

Tennessee Department of Human Services Child Care Services Emergency Preparedness Plan

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I. BACKGROUND

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) licenses approximately 2,400 child care agencies across Tennessee with a capacity to serve an estimated 159,000 children. The National Commission on Children and Disasters recognized the need to improve emergency preparedness for children. In 2009, an interim report was released that recommended requiring disaster planning capabilities for child care agencies. Trust for America's Health identified a gap in their annual 2009 preparedness report, which found that Tennessee lacked a requirement that child care facilities (child care agencies) have a multi-hazard written evacuation and relocation plan for emergencies. For example, Tennessee consistently ranks in the top ten in the nation in the number of reported tornados. This report also addressed the mandate set out by the Office of Child Care for Child Care and Development (CCDF) funding grantees to develop formal emergency planning, response, and recovery processes for early childhood programs.

In November 2009, TDHS Child Care Services (or CCS) launched an emergency preparedness initiative to develop a state plan. This initiative focused on gauging the level of emergency preparedness in rural and urban child care facilities, and identified resource needs, and emergency preparedness policies. The initial TDHS CCS Emergency Preparedness Plan was introduced in July 2016. This document updates that initial plan based upon stakeholder input and continued focus on the needs of child care agencies.

II. PLAN SUMMARY

Plan Purposes

In the event of an emergency, the role of TDHS Child Care Services (CCS) is to support child care agencies and assure the provision of safe and healthy child care alternatives for families during and after a disaster or emergency. This Emergency Preparedness Plan provides specific actions that CCS may take during emergency situations, including but not limited to the following:

- Facilitating reunification of displaced children with their families.
- Partnering and coordinating with state and local emergency management, law enforcement, emergency services, fire, health, community resource agencies, and others who may provide assistance to families and child care agencies.
- Providing assistance to families needing immediate alternative child care.
- Providing assistance to displaced child care agencies.

This plan includes provisions for:

- Coordination and communication in the event of a disaster or emergency.
- Coordination for the relocation of children in affected TDHS licensed child care settings.
- Evaluation of CCS and partner agencies' abilities to function, assessment of provider needs, and assist with coordination of temporary child care.
- Meeting requirements set forth in T.C.A. § 71-3-517 that all licensed child care agencies, excluding drop-in child care centers, shall have a written multi-hazard plan to protect children in the event of an emergency.

Emergency Preparedness

The CCS Emergency Preparedness Plan is a living document. This plan emphasizes safety, leadership, education, training, and public awareness through a comprehensive approach addressing emergency preparedness and disaster planning with licensed child care agencies.

This plan was developed in consultation with the Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council (TNYCWC), our designated state advisory council on early childhood education and care, and the statewide Children in Disasters Task Force, whose members include Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA), Tennessee Department of Health, Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA), and public and nonprofit agencies and organizations.

This plan was also developed to assist child care agencies in taking steps to eliminate or reduce the impact of an emergency, develop the capacity to respond to disasters, and assist programs in returning to a normal state after a disaster has occurred. The plan addresses the following areas:

- Licensure rules and regulations that emphasize multi-hazard emergency preparedness planning, mitigation, response, and recovery;
- Provision of ongoing training and technical assistance to child care agencies that integrates working relationships with local emergency management agencies, public health officials, and others;
- Ensuring continuity of care through continuing child care services and child care assistance after an emergency/disaster;
- Encouraging and promoting local partnerships that incorporate the entire community in disaster planning; and
- Creating a website to make available disaster related and emergency preparedness resources, templates, sample forms, etc.;

Child Care Services Disaster Function

The following activities may be carried out by CCS during or after a disaster to ensure the health, safety and well-being of children receiving child care services:

- Communicating with partners, child care agencies, and families.
- Assisting with the relocation of children.
- Assessing the operational capacity of CCS to fulfill its role and responsibilities and assuring the provision of continued core functions, i.e. monitoring health and safety standards, subsidized child care services, etc.
- Performing needs assessments of damaged and/or affected child care agencies.
- Facilitating the development of emergency child care service, including the development and implementation of temporary special emergency response and recovery licensing policies.
- Designating teams to carry out emergency preparedness functions.
- Ensuring disaster teams have access to a hard copy of this plan.

Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Timeline

The diagram below approximates the process for disaster functions that may be carried out by CCS. **Disaster preparedness or mitigation** refers to actions that occur prior to a disaster. **Disaster response** refers to short-term actions that occur during, or immediately after a disaster. **Disaster recovery** refers to long-term actions that help to return the community to normal or near-normal conditions.



It should be noted that disaster functions could require extra staff, equipment, supplies, or financial resources. Whether or not CCS carries out an individual disaster function depends on the specific needs at the time, as well as the resources available. The CCS Emergency Preparedness Team will determine which disaster activities or functions should be implemented.

III. Program Administration

CCS developed this plan to support child care agencies and ensure families have access to safe and healthy alternative child care services for their children during and after disasters. The plan includes objectives outlined in the CCDF State Plan, an overview of the CCS team structure, and training requirements for staff and partners.

CCDF Plan Requirements

The Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 added a requirement that States and Territories include a Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan for coordination of activities with the State/Territory human services agency, emergency management agency, child care licensing agency, State/Territory local resource and referral agencies, and the State Advisory Council (SAC) (or other state-designated cross-agency body) that includes:

- Guidelines for continuing CCDF assistance and child care services after a disaster, which may include provision of temporary child care, and temporary operating standards for child care after a disaster.

- Requirements that child care agencies receiving CCDF have in place procedures for evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, lock-down, communication and reunification with families, continuity of operations, accommodation of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions.
- Requirements that child care agencies receiving CCDF have in place procedures for staff and volunteer emergency preparedness training and practice drills.

Child Care Services Emergency Preparedness Team

CCS will use a team structure to plan and assist child care agencies in the event of a disaster or an emergency. The CCS Central Office Emergency Preparedness Team has responsibility for providing oversight and managing specific disaster response tasks and will convene to discuss appropriate response(s). The team is composed of:

- Child Care Services Management Team (Child Care Services Director, Child and Adult Care Services Licensing Director, Child Care Certificate Program Director, Child Care Assessment Program Director, and the Child Care Compliance Director).
- Director of Operations, Division of Child Care and Community Services
- Assistant Commissioner, Division of Child Care and Community Services
- TDHS Emergency Services Coordinator(s)
- Fiscal Services staff, as assigned
- Office of General Counsel staff, as assigned
- Others as may be designated by the Commissioner

Regular Review and Update of Disaster Plan

The CCS Emergency Preparedness Plan will be reviewed bi-annually by the Child Care Services Management Team and approved by the Commissioner. The plan and any revisions will be disseminated to all Child Care Services staff and internal and external stakeholders as necessary.

Training of Child Care Services Staff and Partners

- Electronic and hard copies of this plan will be maintained and distributed to members of the CCS Emergency Preparedness Team and select field offices. Child Care Services staff who are new members of the team will receive information about the plan as part of their onboarding and/or new employee academy and additional electronic resources will be accessible via cloud-based storage, i.e. intranet or SharePoint solutions. Emergency-related team lists, including work and home contact information, will be maintained and updated by CCS Central office and distributed periodically.
- Periodic training for staff and/or partners with emergency preparedness/response roles will be coordinated for identified team members as needed. Staff and partners with such roles may receive additional training unique to their geographic area, i.e. responding to earthquakes in the New Madrid Seismic Zone in West Tennessee.

Specific Child Care Services Preparations for Storms and Major Disasters

- *Child Care Services/State backup of computer systems.* Strategic Technology Solutions (STS) will work on behalf CCS to ensure regular backup processes are maintained.
- *Inventory of staff information.* CCS may, as part of its disaster planning, ask staff to volunteer information annually that assists the Child Care Services Emergency Preparedness Team to quickly develop solutions during emergencies. Examples may include identifying staff with foreign language skills, with medical training, who are ham radio operators, who live near a county office, and other resources or skills useful during an emergency.
- *Quick review of disaster roles and processes.* If TDHS is alerted to the possibility of an impending disaster, the CCS Emergency Preparedness Team should alert staff, ask them to review their disaster plans, be sure staff have contact lists for their disaster function and regional teams, identify steps they might take to respond to the incident, and contact partners to walk through how they might work together to respond to the disaster.
- *Actions to prepare Child Care Services Staff.* CCS will encourage staff to take simple steps to reduce the risk of injury, e.g. emergencies occurring when staff are in the office).
- *Communications to child care agencies prior to disasters.*
 - CCS will make available via the TDHS website materials for all child care agencies regarding emergency preparedness, safe response to disasters, and emergency contacts. Electronic copies of the *Preparing Child Care Programs for Emergencies “A Six Step Approach”* self-assessment handbook and checklist will also be made available.
 - During each year, CCS will facilitate local opportunities across the state for child care agencies to perform a self-assessment in consultation with a variety of local subject matter experts, i.e. emergency managers, law enforcement, health educators, etc., using the revised *Preparing Child Care Programs for Emergencies “A Six Step Approach”*.

IV. Command and Control

Disaster Response Process

- The disaster response will be initiated by the Commissioner.
- Consideration for a disaster response:
 - Declaration of state of emergency by the President of the United States, Governor of Tennessee, or other leader(s);
 - Activation of State Emergency Response Team/State Emergency Operations Center;
 - Need for action by Child Care Services:
 - Because disasters may require immediate action, the Commissioner or the designee of the Commissioner has full authority to activate disaster functions and temporarily reassign staff as needed to carry out response functions.

Management Structure

A team structure will be utilized to plan and oversee any disaster response. The CCS Emergency Preparedness Team composed of executive leadership and program staff will provide oversight and

manage specific response tasks. Regional Disaster Teams may be designated by the CCS Emergency Preparedness Team to triage an event and immediately implement a response based on local need.

- **CCS Emergency Preparedness Team** may make decisions regarding strategies, policies, and resources. Examples of such decisions may include but are not limited to:
 - Activation of disaster response or development of new responses/policies as required for a specific emergency;
 - Development of requests for emergency resources (funding/personnel/equipment); and
 - Temporary reassignment of staff as needed.
- **Regional Disaster Teams** may also be used to facilitate local communication and collaboration among Child Care Services partners at a regional level, including public health officials, emergency management staff, and other such partners as may be identified.

Broader Disaster Response

- TDHS collaborates with other agencies, such as the Tennessee Department of General Services, Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA), and others on disaster response activities during and in the immediate aftermath of a disaster to ensure activities of the agency continue with minimal disruption.
- The Child Care Services Director or his/her designee will participate in any statewide emergency planning processes as designated by the Commissioner of the Department to make strategic decisions about coordination with other agencies in the event of a disaster.

V. Disaster Functions

CCS may undertake the following disaster functions in order to fulfill the TDHS's role supporting child care agencies and providing families with safe and healthy alternatives for child care during and after a disaster or emergency.

Communications

Facilitate communication among partner agencies to improve collaboration and avoid duplication. Ensure that child care agencies, the general public, and partners are aware of CCS and other agencies' assistance.

Overall Child Care Services responsibilities:

- Assist with the development and dissemination of emergency preparedness information, including to child care agencies in areas affected by disaster.
- Assist with the development and dissemination of information about emergency child care and other types of services or assistance to families in affected area.
- Collect and share information on response/recovery efforts with CCS partners (act as a central clearinghouse to reduce the chance of duplication).

Child Care Services Partners Who May Be Enlisted to Assist with Communications

- Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Network
- Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA)
- Other TDHS partners, i.e. Public Information and Legislative Office (PILO)
- State, regional, and local health departments, including TDH Emergency Response Coordinators
- TEMA and TDHS Emergency Services Coordinators
- Local child care agencies in affected areas
- Local community and/or social services agencies and child care agencies in affected areas

Preparedness and Pre-Disaster Communications

- Child care agencies may receive a copy of *Preparing Child Care Programs for Emergencies “A Six Step Approach”* handbook as an instruction and self-assessment guide that provide steps for developing an emergency preparedness plan. This information will be available at the TDHS website and through other partner resources.
- Each Child and Adult Care Licensing unit will actively participate in its regional Children in Disasters regional tasks force in order to strengthen collaboration, communication, and cooperation for emergency preparedness and response with other local agencies.
- The CCS Emergency Preparedness Team will assist regional staff with creating and maintaining an emergency contact list of all CCS staff.
- CCS staff should follow emergency preparedness/response plans adopted by each regional TDHS office. The plan may be used as a training tool and reviewed periodically with all new and existing staff members across TDHS Child Care Services.
- Changes in the rules and regulations on emergency preparedness will require in-service training with CCS staff to assure consistency and understanding of updated changes.
- A checklist is used to monitor a child care agency’s emergency preparedness plan for compliance.

Disaster Response Communications

- Child Care Services Director, his/her designee, and team may activate disaster communications with TDHS PILO to disseminate information as may be appropriate and in cooperation with other such partners as may be required.
- The Child Care Services Director will lead the preparation and review of such communications as press releases, disaster updates, and other such written communications regarding a disaster in consultation with TDHS PILO.
- Should children need relocation from child care agencies facing potential dangers, Child Care Services staff, emergency management personnel, and public health officials will be responsible for obtaining information about relocation efforts and assist as may be needed or upon request.
- Pertinent information and updates will be posted to the TDHS website and disseminated to child care agencies when appropriate and practical.
- Regional Disaster Team leaders will collect and share general information between the local, regional, and state levels where possible.

- CCS staff will work closely with state and local partners to disseminate information to child care agencies and families regarding local relief/recovery efforts.
- CCS will work with local departments of social services, state, regional, and local health agencies, emergency management personnel, and other partners to determine what information related to their disaster efforts should be disseminated to child care agencies.

Relocation of Children Off-Site

“Relocation” (also known as “off-site evacuation”) refers to the movement of children away from regulated child care agencies to a safer location during an emergency. Tenn. Code Ann. § 71-3-517 requires each multi-hazard plan contain:

- procedures for notification of parents of emergency;
- designated relocation sites and evacuation routes to those sites;
- a reunification plan for children and families; and
- plans to accommodate children with special needs in an emergency situation.

Child care agencies are required to have a plan for relocating children as part of their emergency procedures. The law requires that child care agencies designate in advance the site where children would be relocated, and notify parents of this relocation site. Child care agencies are expected to follow instructions from local authorities during mandatory evacuations regarding when to relocate children. Plans must include provisions for safely transporting children to the relocation site. The role of CCS in cases of relocation will be to serve as a central point of contact to:

- Ensure that emergency personnel involved with evacuation/relocation have sufficient location information for all child care agencies in the affected area(s).
- Ensure that all child care agencies in the area are aware of any impending evacuations.
- Inform agencies, as needed, of designated relocation sites.
- Assist agencies, as needed, in locating transportation to relocate children
- Obtain information, as needed, as to where evacuating child care agencies are relocating and when they leave (to relay to parents or emergency personnel as needed)
- Remind child care agencies who are relocating children of safe transportation procedures so that there is the safe accounting for every child
- Inform local social service agencies and/or local child care resource and referral agencies of child care agencies who are relocating and whether they need assistance
- Enlist local social service agencies and/or local child care resource and referral agencies in contacting child care agencies or parents as needed, or in helping to transport children as needed

Partners Outside Child Care Services to Help with Functions

- Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA)
- TDHS Emergency Services Coordinator(s)
- Local partnerships and/or child care resource and referral agencies

- State, regional, and local health department officials, including TDH Emergency Response Coordinator(s)

Before a Disaster

- CCS staff will determine what information other partners may need in advance of a disaster, e.g. lists of child care agencies in their areas, estimates of the number of children/adults at each facility, contact information, etc. This will include a designated staff member communicating between CCS and a TEMA Reunification Task Force.
- CCS staff will obtain a list of locations designated by local authorities in advance as possible relocation/evacuation sites where affected children in child care facilities could be taken. This list may be shared with licensed facilities.

During Disaster – Steps to Implement a Special Response

- CCS may facilitate the evacuation of child care agencies as needed. The CCS team will determine what role(s) it may play in offering guidance to agencies or giving information to families during relocation.
- Child care agencies in the threatened area(s) may be alerted about potential relocation. CCS staff may contact state or local emergency personnel to ensure that emergency managers have the latest information on the location of child care agencies and find out where emergency managers are directing facilities to relocate. CCS and partners may also assist child care agencies in locating transportation as needed.
- To the extent possible, CCS staff or partners may work with child care agencies throughout the relocation to coordinate reunification of parents with children who were evacuated. Information may be made available to families as quickly as practicable and where possible concerning the location of a child(ren) and how/when families might be reunited. Strict procedures must be followed to make certain children are released only to adults who have been authorized by each child’s parent/guardian and that the names/contact information of these authorized persons is available at the relocation/evacuation site.
- Depending on the nature of the relocation, CCS staff may work with the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) or Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (TDIDD) to facilitate the availability of mental health services to children, families, and child care agencies that experience trauma. Such services may also include psychological first aid as may be needed especially relocation/reunification sites or during recover upon return to the child care setting.

Assessment of Child Care Services/Partner Agency Functionality

Assess and determine the immediate impact of the emergency on the capabilities of Child Care Services and/or key stakeholders to function and implement response services. Determine how CCS staff, resources, and assets, including equipment and offices, may have been affected by the emergency in order to develop and implement response services. Consider polling key partners and stakeholders about their functionality and capabilities to develop appropriate disaster response activities. Facilitate communication among partner agencies and other stakeholders as necessary to improve cooperation

and collaboration leading to an effective and efficient response. Ensure that child care agencies, the general public, and partners are aware of CCS and other agencies' assistance.

Before a Disaster

The Child Care Services Director and/or his or her designee will clarify with team members which roles they may be likely to assume in assessing and determining functionality and capabilities of Child Care Services and other key stakeholders. The Child Care Services Director will ensure each program establishes and regularly maintains a regional phone tree of all staff to assist in wellness checks and emergency response mobilization. These phone trees will be revised with the onboarding or separation of staff.

Following Disaster—Steps to Implement Special Response

As soon as possible after the disaster:

- If the Nashville area were impacted by the emergency, the Child Care Services Director will identify any impacts on Central Office-based staff as well as communications/IT infrastructure, i.e. computer/phone systems, to determine what resources may be needed to address negative impacts. Child Care Services Central Office-based staff will relocate to pre-identified alternate sites as required.
- Child Care Services staff will activate phone trees to determine how their field staff have been affected, what resources would be needed to enable the field staff to resume operations, and any information the field staff know about the status of partners in their areas.
- Child Care Certificate Director will develop emergency procedures in collaboration with Fiscal Services and Strategic Technology Solutions for continuation of services in the event of a disruption to information systems affecting eligibility and/or payment
- Should the Central Office be so severely impacted that staff are unable to assume leadership roles in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, a Regional Program Supervisor based on the area of need may play the primary leadership role for Child Care Services until Central Office staff become available to reassume responsibilities. (For example, a Child & Adult Care Licensing Program Supervisor would be responsible for issues related to licensing, and so forth.) The Program Supervisor will coordinate with the team members and the other regional team leaders to carry out the assessment of Child Care Services functionality and the status of staff.
- Assessments of need should be repeated periodically until TDHS and key partners have returned to normal operations. Throughout the process, information generated from the assessments of need will be communicated to the CCS Emergency Preparedness Team, State Emergency Response Team members, and TDHS Emergency Services Coordinator and used to revise the response as necessary.

Assessment of Child Care Agencies' Damages and Needs

Identify child care agencies affected by the disaster and assess the extent of damage.

Functional Team Members

- Child Care Services field management and staff

- CCS Central Office staff to assist with the needs assessment and consolidating data for emergency preparedness team's use
- Tennessee State Emergency Preparedness Team members

Before a Disaster

Team Leader will clarify which roles team members may be likely to assume in assessing the needs/damages of child care centers and homes.

Following Disaster—Steps to Implement Special Response

- Child Care Services Director decides to activate the needs assessment function and determines whether, given the disaster scenario, field or central office staff should take the lead.
- If Child Care Services field staff is given the lead role...
 - They will gather specified information about the status of child care agencies in their area.
 - Information collected will be compiled by field supervisors and forwarded to central office. The Child Care Services Director will establish information reporting frequencies.
- Assessments of need should be repeated periodically until child care agencies have resumed normal operations. Throughout the process, information generated from the assessments of need will be communicated to team members and used to revise the response as necessary.

Facilitating Availability and Access to Temporary Child Care

Work with partners to ensure that healthy and safe child care arrangements are available and accessible to meet the needs of children and families.

Definition of “temporary child care” for the purposes of this plan: organized supervision of unrelated children that may ordinarily be subject to child care licensure, but due to the severity of a disaster, may be allowed to operate without a license for a limited amount of time. Temporary child care arrangements would be allowed to protect the health and safety of children, as well as promote families’ efforts to recover from the disaster.

Functional Team Members

- Child Care Services field management and staff
- Child Care Certificate Program Director
- Child and Adult Care Licensing Director
- Child Care Services Director
- Director of Operations, Division of Child Care and Community Services
- Assistant Commissioner, Division of Child Care and Community Services
- Fiscal Services, as needed
- Office of General Counsel, as needed

Partners Outside Child Care Services to Help with Function

- Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)
- Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA)

- Head Start Association/Migrant Head Start
- Red Cross chapters Red Cross offices in disaster-affected areas
- Children in Disaster Regional Task Forces
- TEMA and (after first phase of emergency management) state Division of Emergency Management site coordinators for temporary housing sites
- Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance (State Fire Marshal)
- Tennessee Department of Health (Environmental Health Inspectors)
- Local Emergency Managers and Emergency Response Coordinators

As a special emergency preparedness activity, the team works with the partners listed above to make them aware of conditions under which temporary child care may be allowed and encouraged:

- Existing licensed child care agencies are temporarily or permanently unable to continue providing services (i.e., overall supply of child care in the community is no longer sufficient, as determined through the needs assessment/other sources);
- Families need child care while they are seeking disaster assistance or living in temporary housing/shelters so they can focus on recovering from the disaster and their children can get special attention; and /or
- Emergency workers with young children need child care to be able to report for duty.

Following Disaster – Steps to Implement Special Response

- Child Care Services Director and the CCS Emergency Preparedness Team decide whether temporary child care arrangements are needed to supplement existing capacity or make child care more easily accessible to families affected by the disaster or assisting with the relief effort. If temporary child care arrangements are needed, the Child Care Services Director determines the appropriate scope of Child Care Services involvement.
- Using all available information, the CCS Emergency Preparedness Team coordinates with other key stakeholders as may be necessary to determine what temporary child care arrangements may be needed or allowed. Examples might include:
 - on-site child care arrangements set up at work locations as utility offices, police departments, hospitals, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), or Small Business Administration (SBA) for the children of disaster critical or relief employees who must work during or just after disasters, when licensed child care facilities may still be closed
 - child care in emergency shelters if shelters are expected to be open for an extended amount of time
 - child care offered at temporary housing sites if no existing child care agencies in the area can accommodate extra demand (or if transportation obstacles prevent access)
 - use of child care arrangements that are license-exempt and would not normally serve children receiving subsidy services

- The Assistant Commissioner for Child Care and Community Services, Deputy Commissioner, Commissioner, and/or the Commissioner’s designee will determine whether funds may be made available to help local partners finance temporary care arrangements.
- Temporary child care agencies may be approved for a period to be determined by the Department. CCS staff will assist in any regulatory matters and consider the enrollment of new or temporary child care agencies into the Child Care Certificate Program or the temporary expansion of capacity of current child care agencies.
- CCS will maintain a limited role in the development of temporary child care, serving primarily to facilitate the process and to communicate with partners about child care needs and resources.

Special Licensing Policies and Reestablishment of Safe/Healthy Care

Provide flexibility for child care programs meeting basic health and safety standards to reopen or expand capacity. Develop and manage a temporary rapid response and triage emergency license process with key stakeholders.

Functional Team Members:

- Child and Adult Care Licensing field management and staff
- Child Care Certificate Program staff
- Child and Adult Care Licensing Director
- Child Care Services Director
- Director of Operations, Division of Child Care and Community Services
- Assistant Commissioner, Division of Child Care and Community Services
- Fiscal Services, as needed
- Office of General Counsel, as needed

Partners Outside Child Care Services to Help with Function

- Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)
- Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA)
- Head Start Association/Migrant Head Start
- Red Cross chapters Red Cross offices in disaster-affected areas
- Children in Disaster Regional Task Forces
- TEMA and (after first phase of emergency management) state Division of Emergency Management site coordinators for temporary housing sites
- Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance (State Fire Marshal)
- Tennessee Department of Health (Environmental Health Inspectors)
- Local Emergency Managers and Emergency Response Coordinators

Following Disaster – Steps to Implement Special Response

- CCS may develop temporary emergency licensing policies and/or procedures to facilitate rapid response and triage mechanisms for the reestablishment of care in consultation with key stakeholders, i.e. Office of General Counsel. Such temporary emergency licensing will be of limited duration, coordinated with external stakeholders, and applied on a case-by-case basis.

- CCS will provide technical assistance to licensed child care agencies who sustain damages to determine whether they can continue operating, must temporarily close/reduce enrollment, or relocate. If a provider decides to relocate, licensing staff will help the provider reestablish licensed care on a temporary basis in the new location.
- If the local child care supply is impacted by the disaster and it is necessary to expand capacity, CCS will provide technical assistance to any of the largely-unaffected child care agencies who are willing to provide care for additional children.
- Partners may be asked to assist in communications with child care agencies and emergency management about efforts to reestablish care.

Continuing the Reimbursement for Subsidized Child Care

Ensure that child care agencies who offer subsidized child care are reimbursed as quickly as possible.

Functional Team Members

- Child Care Certificate Program Director
- Child Care Services Director
- TDHS Fiscal Services, as needed

Partners Outside Child Care Services to Help with Function

- Child Care Resource and Referral (assistance with communication)
- Comptroller of the Treasury (indirectly, through backup of payment processing capabilities)
- Department of Finance and Administration
- Strategic Technology Solutions

Steps to Reestablish Function

- The CCS Director calls together the functional team members to determine the extent and estimated duration of the impact on continuation of payment for subsidized care.
- If the Tennessee Child Care Management System (TCCMS) is down throughout the state and it is not anticipated that it can be reestablished within two weeks, the disaster function team identifies procedures for counties to follow in the interim. Child Care Certificate staff contact the appropriate offices to make them aware of new procedures. In the event that phone, fax, and email communications are disrupted, Child Care Certificate staff will make contact onsite if it is possible to travel.
- If normal operations are interrupted, the following efforts may be used to facilitate the continuation of payments:
 - Issue payment identical to previous payment and then adjustment would be made with next payment
 - Payments would be made via Edison (server is out of state), or Finance and Administration could allow for paper checks to be issued.
- Enrollments would be taken via state temporary disaster centers and/or at child care programs that are open. Application would be processed manually. Temporary approvals could be made if documents are unavailable due to disaster situation.

Child Care Subsidy Application Emergency Procedures

Implement procedures to process new applications for families needing assistance as a result of the emergency.

Functional Team Members

- Child Care Certificate Program Director
- Child Care Services Director

Partners Outside Child Care Services to Help with Function

- Identified by the appropriate authority in the Department

Following Disaster – Steps to Implement Special Response

- Based on information provided by CCS staff, partners, or statewide disaster reports, the Child Care Services Director or the Director's designee determines that emergency child care procedures are needed. The Budget Officer verifies that state funding is available for emergency child care.
- After confirming that funding exists and obtaining permission to activate emergency child care procedures field staff will be notified.
- Staff will develop a plan to take calls and/or see families to process requests for assistance. Enrollments would be taken via state temporary disaster centers and/or at child care programs that are open. Application would be processed manually. Temporary approvals could be made if documents are unavailable due to disaster situation.
- CCS staff may be reassigned or moved to another location, as needed.

Other Assistance

Respond to needs unique to the disaster scenario.

The Child Care Services Emergency Preparedness Team may take on other functions in order to meet the needs of children, families, and child care agencies affected by a disaster.

VI. Child Care Agency Plans (Scope and Components)

The Child Care Emergency Preparedness Plan for Tennessee child care agencies outlines the expectations for protecting the health, safety, and well-being of the children in care during emergencies or natural disasters.

TCA § 71-3-517 requires all licensed agencies (excluding drop-in child care centers) to develop a written multi-hazard plan in consultation with appropriate local authorities and local emergency management to protect children in the event of emergencies.

The CCS Emergency Preparedness Team may take on other functions in order to meet the needs of children, families, and child care agencies affected by a disaster.

Plan Development

TDHS has developed the Child Care Agency Emergency Preparedness Plan Template (HS-3275) to assist child care agencies with articulating an individualized emergency preparedness plan meeting the below requirements of TCA § 71-3-517. (This template may be found at the TDHS website at <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/hs/HS-3275.pdf>.)

1. Procedures for Notification of Parents in an Emergency

- Child care agencies shall maintain information on each child enrolled in a format that is easily transported during evacuation of the facility. Recommended information includes:
 - name of child
 - name of parent(s) or legal guardian and emergency contact
 - home address
 - home phone number
 - place of employment of each parent and emergency contact
 - work (or emergency) phone number of each parent and emergency contact
 - name and phone number of child's pediatrician
 - medical information such as allergies, special needs of child, medication required by child, etc.
 - name and phone number of child's health care provider
 - profile of child that includes personal information about the child's likes, needs, etc.
- Child care agencies should identify someone responsible for ensuring that emergency contact information is evacuated with the children.
- Child care agencies shall notify parents through direct contact such as phone communication or through news media.
- The following information shall be provided:
 - Nature of emergency (what, when, where, how, why)
 - General condition of children
 - Present location of children
 - Relocation site (if necessary)
 - Where and how children can be picked up by parents or by the persons designated on their emergency form

2. Designated Relocation Sites and Evacuation Routes

- Child care agencies shall have prearranged relocation sites.
- Parents shall be notified in advance of probable relocation sites.
- A plan for posting the location where children have been taken shall be maintained
- A message should be posted on the door of the facility describing where their children have been taken.

- This posting shall include route and method of transportation (and mobile phone number for staff accompanying the children).
- Contact information for all drivers should be included in the emergency call-up roster.
- As children are evacuated they shall be taken to the transportation pick-up area and evacuated quickly and safely to a previously arranged site.
- Alternative transportation arrangements should be made if the agency does not normally provide transportation
- Child care agencies shall be knowledgeable of their neighborhood in the event that an evacuation on foot is required.

3. Reunification Plans for Children and Families

- Child care agency staff must remain with the children until they can be released to their parents or guardians.
- Child care agencies shall designate a safe area to which parents can be directed to sign their children out.
- Child care agencies shall be alert to the possibility that individuals sometimes use the chaotic environments during an emergency to abduct children and take precautions to ensure that children are only released to authorized individuals.
- When children are transported for emergency medical treatment they shall be accompanied by a caregiver whenever possible.
- A message should be posted on the door of the facility describing where their children have been relocated.
- Once children have been safely evacuated, the director or designated person shall contact local media and provide the following:
 - Nature of emergency (what, when, where, how, why)
 - General condition of children
 - Present location of children
 - Relocation site (if necessary)
 - Where and how children can be picked up by parents or by the persons designated on their emergency form
- Children evacuated to a site managed by the American Red Cross shall be registered at intake.
- Care agency staff shall stay with children until they have been safely released to their parents, guardians or authorized individuals.
- If a child is taken for medical treatment, agency staff shall accompany the child and remain with the child until a parent or designated person arrives to assume responsibility. In the case of one caregiver for multiple children the caregiver will have to acquire assistance.

4. Written Individualized Plans for Accommodating a Child's Special Needs in an Emergency Situation

- Child care agencies shall maintain current individualized plans for each child with special needs.

- Individualized plans for children with special needs shall include areas such as:
- Evacuation plans for children with mobility, hearing, visual, and emotional impairments, etc.
- Transporting children with special needs
- Medication/specialized medical equipment
- Emotional needs
- Identification of staff assigned to children with special needs
- Suitable evacuation sites that may accommodate children with special needs

The management at each child care agency has responsibility for developing and implementing an emergency preparedness plan specific to their agency.

Agency management relies on other key personnel to perform tasks that will ensure the safety of children and staff during a crisis or critical incident. Each staff member must be familiar with his or her role and responsibilities before an incident occurs through regular disaster planning and training as required by child care licensing rules.

Specific Disaster Planning

The agency multi-hazard plan shall include provisions for protecting children in the event of emergencies that include, but is not limited to the following:

Fire Hazard

Fires can happen at any time in a child care agency. Usually it's not the fire itself that causes the most injury and harm, it is the smoke. However, the agency can take steps to avoid or reduce damage, injuries, or loss of life:

- Inspect the building to determine if it can be made more fire-proof
- Include fire preparedness in emergency plans
- Teach children and staff what to do if a fire occurs

Possible Response Procedures:

- Evacuation
- Relocation
- Parent-Child Reunification

Facility Response Actions:

- Contact Fire Department
- Notify local law enforcement
- Determine if evacuation is required.
- Ensure that all children have been evacuated.
- Disseminate information about the incident such as relocation site and parent-child reunification procedures.

- Notify relocation site and determine an alternate site if needed.
- Take roster and emergency kits, if time allows.
- Agency staff should remain with children throughout the evacuation process.
- Upon arrival to a safe area away from fire, attendance should be taken.
- Missing or injured children should be reported.

Buildings should not be reoccupied until it has been inspected and determined safe by proper authorities.

Severe Thunderstorms/Tornadoes

Severe Thunderstorms are fairly common occurrences throughout the state. Storms often include dangerous winds and unstable conditions that sometimes produce tornados. Advance notice of approaching storms is necessary to protect children and staff. Devices such as telephones, radios, weather radios, and tone-activated receivers, can provide advance warning of dangerous conditions.

Possible Response Procedures

- Children may need to crouch and protect their heads and neck
- Reverse Evacuation
- Shelter-in-Place
- Evacuation
- Parent-Child Reunification

Facility Response Actions:

- Staff should be alerted without alarming children.
- If children are outside they should immediately be moved inside.
- Children should be moved away from windows
- Children should be moved away from water and appliances and kept off phones, during lighting.
- Children and staff should be moved to identified safe locations (basements, center of structure on lowest floor, small room such as a closet or bathroom, or under sturdy furniture). In large buildings, go to an interior hallway on the lowest floor, or to a designated shelter area (stay out of auditoriums, gymnasiums, and other structures with wide, free-span roofs).
- Warning devices should be monitored for additional information.
- Staff should remain with children throughout the shelter-in-place process.
- Missing or injured children should be reported.
- If necessary, children should be evacuated to a safer location.
- The relocation site should be notified and an alternate relocation site determined, if necessary.
- Staff and children should not be allowed to return to the building until proper authorities have determined that it is safe to do so.
- Information about the incident such as the relocation site and parent-child reunification procedures should be disseminated.

Earthquake

Earthquakes can happen in many areas in and around the State of Tennessee. The New Madrid Seismic Zone could potentially be the most dangerous of all natural hazards that could impact the State of Tennessee. Steps can be taken to reduce or avoid damage, injuries, or loss of life. Children and staff can be taught what to do in an earthquake.

Possible Response Procedures:

- Children may need to Drop, Cover, and Hold
- Shelter-in-Place
- Evacuation
- Parent-Child Reunification
- Relocation

Facility Response Actions:

- Determine what procedures should be activated.
- Decide if evacuation is required.
- Building maintenance should check mechanical ventilating systems.
- Local law enforcement should be notified of intent to shelter in place.
- Radio and Internet should be monitored for additional information and developments.
- The relocation site should be notified and an alternate site determined if necessary.
- Children and staff should be moved away from immediate danger.
- If outside; observe flags or buildings for evidence of aftershock and relocate children if necessary.
- Shelter-in-place procedures should be enacted when needed.
- Missing or injured children should be reported.
- Children and staff should remain in sheltered area until the “all clear” signal has been issued.
- Local law enforcement should be notified of any alternate relocation site.
- Information about relocation site and parent-child reunification procedures should be disseminated.
- Evacuation and relocation procedures should be enacted if a natural or propane gas leak or odor is detected.
- During evacuation, all children should be directed to report to assigned evacuation area. Class roster and emergency kits should be taken. Building should be checked to ensure that all children have been evacuated.
- When evacuation site is reached, attendance should be taken.
- Buildings should not be reentered until emergency response personnel have determined it is safe.

Hazardous Materials (Chemical Spills)

Hazardous materials accidents may originate inside or outside the building and are regularly transported on highway or rail systems. In addition, materials such as ammonia, chlorine, and propane could be used

and stored in the facility. Toxic leaks or spills can result from accidents involving storage or transport. The child care facility should inspect any stored chemicals on a regular basis.

Possible Response Procedures for External Hazardous materials spill:

- Reverse Evacuation
- Shelter-in-Place
- Evacuation
- Family -Child Reunification

Possible Response Procedures for Internal Hazardous materials spill:

- Evacuation
- Relocation
- Family-Child Reunification

Facility Response Actions for an External Spill:

- Children should be moved away from immediate danger.
- If children are outside a reverse evacuation procedure should be considered (observe wind direction by observing flags or leaves and move children appropriately).
- Mechanical ventilating systems should be shut off.
- Local law enforcement should be notified of intent to shelter in place.
- Missing or injured children should be reported.
- Evacuation to a safer location should be considered.
- The relocation site should be notified and an alternate site determined if necessary.
- Staff and children should not be allowed to return to the building until proper authorities have determined that it is safe to do so.
- Radio and Internet should be monitored for additional information.
- Information about relocation site and parent-child reunification procedures should be disseminated.

Facility Response Actions for an Internal Spill:

- Persons discovering the spill should:
- Alert others in the immediate area to leave the area
- Close windows and doors and restrict access to affected area
- Do not eat or drink anything or apply cosmetics.
- Staff and children should be moved away from the immediate danger zone.
- Evacuation procedures should be activated using primary or alternate routes, avoiding exposure to the chemical fumes.
- An all-site evacuation should be considered.
- Mechanical ventilating systems should be shut off.

- The local fire department and the Tennessee Department of Health should be notified with the following information:
 - Site name and address, including nearest cross street (s).
 - Location of the spill and/or materials released; name of substance, if known.
 - Characteristics of spill (color, smell, visible gases).
 - Injuries, if any.
- Local law enforcement should be notified of intent to evacuate.
- Information about relocation site and parent-child reunification procedures should be disseminated.
- The relocation site should be notified and an alternate relocation site determined, if necessary.
- If a natural or propane gas leak or odor is detected, the building should be evacuated immediately.
- During evacuation, all children should be directed to report to assigned evacuation area. Class roster and emergency kits should be taken. Building should be checked to ensure that all children have been evacuated.
- When evacuation site is reached, attendance should be taken.
- Buildings should not be reentered until emergency response personnel have determined it is safe.

Floods

Flooding can occur in most regions of Tennessee from a wide variety of causes. Communities that have a designated warning system will alert staff and families in case of imminent or confirmed flooding.

Possible Response Procedures:

- Evacuation
- Reverse Evacuation
- Relocation
- Family-Child Reunification

Facility Response Actions:

- Determine if evacuation is required.
- Local law enforcement should be notified of intent to evacuate, the location of the safe evacuation site, and the route to be taken to that site.
- Building should be checked to ensure that all children and staff have been evacuated.
- Radio and Internet should be monitored for flood information.
- Information about the incident, relocation site, and parent-child reunification procedures should be disseminated.
- The relocation site should be notified and an alternate relocation site determined, if necessary.
- The class roster and emergency kits should be taken.
- Attendance should be taken before leaving the site.
- When evacuation site is reached, attendance should be taken.

- Buildings should not be reentered until emergency response personnel have determined it is safe.

Law Enforcement Emergencies

Possible events under this item may include child abduction, riots, protests, strikes, shots fired/active shooter, crimes, domestic violence, terrorist attack, etc. Some of these situations may require lock-down of the facility.

Possible Response Procedures:

- Reverse Evacuation
- Shelter-in-Place
- Lock-down
- Evacuation
- Parent-Child Reunification

Facility Response Actions:

- Law enforcement should be notified by dialing 911.
- A code that can be paged to alert workers in other parts of the building so workers will recognize to keep children out of harm's way should be established.
- The incident should be isolated if it is safely possible to do so.
- Children should be moved to a safe location.
- If relocation is necessary, proceed with caution when leaving agency and entering streets. A police escort may be advised.

Training and Drills

The agency shall maintain documentation that staff are trained on the multi-hazard plan annually. The agency shall implement these emergency procedures through timely practice drills to meet local regulations and local emergency plans. Drills shall simulate conditions of a real emergency. Some online training resources available from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) may include:

- ICS 100 -Introduction to the Incident Command System
- IS-700 – National Incident Management System
- IS 240 – Leadership & Influence
- IS 907 – Active Shooter

Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

Child Care agencies are encouraged to monitor and evaluate their respective plans on an annual basis. Maintaining the plan and providing frequent opportunities for review and evaluation can improve readiness to respond to incidents. Child care agencies are encouraged to stay in regular contact with the local, state, and local emergency managers, such as fire, law enforcement, Red Cross, Tennessee Department of Safety, and Tennessee Department of Health officials to be aware of the general community emergency preparedness plans and training.

VII. Child Care Emergency Preparedness Teams

The **TDHS Executive Team** oversees the Department's response, maintains communication with the Governor's office, and implements any special response initiatives via the Child Care Services Management Team. This team may include:

- Commissioner
- Deputy Commissioners
- Assistant Commissioners
- Office of General Counsel
- And others as may be identified

The **Child Care Services Management Team** manages emergency preparedness, response, and recovery communications between the Executive Team, Central Office staff, and field staff, and also manages the coordination of responses across Child Care Services. This team may include:

- Assistant Commissioner of Child Care and Community Services
- Director of Operations, Division of Child Care and Community Services
- Director of Child Care Services
- Director of Child and Adult Care Licensing
- Director of Child Care Certificate Program
- Director of Assessment Program
- Director of Compliance
- And others as may be identified

The **Child Care Services Management Team** will maintain a log of disaster response and recovery efforts deployed by TDHS to support child care services. The log will include information such as the type of emergency, date of the emergency, parts of the state impacted by the emergency, response and recovery actions taken by TDHS (including staff or categories of staff involved), and the outcomes of those actions.

VIII. References and Resources

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Federal Emergency Management Agency, Children and Disasters, <https://www.fema.gov/children-and-disasters>

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<https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Provider/Training-and-Professional-Development/Emergency-Preparedness-and-Response>

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<https://www.tnccrr.org/emergencyprep>

Tennessee Department of Human Services, Child Care Emergency Preparedness,
<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/child-care-resources-for-providers/child-care-emergency-preparedness.html>

Tennessee Department of Human Services, Child Care Agency Emergency Preparedness Plan Template HS-3275 (Rev. 07-17), <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/hs/HS-3275.pdf>

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Disaster Preparedness Resource Guide for Child Welfare Agencies (2009)
<https://www.aecf.org/resources/disaster-preparedness-resource-guide-for-child-welfare-agencies/>

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<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/disasterplanning/>

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Care, Information Memorandum (CCDF-ACF-IM-2017-01): "Statewide Disaster Plan (or Disaster Plan for a Tribe's service area) for Child Care",
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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Care, Resource Guide: Emergency Preparedness and Response Resources for Child Care Programs (2015),
https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/1509_rg_epr_providers.pdf

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Business Continuity Planning, <https://www.ready.gov/business-continuity-planning-suite>