

CONNECTICUT INITIATIVE FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND CHILD CARE

Project Scope

Comprehensive statewide preparedness, response and recovery planning to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in child care before, during and after disasters.

Across the U.S., some 67 million children are enrolled in kindergartens, schools and child care facilities. Many parents assume these facilities are fully equipped to safeguard their children in the event of an emergency. However, many child care centers do not have a plan ready in the event of disasters, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, chemical spills and criminal or terrorist attacks.

In Connecticut, it is estimated that over 200,000 children are enrolled in child care centers, child day care homes and before and after school facilities. As part of this initiative, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the state Departments of Social Services, Public Health, and Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) will work with Save the Children, local emergency response personnel and local child care programs to ensure an enhanced level of preparedness amongst the child care community.

This initiative will examine disaster preparedness plans for the child care community currently in place in Connecticut. In partnership with state/local emergency officials, it will also create new plans to build on existing measures and provide training to child care providers so they are prepared to address the unique needs of children in an emergency.

Impact

Preparedness, Response and Recovery planning within the child care community is essential to ensuring the safety of children, their child care providers, and the greater community.

Child care programs provide a foundation for young children's physical, emotional and cognitive well-being, and are essential to community recovery in the aftermath of an emergency.

The inability of child care facilities to re-open following an emergency can force families to leave children unaccompanied or in unsafe, informal care, increasing their risk of injury or abuse while parents seek recovery assistance. Child care is essential to jump-starting local economies following an emergency. A reliable workforce needs safe, secure child care for employees to resume work.

Deliverables Overview

Preparedness, Response, Recovery

- **General Planning and Coordination Activities**
Target - State, Regional, and local committees
- **Training Activities**
Target - Child care professionals and emergency professionals responsible for disaster shelter operations
- **Communications**
Target – Geographic Information System Map and emergency communication tools, child evacuation and family reunification
- **Funding**
Target - Strategies to facilitate the response and recovery within the child care community
- **Guidance Documents**
Target - Insurance guidance, emergency child care standards and regulations, draft document to DEMHS for inclusion of child care in planning documents

Timeline

July 1, 2010: Save the Children and State of Connecticut Department of Social Services embark on a new 12-month initiative to ensure that the unique needs of children attending child care programs are met when and if disasters strike the state.

By June 30, 2011: Connecticut's 211-Child Care will be designated to become the communication entry point for child care providers and parents in case of an emergency. The initiative will result in communication between families, providers, and communities regarding emergency preparedness. Save the Children will provide the state with a comprehensive template for use by child care facilities in emergency plans as well as draft guidance to the child care community regarding preparedness planning.

For more information, contact **Peter Palermino at the CT Department of Social Services – 860-424-5006** peter.palermino@ct.gov or visit savethechildren.org and/or contact:

Jessy Burton

**Connecticut Project Director
Save the Children, USA**

860.593.0347; jburton@savechildren.org

