



RHODE ISLAND CHILD CARE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

Understanding that child care programs are not immune to the risks of natural and man-made disasters, Rhode Island has developed this plan to ensure that child care providers are prepared and safe measures are in place before, during, and after an emergency or disaster. Having an emergency preparedness plan reduces the risks of emergencies, and provides child care providers with the information required to prepare and respond in the event of an emergency.

The Emergency Preparedness Plan for Rhode Island Child Care Programs, (hereafter the Plan) was developed in accordance with guidance offered in Information Memorandums CCDF-ACF-IM-2011-01 and CCDF-ACF-IM-2017-01 issued by the US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Office of Child Care. This plan provides a structure to work in a coordinated effort during disaster recovery, and provides guidance to licensed child care providers (hereafter, providers), families, and stakeholders about what they can expect from the State of Rhode Island. This plan is complementary to the Rhode Island Department of Human Services’ Continuity of Operations Plan, (hereafter COOP.) Rhode Island’s Departmental Continuity of Operations Plans (hereafter, COOP.) Child Care Operations are covered in the COOP for both the Department of Human Services which manages Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) funds and programming and the Department of Children Youth and Families which houses the licensing division.

This child care supplement will be reviewed annually and posted on the Rhode Island Department of Human Services website, www.dhs.ri.gov. It is the intent of this Plan to both provide clarity around state agency roles and to assist child care providers in planning and preparing 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 for children and families and reduces the risks of clientele and income loss for programs and businesses.

The Governor’s Office and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency has the overarching responsibility for formulating and updating statewide emergency preparedness procedures, arrangements, agreements and for coordinating all emergency and disaster relief efforts. This document is intended to merely supplement the already existing robust preparedness materials and plans that exist in the state. To learn more about Rhode Island’s Emergency Management Agency visit www.riema.ri.gov.

This Plan was developed in collaboration with the Rhode Island Governor’s Early Learning Council (which serves as the child care advisory body), the Rhode Island State Fire Marshal, all relevant state departments and impacted partners. Details on these collaborative and cooperative efforts are provided in Section 4 Coordination and Section 5 Communication.

The following departments are referenced and abbreviated as noted throughout the Plan:

- Rhode Island Department of Human Services (Lead Agency for CCAP and Child Care Licensing) – “DHS”

- Rhode Island Department of Children Youth and Families – “DCYF”
- Rhode Island Department of Health – “RIDOH”
- Rhode Island Department of Education – “RIDE”
- Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency – “RIEMA”

SECTION 2 – BACKGROUND & SCOPE OF PLAN

In September of 2014, the federal Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) was reauthorized. The CCDBG provides essential child care funding, administered by the Rhode Island Department of Human Services. These funds, along with the required state matching funds support child care subsidy, child care licensing and a robust set of child care quality activities, including a quality rating and improvement system. A key component of the CCDBG Act of 2014 was the inclusion of specific requirements for states regarding the development and dissemination of Statewide Child Care Emergency Plans.

Rhode Island's Plan focuses on the three essential components of Emergency Preparedness:

- Mitigation / Preparation
- Response
- Recovery

Additionally, the Plan focuses on specific requirements of reauthorization. Namely, in Section 658E(c) (2) (U) of the CCDBG Act of 2014, the Plan must include:

- Continuation of CCAP assistance and child care services after a disaster;
- Requirements that providers receiving CCDF funding have in place robust procedures for evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, lock-down, communication and reunification with families;
- Plans for Continuity of Operations (COOP);
- Specific accommodations for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities and children with chronic medical conditions; and
- Requirements that providers receiving CCAP have in place procedures for staff and volunteer emergency preparedness training and practice drills.

In accordance with section 658, Rhode Island has developed the following Plan with the intent to identify and communicate processes and supports for child care in the event of an individual, local, regional, or statewide emergency or disaster. The Plan applies to all licensed Rhode Island providers as well as any other providers who are certified to receive CCAP funds.

When one thinks of a disaster in Rhode Island, it is most common to think of hurricanes or winter storms. However, the fact is, Rhode Island is susceptible to the same natural and human-caused disasters as any other area of the country. The guidance in this Plan is intended for use with all types of disasters. Safe environments for children are essential for child well-being and further assist families to resume work activities and return to normalcy. Rhode Island's Plan is intended to offer a foundation that supports families in re-establishing their daily lives in an expeditious manner and business continuity to the maximum degree feasible.

SECTION 3 – ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions are foundational in development of the Plan:

- Emergencies and disasters present themselves in all forms. While some provide advanced warning such as weather-related events, others may come about with little to no warning. The best way to prepare for a disaster is planning and practice.
- Child Care is a necessary component for families and should be restored as quickly as possible. This offers continuity and comfort to children and enables the least possible disruption to families and their employers.
- All licensed child care providers and any other providers who may be certified to receive CCAP funds are required to develop, provide staff orientation, share with parents, routinely practice, and be fully prepared to follow their emergency preparedness and evacuation plan in the event of an emergency.
- Time frames provided throughout the plan, unless specifically noted, are merely intended to serve as guidelines for activities and may vary depending on specific circumstance of the disaster or nature or duration of the emergency.
- Child care does not operate in isolation of other state activities, and so, this Plan serves merely as a supplement to and not a replacement of the robust COOP plans in place for each Rhode Island state department, most notably the Rhode Island Department of Human Services COOP. Further, during a State of Emergency, all departments act under the guidance of the Governor's office and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency.

SECTION 4 – COORDINATION WITH KEY PARTNERS

In keeping with final rule 45 CFR 98.16(aa) the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (RI DHS), the Lead Agency for CCAP, has coordinated and collaborated with an array of critical stakeholders in the development and implementation of this plan. The following outlines partner engagement in the development of this plan:

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

A state planning committee was convened by RI DHS to engage stakeholders, obtain input and strengthen collaboration of key activities. Represented on the planning committee were:

- DCYF Licensing
- RIDOH, including the department’s emergency preparedness coordinator
- Providers
- Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children)
- CCAP Quality Support Partners, such as the Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- Representatives from the Governor’s Early Learning Council
- Representatives from the Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care

PLAN REVIEW

The Plan was reviewed by and input solicited from:

- Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA)
- The State Fire Marshal’s Office

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

Provided as an Addendum to this Plan is a document titled “Rhode Island Child Care Emergency Planning: Preparedness, Response and Recovery Resources and Toolkit for Programs.” This robust toolkit offers all the information needed to guide programs in the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan. The toolkit was developed by RIDOH, in collaboration with RIDE and RIEMA with input and updates by DHS. Development of this toolkit was supported by Healthy Child Care America.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION

Training and support for providers will be offered as an essential component of the state's robust quality support network. On-line and in-person training opportunities are available. In addition, child care licensors are available to assist providers in complying with the requirements set forth in this document and further supported by licensing regulations.

The addendum to this document offers a robust toolkit of resources for programs and further offers links to national training and support resources on this subject.

ENCOURAGED PARTNERS

The State strongly encourages programs to foster connections at the local level. These local connections are essential in an actual disaster. Programs should establish these "on the ground" relationships and contacts ahead of time. Information on local contacts by community as well as tools to structure the development of these partnerships is available in the Toolkit Addendum to this document.

STATE AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

Coordination between the lead agency and RIEMA as well as interagency coordination is outlined in and supported by the DHS COOP. Rhode Island understands and prioritizes the essential nature of cross-departmental cooperation and collaboration and recognizes the especially critical function this plays in times of emergency.

SECTION 5 – COMMUNICATION

The Rhode Island Child Care Emergency Preparation Plan works as a complimentary guide to the state’s Emergency Public Information Plan (EPI.) The EPI sets standards, policy, and procedures, and assigns responsibility to disseminate accurate information in a timely fashion to Rhode Island citizens before, during, and after an actual or potential emergency incident and/or major disaster. The EPI Plan was developed through the collaborative efforts of the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA), its various internal and external stakeholders, and lead agency representatives for the Emergency Support Function (ESF.)

The State’s EPI Plan identifies important considerations when issuing public information in an emergency. These considerations are centered around providing timely, consistent, and accurate information to the media, the public, local and regional agencies, and organizations. Utilization of a Joint Information System (JIS) may involve the media (e.g., TV/radio/newspaper), Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) website, digital media platforms, WebEOC, CodeRED, Rhode Island Broadcasters Association Cancellation Systems, call centers, the Joint Information Center (JIC) and Public Information Officers (PIOs).

COMMUNICATION FROM CHILD CARE PROVIDERS TO STATE AUTHORITIES

In the event of emergency, providers should first and foremost focus on executing the portions of their plan that best address their needs in the immediate circumstances. Initial focus in time of an emergency will typically center on implementing one of the four following strategies:

1. Lockdown
2. Immediately evacuate
3. Shelter in place
4. Evacuate to a relocation facility.

As soon as it is safe to do so, but no later than 24 hours after the emergency, providers must communicate to the child care licensing department and notify them as to the nature of the emergency, number and status of children and staff affected, and the status of the facility and any other information pertinent to well-being of the children and continuity of operations.

COMMUNICATION FROM STATE AUTHORITIES TO AND WITH PROVIDERS AND INTERAGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

In the event of an emergency, the Governor’s Office and RIEMA provide leadership and direction to state department leadership. Rhode Island has a “CodeRED” system in place for state officials to communicate to the public. Individuals can sign up for CodeRED Alerts at www.riema.ri.gov. All providers are required to be signed up to receive alerts.

DHS will coordinate communication to providers. These agencies rely upon information provided by child care programs to communicate on an individual basis. To the greatest extent possible, it is critical that phone numbers and email addresses are provided to the primary contact for each facility and that this contact information be immediately updated should any changes occur.

Following a disaster, it is expected that state leadership, including officials from DHS and RIEMA will meet to determine if the disaster is severe enough to suspend all licensed facilities / in-home / family child care homes in the immediate disaster declared area or to suspend on a case-by-case basis.

To the maximum extent possible, Licensing will make individual contact with each provider to assess status and provide direction to programs in an emergency area. In addition, in the event of an emergency or disaster, Rhode Island will use website postings, emails, and broadcast messaging to inform child care and other early learning providers of relevant information as part of its coordinated public messaging strategies.

NOTIFICATION TO REGIONAL OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OFFICE OF CHILD CARE

In the event of an emergency, DHS will collect and provide updates to the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) as to the impacts of the disaster / emergency throughout the response period.

SUPPORT FROM KEY NETWORKS AND PARTNERS

In the event of large scale emergencies, state officials will secure support from Rhode Island's robust existing support networks for child care; such as the Center for Early Learning Professionals, the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children, the Rhode Island Child Care Facilities Fund, and the SEIU Education and Support Fund to establish a mechanism for strategic communications and exchange of information among the child care community in an effort to enhance response efforts.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

Providers are required to maintain up-to-date contact information for families and emergency contacts and should ensure that they have mechanisms in place to take this information with them if evacuation becomes necessary. Children are the responsibility of their provider until their parent / guardian or designee can retrieve them from the child care facility. Multiple attempts in a variety of different ways should be conducted prior to reporting that the child's parent / guardian or designee cannot be contacted or found. Providers should establish multiple points-of-contact options to reach out to parents': emergency contact numbers, social media accounts, emails, and work locations etc.

FEMA's National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System (NEFRS) is activated following a presidentially declared disaster to reunite families that have become separated because of the disaster. Individuals and families are encouraged to register online at www.fema.gov or by phone at **1-800-588-9822**, 24-hours a day, when activated.

A key part of family communication includes engagement of families in disaster planning activities as well as ensuring that all families are provided with and understand the provider's emergency plans and procedures. Examples of activities that providers are encouraged to engage in include:

- Routinely verifying accuracy of emergency contact information on file
- Handing out wallet cards that contain information on likely relocation sites and provider contact information
- Discussing options for alternative methods of communication such as social media, email chains, text messages, etc.
- Asking in advance about unique needs that families might have in times of emergency

More detailed information on planning in collaboration with families can be found in the Toolkit Addendum to this Plan.

MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Communications to the public will be coordinated by designated departmental communications and public relations staff. Recognizing that communications may be limited during a disaster, Rhode Island will use and in turn encourages all providers and families to utilize all available mechanisms for communication including social media sites to provide necessary updates and resources to families.

SECTION 6 – REUNIFICATION OF CHILDREN WITH FAMILIES

The Department of Human Services, the lead agency for CCAP and child care licensing, has authority for the administration of child care subsidies but does not have the authority to take custody of children or to provide direct care. RIEMA, DCYF and law enforcement are the lead agencies coordinating family reunification efforts. In the event of an emergency, RIEMA may establish a Family Assistance Center(FAC) in accordance with the state Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) as necessary.

Family reunification includes identifying the correct parent/guardian, verifying their identity, and documenting the child's release to their custody. In the event of a large-scale disaster, it is understood that this may be a difficult task. It is essential that providers understand and plan for the following:

- Children are the responsibility of the provider until their parent or approved guardian is able to retrieve them from the child care facility, temporary evacuation site or Family Assistance Center.
- If a child's custody is unclear or when multiple persons seek to claim a child, all information will be turned over to DCYF or law enforcement for their investigation and determination of custody.
- If after all best efforts have been made and a child remains with the provider, DCYF and/or local law enforcement should be contacted.
- Large scale emergencies may result in children needing long term care. This will be coordinated by DCYF.

SECTION 7 – RECOVERY

The State of Rhode Island has a Disaster Recovery Plan (hereafter “Recovery Plan”) that serves as the guiding document for all Short- Intermediate- and Long-Term Recovery efforts for the State. The “Recovery Plan” was developed in support of emergency management and is based on the National Disaster Recovery Framework. The plan is scalable, flexible, and adaptable, coordinating structures to align key roles and responsibilities.

Child Care specific recovery actions are taken over the short-term to return vital life support systems to minimum standards and long-term to return life to normal or improved levels. Such measures include damage assessment, supplemental assistance to individuals and public entities, assessment of plans, procedures, arrangements and agreements, and the development of economic impact studies and methods to mitigate damages. Recovery efforts will be guided by Rhode Island Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs) developed by both the Department of Human Services and the Department of Children, Youth and Families. These COOPs reflect the mission essential functions outlined in the State’s Disaster Recovery Plan, coordinated through RIEMA.

During recovery Licensing and subsidy administration staff will be collecting data on the impacts of the disaster, the availability of child care and the overall community impacts. Rhode Island will use a variety of communication mechanisms to share information on recovery efforts, including, emails, text alerts, social media, website updates and the Rhode Island Broadcasters Association.

A critical element of recovery is communication with families of children enrolled in child care as well as child care leadership and staff. Rhode Island recognizes the importance of assessing the scale of families who may have needs for alternative care due to impacted centers and will prioritize this activity in its recovery efforts. Depending on the size and scale of the disaster, DHS may make efforts to support families in seeking and securing alternative care.

Licensing staff will support providers impacted by the event and assist with a reopening process for centers as well as licensing and / or approval of temporary spaces as needed.

After large scale disasters, DHS will conduct an after-action assessment, in consultation with RIEMA to determine what factors should be considered in mitigating the effects of future emergencies. The Plan will then be updated accordingly.

SECTION 8 – CONTINUATION OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

CONTINUATION OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

Rhode Island recognizes that child care is an essential service. Continuity of care for children is essential to their wellbeing and access to child care following an emergency can be essential in helping families return to normalcy. If an individual center is damaged, or a large-scale emergency takes place, and temporary locations are needed, DHS Licensing staff will work individually with facilities to obtain temporary site use approvals. While licensing may waive some rules temporarily in the event of an emergency, all critical health and safety requirements will be maintained, if not enhanced. Further, all criminal background check requirements will remain in force, even in times of emergency.

In times of wide-scale regional or state-wide emergencies, Rhode Island recognizes that temporary child care solutions, such as those offered at shelters, may be needed. In the event this becomes necessary, coordination efforts will take place between the Red Cross, RIEMA and DCYF.

The law provides that the subsidies follow the child. Therefore, if needed, families may move to other programs and providers who may be better able to accommodate their needs in times of emergency. The website <http://kids.ri.gov/> provides information on all available programs in Rhode Island.

CONTINUATION OF CCAP ACTIVITIES

To support continuity of operations during an emergency, the DHS Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is in place. The Office of Child Care staff will continue to provide all services, including communication efforts with families. The Office of Child Care staff is cross trained to assure core functions can be performed.

SECTION 9 – CONTINUATION OF CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is the hub of child care information. Administered in Rhode Island by DHS, CCAP staff assist low-income working families to get assistance with paying for child care. In Rhode Island child care is an entitlement program for qualifying families. Families whose income and life situations change because of a disaster or emergency may be eligible for expedited approval. Also, during times of emergency, streamlined or varied mechanisms of application and approval may be implemented to expedite processing.

Child care subsidies in Rhode Island are portable and follow the child. Therefore, in the event of an emergency that displaces families from their current provider, the parent may choose any CCAP provider, including a provider who may be operating at an emergency location, so long as they are approved by licensing and certified by DHS to accept subsidy.

The DHS COOP Plan has business continuity mechanisms in place to ensure continued payment of providers even during times of emergency.

SECTION 10 – AVAILABLE TRAINING AND RESOURCES FOR PROVIDERS

Training and support for providers on development and implementation of Emergency Preparedness Plans is coordinated by DHS in partnership with RIDOH. Training programs are implemented by community partners under contract with DHS to offer training and support on an array of essential topics.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has developed an online training course for providers and Rhode Island strongly encourages providers to complete this training course. The course, IS-36 Multi-hazard Planning for Childcare, is two hours long and offers .2CEUs, these hours and credits are counted towards provider professional development hour requirements in Rhode Island. The course is designed for providers of all sizes and who have responsibility for all age groups. It will help providers analyze hazards and threats at the site and plan accordingly, including implementing and updating processes and procedures. Topics addressed in the course include:

- Knowing your hazards
- Developing a Plan
- Testing and Practicing Your Plan

Upon completing the course providers will be able to:

- Describe why it is important to be prepared.
- Identify hazards and threats.
- Describe how to prevent or mitigate the impact of likely and high-consequence hazards and threats.
- Describe procedures for when an emergency occurs.
- Identify how the childcare site will recover from an emergency.
- Describe how to develop and maintain a plan.
- Describe how to communicate, train, and practice preparedness procedures.
- Identify the emergency preparedness information to be shared with the community.
- Describe when plans should be updated.

The Multi-hazard Planning for Childcare course can be accessed at the following link:

<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-36>

As a supplement to this Plan, Rhode Island has developed a toolkit for providers, titled “Rhode Island

Childcare Center Emergency Planning: Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Resources and Toolkit for Programs.” This toolkit is attached as an addendum to this Plan. The toolkit and customizable templates are available to providers online.

ADDENDUM

- Rhode Island's Response to COVID-19
- Rhode Island Child Care Emergency Planning: Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Resources and Toolkit for Programs

Rhode Island's Response to COVID-19

On March 29, 2020, Governor Gina Raimondo, in partnership with the RI Department of Human Services, mandated statewide closure of child care programs in response to concerns of potential COVID-19 community transmission. In anticipation of this closure, the State adopted a variety of CCAP payment practices to support child care programs in covering their operational costs during the closure period and ensure continuity of care for the children and families served by CCAP. DHS made the decision to modify its policies to ensure CCAP providers were well positioned to reopen their programs once deemed by the state safely to do so. DHS submitted three CCDF State Plan amendments on March 18, 2020, and one waiver to the Administration for Children and Families on April 3, 2020. The following payment practices were temporarily adopted to support CCAP providers during the mandated closure period:

- Reimburse CCAP services based on enrollment, not attendance (state froze the provider’s ability to add “new” enrollments during the mandated closure period)
- Waive the allowable absence policy for families
- Waive family copays (DHS to cover the cost of those copays in CCAP provider payments)
- Upon reopening, reimburse CCAP subsidies using a temporary, enhanced rate (5-star reimbursement based on the state’s QRIS or 90th percentile for providers that were already 5-stars)

In early May 2020, DHS outlined its plan for supporting a safe, gradual reopening of child care providers under new, emergency COVID-19 regulations beginning June 1, 2020. DHS-licensed child care providers were required to submit a COVID-19 Control Plan to the DHS Child Care Licensing Unit outlining their plans for adhering to the new CDC guidelines and DHS COVID-19 Emergency Regulations. Each plan was reviewed and approved by the DHS Child Care Licensing Unit. Child care providers were required to attend two virtual trainings/webinars; a DHS Child Care Reopening Webinar and an Updated Health & Safety Webinar to resume services and safely serve children. CCAP Payment practices were again adopted to support child care providers in adhering to the enhanced regulations.

In preparation for the reopening of the child care sector on June 1, 2020, DHS and RIDOH worked in close collaboration to build a cross agency team that focused on the state’s response to COVID-19 in the child care sector and align the response with other sectors. Upon reopening, the DHS/RIDOH response team met daily to track COVID-19 incidences in child care settings. This daily huddle was a key strategy in the state’s effective approach to provide a safe return to care for child care providers, children, and their families. The response team met daily to coordinate contract tracing, evaluate guidance, and make key decision related to regulatory changes. The team coordinated state wide communication in consultation with the Governor’s Office throughout the pandemic. All guidance materials and COVID-19 related resources were jointly developed and widely accessible online at www.reopeningri.com. The Outbreak Response Playbook was and continues to be a key resource the state developed to support the child care sector during the pandemic and reflect the ongoing changes in guidance as the pandemic evolved. The playbook is accessible in English and Spanish and can be viewed at <https://reopeningri.com/child-care-youth-activities>.

As evidenced by data tracked by the response team (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6934e2.htm>) the state experienced a low incidence of COVID-19 occurrences in the child care setting, as well as a minimal secondary transmission rate within this setting upon the sector’s reopening in June 2020.

Furthermore, during the initial phase of reopening, child care providers were required to operate with group sizes smaller than what was previously allowable under the DHS Licensing Regulations (pre-COVID) for most age

categories. Beginning in July 2020, DHS gradually increased providers' licensed capacity (group sizes) in accordance with RIDOH's public health guidance to minimize the economic burden felt by child care providers to serve fewer children than their pre-COVID licensed capacity allowed. The chart below outlines the group size requirements implemented across DHS-licensed, center-based child care providers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As of April 26, 2021, all DHS-licensed child care providers across all age categories were operating at full, pre-COVID capacity numbers. Important to note: these group size requirements do not supersede DHS Regulations that require appropriate staff:child ratio

Timeline	Group Size Requirement	Operational Impact
6/1/20-7/5/20	Max 10	Reduced capacity for preschool and school-age classrooms in centers, reduced capacity for group family child care providers. No impact to family child care.
7/5/20-4/25/21	Max 20	Reduced capacity for school-age classrooms in centers only. No impact to family child care.
Effective 4/26/21	Max 26	No impact.

Additionally, throughout the pandemic the State worked with contracted vendors to provide additional professional development and technical assistance to support providers in adherence with enhanced COVID-19 health and safety protocols. This included on site monitoring visits, virtual technical assistance, and prerecorded webinar materials to communicate reinforce key information related to the pandemic.

As the state continues to respond to the ongoing pandemic, as well as further stabilize, the practices in place will continue to be tracked and the state's emergency response plan will be updated accordingly in consultation with the required agencies and stakeholders.

Rhode Island Child Care Emergency Planning:
Preparedness, Response and Recovery Resources
and Toolkit for Programs



***Rhode Island
Childcare Center Emergency
Planning:
Preparedness, Response, and
Recovery Resources and Toolkit
for Programs***

***This Toolkit Serves as an Addendum to the Rhode
Island Department of Human Services Childcare
Emergency Preparedness Plan***

Developed by:
Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) Rhode
Island Department of Education (RIDE)
Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS)

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1. Introduction

Background

No one can predict when an emergency will occur. For the safety of children and staff, **every childcare center should be prepared** to handle and recover from an emergency. With a clear plan that is practiced often, it is more likely that an emergency will be handled well.

The Department of Health (RIDOH), the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) developed *Childcare Center Emergency Planning*. The guidelines contained here provide a step-by-step model for individual centers to develop their own Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan (CCCRP) and to evaluate plans that are already in place.

For purposes of this guide, “emergency” is defined as a sudden, generally unanticipated event that has the potential to profoundly and negatively impact a significant segment of the childcare center.

Purpose of this Guide

Unfortunately, the recent wave of violence across the country has uncovered a need for preparedness for a broader range of emergencies beyond situations such as fire and severe weather. The *Childcare Center Emergency Planning* serves two purposes:

- 1) As a guide to creating a Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan (CCCRP), and
- 2) As a model for addressing a range of other issues, such as child safety, that require a coordinated effort.

Although childcare centers may have procedures in place for dealing with emergency situations, most do not have these procedures collected in a coordinated way. More so than ever before, childcare centers need to be prepared for a wide range of emergency situations such as medical emergencies, severe weather, chemical release, sexual abuse, and kidnapping.

More so than ever before, childcare centers need to be prepared for a wide range of emergency situations from medical emergencies to kidnapping.

A strong *Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan* takes considerable time, staff and other resources to develop. Your childcare center should carefully look at the recommended activities in this guide, and address as many of these activities as possible so that your center will be able to successfully handle a range of emergencies. Don't forget that many childcare centers already have some of these procedures in place, but simply need to fully document them.

A strong crisis response plan also helps address other health and safety issues that require coordinated attention from staff. The relationships developed with community groups as part of emergency preparedness can improve ongoing childcare center health and safety programs. **So, the considerable investment of time and resources in the planning process should be recognized as an important investment in building relationships and an infrastructure that will support children’s health and safety in general, not just during an emergency.**

How this Guide was developed

To develop *Childcare Center Emergency Planning*, interviews were conducted with childcare centers and municipal emergency management directors in Rhode Island, and a review of key documents in childcare center crisis response was performed.

Some Rhode Island childcare centers have a crisis response plan in effect, but they want information about best practices in emergency planning to ensure that their plans are comprehensive and up-to-date.

Emergency Preparedness and Response in Rhode Island

In planning for and responding to emergencies, childcare centers should not work alone. This guide is part of many ongoing efforts to protect the health and safety of our State’s residents. The Department of Health (RIDOH) is working with several partners including the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA); state and local police and other first responders; city and town officials; and hospitals to prepare to respond to major public health emergencies. In an emergency, first responders are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Emergency preparedness activities in Rhode Island include:

- **Training First Responders:** maintaining regional Hazardous Material (HAZMAT) and Terrorism Response Teams, and obtaining the most up-to-date equipment and training;
- **Mass Care:** preparing special treatment areas in hospitals, and planning to distribute vaccines and medications if necessary;
- **Incident Stress Management:** deploying teams of specially trained mental health and substance abuse treatment providers to reduce public panic; providing crisis intervention, referral and grief counseling when appropriate; and providing consultation and support to affected businesses, schools and community organizations;
- **Developing Local and State Plans:** creating and updating emergency plans in communities and state agencies, and building communication networks so that local municipal leaders and others can communicate effectively in an emergency; and

- **Increasing Security:** identifying and increasing security around Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CIKR) such as reservoirs, food sources and other possible terrorist targets; revising security measures and providing awareness training opportunities.

Partners in Emergency Response and Recovery

Some kinds of “low level” emergencies can be handled well by childcare center staff and do not require help from outside agencies. For other more serious emergencies, such as a bomb threat or child death, local community first responders will assist childcare centers in responding to and recovering from the incident. For large-scale emergencies that affect an entire community, such as a widespread chemical release or natural disaster, several agencies will handle response and follow-up, possibly including local, state and federal partners.

For certain emergencies, several agencies will be involved in response and recovery. It is important for childcare centers to establish relationships with potential partners before a crisis occurs.

It is important for childcare centers to establish relationships with potential partners in emergency management **and response *before* a crisis occurs**. Refer to Preparedness Section (f) on reaching out to local partners and the Response Section when responding to different kinds of emergencies.

How to Use this Guide

This guide is designed to help childcare centers write an individual Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan. It is presented in three sections: **Preparedness, Response, and Recovery**. These sections correspond to the major phases of crisis management:

- 1) **Preparedness** is the process of deciding what you will do *before* an emergency occurs. Preparedness involves the coordination of efforts between your childcare center and the community at large. This section contains tips and tools for establishing a crisis response team, collaborating with partners, preparing an emergency toolkit / Go Bag, and evacuation routes.
- 2) **Response** is the process of taking the right actions *while* an emergency is unfolding. In short, responding means “doing what you planned to do.” This section contains steps for handling a wide range of emergencies, including Universal Emergency Procedures that may be implemented across many situations.

- 3) **Recovery** is the process of helping people with the physical, psychological and Emotional trauma associated with experiencing tragic events. This section contains follow-up measures and tools to effectively address the aftermath of an emergency. Recovery measures are designed to assist childcare center staff as they help children begin the recovery and healing process.

Mitigation is another key phase of crisis response, but does not have its own section in this guide. Mitigation refers to actions taken to reduce the adverse effects of an emergency. Mitigation measures can be implemented *before* an emergency, *during* an emergency, or in *recovery* from an emergency. As a result, information about mitigation activities appears throughout the guide.

This guide offers information and tools to help childcare centers fully address Preparedness, Response and Recovery from an emergency. When all essential plan components have been addressed, centers will have a comprehensive, up-to-date *Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan* to meet specific local needs.

Your center’s Crisis Response Plan is a living document. To keep it fully functional, you must conduct regular drills to practice the plan, regular training to keep staff informed of their roles in an emergency, and a regular review of the plan to make sure it is up to date.

The guide is being made available online to make it easy for each center to customize the templates. Centers may find it useful to fill out and print certain sections of this guide. Some centers may want to laminate certain forms and keep them in classrooms or other areas of the center. Also, center directors may decide to distribute specific sections of the document to staff while maintaining copies of the full guide in a central location or with key planning team members.

When all essential plan components in this guide have been addressed, childcare centers will have a comprehensive, up-to-date Crisis Response Plan.

Some childcare centers in Rhode Island have already undertaken significant emergency planning efforts in recent years. **For childcare centers that have already developed and documented their Crisis Response Plans,** this guide may be useful as a reference to best practices in childcare center crisis response, and to identify any areas in the center’s plan that need further attention or development.

For childcare centers that have not fully developed or documented their Crisis Response Plans, it is recommended that your center assemble a Crisis Response Team to address each component of this guide. Consider scheduling regular meetings with the team to make regular progress in each area. See Preparedness Section (a) for recommendations on developing a Crisis Response Team.

The first step

The first step in crisis response planning is to designate a few key people, such as the director and a couple of classroom teachers, to review existing emergency plans or to develop a new plan using this guide as a model. Using the checklists, sample forms and protocols provided in this guide, the team can create an emergency plan that includes a designated chain of command, specific roles for team members, and center-specific procedures to implement in the event of an emergency.

New “best practices” for handling emergency situations become available on an ongoing basis, and new emergency situations emerge over time, so your crisis response plan should be updated and practiced on a regular basis.

2. Preparedness

Preparedness is the process of deciding what you will do in the event of an emergency, *before* the emergency occurs. Preparedness involves the coordination of efforts between your childcare center and the community at large.

To be prepared for an emergency, your childcare center's crisis response plan should address each of the issues listed below. Keep in mind that your individual childcare center plan should be *preventative* in nature. This means identifying actions you can take now to mitigate or prevent safety problems. In addition, your center's plan should reflect your center's unique characteristics and needs.

If you have already begun developing your center's Crisis Response Plan, use this section to make sure you've covered the important parts of emergency preparedness. Use the information and templates provided here to add to any areas that need extra attention.

- a. **Establish a Crisis Response Team**
- b. **Maintain Your Crisis Response Plan: Drills, Training, Review and Approval**
- c. **Identify Hazards of the Area**
- d. **Identify Evacuation Routes**
- e. **Identify Emergency Alert Codes**
- f. **Develop Emergency Toolkit**
- g. **Identify Local Partners and Resources**
- h. **Create Crisis Response Plan for Special Needs Children**
- i. **Communicate Before, During, and After an Emergency**
- j. **Develop an Accountability System**
- k. **Develop a Parent/Child Reunification Plan**

a. Establish a Crisis Response Team

The first step in creating your childcare center’s crisis response plan is identifying the Crisis Response Team. The **facility director** is responsible for overseeing the formation of the Crisis Response Team. Certain positions lend themselves to team membership, such as the director or a center administrator, the nurse or health consultant, a head teacher, a teacher’s assistant, and a facilities person if there is one. Each of these people has unique knowledge in areas ranging from mental and physical health to children with special needs, and from access to building plans to knowledge of community resources.

In this section, you will find:

- **The Childcare Center Crisis Response Team**
- **Our Childcare Center’s Crisis Response Team Members**
- **Crisis Team Member Roles During An Emergency**
- **ICS Roles and Responsibilities at Our Childcare Center**

The Childcare Center Crisis Response Team

The purpose of the Crisis Response Team is to:

- Develop the childcare center’s Crisis Response Plan using this template as a guide.
- Conduct or coordinate training.
- Conduct or coordinate awareness programs for children.
- Evaluate the center’s preparedness for implementing Universal Emergency Procedures (see Response Section a).
- Perform an evaluation after every emergency to determine strengths and areas for improvement regarding the center’s crisis response plan.
- Be responsible for communication with children, parents and the community during and after every emergency (see Section i: Communicate Before, during, and after an Emergency).
- Report progress to the parents and the center’s director.
- Assign individual roles for other Crisis Response Team members to assume during an emergency at the center.

Suggested Steps for Team Formation:

Depending on the size and needs of the childcare center, the Crisis Response Team should have between 2 and 4 members. Although these team members make up the formal team, it should be made clear to all staff that each will have a role during an emergency, and each is responsible for addressing the immediate safety needs of children in their care.

To form a Crisis Response Team in your childcare center, consider the following steps:

1. Director communicates with all staff identifying specific needs, and requesting volunteers to serve on the team.
2. Director communicates with parents and potential community representatives.
3. Director or designee creates list of interested people, making sure all major areas are addressed, including:
 - Physical/medical needs
 - Emotional/mental health needs
 - Children with special needs
 - Staff from all areas of the building (different floors, wings, out-buildings, etc.)
 - Staff with knowledge of transportation needs
 - Staff with knowledge of the building floor plan, locks, water main, gas line, etc.
 - Staff with ability to convey information to the media

- Staff with knowledge of community resources
4. Director or designee holds a meeting with potential team members to discuss what will be expected of them.
 5. Director or designee follows up with all center staff to update them on team formation and to fill in areas where gaps exist. No one should be required to have a position on an emergency team if he/she does not feel capable of fulfilling his/her duties.
 6. Director or designee calls an initial meeting to formally establish the Crisis Response Team, and to begin the process of developing the center's crisis response plan.
 7. The team holds regular meetings every 4-6 months to review protocols and ongoing issues as they arise (may include local, state or national issues that may affect the center).
 8. The team sets dates to conduct orientation, review and updates of plan.

Please use the template on the next page to list your team members.

Our Childcare Center's Crisis Response Team Members

For Year Starting _____ and Ending _____

Name	Room/Position	Work Phone	Cell/Pager	Home Phone

About the Incident Command System (ICS)

For some emergencies, your childcare center will be able to handle the event without any help from other agencies. However, some emergencies require involvement from police officials, fire departments, and other emergency management agencies. With several agencies handling a crisis, roles and responsibilities can quickly become confusing.

To prevent confusion about “who is doing what,” many emergency response agencies use the Incident Command System (ICS). It is important for your Crisis Response Team and other center staff to understand the ICS so that they can work cooperatively with other agencies during a crisis.

The ICS assigns roles during the planning and handling of emergencies of all types. Using the ICS helps staff from different agencies to know their area of responsibility during a crisis and to plan and practice their specific role. **Unified Command (UC)** is a structure that brings together the "Incident Commanders" of all major organizations involved in the incident to coordinate a response.

The roles described in the next section use some of the terms and roles of the ICS. Try to use these terms and roles when assigning duties to your Crisis Team Members.

Should include ICS training requirements and references, and NIMS references.

It is important for your Crisis Response Team to understand the ICS so they can work cooperatively with other agencies during a crisis.

Crisis Team Member Roles During an Emergency

Use the following pages to assign roles to your center's crisis team members. The first step is to look at the abilities of each Crisis Response Team member. Then, match people with certain abilities to the roles described below.

Because no two childcare centers are the same, the roles and responsibilities outlined here may need to be changed to fit your center. Also, because your center may have a small staff, it is possible that one person may be assigned more than one role. Remember to include backups for each assignment.

Make sure that the following areas are assigned to at least one person on your Crisis Response Team. Remember, these terms and roles come from the Incident Command System (ICS) to help your center coordinate with other agencies during an emergency. You may need to adapt these roles to fit the needs of your childcare center.

- **Incident Commander (IC)**: Usually the director, this person works to protect life and property, directs the overall management of emergency response activities.
 - **Public Information Officer (PIO)**: This person talks with local media, prepares media releases, establishes/monitors communication to parents and staff, and coordinates information with Incident Commander and the rest of the team.
 - **Safety Officer**: Working with the Director, this person watches safety conditions of an emergency and develops measures for ensuring the safety of building occupants (children, staff, volunteers, responders).
 - **Liaison Officer**: This person develops a working knowledge of local agencies, and assists in accessing services from other agencies when the need arises.
- **Operations**: At a childcare center, most staff will be assigned roles under Operations. Operations is responsible for the safety of children and for following emergency response activities according to established Universal Emergency Procedures and Emergency Management Protocols (see Response Section).
- **Logistics**: The logistics area is responsible for communications, as well as getting needed materials, resources, services and personnel during an emergency. May take on a major role in long term emergency situations.
- **Planning**: In small emergencies, the Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for planning, but in a larger emergency, the IC establishes a Planning Section. Planning collects and evaluates information as related to the development of an incident and status of resources.
- **Administration/Finance**: Sometimes overlooked, Administration/Finance is important for tracking incident costs. It is especially important to track costs where a state or federal "disaster area" may be declared.

b. Maintain Your Crisis Response Plan: Drills, Training, Review and Approval

Your childcare center's Crisis Response Plan is a living document. To keep it fully functional, you must conduct regular drills to practice the plan, regular training to keep staff informed of their roles in an emergency, a regular review of the plan to make sure it is up to date, and you must obtain approval of the plan from official sources.

In this section, you will find information about maintaining your childcare center's Crisis Response Plan, including recommendations for conducting regular drills, training, review and approval of the plan.

In this section, you will find:

- **Drills to Practice**
- **Staff Training Log**
- **Annual Plan Review**

Emergency Drills

It is important to practice your plan once in a while to make sure that it works, and that all staff understand their roles. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides several options for accomplishing this goal:

1. TABLETOP EXERCISE

- An informal discussion of simulated emergencies
- No time pressures
- Low stress
- Useful for evaluating plans and procedures
- Helpful to resolve questions of coordination and responsibility

2. DRILL

- An informal simulated emergency
- May test a single component or function of the Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan (for example, a “lock-down” drill)
- May only involve one supporting agency

3. EXERCISE

- A formal simulated emergency
- Policy and coordination personnel will practice all or part of the Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan
- More stressful and realistic simulation of real life situations
- Usually takes place in “real time”
- Emphasizes the emergency functions of the Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan. Examples might include perimeter security (securing all doors of the center), utility shutdowns, and accounting for all the people who should be in the childcare center at the time (to include children and staff).
- Childcare Center’s Crisis Response Team is activated.

Use the templates on the following pages to record regular drills and training at your childcare center.

Drills to Practice

Use the following worksheet to plan drills for your childcare center. Submit a copy of the schedule with your center’s plan, and use the original to document drills when they actually occur.

Fire Drills: Two fire drills in the first month of a new year, and one per month each following month.

Monthly Schedule	Date Conducted	Weather Conditions	Number of Occupants	Evacuation Time	Comments, Notes
1 st :					
1 st :					
2 nd :					
3 rd :					
4 th :					
5 th :					
6 th :					
7 th :					
8 th :					
9 th :					
10 th :					

Earthquake Drills: Two each year.

Date Scheduled	Date Conducted	Number of Occupants	Response Time	Comments, Notes
1 st :				
2 nd :				

Severe Weather Safe Area: Twice each year, including one in March

Date Scheduled	Date Conducted	Number of Occupants	Response Time	Comments, Notes
1 st :				
March:				

Other Drills or Practice: Such as Lockdown, Shelter in Place, Intruder, Bomb Threat, etc.

Date Scheduled	Date Conducted	Type of Event Scheduled	Comments, Notes

Staff Training Log

Once a Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan is completed, all personnel need to be oriented to it. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends that this orientation:

- Be informal
- Not be part of a simulation
- Includes a discussion of Roles and Responsibilities
- Introduces related Policies, Procedures, Plans and Responsibilities

Annually, each childcare center should prepare a schedule of orientation and training events. Use the worksheet below to outline a schedule for staff training events and drills.

Month	Training Event, Who is to be Trained, and Location	Person Responsible	Comments
January			
February			
March			
April			
May			
June			
July			
August			
September			
October			
November			
December			

Annual Review Policy

Once the Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan has been developed, your center is responsible for updating its plan on an annual basis and distributing updated copies to appropriate stakeholders, as documented below. A schedule similar to the one below should be located at the beginning of your center’s Crisis Response Plan.

Date Reviewed:	Person Responsible:	New Copies Distributed to:

Approval of the Emergency Plan

Once the Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan has been developed, your center is responsible for getting approval of the plan from official sources. The Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan should be reviewed by the director and the parent board or board of directors if you have one.

C. Identify Hazards of the Area

It is vital to record the potential hazards for your geographic area and risks to your building(s) so you know what to expect and what to do to protect children and staff. It is important to understand that disasters have a cascading effect, for example:

- Forest fires lead to debris flows, mudslide, grassfires and smoke/pollution
- Earthquakes cause fires, loss of water supply, structural damage
- Flooding blocks roads, damages property, and ruins food supply
- Tornadoes destroy buildings, cause fallen power lines

The Childcare Center Crisis Response Team should consider which disasters (caused by both natural hazards and human/technological factors) could occur or have occurred in your region, and identify actions to take in each situation to lessen the impact of an event.

In this section, you will find:

- **Classroom and Building Hazard Worksheet**

Classroom and Building Hazard Worksheet

Instructions: With the help of teachers, maintenance staff and others—like local emergency response personnel—the Childcare Center Crisis Response Team should identify any special circumstances that exist in the center or near the building that present problems or potential risks to persons or property. These may include materials used in activities, issues specific to your location in the building, situations which may block evacuation from the building, community issues (factories, airport, water plant, and rivers/streams), etc. Please describe any such potential hazards below, and actions requested to mitigate.

Potential Hazard	Action Requested to Mitigate the Hazard
<i>Example: Overgrown bushes near classroom window</i>	<i>Example: Regular trimming of bushes</i>
<hr/>	<hr/>

d. Identify Evacuation Routes

Your childcare center should identify several evacuation routes for different types of emergencies. The evacuation routes must be able to accommodate movement of children without exposing children or staff members to danger. In the case of a bomb threat situation, the evacuation route should avoid center parking lots, large containers, and other areas where secondary devices may be hidden. The added concerns of chemical incidents include wind direction and avoiding walking into the danger.

In this section, you will find:

- **Evacuation Plan: Outside the Childcare Center Building**
- **Evacuation Plan: Alternate Building Location Within Walking Distance**
- **Evacuation Plan: Alternate Building Location Requiring Transport**

Evacuation Plan: Outside the Childcare Center Building

Use the following worksheet to plan for evacuation from the building to an on-site or near-site Assembly Area (e.g., near-site football field). The Assembly Area should minimize exposure of children to dangers or hazards around the building.

1. Examine floor plans and maps for your childcare center grounds and surrounding neighborhood. Determine two exits for each room in the building. Consider factors such as: gas, sewer, power lines; chain link fences (electrical hazard); facilities containing toxic or radioactive material, water towers, multiple story buildings (vulnerable to collapse), transformers, and balconies (which may fall from buildings). Be sure to describe how you would evacuate non-mobile children such as infants or children with special health needs.

2. Designate each of the following in the Assembly Area:

Command Post _____

Access for emergency vehicles _____

Child assembly areas (by team) _____

First aid area _____

Heliport landing area for air medical (if traffic gridlock prevents vehicular access) _____

Psychological first aid area _____

Child release _____

Media area _____

3. Place copies of floor plans and evacuation routes, highlighted as appropriate, in this section of the guide, and post throughout the building.
4. Communicate Child Accounting and Release procedures to parents (see Sections j and k).

Evacuation Plan: Alternate Building Location Within Walking Distance

In inclement weather, it may be necessary to move children to an alternate building location rather than using the typical outdoor location. Use the following worksheet to plan for evacuation from the building to an off-site building location within **walking distance** from the childcare center. Remember to coordinate your planning with other childcare centers and community stakeholders as appropriate.

1. Examine maps and site plans for possible Alternate Building Location in the immediate vicinity of the childcare center property.
2. Consider factors such as roadways, waterways, power lines, metal fences, utilities, etc., and select routes that minimize exposure to area hazards. Also consider the fact that you may care for infants and toddlers who can't be expected to walk far or walk in an orderly way. Use evacuation cribs as needed.
3. Establish relationship and coordinate planning with persons from nearby childcare centers, schools, community centers, businesses, churches, etc. to use Alternate Building Locations.
4. Designate each of the following:

<p>Alternate Building Location</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">(Address)</p>	<p>Lead Contact /Phone</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Secondary Location</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">(Address)</p>	<p>Lead Contact /Phone</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

USE SPACE BELOW for any special planning needs, routes, alternate routes, or for coordinating your childcare center's plan with other childcare centers or schools in the community.

Evacuation Plan: Alternate Building Location Requiring Transport

Use the following worksheet to plan for evacuation from the building to an off-site building location **requiring transport** from the childcare center. Refer to page 34 of this document for local evacuation maps to assist in your planning. Even though your childcare center may not have access to a vehicle to transport children, remember to coordinate your planning with other schools and community stakeholders as appropriate. For example, you might be able to arrange to rent or borrow a vehicle during an emergency from other agencies in the area.

1. Plan for transporting children and staff to an Alternate Building Location. Examine local area maps for primary and secondary roadways to transport children and staff to an Alternate Building Location.
2. Consider how you will move children who require child safety seats.
3. Consider factors such as roadways (for potential traffic “gridlock”), waterways, power lines, metal fences, utilities, etc., and select routes that minimize exposure to area hazards.
4. Coordinate planning with other childcare centers, schools, community centers, businesses, churches, and others as appropriate to establish reciprocal relationships for Alternate Building Location. See Section (g) for more information on developing partnerships with local schools and other agencies.
5. Assign each of the following:

Alternate Building Location	Lead Contact /Phone
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
(Address)	
Secondary Location	Lead Contact /Phone
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
(Address)	

USE SPACE BELOW for any special planning needs or for coordinating your childcare center’s plan with other centers or schools in your community.

e. Identify Emergency Alert Codes

Each childcare center’s Crisis Response Team should develop private code words to use when activating emergency response procedures. Codes should be used in situations where immediate action is necessary, but the children and staff may be in danger if everyone in the building knows of the emergency. For example, a hostile intruder may panic if the director announces the intruder’s presence. The codes will inform personnel of the type of emergency and appropriate actions to take.

The Crisis Response Team should develop and tell the code words to staff that may be involved in responding to an emergency. It is important that staff are aware of the following codes and understand appropriate actions to take.

Emergency Alert Codes at Our Childcare Center

Code Word (e.g., “Green”)	Emergency	Actions

Establish industry wide standard Code-Words

f. Develop Emergency Toolkit

Each childcare center’s Crisis Response Team should develop a “toolkit” to have available for use during an emergency. Items in the toolkit should not be used for anything other than emergency activities. A member of the Crisis Response Team should be assigned to make sure the toolkit is updated (change batteries, update phone numbers, etc.).

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you begin to pull together your emergency toolkit:

- **Assess the special needs of your children and make sure your toolkit contains items to address those needs** (e.g., inhalers, epi-pens, insulin). This means that parents will have to get an extra prescription for these items. Medications will need to be checked to make sure they haven’t expired.
- **The toolkit should be portable and easy to get in an emergency.** Consider having a toolkit that is outside the building after an evacuation. If some items such as food and water don’t fit in the kit, assign center staff to take charge of getting them during an emergency. Make sure you have a backup for each person assigned a role in case they are absent the day of the emergency.
- **Some of the recommended items for your kit may be too expensive for your childcare center.** Assemble all the items you can and try to identify community agencies that may be able to donate items (e.g., battery powered megaphone) or provide resources to your children in an emergency (e.g., food and water).

In this section, you will find:

- **Emergency Toolkit Checklist**
- **Crisis Bags for the Classroom**

Emergency Toolkit Checklist

ITEMS:	NOTES:
<input type="checkbox"/> Copies of the all forms completed in the development of the childcare center Crisis Response Plan	
<input type="checkbox"/> Map of building(s) with location of Exits, Phones, First Aid Kits, Assembly Areas	Keep copies in your kit and also At your local police or fire station.
<input type="checkbox"/> Blueprints of center building(s), including utilities	Keep copies in your kit and also at your local police or fire station.
<input type="checkbox"/> Map of local streets with evacuation route (Alternate Building Location requiring Transport)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlights	
<input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit and non-latex gloves	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tape and plastic for windows	
<input type="checkbox"/> Food and water for all children for 1-3 days	
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff roster (including emergency contacts)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Child roster (including emergency contacts for parents)	Copies should also be kept in each classroom and taken with teachers if they need to evacuate the building.
<input type="checkbox"/> Master schedule	
<input type="checkbox"/> Two-way radios and/or cellular phones	
<input type="checkbox"/> Battery powered radio and spare batteries	
<input type="checkbox"/> Battery powered megaphone	
<input type="checkbox"/> Several legal pads and ball point pens	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grease boards and markers (or dry erase boards)	
<input type="checkbox"/> White peel-off stickers and markers (for name tags)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Local telephone directory	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lists of other emergency phone numbers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Supplies for children with special needs (e.g., inhalers, epi-pens, insulin)	Parents will have to get an extra prescription for these items. Extra medications will need to be Checked to make sure they haven't expired.
<input type="checkbox"/> Formula, diapers and wipes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	

Crisis Bags for the Classroom

Many experts recommend that each classroom be equipped with a crisis bag. These can take the form of backpacks, tote bags, or even five-gallon buckets. The contents should include the following:

- Current child roster with emergency contacts. Make sure to update and check often.
- Copy of emergency procedures
- First aid supplies
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Activities for children
- Paper and pens
- Clipboard

Store each crisis bag in an easily accessible location.

g. Identify Local Partners and Resources

Your emergency planning efforts will be most successful when they involve your community's major stakeholders. Ideally, major stakeholders should include representation from:

- Other childcare centers in your community
- Schools in your community
- Local law enforcement
- Local fire department
- Parents
- Health and mental health professionals
- Business leaders
- Local emergency management officials
- The media

For each of these stakeholder groups, determine the following:

- In an emergency, what is the role of this stakeholder group?
- What does this stakeholder group need to know about our center's crisis response plan **now**, before an emergency happens?

Once you determine the role of each of these groups and what they need to know about your Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan, **meet with them** and give them an overview of what is in your plan, **walk them through** the pieces of your plan they need to know about, and **incorporate their feedback and ideas** into the appropriate pieces of your plan. Once you incorporate their feedback into your plan, give **them a copy of the plan**. It is important for stakeholders to become involved in your childcare center's crisis response planning before a crisis happens. This strengthens your center's ability to coordinate with important emergency responders and successfully handle any emergency.

In this section you will find information and tools to help you foster relationships with your local stakeholders and to develop a plan specific to your community:

- **Local and Regional Emergency Response Phone Numbers**
- **Local Evacuation Maps**
- **Emergency Contact Posting Template**
- **Childcare Center Partnership Agreement Template**

Local and Regional Emergency Response Phone Numbers

To help you reach out to local emergency response officials, here is a list of emergency contacts and local emergency management directors in Rhode Island. Use these master lists to create your own list for your childcare center. Remember to update your list on a regular basis, as names and phone numbers frequently change.

Emergency Contact Information for Rhode Island

Police and Fire Emergency	911
United Way 211	211
Poison Control Center	800-222-1222
National Grid - Electric	800-909-1212??
National Grid - Gas	401-831-8800??
Radio Stations	WPRO Radio 630 AM/92.3 FM WHJY Radio 94.1 FM WHKK Radio 100.3 FM WWLI Radio 105.1 FM WWBB Radio 101.5 FM WHJJ Radio 920 AM WSKO Radio 790 AM
Television Stations	WLNE Channel 6 WPRI Channel 12 WJAR Channel 10
Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)	800-RI CHILD (800-742-4453)
Family Services	
Region 1 Providence	528-3502
Region 2 East Bay	254-7000
Region 3 South	294-5300
Region 4 North	721-2400
RI Department of Mental Health (MHRH) Community Mental Health Centers	
Providence	274-7111
Cranston, Johnston and NW RI	553-1031
East Bay	435-7475
South County	364-7705
Newport, Middletown	846-1213
Pawtucket, Central Falls	723-1915
Kent County	732-5656
Northern RI	235-7120
Crisis Services	
RI Critical Incident Management Team, Inc.	Pager: 763-2778
Missing children hotline (24 hr)	RI State Police 444-1124
Child Mental Health	457-4514

Family Counseling	222-3504
Domestic violence hotline	800-494-8100
Samaritans suicide hotline	800-365-4044
Victim Assistance	
Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Line	800-742-4453
Child Advocate Office	222-6650
Rape Crisis Hotline	421-4100
Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)	800-656-HOPE (800-656-4673)
Runaway Hotline (RI)	521-7233
Runaway Hotline (National)	800-621-4000
Hazardous Materials	
Report hazardous materials leak or spills (24 hr.)	800-662-8802
Department of Environmental Management (DEM)	222-2797
Rhode Island Office of Communicable Diseases	222-2577
Disaster Assistance	
American Red Cross (24 hr.)	831-7700
RI Emergency Management Agency (24 hr.)	800-439-2990 401-946-9996 401-255-0951 (RIEMA Duty Officer)

Local Emergency Management Information in RI

The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency maintains a searchable database of up to date contact information for each Rhode Island Municipality. To assist in planning you should find your city or town's information using the following link -

<http://www.riema.ri.gov//resources/emergencymanager/response/local.php>

Once you have located your local emergency contact information, print the page, or use the template included in this section to develop a document to be posted in your center.

Local Evacuation Routes

Evacuation Maps

In 2013, Rhode Island's 21 coastal communities received community-wide evacuation maps from the United States Army Corps of Engineer (USACE) as a product of the Hurricane Evacuation Study. The maps show Hurricane Evacuation Zones that are recommended to be evacuated from during potential worst-case Hurricane Surge Inundation.

Evacuation Zone "A", shown in red, is recommended to be evacuated prior to an expected category 1 or 2 hurricane. Evacuation Zone "B", shown in yellow is recommended to be evacuated prior to an expected category 3 or 4 hurricane. For more information on the hurricane categories view the [Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale](#).

To view a local evacuation map click on the corresponding community name below.

Barrington	Little Compton	Portsmouth
Bristol	Middletown	Providence
Charlestown	Narragansett	South Kingstown
Cranston	Newport	Tiverton
East Greenwich	New Shoreham	Warren
East Providence	North Kingstown	Warwick
Jamestown	Pawtucket	Westerly

For Live Links to City and Town Maps Visit

<http://www.riema.ri.gov/planning/evacuation/index.php>

Childcare Center Partnerships

Consider establishing partnerships with other childcare centers or schools in your community so that you can help each other prepare and respond to emergencies, particularly when evacuation is necessary. During a childcare center evacuation, your center may want to relocate the children to a neighboring childcare center or school.

Like all emergency planning, a childcare center partnership agreement requires advance coordination of all aspects of the arrangements. Space inside the childcare center must be large enough to house a second group of children and the impact on the host facility must also be considered. This will require the host facility to be prepared to alter schedules and address the emotional impact of involving the host center’s children in the emergency.

The Childcare Center Crisis Response Teams from both facilities should be informed of the agreement and fully understand what is expected if evacuating to the partner facility or hosting the partner facility during an emergency.

Use the Childcare Center Partnership Agreement below as a guide to preparing written agreements with neighboring facilities.

Childcare Center Partnership Agreement

Name and location of host facility:

Director of host facility:

Contact Numbers:

Assistant Director:

Contact Numbers:

Location within the facility where children will be sheltered:

If Emergency Toolkit is stored at host facility, location of kit:

Crisis Response Team Member responsible for coordinating evacuation to host facility:

h. Create Crisis Response Plan for Special Needs Children

Be sure to give special consideration to the unique needs of staff and children with disabilities, and infants and toddlers when developing the Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan. Evacuation and relocation procedures will need to address any mental, physical, motor, dietary, developmental and sensory limitations.

Ask all teachers currently working with special needs children to fill out the following worksheet. Collect all the worksheets and make enough copies to include in every copy of the Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan.

In this section, you will find:

- **Teacher Survey: Children Needing Special Assistance**

i. Communicate Before, During and After an Emergency

Communication is a critical part of emergency management. Childcare center staff members and children must be told what is happening and what to do. Parents of children and families of staff members must be informed about the situation, including the status of their child or family member. Timely contact with law enforcement and other emergency services is necessary for effective response. The media must also be informed and kept updated.

In this section, you will find:

- **Sharing Information with Staff**
- **Dealing with Rumors**
- **Communication Technology**
- **Strategies for Communicating with Parents and Community**
- **Sample Letter to Parents – Before an Emergency**
- **Sharing Information with Parents in the Event of an Emergency**
- **Sample Letter to Parents – After an Emergency**
- **Parent Fact Sheets**
- **Sharing Information with the Media**
- **Sample Statement to the Media**

Sharing Information with Staff

Substitute Teachers

Make sure substitute teachers have basic information about the center's emergency plan. When a substitute teacher arrives at the center, it may be helpful to provide a brief orientation to the center's emergency plan, including where to find written information about emergency response procedures, evacuation routes, and the center's emergency alert codes.

The Telephone Tree

A telephone tree is a simple system for notifying staff of an emergency event when they are not at the childcare center. The first person on the list calls several people, who in turn call others, etc., until everyone on the list has been notified of the situation. A carefully written statement, saying what is and is not yet known, and what steps may need to be taken, should be drafted before the telephone tree is activated.

During/After an Emergency

The Director will need to notify staff of an event or emergency and keep them informed as additional information becomes available and as plans for management of the situation evolve.

Dealing with Rumors

Establishing good communication networks is important for dealing with rumors. People are going to talk about an emergency, and when accurate information is not available, rumors begin. Rumors create a negative perception of the childcare center's ability to manage an emergency. The most effective strategy for combating rumors is to provide facts as soon as possible.

1. Identify and notify internal groups including staff, teachers, custodians, secretaries, etc. These are primary sources of information and are likely to be contacted in their neighborhoods, at grocery stores, etc. It is critical that they have accurate information because what they know will be passed on. A staff meeting should be held before staff members go home so that what is (and is not) known can be clearly communicated.
2. Clerical staff answering the telephone at the childcare center must know what information can be shared and what information cannot be shared with the public. They must be kept informed of inaccurate information that is circulating so they can help correct misinformation. They must all receive consistent and updated information as it becomes available. Additional office staff may be required in an emergency event.
3. Use of key communicators in the community will also combat rumors. A telephone tree or a briefing held especially for identified community representatives directly associated with the childcare center will help convey accurate information.
4. The media can also help control rumors; ask them to provide frequent updates to the public, particularly providing accurate information where rumors need to be dispelled.

Communication Technology

Look at your communication technology capacity and needs using this list as a starting point. Document your childcare center's communication tools and how they will be used during an emergency. Common tools include the following:

1. **Telephone** – Your childcare center might want to consider having one unpublished number. Check with the phone company to see if there are unused lines in the center's control panel that can be activated if needed. Use standard jacks and mark them clearly so emergency personnel can find them.
2. **Bullhorns and megaphones** – Battery-powered megaphones can be effective for communication in an emergency. You should include one in the center's emergency toolkit. Procedures about storage and use will help make sure it is available when needed.
3. **Two-way radio** – Two-way radios provide a reliable method of communication between rooms and buildings at a single site. All staff should be trained to operate the 2-way radio. However, two-way radios are not a secure means of communication and therefore discretion should be used when discussing sensitive issues (e.g. personal information about students or staff affected by the emergency). Two-way radios should not be used during a bomb threat, as radio waves can activate an explosive device.
4. **Computers** – Existing computers may be used for communication both within the center and to other sites. E-mail may be a useful tool for updating information for staff or other facilities or agencies in an affected area.
5. **Fax machines** – Possible uses include an accident outside the center where lists of children and staff members involved, their locations, and needed telephone numbers can be quickly and accurately communicated. Medical information, release forms, and authorizations can be faxed and returned in emergencies.
6. **Cellular telephones** – These phones may be the only tool working when electric service is out; they are useful to staff who may be end route to or from a site. However, cell phones may not work or become overloaded, and should not be your center's only emergency communication option. Note that many cell phones incorporate a two-way radio feature and should not be used during a bomb threat, as these devices can activate an explosive device.
7. **"Panic buttons"** – "Panic buttons" may be connected directly to the police or other emergency services. In some communities, there is an immediate response; in others, the police or fire departments call the center to confirm the emergency.
8. **Alarm systems** – Bells or buzzers which may be sounded in different ways to signal different types of emergencies - for example, fire, severe weather, or special alert (with instructions to follow).

Strategies for Communicating with Parents and Community

An important aspect of managing emergencies is dealing effectively with parent reactions and community agencies. Communication with parents and the community is best begun before an emergency occurs. Some useful strategies include the following:

1. Inform parents about the childcare center's emergency plan, its objectives, and the need for it; such information can be included in a newsletter or other informational materials prepared for parents and can be explained during open houses or other meetings. See the sample letter in this section.
2. Develop a relationship with parents so that they trust and feel comfortable calling your staff in the event of emergency.
3. Develop templates of materials that may be needed including:
 - a. Letters to parents informing them of what happened.
 - b. Information regarding possible reactions of their child and ways to talk with them.
 - c. How the childcare center is handling the situation.
4. Develop a list of community resources that may be helpful to parents or helpful to the center in the event of an emergency.
5. Identify parents who are willing to volunteer in case of an emergency, and include them in preparation and training efforts.
6. Parent handbooks should include a description of the plan so parents know what to expect.

Sample Letter to Parents – Before an Emergency

Dear parents,

Even though it is unlikely that an emergency will happen at our facility, we believe it is very important to be prepared just in case an emergency happens. So we have developed an emergency response plan for our facility. We developed this plan to keep your child safe in the event of an emergency, until you or your emergency contact is able to pick the child up.

Our emergency response plan has policies and procedures for:

1. **Preparing** for an emergency, including forming a planning team and conducting drills,
2. **Responding** to an emergency, and
3. **Following up** after an emergency, including helping children and staff return to normal activities as soon as possible.

(Add more detail about your facility's plan if appropriate.) As part of our plan, we ask you to consider the following:

(Add information about what your center would like parents to do ahead of time to help the center prepare for an emergency – e.g., prepare an emergency toolkit for the child, sign emergency contact/release form)

We would be happy to talk about our plan with you, and answer any questions you may have. Thank you supporting our childcare center as we work together to keep the children in our care safe and sound.

Sincerely,

(Director Name) (Phone)

Sharing Information with Parents in the Event of an Emergency

In the event of an emergency, parents have very specific information needs. First, parents want to know their children are safe; then, parents want to know the details of the emergency situation, to know how it is being handled, and to know that the children will be safe in the future. The first reactions are likely to involve fear. Upon learning of an incident at the childcare center, parents are likely to arrive at the center in search of their child or to telephone, looking for information.

Establishing a system for responding quickly to parent needs for information is very important. For example, assign a staff member to be responsible for traffic flow and parking for parents in the event of an emergency, as well as establishing private areas to talk with parents individually if necessary.

Anger is another common reaction of parents, particularly in the case of senseless acts of violence. In the event of an emergency or disaster:

1. Tell parents exactly what is known to have happened. Do not speculate.
2. Implement the plan to manage phone calls and meet with parents who arrive at the center.
3. Schedule and attend a Crisis Management Briefing (CMB) for parents as soon after the incident as possible. The CMB is an open question-and-answer meeting that will provide an opportunity for childcare center staff to listen to and respond to parent concerns (which is helpful in addressing rumors and other misinformation) and to work on restoring parental trust in the childcare center.
4. In the event of an incident that involves damage or destruction, an open house for parents and other members of the community to see the center restored to its “normal” state helps everyone get beyond the emergency.
5. Parents or other community members may wish to view the scene of a disaster. Those affected may also need to view the scene. Plans for the physical safety as well as mental health needs of those visiting the scene should be considered.

In the event of an emergency, parents have very specific information needs.

Sample Letter to Parents – After an Emergency

Dear parents,

As you may know, our facility has recently experienced (specify event, whether death, fire, etc.) which has deeply affected us. Let me briefly review the facts (give brief description of incident and known facts).

We have implemented our childcare center's crisis response plan to respond to the situation and to help our children and their families. Children and staff will react in different ways to emergencies of this nature, so it will be important to have support available to assist children in need. Counselors are available at the center to assist children as they express their feelings related to (the specific event). We have included a reference sheet **[please see page 87 for a sample]** to help you recognize possible reactions you may observe in your child. If you feel your child is in need of special assistance or is having a great deal of difficulty coping with (the loss, disaster, etc.), please do not hesitate to call.

While it is important to deal with grief, loss, anger and fear reactions, we believe it is essential to resume as normal a routine as possible regarding the center's activities. The following modifications in our childcare center's regular schedule will be in effect during (specify dates), and after that time all regular schedules and routines will resume. (Specify needed information such as memorial services, possible changes in classroom or meeting locations, alterations in operating hours, etc.)

Thank you for your support of our childcare center as we work together to cope with (specify event). Please observe your child closely over the next several days and weeks to watch for signs of distress that may indicate a need for additional support and guidance.

Please feel free to call if you have any concerns or questions regarding your child, or steps being taken by the childcare center to address this (loss, tragedy, etc.).

Sincerely,

(Director Name) (Phone)

Fact Sheets for Parents

Regular, clear communication between childcare centers and families is essential. Letters to parents and guardians, often handed to parents directly, sent home in children’s diaper bags or placed in cubbies for pickup, are a key communications tool between childcare centers and parents.

Especially when an emergency has occurred at the childcare center or has involved one or more children or staff members at a center, fact sheets, written together with public safety officials, can be an effective way of relaying important and helpful information. Unlike discussion, fact sheets can be reread and used as a reference tool. The information in fact sheets can form the outline for media interviews if necessary.

What Should a Parent Fact Sheet Say?

All well-constructed parent fact sheet share of number of characteristics:

- They are clear and simply written.
- They avoid words or phrases that are inflammatory.
- They contain only accurate information without speculation.
- They involve parents in the solutions.

Often a fact sheet is limited to three paragraphs:

1. The first paragraph outlines the situation.
2. The second paragraph details the steps the childcare center has taken—along with other public safety and/or public health officials—to remedy the problem.
3. The third paragraph lists ways that families can help and how families can get more information.

How is a Parent Fact Sheet Prepared?

The director prepares a draft of a backpack letter. In all situations that involve police or fire and rescue investigations, public safety officials must also review the letter before it is sent home. The Rhode Island Department of Health likewise reviews letters that involve public health issues.

Every effort should be made to allow as much time as possible for the review process.

Sharing Information with the Media

Most news people are sensitive when reporting emergencies that occur in childcare settings and want to do a good job. The following suggestions will promote clear communications with the media:

- Identify a single information source, usually the center's director or person responsible for communicating with the media.
- Direct media representatives to one area where briefings can take place.
- Instruct all employees to refer all information and questions to the center's director or person responsible for communicating with the media.
- If the emergency is a death, consult with the deceased child/staff member's family before making a statement.
- Insist that reporters respect the privacy rights of children and staff.
- The childcare center should decide what to say, issue a statement, and answer questions within the limits of confidentiality.
- Remind employees that only designated spokespersons are authorized to talk with news media.
- Take initiative with news media and let them know what is or is not known about the situation.
- Emphasize the childcare center's good record.
- If there is involvement with a criminal case, work in conjunction with the law enforcement spokesperson.
- Don't try to "kill" a story; don't say "no comment;" don't speculate; don't try to blame anyone for anything.
- When communicating, maintain a unified position and message; keep messages concise, clear, and consistent.
- Delay releasing information until facts are verified and the center's position is clear; prepare statements about the situation in advance.
- Assign enough staff to handle phones and keep a log of calls and personal contacts.
- Express appreciation to all persons who helped handle the emergency.

Sample Statement to the Media

Example 1: Field Trip Bus accident

The children at our facility were on a field trip when their bus was involved in an accident on Interstate 195 (I-195). Emergency medical teams have arrived and are transporting children to (NAME) community hospital. Our [staff member position and name] is at the scene, and our director is at the hospital. We have established a hotline for parents (or, staff members are calling parents of children involved in the accident). The hotline number is (NUMBER). Our Childcare Center Crisis Response Team is implementing our emergency protocol for bus accidents, including providing support to children and staff.

Note: Important points made are: preparedness of the childcare center; coordination of efforts with community agencies, access to information for parents; responsible immediate action taken by childcare center representatives (including those in positions of authority); and support provided for children at the center.

j. Develop an Accountability System

The Crisis Response Team should make sure that the childcare center has a system in place for quickly accounting for every person on the center's property. As soon as a crisis is recognized, the system should be used to account for all children, staff and visitors.

Accounting for all children, staff and visitors at the center includes implementing systems such as:

- Daily attendance log for children
- Daily attendance log for staff
- Daily visitor sign-in and sign-out log

Attendance and visitor sign-in logs should be easily accessible during an emergency, and staff should be instructed to take all logs with them during an evacuation. Emergency responders treat a situation very differently when people are missing. For example, when a bomb threat occurs, the stakes are substantially higher if firefighters do not know whether children are in the building when they are trying to locate and disarm a bomb.

The movement of children out of the building adds the extra responsibility of accounting for every child. In order to account for children, teachers/staff members must bring rosters with them from the classroom and maintain control of the group once they are outside. Missing and extra children should immediately be reported to the team member responsible for child accountability. This information should be passed on to the director and then to police or fire personnel.

k. Develop a Parent/Child Reunification Plan

When an emergency occurs at a childcare center, children’s parents will contact the center and may begin arriving at the center to retrieve their children. The arrival of parents could interfere with those dealing with the crisis. It is important to plan for an organized process where parents and children can be reunited in an orderly fashion. This is called a “Parent/Child Reunification Plan.” A well-organized parent reunion plan will alleviate parents’ fears and deliver children to their parents or guardians efficiently.

In this section, you will find:

- **Tips for Developing a Parent/Child Reunification Plan**

Tips for Developing a Parent/Child Reunification Plan

The parent reunion area should be away from other areas used in the emergency and can be some distance from the childcare center building. When choosing a parent reunion area, plan for the worst case scenario so that the location can support many parents and vehicles, provide shelter and possibly offer some isolated quiet areas. One good location for this type of operation is a nearby church or similar building with plenty of parking available.

All people involved in the incident, including your local police department, must be aware of the parent reunion location and be able to direct parents to the area. Depending on the type of incident, the parent reunion area may require security and traffic direction, which should be identified in advance and coordinated with the police department during the incident.

Parent contact should be expected and planned for by giving specific directions to the parents as they arrive in the area. A central location must be established where the parents can wait to be reunited with their children and obtain information about the event. A well-informed member of the crisis team should be at this location and coordinate the activities at this site. This person should: 1) coordinate with the director for information that can be released to the parents, and 2) communicate with the other member of the Crisis Response Team to help children coming to the reunion location join their parents. The reunion location may become very chaotic during an incident, but with proper planning the activities can be established quickly and remain organized.

Steps for developing a parent/child reunification plan:

- 1) Using the center's evacuation routes, identify a parent/child reunification area for each type of evacuation, including:
 - Outside the building
 - Alternate building location within walking distance
 - Alternate building location requiring transport
- 2) Identify a crisis team member to coordinate activities on the site as parent reunion organizer, including coordinating contact with the media.
- 3) Come to agreement with local emergency management personnel about any special procedures that may be necessary (e.g., traffic direction) to direct parents to the reunification area. Keep local partners updated with any changes to your parent/child reunification plans.
- 4) Develop child release procedures once reunification occurs.
- 5) Communicate reunification location and release procedures to parents once every year or as they are updated.
- 6) Cross-check parent identification with the center's parent pickup/release sheet.

3. Response

Response is the process of taking the right actions *while* an emergency situation is unfolding. Responding means “doing what you planned to do.” In this phase, childcare centers gather together resources needed to handle the emergency at hand.

This section has examples of many different types of emergencies. For each event listed, there are specific actions to be taken to handle the situation correctly. Depending on the type of emergency, directions for handling the situation may be the responsibility of the childcare center or may involve a community-wide response.

The examples here have been developed and approved by the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA). Use this section as a guide to responding to emergencies at your childcare center.

a. Universal Emergency Procedures

b. General Emergency Intervention Checklist

c. Emergency Procedures Guide – Alphabetical Listing

- Allergic Reaction
- Assaults/Fights
- Bomb Threat
- Bus Accident
- Disease Outbreak/Foodborne Illness
- Fire
- Hazardous Materials
- Intruder/Hostage
- Missing Child/Kidnapping
- Natural Disasters
 - Earthquake
 - Flood
 - Heat Alert
 - Hurricane
 - Severe Thunderstorms
 - Snow
 - Tornado
- Poisoning

- **Radiological Incident**
- **Rape/Sexual Abuse**
- **Serious Injury/Death**
- **Suspicious Mail or Package**
- **Utility Failure**
 - **Gas Line Break**
 - **Electric Power Failure**
 - **Water Line Break**
- **Weapons**

a. Universal Emergency Procedures

Universal Emergency Procedures are a set of standard, clear directions that may be used across a variety of emergency situations. When an emergency begins, the Director will decide which Universal Emergency Procedures to use, based on the situation.

There are **six basic procedures** that can be utilized in responding to various emergencies:

1. Evacuation
2. Reverse Evacuation
3. Severe Weather Safe Area
4. Shelter in Place
5. Lockdown
6. Drop, Cover, and Hold

(Adapted from FEMA, 1999 and Henniker Community School, 2000)

In this section, you will find:

- **Protocols for Six Universal Emergency Procedures**

Protocols for Six Universal Emergency Procedures

<p>1. <u>Evacuation</u> (For use when conditions outside are safer than inside)</p> <p>When announcement is made or alarm sounded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take the closest and safest way out as posted (use secondary route if primary route is blocked or hazardous) ▪ Take roll book for child accounting ▪ Assist those needing special assistance ▪ Do not stop for belongings ▪ Go to designated Assembly Area ▪ Check for injuries ▪ Take attendance; report according to Child Accounting and Release procedures ▪ Wait for further instructions 	<p>2. <u>Reverse Evacuation</u> (For use when conditions inside are safer than outside)</p> <p>When the announcement is made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Move children and staff inside as quickly as possible ▪ Assist those needing special assistance ▪ Report to classroom ▪ Check for injuries ▪ Take attendance; report according to Child Accounting and Release procedures ▪ Wait for further instructions
<p>3. <u>Severe Weather Safe Area</u> (For use in severe weather emergencies)</p> <p>When announcement is made or alarm sounded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take the closest, safest route to shelter in designated safe areas (use secondary route if primary route is blocked or dangerous) ▪ Occupants of portable classrooms shall move to the main building to designated safe areas ▪ Take roll book for child accounting ▪ Take attendance; report according to Child Accounting and Release procedures ▪ Assist those needing special assistance ▪ Do not stop for belongings ▪ Close all doors ▪ Remain in safe area until the “all clear” is given ▪ Wait for further instructions 	<p>4. <u>Shelter in Place</u> (For use when evacuation is not possible)</p> <p>When the announcement is made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children are to report to nearest available classroom or other designated location ▪ Assist those needing special assistance ▪ Close and tape all windows and doors and seal the gap between bottom of the door and the floor (external gas/chemical release) ▪ Take attendance; report according to Child Accounting and Release procedures ▪ Do not allow anyone to leave the room ▪ Stay away from all doors and windows ▪ Wait for further instructions
<p>5. <u>Lockdown</u> (For use to protect building occupants from potential dangers in the building)</p> <p>When the announcement is made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children are to report to nearest available classroom ▪ Assist those needing special assistance ▪ Close and lock all windows and doors and do not leave for any reason ▪ Cover all room and door windows ▪ Then stay away from all doors and windows and move children to interior walls and drop ▪ Shut off lights ▪ BE QUIET! ▪ Wait for further instructions 	<p>6. <u>Drop, Cover and Hold</u> (For use in earthquake or other imminent danger to building or immediate surroundings)</p> <p>When the command “Drop” is made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DROP – to the floor, take cover under a nearby desk or table and face away from the windows ▪ COVER - your eyes by leaning your face against your arms ▪ HOLD - on to the table or desk legs, and maintain present location/position ▪ Assist those needing special assistance ▪ Wait for further instructions

b. General Emergency Intervention

Checklist for Childcare Center Staff

Although each situation is different, the following is a general listing of actions to consider when faced with an emergency.

- Take a deep breath, don't panic, and verify information.
- Use appropriate alert code to notify necessary staff and activate plan.
- Activate childcare center's Crisis Response Team, and assign duties as needed:
 - Safety Officer (overall safety conditions of facility)
 - Public Information Officer (media relations, contact)
 - Liaison Officer (coordinate with outside agencies)
 - Planning/Intelligence (incident time log, evaluate information)
 - Operations (child accounting and release, facilities, medical, crisis intervention & response, food and water)
 - Logistics (communications and supplies)
 - Administration/Finance (documentation, record keeping)
- Determine whether to call 911, whether to implement Universal Emergency Procedures.
- Notify and request assistance from community partners to:
 - Assist with planning for a response and implementing protocols
 - Provide recovery support to children
- Set up a Command Post for communication.
- Bring "emergency toolkit" to Command Post (inside or outside).
- Schedule briefing with staff before the center opens and after it closes to:
 - Advise staff of the known facts and provide written statement
 - Support their concerns and emotions
 - Provide classroom assistance if needed; refer to emergency procedures guide flip chart
 - Outline schedule for the day; modify day's schedule if needed
 - Identify resources available to teachers and children
- Establish contact with parents/family members of affected children to offer support, to determine assistance needed, and (in the event of a death) for information regarding visitation/funeral arrangements.
- Prepare formal statement or announcement to students, parents and media; provide statement to secretaries, teachers, and other internal personnel.
- Review and implement "Recovery" activities.
- Document actions taken, secure records as legal documents.

C. Emergency Procedures Guide

(Alphabetical Index)

Protocols

- Allergic reaction
- Assaults/fights
- Bomb threat
- Bus accident
- Disease outbreak
- Fire
- Hazardous materials
- Intruder/hostage
- Missing child/kidnapping
- Natural disasters
 - Earthquake
 - Flood
 - Heat Alert
 - Hurricane
 - Severe thunderstorm
 - Snow
 - Tornado
- Poisoning
- Radiological incident
- Rape/Sexual abuse
- Serious injury/death
- Suspicious mail or package
- Utility failure
 - Gas line break
 - Electric power failure
 - Water line break
- Weapons

Allergic Reaction

Possible Symptoms:

- Skin irritation or itching, rash, hives, nasal itching or sneezing, localized swelling, swollen tongue.
- Restlessness, sweating, fright, shock.
- Shortness of breath, vomiting, cough, hoarseness.

Staff First Actions:

- If there is a life threatening situation, call 911.
- Send for immediate help (Operations: First Aid, CPR, medical) and medication kit (for known allergies).
- Assist in getting “Epi pen” (Epinephrine) for individuals who carry them, and prescription medications.
- If an insect sting, remove stinger immediately.
- Notify director.
- Assess situation; help child/employee to be comfortable.
- Move only for safety reasons.

Director, Team:

- Call 911, depending on circumstances.
- Notify parent or guardian.
- Administer medication, by order of a doctor, if appropriate; apply ice pack to affected area, keep victim warm or take other actions as indicated.
- Observe for respiratory difficulty.
- Record on an attached label: time & site of insect sting or food ingested, name of medicine, dosage & time administered.

Preventive/Supportive Actions:

- Emergency health care should be completed by parents for each child, and should be easily accessible by childcare facility staff.
- Bus drivers should have emergency sheets for all known acute reactors.
- Encourage employees with special health considerations to alert director and work associates of any difficulties and possible remedial actions.
- Training in allergic reactions and administration of Epi pen

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Assaults/Fights

Staff Procedures:

- Ensure the safety of children and staff first.
- Call 911, if necessary.
- Notify CPR / first aid certified persons in building of medical emergencies.
- Notify director. Director assembles Crisis Team Members.
- Seal off area where assault took place.
- Defuse situation, if possible.
- Director notifies police if weapon was used, victim has physical injury causing substantial pain or impairment or if assault involved sexual contact (i.e., intentional touching of anus, breast, buttocks, or genitalia of another person in a sexual manner without consent. This includes touching of those areas covered by clothing.)
- Director notifies parents of children involved in assault.
- Document all activities. Ask victim(s) / witness(es) for their account of incident.
- Assess counseling needs of victim(s) or witness(es). Implement post-crisis procedures.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Bomb Threats

Upon receiving a message that a bomb has been planted in building:

- Ask where the bomb is located, when bomb will go off, what materials are in bomb, who is calling, why caller is doing this.
- Listen closely to caller’s voice and speech patterns and to noises in background.
- Notify director or designee.
- Director/designee orders evacuation of all persons inside building(s).
- Director/designee notifies police (call 911). Director must report incident to Fire Marshal.

Evacuation procedures:

- Director warns children and staff. Do not mention “Bomb Threat.” Use standard fire drill procedures.
- Direct children to take their coats.
- Children and staff must be evacuated to a safe distance (suggested distance at least 2000 feet) Outside of building(s). Director may move children to _____ (*primary relocation center*) if weather is inclement or building is damaged.
- Teachers take roll after being evacuated.

- No one may reenter building(s) until entire building(s) is declared safe by fire or police personnel.
- Director notifies children and staff of termination of emergency. Resume normal operations.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Bus Accident

The teacher in charge of an activity trip should prepare trip bus folders, including an emergency telephone number for each child who rides the bus. One copy of the child manifest should be placed in the trip folder and a second copy should accompany the teacher on the trip.

Bus drivers should have designated procedures for handling emergency situations. The following protocol is intended to outline steps to be taken by childcare center staff should an accident occur.

In the event of a Bus Accident: Staff at the Scene:

- Call 911, if warranted.
- Call director.
- Childcare center staff at the scene of a bus accident will help to implement basic first aid until emergency medical services and/or law enforcement arrives and takes charge of the emergency.
- Childcare center staff at the scene of a bus accident will move all uninjured children to a safe distance from the accident.
- The names of all injured children and the location to which they may be taken for medical treatment will be provided to the childcare center.

Director, Team:

- Ascertain the names of any injured children and the nearest location of any medical treatment facility.
- Parents/guardians of all children on the bus will be notified as quickly as accurate information is available.
- Designated childcare center staff representative will proceed to any medical treatment facility to which an injured child has been taken to assist parents and to provide support to children, as appropriate.
- Complete appropriate documentation.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Disease Outbreak/Foodborne Illness

Possible Signs of Disease Outbreak/Foodborne Illness:

- Unusual number of people showing the same signs and symptoms
- Threats received or group taking credit for causing illness
- Ordinary disease or symptoms but out of season

Staff First Actions:

- If imminent risk, call 911.
- Send for immediate help (Operations: First Aid, CPR, medical).
- Isolate persons affected in a separate room and restrict access to the room to essential personnel only.
- Notify director.
- Help children/employees be comfortable.

Director, Team:

- Call 911, depending on circumstances.
- Call the Rhode Island Office of Communicable Diseases: 401-222-2577 to determine whether an outbreak investigation is needed. **(This is critical as there may be contaminated food that was sent to multiple locations that could make more people ill.)**
- Notify parent or guardian of affected child.
- Administer medication, by order of a doctor, if appropriate.
- Document all activities.
- Implement post-crisis procedures.

For more in-depth information about preventing and responding to disease outbreaks in your facility, please refer to the School Nurse Teachers Infectious Disease Reference Manual, available at: <http://www.health.ri.gov/disease/communlikable/providers.php>. or <http://www.health.ri.gov/publications/manuals/SchoolNurseTeacher.pdf>.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Fire

In the event of fire, smoke from a fire or if a gas odor has been detected:

- Pull fire alarm.
- Evacuate children and staff to a designated area.
- Follow normal fire drill route. Follow alternate route if normal route is too dangerous.
- Teachers take child roster.
- Director/designee notifies police (call 911). Director must report to Fire Marshal's office.
- Teachers take roll after being evacuated.
- Director may move children to _____ (*Primary Relocation Center*) if weather is inclement or building is damaged.

- No one may reenter building(s) until declared safe by fire or police personnel.
- Director/designee notifies children and staff of termination of emergency. Resume normal operations.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Hazardous Materials

Incident occurred in childcare center:

- Call 911.
- Notify director.
- Seal off area of leaks/spill.
- Take charge of area until fire personnel contain incident.
- Personnel in charge will recommend shelter or evacuation actions.
- Follow procedures for sheltering or evacuation.
- Notify parents if children are evacuated.
- Resume normal operations after consulting with fire officials.

Incident occurred near childcare center property:

- Fire or Police will notify director.
- Fire officer in charge of scene will recommend shelter or evacuation actions.
- Follow procedures for sheltering or evacuation.
- Notify parents if children are evacuated.

Resume normal operations after consulting with fire officials.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Intruder/Hostage

An **intruder** is an unauthorized person who enters the facility.

Procedures:

- Notify director.
- Ask another staff person to accompany you before approaching intruder.
- Politely greet intruder and identify yourself.
- Ask intruder the purpose of his/hervisit.
- Inform intruder that all visitors must register at the main office.
- If intruder's purpose is not legitimate, ask him/her to leave. Accompany intruder to exit.

If intruder refuses to leave:

- Warn intruder of consequences for staying on the facility property. Inform him/her that you will call police.
- Notify security or police and director if intruder still refuses to leave. Give police full description of intruder.
- Walk away from intruder if he/she indicates a potential for violence. Be aware of intruder's actions at this time (where he/she is located in facility, whether he/she is carrying a weapon or package, etc.)
- Director may issue lockdown procedures (see Universal Emergency Procedures section).

Hostage:

- If hostage taker is unaware of your presence, do not intervene.
- Call 911 immediately. Give dispatcher details of situation; ask for assistance from hostage negotiation team.
- Seal off area near hostage scene.
- Notify director.
- Give control of scene to police and hostage negotiation team.
- Keep detailed notes of events.

If taken hostage:

- Follow instructions of hostage taker.
- Try not to panic. Calm children if they are present.
- Treat the hostage taker as normally as possible.
- Be respectful to hostage taker.
- Ask permission to speak and do not argue or make suggestions.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Missing Child/Kidnapping

Missing Child:

- Call 911 immediately; provide the following information:
- Child's name and age
- Address
- Physical and clothing description of the child, including any distinguishing marks such as visible scars or birthmarks
- Medical status, if appropriate
- Time and location child was last seen
- Person with whom the child was last seen
- Have child's information including picture, if possible, available for the police upon their arrival.
- Childcare center will notify parents of missing child and attempt confirmation that child is with family; if not - inform parents of situation and the steps taken.
- Childcare center will report incident to DHS and Child Protective Services.
- Childcare center will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity. Incident reports are stored:
 - _____

Kidnapping:

- Call 911 immediately; provide the following information:
- Child's name and age
- Address
- Physical and clothing description of the child, including any distinguishing marks such as visible scars or birthmarks
- Physical and clothing description of the suspect
- Medical status, if appropriate
- Time and location child was last seen
- Vehicle information and direction of travel
- Follow Emergency Lockdown procedure in Section(a).
- Have child's information including picture, if possible, available for the police upon their arrival.
- Childcare center will notify parents of missing child; inform parents of situation and the steps taken.
- Childcare center will report incident to DHS and Child Protective Services.
- Childcare center will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity. Incident reports are stored:
 - _____

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Natural Disasters: Earthquake

Procedures:

- Remain calm and stay where you are.
- If indoors, take cover under a sturdy desk, table or bench and hold on or sit against an interior wall.
- If outdoors, stay there. Move away from building, utility poles, wires and streetlights.
- Be prepared for after shocks.
- Evacuate building if gas or chemical fumes are present.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Natural Disasters: Flood

Procedures:

- Monitor emergency alert stations and listen to television newscasts for the latest information.
- Evacuate the building by prescribed routes when necessary.
- Stay away from floodwaters as it may contain chemicals or raw sewage.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Natural Disasters: Extreme Heat

Procedures:

- Monitor the heat index and listen to news reports for the latest information.
- Relax classroom drinking policies.
- Curtail physical activities.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Natural Disasters: Hurricane

Procedures:

- Monitor Emergency Alert Stations (see Preparedness Section (f) Local and Regional Emergency Contact information) or NOAA Weather stations (National Weather Service, or Weather Channel).
- Evacuate the building by prescribed routes when necessary.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Natural Disasters: Severe Thunderstorms

Procedures:

- Monitor weather updates with a battery-operated radio.
- Escort children to designated area for shelter.
- If inside, move to pre-designated shelter area.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Natural Disasters: Snow

Procedures:

- Director will determine prior to opening hours whether or not to open the childcare center; families will be notified.
- If the childcare center must close during hours of operation because of snow or storm, the director will notify parents by: _____ (e.g., telephone, website, radio, etc.)
- If weather conditions prevent a parent or legal guardian from reaching the center to recover a child, the center will care for the child until such time as the parent, legal guardian, or emergency contact person can safely claim the child. The emergency toolkit supplies will be used as needed.
- If the above persons cannot claim the child within 3 hours of the center closing, the childcare center will contact police to transport the child to a Child Protective Services care site.
- Childcare center will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity; incident reports are stored: _____

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Natural Disasters: Tornado

Procedures:

- Shut off gas.
- Monitor Emergency Alert Stations (see Preparedness Section (f) Local and Regional Emergency Contact information) or weather stations (National Weather Service or Weather Channel).
- Bring all persons inside building.
- Close windows and blinds.
- Review tornado drill procedures and location of safe areas. Tornado safe areas are under desks and in hallways away from windows and large rooms.
- Review “stop, drop and cover” procedures with children.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Poisoning

In the event of the poisoning or suspected poisoning of a child or an employee:

Immediate Actions:

- If there is a life-threatening reaction, call 911.
- Call the Poison Center Hotline (1-800-222-1222).
- Administer first aid directed by Poison Information Center.
- Notify director.
- Utilize building personnel with knowledge of poisonous materials, first aid training, etc.
- Notify parents.
- Seek additional medical attention as indicated.

Preventive Measures:

- Keep poisonous materials in a locked and secure location.
- Post the Poison Information Center emergency number in prominent locations such as the office.
- Post the names of building personnel who have special paramedic, first aid training, or other special lifesaving or life-sustaining training.
- Provide staff with information on possible poisonous materials in the building.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Radiological Incident

Rhode Island does not have a commercial Nuclear Power Plant within its borders. However, our neighboring states of Connecticut and Massachusetts do. In the event of a site emergency of some kind, appropriate warning and instruction will be broadcast over the state Emergency Alert System (EAS). There are two basic protective actions: sheltering and evacuation.

Sheltering Notification:

- Bring all persons inside building(s).
- Close all exterior doors and windows.
- Turn off any ventilation leading outdoors.
- Cover up food not in containers or put it in the refrigerator.
- If advised, cover mouth and nose with handkerchief, cloth, paper towels or tissues.

Evacuation may not be necessary in Rhode Island (distance factor):

- State and/or local officials will announce a nuclear power plant emergency.
- All precautionary actions will be announced by State Officials.

Radiological Incident/Accident:

- An accident or incident involving radiological materials at or near a childcare center is quite possible. Consequently, certain precautionary actions should be taken. The three basic actions are:
- **Time:** Minimize the amount of time near and exposed to the source.
- **Distance:** Maximize the distance away from the source.
- **Shielding:** Maximize the amount of material (i.e. wood, concrete, earth, etc.) between the individual and radioactive source.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Rape/Sexual Abuse

When a childcare facility is notified that a rape or other sexual abuse may have occurred, the facility must protect the identity and right to privacy of the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator. News of the incident should be contained as much as possible. Staff response will be directed at assisting the victim, addressing and minimizing the fear of other children and employees, and stopping the spread of rumors. Services provided to the victim and her/his family must be kept confidential and should be coordinated with outside providers, such as a rape crisis center, children's advocacy center, or hospital emergency room.

Rape / Sexual abuse becomes a crisis to be managed by childcare center staff only when one or more of the following conditions exist:

- A rape or other sexual abuse occurs within the facility.
- A member of the alleged victim's family requests intervention.
- The alleged victim's friends request intervention.
- Rumors and myths are widespread and damaging.
- Children witness police action or emergency services response.

When one or more of the above conditions exists, the following should be done:

- Direct the person providing the information, and others who hear the report, not to repeat it elsewhere in the facility.
- Ensure the short-term physical safety of the child.
- The nurse, counselor or other staff shall administer first aid and secure immediate medical treatment.
- Notify appropriate law enforcement, and/or rape crisis center.
- Designate a counselor or staff member closest to the alleged victim to talk about the types of support he or she needs.
- Determine which peers close to the victim may need support.
- Take action to quell rumors.
- Store all records related to rape or other sexual abuse incident and services provided in a confidential file.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Serious Injury/Death

If incident occurred in childcare facility:

- Call 911.
- Notify CPR/first aid certified persons in building of serious medical emergencies (names of CPR/first aid certified persons are listed in Crisis Team Members section).
- If possible, isolate affected child/staff member.
- Notify director/designee.
- Activate childcare center crisis team. Designate staff person to accompany injured/ill person to hospital.
- Director notifies parent(s) or guardian(s) of affected child.
- Direct witness (es) to psychologist/counselor. Contact parents if children are sent to psychologist/counselor.
- Determine method of notifying children, staff, and parents.
- Refer media to _____(Spokesperson)
- _____(Telephone Numbers—home, work, mobile)

If incident occurred outside of childcare facility:

- Building administrator confirms the accuracy of the report with law enforcement or family.
- Activate childcare center crisis team if appropriate.
- Notify staff before normal operating hours.
- Determine method of notifying children and parents. Announce availability of counseling services for those who need assistance.
- Refer media to _____(Spokesperson)
- _____(Telephone Numbers—home, work, mobile)

Post-Crisis Intervention:

- Meet with counseling staff and _____(Div Child Mental Health or other mental health workers) to determine level of intervention for staff and children.
- Designate rooms as private counseling areas.
- Escort affected children’s siblings and close friends and other “highly stressed” children to counselors.
- Assess stress levels of staff. Recommend counseling to overly stressed staff.
- Follow-up with children and staff who receive counseling.
- Designate staff person(s) to attend funeral.
- Allow for changes in normal routines to address injury or death.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Suspicious Mail or Package

Procedures:

- Do not touch, smell, or taste unknown substances.
- Fence off area and mark as “Do not enter or Dangerous.”
- Evacuate and seal off room.
- Wash hands thoroughly.
- Call 911.
- Make a list of all adults and children present in the room at the time of the incident to provide to local health authorities and the police.
- Director will inform all parents of the incident.
- Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity; incident reports are stored

_____.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Utility Failure: Gas Leak

Procedures:

- Call 911.
- Notify director/designee.
- Open windows.
- If directed, follow evacuation procedures.
- Do not re-enter building until utility officials say it is safe.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Utility Failure: Electric Power Failure

Procedures:

- Calm children.
- Stay in classroom until evacuation notification.
- If there is danger of fire, evacuate the building by evacuation procedures,
- If a short is suspected, turn off all electric devices in room, and notify custodian.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Utility Failure: Water Line Break

Procedures:

- Notify director/designee and custodian.
- Relocate articles that may be damaged by water.
- Relocate children to designated safe areas.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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Weapons

Children or staff who are aware of a weapon brought to the facility:

- Notify director or teacher immediately.
- Tell director or teacher name of suspected person who brought the weapon, where the weapon is located, if the suspect has threatened anyone or any other details that may prevent the suspect from hurting someone or himself/herself.
- If teacher suspects that weapon is in classroom, he/she should confidentially notify a neighboring teacher. Teacher should not leave classroom.

Director:

- Call police if a weapon is suspected, as viewed by a reasonable person, to be in the facility.
- Ask another administrator to join you in questioning suspected individual.
- If feasible, accompany suspect to private office to wait for police.
- If situation warrants, isolate suspect/area until police arrive.
- Assign person detailed notes of all events and why search was conducted.
- Notify parent(s) or guardian(s) of suspect is a child. Explain why search was conducted and results of the search.
- Avoid confrontation. Try not to disarm him/her. Back away with your arms up. Remain calm.

Additional steps for our facility (if any):

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4. Recovery

Recovery is the process of helping people with the physical, psychological and emotional trauma associated with experiencing tragic events.

The following section contains follow-up measures and tools to address the aftermath of an emergency situation. This collection of recovery measures is designed to assist teachers and other professionals as they help children and families begin the recovery and healing process.

If you have already begun developing a Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan, use this section to make sure you've covered the important components of recovering from an emergency. Use the information and examples provided here to add to any areas that need additional attention.

In this section you will find:

- a. Introduction to Recovery & Aftermath Planning**
- b. Helping Children Cope with Disaster**
- c. Mental Health Checklist**
- d. General Reactions to Emergencies in Adults**
- e. Information to Share with Parents**

a. Introduction to Recovery & Aftermath Planning

Recovery and aftermath planning is a long-term process of supporting people who have experienced an emergency or tragedy. At first, people may be in shock and may need help with basic needs. In the months and years that follow an emergency, individuals may enter a grief phase and need continued support. Children and their parents, staff, public safety personnel and the larger community are all affected by tragic events and benefit from immediate and ongoing support.

Short Term vs. Long Term Recovery

It is important to understand recovery at two levels: immediate and ongoing. *Immediate support* is needed from the first moments of a traumatic event through the first few days following it. Often, recent victims of major trauma are in a state of shock, and at this time basic human needs of food, shelter and clothing are often a primary focus. *Long-term recovery* needs may not be obvious, and for many, ongoing support will be needed.

Ongoing recovery refers to support provided to some individuals for weeks, months, or years following a tragic event.

Who should provide recovery services?

For some traumatic events, your childcare center's crisis response team may be able to provide immediate and ongoing recovery services. For other emergencies, your center will need to ask for help from local community mental health providers, employee assistance programs, and similar services.

It is important to establish relationships and agreements with local mental health providers **before** a crisis occurs.

Refer to Section (f) in the Preparedness section to develop a network of local and regional mental health providers to assist in the aftermath of an emergency.

It is important to establish relationships and agreements with local mental health providers before a crisis occurs.

b. Helping Children Cope with Disaster

Disasters can be very frightening and traumatic, especially for young children. How disasters affect children is not simple to predict. The range of responses can include symptoms such as nausea, not sleeping well, slowed thinking, bad memories, regressed behavior, anxiety, guilt, depression, anger and many other responses.

It is important for your center to have a good relationship with local mental health agencies to help staff and children in your care with these feelings and experiences after an emergency.

In general, there are several things that you can do to help the children in your care cope with their feelings.

- Reassure the children that they will not be left alone and that you are there to protect them.
- Be aware of changes in a child's behavior but also know that some children may not outwardly show their distress.
- Keep to routines such as meals, activities, and naps, as much as possible.
- Avoid allowing young children to watch or listen to news coverage of the disaster.
- Give simple but truthful answers to children's questions and make sure children understand your answers. Don't give more information than the children can use and understand.
- Give children opportunities to express their feelings through activities such as play-acting, using dolls, storytelling, painting, or drawing.
- Be especially supportive of the children's feelings and need to be close. Give lots of hugs, smiles, and kind words.
- Reassure children that they are not responsible for the disaster. Listening to children's stories about disasters and feelings may help.
- If possible, take a moment away from the children and make sure you address your own fears and anxieties by talking with other adults.
- Seek professional assistance when needed. The Mental Health Checklist in this section may help you determine the need for additional assistance. Your own knowledge of the child and your instincts about the child's needs will help you make a decision. When in doubt, call for professional help.

C. Mental Health Checklist

This checklist, provided by FEMA, can help parents and teachers determine if a child needs professional counseling after a disaster or traumatic event. Add up the pluses and minuses to obtain a final score. If the child scores more than 35, it is suggested you seek a mental health consultation.

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Has the child had more than one major stress within a year BEFORE this disaster such as a death, molestation, major illness or divorce? If yes, +5. | 1. |
| 2. Does the child have a network of supportive, caring individuals who relate to him/her daily? If yes, -10. | 2. |
| 3. Has the child had to move out of his/her house because of this disaster? If yes, +5. | 3. |
| 4. Was there reliable housing within one week of the disaster with resumption of the usual household members living together? If yes, -10. | 4. |
| 5. Is the child showing severe disobedience or delinquency? If yes,+5. | 5. |

Has the child shown any of the following as a NEW behavior for more than three weeks after the disaster?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 6. Nightly states of terror? +5 | 6. |
| 7. Waking from dreams confused or in a sweat? +5 | 7. |
| 8. Difficulty concentrating? +5 | 8. |
| 9. Extreme irritability? +5 | 9. |
| 10. Loss of previous abilities in toilet or speech? +5 | 10. |
| 11. Onset of stuttering or lisping? +5 | 11. |

Subtotal for this page _____

- 12. Persistent severe anxiety or phobias? +5
- 13. Obstinacy/stubbornness? +5
- 14. New or exaggerated fears? +5
- 15. Rituals or compulsions? +5
- 16. Severe clinging to adults? +5
- 17. Inability to fall asleep or stay asleep? +5
- 18. Startling at any reminder of the disaster? +5
- 19. Loss of ambition in the future? +5
- 20. Loss of pleasure in usual activities? +5
- 21. Loss of curiosity? +5
- 22. Persistent sadness or crying? +5
- 23. Persistent headaches or stomachaches? +5
- 24. Hypochondria? +5
- 25. Was anyone in the child's immediate family killed or severely injured in the disaster (including injury to the child)? If yes, +15.

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Subtotal for this page _____

Total for both pages _____

NOTE: Any child presenting a preoccupation with death, unusual accident proneness, or suicidal threats should be referred for immediate consultations. It is also recommended that any child who has been seriously injured or who has lost a parent, sibling or caregiver to death be referred to a mental health professional.

This child has been referred to:

Referral made by:

On this date:

6. References and Resources

d. General Reactions to Emergencies in Adults

First reactions may include:

- Numbness, shock, difficulty believing what has occurred or is in the process of occurring
- Physical and mental reactions may be very slow or confused
- Difficulty in decision making; uncertainty about things; it may be difficult to choose a course of action or to make even small judgment calls

Ongoing reactions may include:

- Loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, loss of interest or pleasure in everyday activities
- Desire to get away from everyone - even family/friends
- Emotional lability; becoming irritable or upset more quickly than usual
- Feelings of fatigue, hopelessness, helplessness
- Digestive problems; headaches or backaches
- Difficulty accepting that the emergency has had an impact or difficulty accepting support from friends and the community

Some things that can be helpful:

- Take time to relax and do things you find pleasant; getting away for a few hours with close friends can be helpful
- Stick with your regular routine for a while; avoid making changes, even if it appears to be a positive change
- Get regular exercise or participate in a regular sport; activity soothes anxiety and helps you relax
- Keep your days as simple as possible; avoid taking on any additional responsibilities or new projects
- Tap sources of assistance with your workload - have other staff members help with time-consuming tasks
- If symptoms of stress persist beyond a few weeks or are severe, seek professional help

6. References and Resources

e. Information to Share with Parents

Helping Your Child after a Disaster

Children may be especially upset and express feelings about the disaster. These reactions are normal and usually will not last long. Listed below are some problems you may see in your child:

- Excessive fear of darkness, separation, or being alone
- Clinging to parents, fear of strangers
- Worry
- Increase in immature behaviors
- Not wanting to go to school
- Changes in eating/sleeping behaviors
- Increase in either aggressive behavior or shyness
- Bedwetting or thumb sucking (if this is not normal for your child)
- Persistent nightmares
- Headaches or other physical complaints

The following will help your child or teen:

- Talk with your child about his/her feelings about the disaster; share your feelings, too.
- Talk about what happened; give your child information he/she can understand.
- Reassure your child that you are safe and together. You may need to repeat this often.
- Hold and comfort your child often.
- Spend extra time with your child at bedtime.
- Allow your child to mourn or grieve over lost belongings (a toy, a lost blanket).
- If you feel your child is having problems at school, talk to his/her teacher or counselor so you can work together to help him/her.

Long term recovery:

Please reread this information from time to time in the coming months. Usually a child's emotional response to a disaster will not last long, but some problems may be present or recur for many months afterward. Professionals skilled in talking with people experiencing disaster-related problems are on staff at your community mental health center.

6. References and Resources

Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan (CCCRP): A written plan to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. It is the modified version of this guide, tailored to meet the unique needs and resources of a given childcare center.

Crisis Management Briefing (CMB): An open question-and-answer meeting that happens after an emergency. It provides an opportunity for childcare center staff to listen to and respond to parent concerns (which is helpful in addressing rumors and other misinformation) and to work on restoring parental trust in the childcare center.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Hazardous Material and Terrorism Response Teams (HAZMAT)

Incident Command System (ICS): A nationally recognized organizational structure designed to handle Management, Operations, Logistics, Planning, and Administration and Finance during an emergency. The ICS allows for appropriate utilization of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications, and for the management of assigned resources to effectively accomplish stated objectives pertaining to an incident.

Incident Commander (IC): Highest ranking official in the Incident Command System responsible for the emergency/disaster operations. The IC directs from a command post set up in close proximity to the incident.

Public Information Officer (PIO): The official spokesperson designated by an organization to coordinate internal and external communications. Responsible for handling all requests for information and proactively providing consistent, accurate and timely information. The PIO establishes a central site for the media, maintains a log of all actions and communication, prepares press releases, keeps Incident Commander apprised and maintains all documentation to support the history of the event.

Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) Rhode

Island Department of Education (RIDE)

Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA)

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7. Websites

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National Association of School Nurses Disaster Resources: <http://www.nasn.org/nasn-resources/practice-topics/disaster-preparedness>

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care:
<http://ncrkids.org/>

National School Safety Center:
<http://www.schoolsafety.us>

Rhode Island Department of Education:
<http://www.ride.ri.gov/>

Rhode Island Department of Health:
www.health.ri.gov

Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency:
www.riema.ri.gov

U.S. Department of Education Disaster Planning Website:
www.ed.gov/emergencyplan

U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center:
<https://www.secretservice.gov/protection/ntac/>

8. Customizable Templates

The following forms are found throughout the School Emergency Planning guide. They are also included in this section for your convenience. Refer to the appropriate section of the guide for specific instructions on completing each form.

Our Childcare Center's Crisis Response Team Members

For Year Starting _____ *and Ending* _____

Name	Room / Position	Work Phone	Cell/Pager	Home Phone

Drills to Practice

Use the following worksheet to plan drills for your childcare center. Submit a copy of the schedule with your center’s plan, and use the original to document drills when they actually occur.

Fire Drills: Two fire drills in the first month of a new year, and one per month each following month.

Monthly Schedule	Date Conducted	Weather Conditions	Number of Occupants	Evacuation Time	Comments, Notes
1 st :					
1 st :					
2 nd :					
3 rd :					
4 th :					
5 th :					
6 th :					
7 th :					
8 th :					
9 th :					
10 th :					

Earthquake Drills: Two each year.

Date Scheduled	Date Conducted	Number of Occupants	Response Time	Comments, Notes
1 st :				
2 nd :				

Severe Weather Safe Area: Twice each year, including one in March

Date Scheduled	Date Conducted	Number of Occupants	Response Time	Comments, Notes
1 st :				
March:				

Other Drills or Practice: Such as Lockdown, Shelter in Place, Intruder, Bomb Threat, etc.

Date Scheduled	Date Conducted	Type of Event Scheduled	Comments, Notes

Staff Training Log

Once a Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan is completed, all personnel need to be oriented to it. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends that this orientation:

- Be informal
- Not be part of a simulation
- Includes discussion of Roles and Responsibilities
- Introduces related Policies, Procedures, Plans and Responsibilities

Annually, each childcare center should prepare a schedule of orientation and training events. Use the worksheet below to outline a schedule for staff training events and drills.

Month	Training Event, Who is to be Trained, and Location	Person Responsible	Comments
January			
February			
March			
April			
May			
June			
July			
August			
September			
October			
November			
December			

Annual Review Policy

Once the Childcare Center Crisis Response Plan has been developed, your center is responsible for updating its plan on an annual basis and distributing updated copies to appropriate stakeholders, as documented below. A schedule similar to the one below should be located at the beginning of your center's Crisis Response Plan.

Date Reviewed:	Person Responsible:	New Copies Distributed to:

Evacuation Plan: Outside the Childcare Center Building

Use the following worksheet to plan for evacuation from the building to an on-site or near-site Assembly Area (e.g., near-site football field). The Assembly Area should minimize exposure of children to dangers or hazards around the building.

1. Examine floor plans and maps for your childcare center grounds and surrounding neighborhood. Determine two exits for each room in the building. Consider factors such as: gas, sewer, power lines; chain link fences (electrical hazard); facilities containing toxic or radioactive material, water towers, multiple story buildings (vulnerable to collapse), transformers, and balconies (which may fall from buildings). Be sure to describe how you would evacuate non-mobile children such as infants or children with special health needs.

2. Designate each of the following in the Assembly Area:

Command Post _____

Access for emergency vehicles _____

Child assembly areas (by team) _____

First aid area _____

Heliport landing area for air medical (if traffic gridlock
Prevents vehicular access) _____

Psychological first aid area _____

Child release _____

Media area _____

3. Place copies of floor plans and evacuation routes, highlighted as appropriate, in this section of the guide, and post throughout the building.
4. Communicate Child Accounting and Release procedures to parents (see Sections j and k).

Evacuation Plan: Alternate Building Location Within Walking Distance

In inclement weather, it may be necessary to move children to an alternate building location rather than using the typical outdoor location. Use the following worksheet to plan for evacuation from the building to an off-site building location within *walking distance* from the childcare center. Remember to coordinate your planning with other childcare centers and community stakeholders as appropriate.

1. Examine maps and site plans for possible Alternate Building Location in the immediate vicinity of the childcare center property.
2. Consider factors such as roadways, waterways, power lines, metal fences, utilities, etc., and select routes that minimize exposure to area hazards. Also consider the fact that you may care for infants and toddlers who can't be expected to walk far or walk in an orderly way. Use evacuation cribs as needed.
3. Establish relationship and coordinate planning with persons from nearby childcare centers, schools, community centers, businesses, churches, etc. to use Alternate Building Locations.
4. Designate each of the following:

Alternate Building Location	Lead Contact /Phone
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
(Address)	

Secondary Location	Lead Contact /Phone
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
(Address)	

USE SPACE BELOW for any special planning needs, routes, alternate routes, or for coordinating your childcare center's plan with other childcare centers or schools in the community.

Evacuation Plan: Alternate Building Location Requiring Transport

Use the following worksheet to plan for evacuation from the building to an off-site building location **requiring transport** from the childcare center. Even though your childcare center may not have access to a vehicle to transport children, remember to coordinate your planning with other schools and community stakeholders as appropriate. For example, you might be able to arrange to rent or borrow a vehicle during an emergency from other agencies in the area.

1. Plan for transporting children and staff to an Alternate Building Location. Examine local area maps for primary and secondary roadways to transport children and staff to an Alternate Building Location.
2. Consider how you will move children who require child safety seats.
3. Consider factors such as roadways (for potential traffic “gridlock”), waterways, power lines, metal fences, utilities, etc., and select routes that minimize exposure to area hazards.
4. Coordinate planning with other childcare centers, schools, community centers, businesses, churches, and others as appropriate to establish reciprocal relationships for Alternate Building Location. See Section (g) for more information on developing partnerships with local schools and other agencies.
5. Assign each of the following:

Alternate Building Location	Lead Contact /Phone
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
(Address)	
Secondary Location	Lead Contact /Phone
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
(Address)	

USE SPACE BELOW for any special planning needs or for coordinating your childcare center’s plan with other centers or schools in your community.

Identify Emergency Alert Codes

Each childcare center’s Crisis Response Team should develop private code words to use when activating emergency response procedures. Codes should be used in situations where immediate action is necessary, but the children and staff may be in danger if everyone in the building knows of the emergency. For example, a hostile intruder may panic if the director announces the intruder’s presence. The codes will inform personnel of the type of emergency and appropriate actions to take.

The Crisis Response Team should develop and tell the code words to staff that may be involved in responding to an emergency. It is important that staff are aware of the following codes and understand appropriate actions to take.

Emergency Alert Codes at Our Childcare Center

Code Word (e.g., “Green”)	Emergency	Actions

Emergency Toolkit Checklist

ITEMS:	NOTES:
<input type="checkbox"/> Copies of the all forms completed in the development of the childcare center Crisis Response Plan	
<input type="checkbox"/> Map of building(s) with location of Exits, Phones, First Aid Kits, Assembly Areas	Keep copies in your kit and also At your local police or fire station.
<input type="checkbox"/> Blueprints of center building(s), including utilities	Keep copies in your kit and also at your local police or fire station.
<input type="checkbox"/> Map of local streets with evacuation route (Alternate Building Location requiring Transport)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlights	
<input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit and non-latex gloves	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tape and plastic for windows	
<input type="checkbox"/> Food and water for all children for 1-3days	
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff roster (including emergency contacts)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Child roster (including emergency contacts for parents)	Copies should also be kept in each classroom and taken with teachers if they need to evacuate The building.
<input type="checkbox"/> Master schedule	
<input type="checkbox"/> Two-way radios and/or cellular phones	
<input type="checkbox"/> Battery powered radio and spare batteries	
<input type="checkbox"/> Battery powered megaphone	
<input type="checkbox"/> Several legal pads and ball point pens	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grease boards and markers (or dry erase boards)	
<input type="checkbox"/> White peel-off stickers and markers (for name tags)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Local telephone directory	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lists of other emergency phone numbers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Supplies for children with special needs (e.g., inhalers, epi-pens, insulin)	Parents will have to get an extra prescription for these items. Extra medications will need to be Checked to make sure they haven't expired.
<input type="checkbox"/> Formula, diapers and wipes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	

Childcare Center Partnership Agreement

Name and location of host facility:

Director of host facility:

Contact Numbers:

Assistant Director:

Contact Numbers:

Location within the facility where children will be sheltered:

If Emergency Toolkit is stored at host facility, location of kit:

Crisis Response Team Member responsible for coordinating evacuation to host facility:

