

The Daily Parent

A NEWSLETTER FOR WORKING PARENTS

DISASTERS HAPPEN

What is Your Child Care Program's Plan?

- ▶ Suspected Bomb Plot Under Investigation
- ▶ Fire Grows to 9,700 Acres Amid Hot Winds
- ▶ H1N1 Flu is a Global Pandemic
- ▶ Flooding Closes Major Transportation Routes
- ▶ Burst Pipes Cause \$150,000 Damage to Building
- ▶ Local Chemical Spill forces Evacuation of Neighborhood

Stories like these are in the news everyday. And behind every disaster and emergency there are personal stories about businesses and families having to cope with adversity.

We all need to be prepared and have plans in place for any kind of disaster or emergency. This is especially true for programs that care for young children.



If your child is in child care, is it essential that you know what kind of disaster preparedness plan your child care program has in place. Ask your child care provider these 10 questions to make sure you know the *what, when, where* and *how*

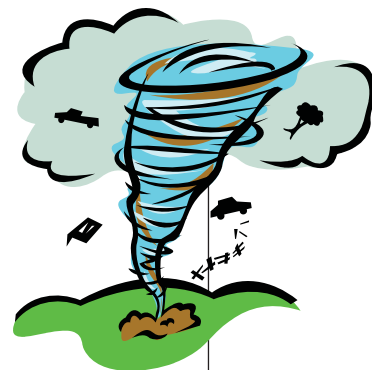
of your child care provider's emergency action plan.

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

- ➔ Make sure they have an emergency preparedness plan. Ask for a copy of the plan.
- ➔ Ask if they practice the plan on a monthly basis.
- ➔ Ask that reminders about important parts of the plan that affect parents be shared with parents regularly in newsletters, emails, on the program's website and on bulletin boards.
- ➔ If they do not have a plan, find out when they will. Let them know that you feel this is important. Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies can help your provider develop an emergency preparedness plan. Your provider can find a CCR&R by contacting Child Care Aware at 800-424-2242 or visiting www.childcareaware.org



2. *How will you safely evacuate my child to a safe, predetermined location? What will you do if you have to shelter-in-place?*

- ➔ Find out where the children will be moved and how they will be moved. Check to make sure the place is safe and acceptable.
- ➔ Ask about plans for an alternative site in case the first location is not available.
- ➔ Ask how infants and other children who are not able to walk or to follow instructions will be transported.



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- ➔ Ask where parents should gather if the program is required evacuate the children or to shelter-in-place.
3. *How and when will I be notified if a disaster occurs when my child is in child care?*
- ➔ Make sure you list at least two ways that you can be contacted. The program should have the numbers for your home phone, your work phone and your cell phone. They should have at least one e-mail address. Check regularly to make sure that your contact information is up-to-date.
 - ➔ Include information about other people who can take messages for you. If you are difficult to reach during the workday, consider giving the program the contact information for your supervisor. Include the phone number of someone out of your geographic area.
 - ➔ Ask if the program has a password-protected page on the program website, a telephone calling tree, an e-mail alert, or call-in voice recording. Is there an out-of-town phone number where staff and parents can call to leave a status message in a catastrophic disaster? Is there a designated radio or television station that the program will use to provide information about its status?
4. *If I cannot get to my child during or after a disaster, how will you continue to care for my child?*
- ➔ Make sure your provider has any important information about your child's health needs that they will need to care for your child for a longer than normal period of time.
 - ➔ Ask how will the program let you know if someone else has picked up your child? How will they make sure that this person has your permission to pick up your child in an emergency?
 - ➔ Check periodically to make sure your child has a change of clothes that is appropriate for the season.
5. *Have you and your staff received training on how to respond to my child's physical and emotional needs during and after a disaster?*
- ➔ Training in responding to emergencies is critical. Children at different stages of development and with different temperaments will react to disasters in different ways. Find

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out how the provider will help calm and reassure children during and after a disaster.

- ➔ Find out how contact information, medical records, medications and other important information is kept with the children during an emergency.
- ➔ Make sure your provider has a plan to always have someone onsite who has training in first aid and in CPR.

6. *Will you teach my preschool-age or school-age child what to do during an emergency?*



- ➔ Ask what kind of drills the provider has to help preschool-age children and school-age children practice what to do in different kinds of emergencies.
- ➔ Ask if the drills are monthly or more often.
- ➔ Ask if parents can participate in the drills. This can help you learn what steps are being taken and help you be more comfortable with the plan.
- ➔ *Do you have a disaster or supply kit with enough items to meet my child's needs for at least 72 hours or three days*
- ➔ If a kit is not available, ask how you can help get one. If necessary, involve other parents.
- ➔ If your child is on regular medication, make sure the provider knows about it. If possible provide an extra supply to have on hand in an emergency.

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

- ➔ Make sure local emergency management agencies know about your child care provider. Call and verify this yourself.



8. *How can I help you during and after a disaster*

- ➔ Becoming familiar with the way disasters will be handled in your program will help you see what can be done before and after a disaster
- ➔ Volunteer to help your provider prepare by organizing supplies and setting up procedures to contact parents during or after disasters.
- ➔ Give suggestions if you see a need that your program has not addressed.

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

- ➔ Ask if there will be a phone number, website or other way the child care program will contact parents.
- ➔ Ask if you will be informed when the program reopens or will it be up to you to contact them.
- ➔ Ask if there are backup plans to help you with your child care needs while your program recovers from a disaster.

10. *Take care of your own family.*

- ➔ When in doubt whether an emergency situation may be developing, stay home with your child.
- ➔ Make sure your family has a family emergency preparedness plan and that you practice it monthly. Make it part of your plan to pick up your child from child care under various situations.

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For More Information

NACCRRRA, *Is Child Care Ready? A Disaster Planning Guide for Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies*, <http://www.naccrra.org/publications/naccrra-publications/>, is a guide to help CCR&Rs help child care providers respond to disasters and continue to serve children.

NACCRRRA, *Preparing for Disaster: The Parent View*, http://www.naccrra.org/for_parents/coping/disaster, offers resources parents can use to work with child care provider to plan for and recover from any catastrophe that strikes.

NACCRRRA, *Helping Families and Children Cope with Traumatic Events*, http://www.naccrra.org/for_parents/traumatic-events/, offers resources of parents and child care providers about how to help children cope after a disaster.



Information in this issue of *The Daily Parent* is based on NACCRRRA's *What's the Plan? Ask Your Child Care Program Before a Disaster*

The Daily Parent is prepared by NACCRRRA, The National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies.
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