

Emergency Response Planning for Early Childhood Settings

February 2026

The banner features illustrations of a red first aid kit, a blue surgical mask, a white pill bottle with an orange cap, and a blue tissue box.

Agenda

- Introductions
- Identifying Hazards
- Emergency Response Plans
- Emergency Response Options
- Emergency Supplies
- Scenario Practice
- Practice Component Instructions



The sign features the text "You are welcome here." surrounded by colorful hearts (red, yellow, purple, green) and a row of stylized human figures with raised arms.

Introductions

- **Name / Role**
- **Location / Program**
- **What are you hoping to learn in this training?**

Learning Objectives:

After completing the training, participants will be able to:

- Explain why it is important for child care programs to be prepared for emergencies and disasters and why it is important to practice for emergency disasters
- Describe examples of the types of emergencies and disasters child care programs should be prepared for
- Explain how to prepare for the three major types of action a child care program may have to take when there is an emergency or disaster
- Explain what should be included in an emergency response plan and the types of equipment and supplies child care programs need to be prepared for an emergency or disaster

What emergencies / hazards might you see in your setting?



What feels hardest to plan for?



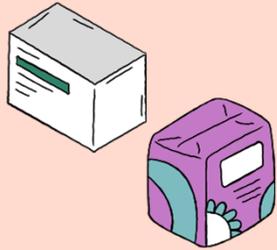
Know your hazards!

- Identify potential hazards in your specific location and setting.
- Consider natural disasters common to your area.
- Evaluate your building's vulnerabilities.
- Consider the ages and abilities of the children in your care.



Using the Hazard Identification worksheet, complete sections 1-4.

What types of emergencies/hazards have you identified?



Who Can help you identify potential hazards?



Why is an emergency response plan important?



Licensing Guidelines

Center Based

- . 3.7 Emergency Preparedness
- . 5.7 First Aid Kits

Family Childcare

- . 3.6 Emergency Preparedness
- . 5.7 First Aid Kits

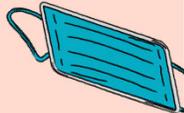
Essential components:

- **Comprehensive:** Covers all potential emergencies
- **Aligned:** Matches local emergency plans
- **Specific:** Tailored to the program's unique needs
- **Implementable:** Easy to follow and put into action
- **Regularly Practiced:** Drills ensure staff are familiar with the plan



Types of Emergency Actions

- Evacuate: Leave the building or area due to an unsafe situation.
- Shelter-in-Place: Take cover in a safe location within the facility.
- Lockdown: Used to secure everyone in a room or building during a threat.



Emergency Supplies



What is in your first aid kit?

What is available in your building?

What is in your emergency backpack?

Scenario Practice

#1 Fire Alarm During Lunch
 It's 12:05pm. You're serving lunch. The fire alarm goes off. You smell something faintly smoky near the kitchen area but can't see anything.
 Curveball: Two children are in the bathroom with an educator.

#2 Gas/Propane Smell in the Entryway
 You notice a strong gas smell near the main entrance. A parent is entering as you notice it. No alarm has gone off.
 Curveball: It's 5 minutes before pickup and several families are arriving.

#3 Power Outage + No Heat in Winter
 It's January. You lose power at 9:10am and temperatures are dropping fast. The building is getting cold.
 Curveball: Cell service is spotty and your landline is down.

Scenario Practice

#4 Sudden Severe Thunderstorm During Outdoor Play
 You hear thunder and see a storm moving in quickly. Weather alert says severe thunderstorm warning.
 Curveball: One classroom is farthest from the main building entrance.

#5 Poor Air Quality Day (Smoke / AQI Very High)
 You get a message that air quality is hazardous. Families are asking whether they should pick up early.
 Curveball: You were planning a large family event outside later today.

#6 Custody Conflict at Pickup
 A non-custodial parent arrives demanding their child and becomes agitated when told the child cannot be released.
 Curveball: This is happening in front of children and other families.

Scenario Practice

#7 Missing Child During Transition

You are lining up for outdoor play. When you do headcount at the door, one child is missing.

Curveball: A delivery driver just entered the building and a classroom door was propped open.

#8 Fire Alarm + Child With Mobility Needs

Fire alarm goes off during center time. You have one child with mobility needs who cannot move quickly and one infant classroom needs evacuation cribs.

Curveball: One exit is blocked due to snow drift.

#9 Power Outage + Phone Outage + Family Panic

Power and phones go out. Rumors spread in town that there is a "dangerous situation." Families begin arriving early and anxious.

Curveball: You cannot immediately confirm what is happening.

What would help you feel more confident tomorrow if an emergency occurred?

Practice Component

Review your program's existing emergency response plan.

- What is missing?
- What needs updating?
- Work with the leadership at your program to make any needed changes to ensure it is clear and comprehensive.

If you don't have your first plan yet or if your plan needs work this is the perfect time to do that work!

Come prepared to share:

- One strength of your plan
- One area still needing clarity
- One immediate next step.

