

Ask Your Child Care Program Before a Disaster



What's The Plan?



America's most trusted child care resource.

1-800-424-2246

ChildCareAware.org



When looking for a child care program, your most important consideration is the safety and well-being of your child. Knowing your child will be cared for in a healthy and secure environment that has appropriate safety measures in place is a top priority.

You should consider whether your child care program has a plan in place for emergency situations. These situations include not only medical emergencies but also weather- and disaster-related emergencies.

Most of us are aware of natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods, but there are also technological disasters that can impact a child care program. We all need to be as prepared as possible and have plans in place for any kind of disaster or emergency. This is especially critical for programs and schools with young children.

For parents with children in child care, knowing what kind of plan is in place and what to do in case of emergencies is essential. Make sure you know the what, when, where, and how of your child care provider's emergency action plan by asking these 10 questions.

Do you have an emergency preparedness plan for disasters that are likely to occur in our area?

- ▶ Make sure they have one. Ask for a copy of it.
- ▶ If they do not have a plan, find out when they will. Let them know you feel it is necessary.

How will you safely evacuate my child to a safe, predetermined location?

- ▶ Find out what procedures will be used, how the children will be moved and where. Make sure the place they move to is safe and acceptable to you.
- ▶ If your child has special needs, make sure your provider will take these into consideration.

How and when will I be notified if a disaster occurs when my child is in child care?

- ▶ Make sure you have at least two ways to be contacted, including another person with whom messages could be left for you (someone out of your geographic area would be ideal).
- ▶ Keep your contact information current: phone numbers, other people who can reach you, etc.
- ▶ Find out if there is a person/number you can call or a central phone number that will have information.

If I cannot get to my child during or after the disaster, how will you continue to care for my child?

- ▶ Provide any important information the provider will need to care for your child for a longer period of time.
- ▶ Discuss any plans or procedures you do not agree with or understand.

Have you and your staff received training on how to respond to my child's physical and emotional needs during and after a disaster?

- ▶ Training in responding to emergencies is critical. Find out how the provider will help calm and reassure children, as well as provide first aid.
- ▶ Ask how vital records on children are kept and are made available during a disaster.
- ▶ Make the provider aware of your child's special needs.

Will you teach my older child what to do during an emergency?

- ▶ Ask what kinds of drills the provider will have to help older children follow directions and understand what they are to do.
- ▶ Ask if parents can participate in drills. This can help you learn what steps are being taken and to feel comfortable with the plan.

Do you have a disaster or supply kit with enough items to meet my child's needs for at least 72 hours, or three days?

- ▶ If a kit is not available, ask how you can help get one. Talk and work with other parents.
- ▶ If your child is on regular medication, make sure the provider knows, and if possible, provide an extra supply to have on hand, just in case.

Do the state and local emergency management agencies and responders know about your child care program and where it is located?

- ▶ Ensure local emergency management agencies know about your child care provider. Call and verify this yourself.

How may I help you during and after a disaster?

- ▶ Becoming familiar with the way disasters will be handled will help you see what can be done before and after a disaster.
- ▶ Volunteer to help your provider prepare by organizing supplies, collecting or getting supplies donated, or organizing a “phone tree” for parents to be contacted during or after a disaster.
- ▶ Ask what other kinds of assistance are needed, and volunteer to help meet those needs.
- ▶ Offer suggestions and solutions if you see needs they have not addressed.

After a disaster occurs, how will I be notified about your plan to reopen?

- ▶ Ask if there is a phone number, website, or other way the child care program will notify parents of plans to reopen or not. Will you be informed, or will it be up to you to contact them?





Resources for parents and child care providers on emergency preparedness

Caring for Children in a Disaster. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website lists resources for families and child care facilities to aid in emergency planning and preparedness, protecting children during emergencies and helping children cope in the aftermath of a disaster. www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/index.html

Coping With Disaster or Traumatic Events. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers a variety of resources to assist families in understanding and coping with traumatic events. Resources include tip sheets, videos, and articles. <http://emergency.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/>

Crisis and Disaster Resources. Child Care Aware® of America provides a listing of resources geared towards parents and caregivers to help families, children and child care programs cope, heal and deal with disasters. www.usa.childcareaware.org

Getting Your Family Prepared for a Disaster. HealthyChildren.org (from the American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP]) shares this guide to assist families in preparing for most types of disasters. Available at www.healthychildren.org.

American Red Cross Preparedness Fast Facts. Tip sheets that offer information before, during and after various emergencies at www.redcross.org.

Rely on your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency

Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) are local and state-based organizations that help parents find and pay for child care within their communities. They are located in every state. CCR&Rs are great resources for parents at any time, with any issue relating to child care. CCR&Rs can help you learn more about disaster preparedness resources in your community.

Child Care Aware® is committed to helping parents find the best information on locating quality child care and child care resources in their community. In partnership with Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&R), Child Care Aware® builds consumer awareness and supports families in making choices for the care and education of their children.

For additional resources or help finding your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency (CCR&R), call:

1-800-424-2246

TTY Line: 1-866-278-9428

ChildCareAware.org

For local information contact:



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