

# State of Utah

## Department of Workforce Services, Office of Child Care CCDF Emergency and Disaster Plan

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# State of Utah Department of Workforce Services, Office of Child Care

## CCDF Emergency and Disaster Plan

### A. Overview

The Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS), Office of Child Care (OCC) has established this Emergency and Disaster plan to respond to a wide range of potential emergencies. This plan establishes guidelines for the implementation of the agency's essential and support functions during an emergency and for a period of sufficient time that regular services can be restored allowing OCC to operate normally. The following areas have been identified as critical in emergency and disaster situations:

1. **Mitigation:** Preventing future emergencies or minimizing their effects, including any activities that prevent an emergency, reduce the chance of an emergency happening or reduce the damaging effects of unavoidable emergencies. Mitigation activities take place before and after emergencies.
2. **Preparedness:** Preparing to handle an emergency, including plans or preparations made to save lives and to help response and rescue operations. Evacuation plans and stocking food and water are both examples of preparedness. Preparedness activities take place before an emergency occurs.
3. **Response:** Responding safely to an emergency, including actions taken to save lives and prevent further property damage in an emergency situation. Seeking shelter from a tornado or turning off gas valves in an earthquake are both response activities. Response activities take place during an emergency.
4. **Recovery:** Recovering from an emergency, including actions taken to return operations to normal following an emergency. Recovery includes getting financial assistance to help pay for repairs. Recovery activities take place after an emergency.
5. **Protection:** Educating child care professionals about protecting the children before, during and after a disaster, including providing access to training, educating facility operators on reunification procedures and encouraging communication with parents, law enforcement, emergency management and other stakeholders.

## **B. Plan Summary**

In the event of an emergency, the role of the Office of Child Care is to provide support to child care providers and to assist in the provision of safe and healthy child care alternatives for families during and after disasters or emergencies. OCC's Emergency and Disaster Plan provides specific actions that will be taken in emergency situations. This includes provisions for coordination and communication in the event of a disaster or emergency, coordination of relocation of children in affected child care settings, assessment of the ability of OCC and its partner agencies to function, assessment of providers' needs, and provisions for the establishment of temporary child care.

OCC has developed this Emergency and Disaster Plan to provide support to providers and give families safe and healthy alternatives for the care of their children during and after emergencies and disasters. This plan provides information to instruct staff regarding emergency preparedness, disaster response, and disaster recovery.

This plan was created using the following assumptions:

1. Child care is an integral and essential part of a community's economic viability and should be restored as soon as possible following an emergency event.
2. Child care providers have their own emergency preparedness, response, and recovery plans as required by Child Care Licensing standards. These plans outline the mandates to practice drills, which will be adjusted as needed, based on children, families, staff, and facility needs and to keep families informed of current and any revised procedures.
3. As required by Licensing, providers should have food, water and supplies to take care of children during an emergency or disaster.
4. This document is consistent with other local, state and federal disaster planning documents related to caring for the needs of young children.
5. Families may need temporary assistance with respite care for their children while they work in the recovery phase following an emergency or disaster.
6. Understanding the needs for emergency responders to have care for their own children in order to meet the needs of the community.
7. The steps to be followed when responding to the needs of a community will vary depending on the particular emergency or disaster and the geographic area involved, extent of the damage and auxiliary services available.

8. In this plan, “Child Care Provider” means any licensed and license exempt, including FFN providers, and any child care provider eligible to receive CCDF subsidies and grants.

### **C. Planning For Continuation of Services to Child Care Families**

DWS, OCC has established a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to respond to a wide range of potential emergencies. The Utah Department of Emergency Management coordinates statewide responses and provides updates during and immediately following an event. The plan establishes guidelines for the implementation of the agency’s essential and support functions during an emergency and for a period of sufficient time that regular services can be restored allowing OCC to operate normally and continue providing core CCDF program functions.

1. OCC’s emergency preparedness efforts include:
  - a. Training for disaster functions;
  - b. An ongoing dialogue with early childhood partners about their roles, plans and preparedness;
  - c. Development of partnerships with emergency management agencies;
  - d. Year-round training of child care providers;
  - e. Initiating preparedness/warning/response activities when aware of imminent or existing emergencies or imminent disaster(s); and
  - f. Coordination with the Federal Disaster Recovery Center personnel, emergency child care subsidy and identification of licensed child care facilities operating in the disaster area.
2. Emergency Preparedness for Child Care Providers:

Licensing standards require that licensed and license exempt, including FFN, providers have an Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Plan and adequate training that include emergency preparedness and evacuation procedures. Child Care Licensing provides a template for this plan, which can be found at: <https://childcarelicensing.utah.gov/Forms.html>. Additional rules and requirements apply to the different facility types. Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery plans must be written and individualized to the child care facility and hours of operation, reviewed annually with child care staff, and updated as needed. These plans must be available for staff and parental review.

Licensing requires emergency plans establish the procedures in the following situations: serious injuries, serious illnesses, poison exposure, and outbreaks of communicable diseases, weather-related disasters, fires, man-made disasters, human threats, utility disruption, and other natural or man-made disasters that could create structural damage to the facility or pose health hazards.

Providers are also required to conduct drills at various times throughout the hours of operation, so that each child and staff member has an opportunity to participate. Fire drills are to be conducted and documented at least monthly. Disaster drills are also to be conducted and documented at least every six months. Lock-down, evacuation, and relocation procedures are reviewed at least once every 12 months.

Childcare provider emergency plans shall include:

- a. Procedures for addressing each child's needs, with additional considerations for:  
(A) 2- year-olds and younger; and (B) children with disabilities or chronic medical conditions.
- b. Ways to account for each child's location during an emergency; shelter-in-place procedures for short- and extended-stay situations that require children to stay in the building; lock-down procedures for situations threatening the safety of children and personnel; evacuation procedures for situations that require children to leave the building and include evacuation routes posted and pre-determined meeting locations; relocation procedures at pre-determined locations; pre-determined transportation plan; and procedures for reuniting parents and children.
- c. In case of an emergency, child care providers are required to notify emergency authorities and parents. Since emergencies are not predictable, providers are also required to keep parents' contact information available during off-site activities.
- d. Providers should make sure personnel are familiar with the current emergency plans and procedures, including roles and responsibilities in an emergency; location of emergency plans and procedures; location of posted emergency information; location of first aid and emergency supply kits; and location and use of fire extinguishers.

- e. Operable phones in each building and on each floor of a multi-floor building; an operable phone at off-site activities: an operable phone in each vehicle when children are transported.
- f. Posted emergency information, including the physical address of the program; program information; emergency numbers; first aid kit; emergency supply kit; fire extinguisher locations; and evacuation routes.
- g. Providers are to have emergency first aid and supply kits containing the minimum supplies listed in the licensing rules, records of all children and personnel currently in attendance with emergency contact information, and children's prescribed medications.
- h. Facilities are to be in compliance with the local fire department guidelines and to provide to licensing a copy of their current fire certification once a year.

3. Child Care Emergency and Disaster Subsidy Plan:

a. Assumptions

The Child Care Emergency and Disaster Subsidy Plan incorporates the following assumptions:

- i. Child Care Providers are operating with basic health and safety requirements in place, as required by the Department of Health, Child Care Licensing (CCL).
- ii. The eligibility structure, including the CCL database, is operating.
- iii. DWS's eREP eligibility system is operating.
- iv. The FINET system, which issues child care payments for DWS, is operating.
- v. Checks will be mailed to providers, unless they are set up for direct deposit and the provider's financial institution is operating.
- vi. If a provider is asked to leave the premises due to a dangerous situation, they must comply.

b. Policy

A disaster or state of emergency must be declared by a federal or State government official. In this circumstance, child care may be authorized for up to three months. All child care eligibility and participation requirements may be waived during this time period. Child Care may be used to provide continuity of care for the children while parent's complete necessary tasks as a result of the crisis.

c. Obtaining Emergency or Disaster Child Care

- i. Complete the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Child Care Application (paper application only).
- ii. Submit to DWS.
- iii. An eligibility worker will make a determination and process benefits.
- iv. The length of time child care will be approved (one to three months) will be determined by DWS and may vary depending on the type of emergency or disaster.

4. Provision of Temporary Child Care Services after a Disaster:

Child Care Licensing Specialists in the affected areas assess the needs of child care providers to continue child care that meets health and safety requirements. Programs that are closed due to structural or utility disruption are noted and families are provided alternate program referral information from Care About Childcare agencies. Licensing staff will contact the OCC state office to report on the numbers of programs impacted and to what degree.

If there is a need for additional child care in the disaster declared areas, Child Care Licensing works with emergency agencies such as the Red Cross to provide care at shelters or other locations and may also identify providers and other programs to determine whether they can care for additional children of emergency responders.

In addition, Emergency Preparedness requirements and procedures are covered through the State of Utah Child Care Licensing Rules R430-90-10 and R430-50-10, listed in the State of Utah Department of Health (Child Care Licensing Program) COOP. The rules can be found here:

<http://childcarelicensing.utah.gov/rules/Interpretation/family/Section%2010%20-%20Emergency%20Preparedness.pdf>

#### **D. Coordinating with Emergency Management Agencies and Key Partners**

Through Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP), DWS, OCC is prepared to respond to unforeseen disruptive events in an “All Hazards” approach to ensure that essential functions are resumed in a timely manner. This plan is a guideline delineating and coordinating agency efforts to continue mission-critical, essential functions immediately following the onset of a significant emergency. Within the COOP, the agency’s essential functions are identified; roles and procedures for implementing the plan are presented; any applicable delegations of Authority and Orders of Succession are identified. This plan is a coordinated effort with emergency planning agencies and will ensure connectivity with other local and state agencies.

1. Communication Resources:

In accordance with the COOP, DWS shall communicate to entities which are superior, lateral, subordinate and internal. For example, for DWS, this would include the Federal government, other states, counties, and staff. All modes of communication shall be considered, from emails and social media, to phones, radios and runners. The Utah Department of Technology Services (DTS) is responsible for providing email and phone communication resources. These resources and procedures are listed in detail in the State Emergency Operation Plan, in the ESF Communications Annex.

2. Protection/Safeguarding/Recovery of Critical Applications and Data:

As set forth in Utah Code §63F-1-104, the Department of Technology Services (DTS) serves as general contractor between the state's information technology users, including DWS, OCC, and private sector providers for information technology products and services. DTS is responsible for all computerized and auxiliary automated information handling, including:

- a. Systems design and analysis;
- b. Acquisition, storage, and conversion of data;
- c. Computer programming;
- d. Information storage and retrieval;
- e. Voice, radio, video, and data communications;
- f. Requisite systems and controls;
- g. Simulations; and
- h. All related interactions between people and machines.

Specific applications and databases, as identified in the above-mentioned contract, are listed in the Continuity of Operations Plan for each of the Department's essential functions. These databases include all vital records for which the Department has custodianship. With internet access, employees can carry out essential functions using laptop computers

3. Coordination with other State Agencies and Key Partners:

The Office of Child Care and the Department of Workforce Services' staff members collaborate with members of the Utah Emergency Preparedness Plan Committee. The committee is composed of representatives of OCC, the Department of Health (Child Care Licensing), the Department of Public Safety (Emergency Management), the Department of Human Services (Division of Child and Family Services), Care About Childcare

Agencies (CCR&Rs), the State Advisory Council (Early Childhood Utah), the Utah Board of Education and the Utah Head Start Collaboration Office. The committee meets to coordinate emergency and disaster preparedness planning efforts and to ensure all possible contingencies are addressed. This committee shall meet at least on an annual basis.

## **E. Regulatory Requirements and Technical Assistance for Child Care Providers**

Licensing shall account for each child care provider and the overall wellbeing of the children in care. Each licensor will contact, and physically visit if possible, each provider on their caseload to assess general need for the provider and the children in care. If a licensor is unavailable, the trainer(s), complaint investigator, and office specialist(s) will be assigned caseloads to contact.

1. Licensors shall develop a report that will include but is not limited to:
  - a. Are all program staff accounted for?
  - b. Are all children accounted for?
  - c. Has there been communication between parent and provider?
  - d. Has the program moved to an emergency relocation site?
  - e. Is the program able to continue with operations and provide at least shelter, food, water and adult supervision?
2. Licensing shall then compile the report of specific needs of each individual program. Needs may be divided into three areas:
  - a. Physical welfare of program participants, including adult supervision.
  - b. Need for resources such as food and water.
  - c. Assistance with reuniting children with parents.

Staff members may then be assigned to assist programs based on the employee's location and resources available.

An online copy of this document, including contact information for all program staff, emergency services, and child care providers is available to all program staff through the program's database. Although Child Care Licensing stores a current database backup in servers in two separate cities of the state in case of an emergency, a hard copy of this document is also available at each one of the program offices in the event of lost internet access.

Child Care Licensing, the Care About Childcare offices, and the Office of Child Care will communicate with each other to implement the state's emergency plan and to contact

and support any other agencies as needed, to account for programs and children impacted, and to coordinate support.

### 3. Child Care Provider Training:

Care About Childcare and Child Care Licensing schedule training sessions throughout the year for center-based and family child care providers and caregivers to help them better prepare for emergencies and disasters. Both agencies have also posted technical assistance materials on their websites addressing this and other valuable topics for parents, providers, and caregivers. Technical assistance materials include forms, documents, links, and other resources available within the agencies and in the community. The Care About Childcare website is: [www.careaboutchildcare.utah.gov](http://www.careaboutchildcare.utah.gov). The Child Care Licensing website is: [www.childcarelicensing.utah.gov](http://www.childcarelicensing.utah.gov).

In addition, the Professional Development Coordinator adapted the Emergency Preparedness curriculum from Child Care Aware of America into a Care About Childcare – the state’s Child Care Resource and Referral agency – training program called "Is Your Childcare Ready?" This program is available as a resource to providers. The Care About Childcare agencies also organize resource nights with an emergency preparedness theme. These resource nights provide emergency materials donated by local agencies, including emergency blankets, food and backpacks. In addition, the CCR&R agencies provide emergency preparedness training specific to their Service Delivery Area.

## **F. Rebuilding Child Care after a Disaster**

After a disaster OCC shall be involved in rebuilding Utah’s child care system. The rebuilding effort may focus on two primary components: (i) rebuilding the network of child care providers; and (ii) rebuilding the administrative functions of the child care subsidy program.

As outlined in Section E.1, Child Care Licensing has a system in place to identify the needs of child care providers following a disaster or emergency, ensuring the needs of young children and their families are met. Through a tracking and alert system developed by Care About Childcare agencies, child care providers are identified based on proximity to the emergency or disaster and contacted to determine needs and status. Once identified, CCL implements the process for assisting those programs described in Section E.1.

Where the child care subsidy system is impacted by an emergency or disaster, the OCC COOP describes the process of rebuilding. As stated in the OCC COOP, the DWS Assistant Deputy Director will act as the Reconstitution Manager and will focus on reconstitution of the agency during and following any event that causes the activation of the COOP.

Additional staff will be assigned to assist with reconstitution as the opportunity becomes available.