

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS POLICY

Reason this policy is important:

Child care settings must safeguard each child in care. All staff should be prepared to deal with any emergency that may happen during child care, in order to minimize the effects of such events. To ensure that a safe environment is maintained and a reasoned response made to various emergencies, written plans, policies, procedures and record-keeping are required.

Procedure and Practices, including responsible person(s):

The facility shall follow a written plan for reporting and evacuating all occupants in case of fire, flood, tornado, earthquake, hurricane, blizzard, power failure, bomb threat, or any other disaster that could cause damage to the facility or pose health and safety hazards to the children and staff.

The following, at a minimum, shall be addressed in the Disaster Preparedness Plan:

- a) Evacuation to a safe and adequately-supplied place of refuge where children can receive care until parents or guardians arrive;
- b) Specific methods of safely evacuating infants and children with special needs;
- c) Staff roles and responsibilities in emergency situations, as well as periodic training and updates on all emergency procedures, including use of fire extinguishers;
- d) Arrangements for additional/back-up caregivers or substitutes, so that child: staff ratios are maintained during any emergencies;
- e) Transportation alternatives to urgent medical and dental care (hospital emergency room, medical or dental clinic, or other constantly-staffed facility known to caregivers and acceptable to parents);
- f) Provisions and directions for "Shelter in Place" at the facility when necessary;
- g) Practice of emergency evacuation procedures with drills on a monthly basis;
- h) Adequate stocking of First Aid Kits and Emergency Kits for children and staff, including after each use and a periodic review of contents;
- i) Identification and correction of facility hazards which could contribute to injuries during a disaster, i.e. fastening bookshelves and pictures to walls,
- j) Scheduled reviews of staff members' ability to perform First Aid and documentation of their formal First Aid/CPR/UP training.

Plans will be clear enough that a visitor to the facility could easily follow the instructions. Diagrammed evacuation routes will be posted in every room; floor plan layouts will show 2 alternative exits.

When this policy applies:

At any time there is an emergency while child care is being provided.

Communication plan for staff and parents:

Staff and volunteers will receive a written copy of this policy in their Orientation Packets before beginning work. All parents will receive a written copy of this policy in their Parent Handbook upon their child's enrollment. Written notification will be given of any updates. A copy of the Disaster Preparedness Plan will be posted on the parent and staff bulletin boards.

Effective Date and Review Date:

This policy is effective _____(month/day/year)_____ and will be reviewed annually or as needed.

Reviewed by:

_____ Director/Owner

_____ Health Professional (physician, nurse, health department, EMS, Health consultant)

_____ Staff member

_____ Other (parent, advisory committee, police, CPS)

References:

- *Caring for Our Children* – <http://nrc.uchsc.edu>
- *Model Child Care Health Policies* – <http://www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org>
- *It Pays to Prepare! An Emergency Preparedness Guide for Child Care Providers* by Healthy Child Care Virginia, VA Department of Health, Office of Family Health Services-Division of Child & Adolescent Health, Richmond, VA, 2004 – <http://www.vahealth.org/healthychildcareva/>
- *Bananas Handouts on How to Write a Disaster Plan* by Bananas Child Care Information & Referral, Oakland, CA 94618 – <http://www.bananasinc.org>.

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