

Tip Sheets

Emergency Planning for Children with Disabilities

Young children with disabilities are especially vulnerable and have unique needs that may require special considerations, especially during emergencies. It is important for programs to consider the individual needs of children when planning and preparing for an emergency event.

Special Considerations: Best Practices

To ensure that emergency preparedness planning is inclusive of children with disabilities and or special health care needs, consider the following best practices when developing emergency plans:

- Consider how an emergency affects each child.
- Identify children who require accommodations or additional assistance during an emergency.
- If available, assign primary and backup adults to assist in caring for infants/children who need extra assistance in the event of an emergency.
- Work with the child's family to prepare an individualized care plan that includes how to help the child respond to an emergency.
- Consult with specialists and other professionals who work with the child.
- Decide how you will evacuate children who have limited or no mobility. Assess evacuation routes for potential hazards and plan primary and secondary routes.
- Maintain a list of children who receive special medication during program hours. Note where medication is stored/the medication schedule.
- Keep families informed of emergency plans and keep emergency documents current.
- Consider including local responders in emergency planning and inform them of any special accommodations needed.

- Conduct emergency drills and provide additional support to children as needed.
- Develop communication protocols for children who have speech/vision/hearing limitations and those with limited English proficiency. Identify adults with foreign language skills (and ASL).
- Determine accommodations needed for those with temporary special needs (i.e. broken leg).
- Ensure adults in the program are prepared to address their own health needs (i.e. availability of EpiPen and seizure or diabetes medication). Their ability to manage their own health needs will affect their ability to care for the children.

Special Considerations: Emergency Supplies

- Children's emergency records
- Special health care plans
- Critical medications and medication schedule
- Foods for children with special dietary needs
- Extra prescription medication
- Generator/battery back-up for medical devices
- Copies of prescriptions and supplies needed
- Extra batteries for hearing aids and other communication devices
- Extra eye glasses
- Manual wheelchairs, medical equipment, etc.
- Visual supports such as picture cards

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