out of sight.

Calm the children and help them stay quiet.

Communicate with first responders to ensure all children are in safe locations. Communicate necessary information to parents.

Wait for all clear from first responders before resuming daily activities.

Practice, Review, Revise Framework

Practice

Practicing your response is essential. Practice drills help everyone become more familiar with emergency procedures, thereby reducing anxiety and promoting an appropriate response during the real emergency. Practice drills should be both announced and unannounced, be implemented at different times of the day, and involve children of all ages and abilities. Use the checklists on pages [31-36](#) when practicing each response procedure.

When faced with emergencies, the human body wants to freeze. The best way to override that instinct is to practice. Practice also helps you acknowledge any reactions from children that you might not expect and that could affect your response in an actual emergency.

Review

After performing an emergency drill, directors, staff, and families should reflect upon how the drill went and provide feedback on what worked and what did not work. Staff and teachers should also discuss the drill with the children afterwards, so the children can ask questions and understand what happened.

Questions to consider during your review:

- ⊕ Did everyone follow the practiced procedures?
- ⊕ Were the children accounted for quickly?
- ⊕ Were children with special health care needs accommodated and able to respond without delays?

Revise

In this phase, directors, staff, and families can update and revise the emergency plan and procedures, based on lessons learned during the drill and review. If revisions are made, communicate updates to all involved, including staff, families, and community partners.



- ⊕ The first time you activate your response plan should not be when the emergency is actually happening.

Practice, Review, Revise Worksheet

This worksheet can be used with practice drills to ensure you are documenting drills, reviewing your procedures, and revising them if necessary.

Practice

Date of emergency drill: _____

Procedure: Shelter in place Evacuation Lockdown

Participants:

Children: _____

Child care staff: _____

Administrators (Head Start): _____

Families: _____

Health department officials: _____

Fire department: _____

Police department: _____

Review

Three things that worked well during this drill:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Three ways to improve next time:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Revise

Were you able to quickly access and secure your emergency kit? Was it fully stocked and usable if this was an actual emergency and not a drill?

Practice, Review, Revise Worksheet continued...

Did you maintain communication with staff, parents/guardians, and first responders throughout the drill?

If this had been an actual emergency, what letter grade (A, B, C, D, or F) would you give your center, program, or family child care home? What would it take to move up one letter grade? What would it take to move up to an A?

Other comments:

Response Scenarios

The following scenarios give examples of how to respond to emergencies. Read through the scenarios, and use the questions that follow them to check your understanding of the response process.

Earthquake

As you read through this scenario, use your practice checklist to ensure each step of the response is being followed.

Scenario 1: Snack Time

During snack time, you see milk sloshing in glasses and believe that this could signal an earthquake or tremor. You quickly count the children and then calmly tell them and staff that an earthquake is happening and remind them of the response procedure: “drop, cover, and hold on.” Since you have practiced this before, the children know to drop to their hands and knees so the earthquake doesn’t knock them down. They also know to cover their heads and necks with their arms. Because this is occurring during snack time, the children crawl under the table and hold on to a sturdy object, such as a table leg or chair leg. Teachers alert the director that they are all safely sheltered and will remain where they are.

Here’s where it can change:

1. As you and the children are safely taking cover, beverages splash off the table, and items begin to fall off the shelves. As the shaking becomes more severe, children start screaming and crying. Continue to take shelter under the tables and ensure that children are comforted and safe until the event is over.
2. Once the shaking stops and you get the all clear from whomever is in charge, tell the children that it is safe to come out from under the table. Check for and treat any injuries. If there is a clear path to safety, leave the building and go to an open space away from damaged areas. If you cannot leave the building, alert rescuers to your location using your cell phone, radio, or whistle.



Questions to consider while reading

Where would you have children take cover if the earthquake happens during outdoor time? Nap time? Circle time or choice time?

What if you have a child (or children) in a wheelchair (or wheelchairs) in your program? How will your response differ? <https://beprepared.com/blog/19311/earthquake-survival-kit-people-mobility-issues/>

Scenario 2: Infants in Your Early Childcare Education Program

You are changing an infant's diaper and your assistant caregiver has two infants on a sheet on the floor for tummy time when you feel a vibration in the floor. You immediately pick up the infant and hold her close to you as you drop to the floor. Your assistant caregiver pulls the two infants close to her and pulls the sheet over them. Because you have planned and practiced your response, the three other infants in their cribs are protected—the cribs are sturdy and there are no shelves or items that can fall on them.

Since the shaking is not severe, you give the infant to your assistant and she holds all three close to her on the floor. You go to the cribs, move all three infants into a single evacuation crib, cover the crib with the approved fire-proof blanket, then drop down and hold onto the crib.

Here's where it can change:

1. Once the shaking stops and you get the all clear from whomever is in charge, you and your assistant check each infant carefully for any injury, calm them, and place them in their cribs.
2. During the event, you hear a loud noise from another room. Once the shaking stops, you and your assistant place all infants in evacuation cribs, cover the cribs with the approved blankets, and wait for instructions from your director. You do not know what caused the noise, so you prepare to evacuate if necessary.



Questions to consider while reading

What would you do to calm and comfort the children throughout the emergency?

If evacuation is necessary, what should you consider, what should you consider when returning to the facility/home?

What should you consider when deciding if you should return to the facility or home or if you should have families pick up children from the evacuation site?

Landslide or Debris Flow

As you read through this scenario, use your practice checklist to ensure each step of the response is being followed.

Your area has experienced a significant amount of rainfall recently. You have the local news channel on, and the meteorologist reports that there are landslide or flood warnings in your town. You communicate this information to parents/guardians, alerting them that there is potential for a landslide to occur and to be aware of possible evacuation to your predetermined safe location.

As the day continues, you see images of trees breaking, landslides, and flooding several blocks from your program, center, or family child care home. You determine that there is time to evacuate safely and activate evacuation procedures.

- ⊕ If you are in a program or center, alert your staff to begin evacuation procedures.
- ⊕ If you are a family child care provider, begin your evacuation procedure, and alert families that you are in the process of evacuation.

Using an evacuation crib, transport infants with their car seats to the evacuation vehicle(s). As they have practiced, children who can walk and follow directions grab onto a walking rope and walk to the evacuation vehicle. As prearranged, children with special health care needs are assisted as they evacuate safely to the vehicle. You and your staff continually count heads as children move through the building and to the evacuation vehicles.

Once all children are secured in the vehicle, take attendance, and safely transport the children to your secure evacuation location.



Questions to consider while reading

What would you do if you realized that there was a child missing? A staff member or assistant?

In a Head Start program or child care center, who initiates the evacuation procedures? How do staff know that evacuation procedures should begin?

What should you consider when deciding if you should return to the facility or home or if you should have families pick up children from the evacuation site?

What if you don't have an evacuation crib to move your infants? What could you use instead?

Tornado

As you read through this scenario, use your practice checklist to ensure each step of the response is being followed.

It's a beautiful sunny morning, but daily weather reports indicate possible thunderstorms in the afternoon. Thunderstorms are common in your area this time of year and not usually a cause for alarm. However, you are prepared with a programmed National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio and your weather alerts on your cell phone.

Scenario 1: Child Care Center

After lunch, the sky becomes cloudy, so you instruct staff to keep children indoors for play. Around 1:00 p.m., you are notified of a tornado watch for your area. Your center is in a well-built facility, so you visit each classroom to be sure staff and volunteers are aware of the weather conditions and are ready to take shelter if the weather alert says to shelter in place or if your NOAA radio tells you to alert them using a whistle. One preschool class has a substitute teacher; she has been trained, and you confirm that she knows the procedure and the safe area for her class. Most classrooms and nurseries have restrooms along the interior wall that can provide safe shelter. However, two of the preschool classes are instructed to walk across the interior hallway to the main restrooms for shelter.

What if you don't have a basement or interior room?

Your NOAA weather radio alerts you that the tornado watch has been moved up to a tornado warning; it's time to have the center shelter in place. You use your emergency whistle to tell staff to take shelter. The teachers count heads and then move children into the restrooms for shelter, according to the plan. Children are told to sit on the floor and cover their heads, while staff take count of children again. A child in a wheelchair could be covered with a blanket, with an adult there to protect from debris. You check in by sending a text message to each teacher to make sure that everyone is safely sheltered (http://www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org/documents/pi_Region10_EmergEvacPlanning.pdf). You give staff the all clear using your emergency whistle. The teachers count heads and return to the classroom. After checking in with each teacher, you communicate what has happened to parents/guardians.



Scenario 2: Family Child Care Home

You do not have a basement or interior room that is structurally safe for a storm. However, you have an agreement with a church nearby that you use as a safe shelter. When you hear that the tornado watch is now a tornado warning, you count heads, grab your emergency kit, and begin to evacuate. The church is only a block away, and the weather event is not yet in your area so it is safe to walk if you leave immediately. Your preschool children get their backpacks and you walk to the church, with children holding a walking rope. Once you arrive, you take the children to the interior room where the church typically conducts children’s activities and instruct them to implement procedures as practiced—get low to the ground and cover their heads. First responders arrive and let you know that there has been damage to nearby areas and homes. You are not sure if your home has been hit, but it is safe to leave the shelter. You call parents/guardians to let them know that they should pick children up from the church and that you will contact them about plans for the following day, once you assess whether there is damage to your home.

What if there is no time to safely evacuate?

Your NOAA weather radio alerts you that the tornado watch has been moved up to a tornado warning. Your home does not have a basement or an interior room safe for shelter, and there is no time to get to your normal evacuation spot at the church across the street—you need to shelter in place. You remain calm and tell the children that you all need to go into the bathroom and sit in the bathtub, as it is a structurally solid part of your home. Ensure that they are sitting down and covering their heads, away from any windows. You and the children wait out the tornado in the bathroom until you receive an all-clear emergency alert from your NOAA radio.



Questions to consider while reading

What are some good ways for a center to communicate that shelter in place needs to occur? Texting? Email alerts? Other ideas?

If you do not have a good shelter-in-place spot in your child care program or center or family child care home, what community resources can you use that would be safe in case of a tornado? What partnerships or agreements do you need to make while you do your planning?

Potential Violence

As you read through this scenario, use your practice checklist to ensure each step of the response is being followed.

You are the director of a child care center that enrolls infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. One of your parents/guardians informed you of a custody battle with his spouse pending their divorce. He provided legal documentation that he has sole custody and his spouse does not have visitation rights. However, on Friday afternoon, his spouse arrives at the program and states that she is picking up their two children for weekend visitation. After asking for her identification and checking your authorization list, you inform her that she is not on the approved authorization list and you cannot release the children to her. She responds by loudly announcing that they are her children and she will be taking them. You hope to resolve this peacefully, but you immediately contact the child's custodial parent/guardians and initiate lockdown procedures according to your practiced plan.

You initiate your standard lockdown procedure by alerting staff with an audible alarm system. All staff remain where they are with children and lock their doors from the inside of each room. Staff count heads, and children are led to the safest designated area, where the teacher engages them in quiet activities.

You again advise the woman that you cannot release the children to her and offer to contact the custodial parent/guardians.

Here's where it can change.

1. The woman gets angry, says several things about her spouse, and leaves the facility, slamming the door behind her. After the situation is resolved, you give staff the all clear to end lockdown. However, you continue to be alert and provide additional supervision in the classrooms where the two children are enrolled while you wait for the custodial parent/guardians to arrive. After he arrives, you give staff the all clear to resume normal activities.
2. The woman continues to shout and threaten legal action against the center. When she refuses to lower her voice and leave the facility, you contact 911 for assistance. You calmly try to diffuse the situation while waiting for first responders. During this time, you have a staff member contact the custodial parent/guardians. The center remains on lockdown until the situation is resolved. Staff engage the children until an all clear signal is given.



Questions to consider while reading

How would you communicate the incident to parents/guardians of the other children in your care?

Chapter 4:

RECOVERY

What Is Recovery?

The recovery phase refers to the actions taken from the time the emergency ends until the needs of staff, children, and families are met. It includes helping affected families resume their daily activities and helping all those affected cope with the aftermath of the emergency. Recovery can last for a few days, weeks, months, or even years.

The goals of the recovery phase are to:

- Rebuild your facility or home if necessary, and restore services as quickly as possible.
- Meet the needs (physical, health, emotional) of children, families, and staff.
- Provide a supportive and caring environment that brings normalcy back into children's lives. https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/1509_rg_epr_providers.pdf

Incorporating recovery resources into your emergency-preparedness plan can help you reach these goals more quickly while providing mental health and emotional support to children, families, and staff.

Reunification

Safely returning children to their parents/guardians after an emergency begins to bring children and families back to normalcy. Preparing for this by keeping up-to-date emergency contact information for each child in your emergency kit can help provide structure around this process. As discussed in previous chapters, make sure you are communicating with parents/guardians throughout the emergency, if possible. This communication may help the reunification process begin more quickly, as parents/guardians may be able to safely pick up their children sooner.

Damage and Needs Assessment

A damage assessment of your facility or home after an emergency is crucial for your early childcare education program to open again. Assessments will differ based on the type of emergency your program, center, or home experienced.

Resources to help you complete a damage assessment:

- Flooding: usa.childcareaware.org/flooding/
- Hurricane: usa.childcareaware.org/hurricanes
- Tornado: www.ready.gov/tornadoes

Ensure that your early childcare education program has been given the all clear from licensing and emergency officials before reopening. If you are in a Head Start program, reach out to your Head Start program specialist for assistance with your damage and needs assessment.



Continuation of Services

After conducting your damage and needs assessment, an action plan is needed for how your early childcare education program will resume services to families. Use community resources such as CCR&Rs, CCDF state agencies, or your Head Start program specialist; they can connect you to resources that can help you re-open your early childcare education program or provide children with temporary child care.

Resources related to continuation of services:

- + childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/continuation-child-care-services-louisianas-experience

Mental Health and Emotional Needs

Mental health support is a high priority after an emergency. Children and adults who have experienced stress and/or loss, either at the child care program or at home, may have difficulty coping. By offering a safe place and resources like mental health consultants, child care and Head Start programs support children, families, and staff coping with fear, anger, and grief and help them resume their lives in a healthy way.

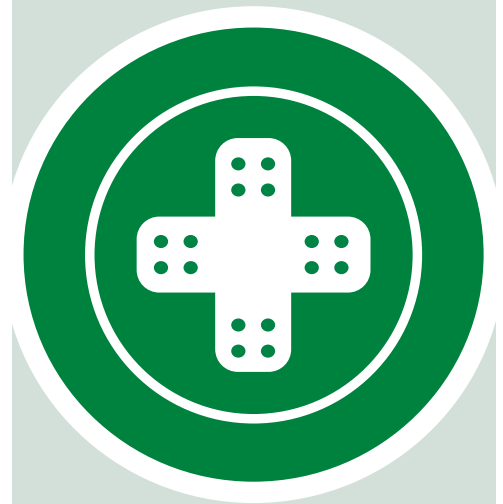
Resources related to mental health to support response and recovery:

- + <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/mental-health/article/mental-health-resources-support-response-recovery>

Coping with Disaster, Emergencies and Tragedies:

Keep in mind the following:

- + Everyone who sees or experiences an emergency is affected by it in some way.
- + It is normal to feel anxious about your own safety and that of your family and close friends.
- + Profound sadness, grief, and anger are normal reactions during or after an emergency.
- + Everyone has different needs and different ways of coping.
- + Acknowledging feelings and focusing on your strengths and abilities can help recovery.
- + Difficult memories of the disaster can be triggered by certain loud noises, weather events, or news clips from the emergency. This may be true even years later.



- + Often, anniversaries of the emergency can trigger difficult memories for children, staff and families. Be sure to keep this in mind even years after the event occurs.

Chapter 4: Recovery

Further resources about how parents/guardians can help children cope after a disaster:

- ⊕ This webpage can help guide conversations with children about disasters: www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/pages/Getting-Your-Family-Prepared-for-a-Disaster.aspx
- ⊕ This webpage can help guide conversations with children about tragedies and emergencies: www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Talking-To-Children-About-Tragedies-and-Other-News-Events.aspx
- ⊕ This webpage has several resources for helping children cope with both natural disasters and emergencies: www.brighthorizons.com/talking-to-children
- ⊕ This tip sheet helps explain why children may be acting differently in response to an emergency or disaster: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/childrens-responses-crises-tragic-events>
- ⊕ This tip sheet provides examples and explanations about how to talk to children when they are coping after a disaster: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/helping-your-child-cope-after-disaster>
- ⊕ This brief helps providers, parents/guardians and other caregivers understand how children of different ages may react in response to an emergency or disaster: store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA12-4732/SMA12-4732.pdf



Chapter 5:

CONCLUSION AND RESOURCES

Emergencies can take many forms. Early childhood education programs should be ready to act in the event of any type of emergency. This manual helps early childhood educators make a plan to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

Additional Resources to Help Programs Prepare, Recover, and Respond

Administration for Children and Families Early Childhood Disaster Resources

www.acf.hhs.gov/ohsepr/early-childhood

American Academy of Pediatrics Children and Disasters website

www.aap.org/disasters

California Childcare Health Program, Health and Safety Notes: cchp.ucsf.edu/sites/cchp.ucsf.edu/files/EmergencyEN061406_adr.pdf

Child Care Aware® of America: Emergency Preparedness website

www.childcareprepare.org

Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center Emergency

Preparedness page <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/safety-practices/article/emergency-preparedness>

Emergency Planning for Students with Special Needs, Minnesota:

www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org/documents/pi_Region10_EmergEvacPlanning.pdf

Evacuation for persons with disabilities: <https://emergency.vanderbilt.edu/vu/quick-ref-guides/evacuation-disabled.php>

Hendrix, C. Disaster Planning and Preparedness in Early Childhood and School-Age Care Settings, Redleaf Press, Minnesota 2015.

www.redleafpress.org/Disaster-Planning-and-Preparedness-in-Early-Childhood-and-Schoolage-Care-Settings-P1275.aspx

Hendrix, C. Medical Emergencies in Early Childhood and School-Age Settings, Redleaf Press, Minnesota 2016.

www.redleafpress.org/Medical-Emergencies-in-Early-Childhood-and-School-Age-Settings-Revised-Edition-P1358.aspx

Office of Child Care: Child Care Resources for Disasters and Emergencies

www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/child-care-resources-for-disasters-and-emergencies

Ready.gov www.ready.gov

Sesame Street in Communities Emergency Preparedness Page: <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/emergency-preparedness/>



Chapter 5: Conclusion and Resources

Glossary of Terms :

Alert: signal, sound, or other indication that warns of an emergency.

Earthquake safe position: drop, cover, and hold on!

Emergency: an unexpected and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action.

Emergency kit: collection of basic items your child care program may need in the event of an emergency (i.e., food, water, and medications) in sufficient quantity to last for at least 72 hours. www.ready.gov/build-a-kit

Emergency preparedness: steps you take to make sure you are safe before, during, and after an emergency or natural disaster. These response and recovery plans are important for your safety in both natural and man-made emergencies. <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/emergency/>

Evacuation: when disaster conditions require that you seek immediate protection at another location. www.ready.gov

FEMA Emergency Declaration: authorizes FEMA to identify, mobilize, and provide equipment and resources to assist with the emergency. www.fema.gov/faq-details/Applying-for-Assistance-under-an-Emergency-Declaration-1370032124284

First Responder: any individual who responds to help others in an event, such as fire, law enforcement, and emergency medical personnel. <https://www.fcc.gov/first-responders>

Lockdown: a shelter-in-place procedure that is used in situations with intruders or emergencies that involve potential violence. Lockdown requires children and adults to shelter in a safe room, lock doors, and remain quiet until the event is over. www.publicsafety.upenn.edu/pennready/procedures/lockdown/

Lockdown Safe Room: if you cannot evacuate, lock the door of the room you are in. In the room, your safest location is out of the intruder/shooter's view. If you are able, spread out to make it more difficult for the intruder. www.ready.gov/active-shooter

Mitigation: the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of emergencies. For mitigation to be effective, action needs to be taken before an emergency. www.fema.gov/what-mitigation

Response: begins the moment you are alerted to an impending emergency and continues as the emergency occurs.

Recovery: happens as soon as the emergency is over, when efforts are focused on food, water, shelter, and the safety of those affected.

Reunification: bringing children and their families together after an emergency.

Safe Room: space where children and adults can hide during lockdown. The room should lock from the inside to keep intruders out, and have curtains or barriers so intruders cannot see inside the safe room. Every classroom or nursery can be designed as a safe room. www.fema.gov/safe-rooms

Shelter in place: When emergency conditions require that you seek immediate protection in the building you are in. www.ready.gov

Tornado-safe position: A position that keeps you and children safe during a tornado that involves getting low to the ground, covering your head, and, if there are infants in your program, holding them close to you and protecting their heads.

Tornado safe room: Ideally, a small, interior windowless room on the lowest level, below ground in a basement, or storm cellar, is best. www.ready.gov/tornadoes

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Resources

Watch: Issued when the risk of a hazardous event has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location, and or timing is still uncertain. It is intended to provide enough lead time so that those who need to set their plans in motion can do so. <https://emilms.fema.gov/IS0242b/COM0103240text.htm>

Warning: Issued when a hazardous event that poses a threat to life or property is occurring, is imminent, or has a very high probability of occurring. <https://emilms.fema.gov/IS0242b/COM0103240text.htm>

Cite as: [[Author. Year. Head Start and Child Care Emergency Preparedness Manual. Place of Publication: Publisher.]] [[Link title to URL, if available .]]



NATIONAL CENTER ON

Early Childhood Health and Wellness

School readiness begins with health!

Toll-free phone: 888-227-5125 • E-mail: health@ecetta.info • <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/health>