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# Sample Disaster/Crisis Plan

(Adapted from Snohomish Health District Partners in Child Care)

## Table of Contents

Emergency Phone Numbers .....	3
Missing Child .....	4
Kidnapping .....	4
Child Abuse .....	4
Assault on Child or Staff .....	5
Fire Alarm/Emergency .....	5
Gas Leak .....	6
Earthquake .....	6
Flooding .....	7
Building and Site Evacuation .....	8
Field Trip Incident .....	9
Power Outage .....	9
Storms & Snow .....	10
External and Internal Hazardous Materials Accident .....	10
Shelter-in-place Procedure .....	11
Bomb Threat .....	12
Suspicious Mail or Package .....	12
Emergency Lockdown/Intruder Alert Procedure .....	13
Crisis Response .....	15
Appendices .....	17
A: Sample Parent Letter/Communication Form .....	17
B: Disaster Supply List .....	19
C: Center Floor Plan and Internal Systems.....	20
D: Helping Children Cope with Disaster .....	20

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**Disaster Plan for:** \_\_\_\_\_(name of center)

This policy was last reviewed and updated on: \_\_\_\_\_(date)

**Our Center's Address is:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Our Center's Phone Number is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Our Nearest Cross-Streets are:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Emergency Phone Numbers:** \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Emergency Assistance Number(s):** \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Police: 911**
4. **Fire/Medics: 911**
5. \_\_\_\_\_ **Hospital Emergency Room** \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_ **Hospital Emergency Room** \_\_\_\_\_
7. **Poison Control Center: 1-800-222-1222**

*Note: In an emergency, people (particularly parents, visitors, and volunteers) may be asked to call for assistance. Having the address of the center as well as the emergency numbers posted by every phone can save valuable time.*

**Other numbers helpful in an emergency:**

Electricity: \_\_\_\_\_

Gas: \_\_\_\_\_

Water District: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Auto Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Building Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Radio Station: \_\_\_\_\_ (AM) \_\_\_\_\_

Regional Radio Station: \_\_\_\_\_ (AM) \_\_\_\_\_

Center Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Director Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Out-of-Area Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Protective Services: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Care Licensor: \_\_\_\_\_

DEL Health Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Health Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Site Location (Near Child Care Center): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Site Location (Evacuation Site): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Location of Nearest Pay Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## **MISSING CHILD**

1. Call 911 immediately and provide the following information:
  - Child's name and age
  - Address
  - Physical and clothing description of the child, including any distinguishing marks such as visible scars or birthmarks
  - Medical status, if appropriate
  - Time and location child was last seen, and
  - Person with whom the child was last seen.
2. Notify Director immediately and search the facility again.
3. Have child's information, including picture, if possible, available for the police upon their arrival.
4. Director will notify parents of missing child and attempt confirmation that child is with family; if not, inform parents of situation and steps taken.
5. Director will report incident to licensor and Child Protective Services.
6. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

## **KIDNAPPING**

1. Call 911 immediately, provide the following information:
  - Child's name and age
  - Address
  - Physical and clothing description of the child, including any distinguishing marks such as visible scars or birthmarks
  - Physical and clothing description of the suspect
  - Medical status, if appropriate
  - Time and location child was last seen, and
  - Vehicle information and direction of travel.
2. Notify Director immediately.
3. Follow Emergency Lockdown procedure (page \_\_\_\_)
4. Have child's information, including picture, if possible, available for the police upon their arrival.
5. Director will notify parents of missing child and inform parents of situation and steps taken.
6. Director will report incident to licensor and Child Protective Services.
7. Director will implement Crisis/Disaster Response Plan (page \_\_\_\_).
8. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

## **CHILD ABUSE**

1. Report abuse or suspected abuse to the Director, or follow center policy on reporting abuse.
2. Director will make a report to Child Protective Services and the licensor
3. Director and appropriate staff will write down the following information on an incident report\*:
  - Date and time of calls to Child Protective Services and Department of Early Learning (licensor)
  - Child's name
  - Child's age/birthdate
  - Address
  - Name and address of parent or guardian and other children in the home (if known)
  - Any statements made by the child (DO NOT interview child)
  - The nature and extent of the injury or injuries, neglect, and/or sexual abuse
  - Any evidence of previous incidences of abuse or neglect, including nature and extent
  - Any other information which may be helpful in establishing the cause of the child's injury or injuries, neglect or death, and the identity of the perpetrator or perpetrators.

*\*Note: These reports may become legal documents. Confidentiality of these reports must be strictly observed.*

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## **ASSAULT ON CHILD OR STAFF**

1. Call 911 if any medical treatment is needed or if police are required (if in doubt, go ahead and call).
2. Director will follow "Administrator Responsibilities – Intruder Alert" in the Emergency Lockdown procedure on page \_\_\_\_.
3. Follow Emergency Lockdown Procedure (page \_\_\_\_).
4. Staff member will stay with the victim.
5. Victim's family will be notified by \_\_\_\_\_ when safe to do so.
6. Director will report incident to licenser.
7. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

## **FIRE ALARM/EMERGENCY**

1. Activate fire alarm if not sounding.
2. Evacuate children, visitors, and staff, following the building evacuation procedure (page \_\_\_\_). Drop and crawl to avoid smoke, and close doors behind you. Take the following items with you:
  - Disaster supplies, which are stored \_\_\_\_\_
  - Class/staff attendance sheets and visitor sign-in sheets
  - Children's emergency and medical information and supplies, and
  - Cell phone, if available
3. Call 911 from outside the building.
4. Take attendance. If safe to do so, search the building for anyone missing.
5. Director or staff member will check area of concern and use fire extinguisher, if safe to do so.
6. Have the following items ready for police and fire personnel:
  - Number of children in care, staff, volunteers, and visitors
  - Knowledge of anyone remaining in the building, and
  - Floor plan and internal systems information (Appendix C, page \_\_\_\_).
7. If it is determined that the building is unsafe, move children to alternate site location. Follow site evacuation procedure (page \_\_\_\_).
8. Director will notify parents of evacuation and alternate site location, if applicable.
9. Director will report incident to licenser.
10. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.
11. All parents will be notified of incident.

## **GAS LEAK**

1. DO NOT activate the fire alarm system or any other electrical equipment.
2. Notify center Director.
3. Evacuate children and staff following the building evacuation procedure (page \_\_\_\_) and close doors behind you but leave a window open. Take the following items with you:
  - Disaster supplies which are stored \_\_\_\_\_
  - Class/staff attendance sheets and visitor sign-in sheets
  - Children's emergency and medical information and supplies
  - Cell phone, if available.
4. Call 911 from outside the building.
5. Move children to a designated area no less than one block from the child care. This location is: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Take attendance.
7. If possible, turn gas off with the wrench stored.
8. Have the following items ready for police and fire personnel:
  - Location of leak, if known
  - Number of children in care, staff, volunteers, and visitors
  - Knowledge of anyone remaining in the building
  - Floor plan and internal systems information (Appendix C, page \_\_\_\_).
9. Director will notify parents immediately if evacuation looks to be long term or if children are moved to alternate site location. If necessary to move to the alternate site location follow site evacuation procedure (pg.\_\_\_\_)
10. Director will report incident to licenser.
11. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.
12. All parents will be notified of incident.

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## EARTHQUAKE

1. Staff "DROP, COVER, and HOLD." Direct all children to "DROP, COVER, and HOLD" and remain that way until the earth stops moving. Stay away from windows, bookcases, and filing cabinets. Hold onto the item you are using as a cover. If it moves, move with it. Keep talking to children until it is safe to move. In infant areas, cribs with infants in them should be moved away from windows.
2. If no items are available for cover, crouch by a load-bearing wall and cover your head with your arms.
3. If outside, "DROP, COVER, and HOLD," keeping away from glass, bricks, and power lines. If you are outside near a building and there is no safer location, take cover in a doorway to protect yourself and children.

When the earthquake stops, the following procedures should be carried out:

1. Staff check themselves and children for any injuries.
2. Check evacuation routes for damage.
3. Evacuate children and staff, following the evacuation procedure (see page \_\_\_\_ ) and close doors behind you. Take the following items with you:
  - Disaster supplies, which are stored \_\_\_\_\_
  - Class/staff attendance sheets and visitor sign-in sheets
  - Children's emergency and medical information and supplies
  - Cell phone, if available.
4. Staff will render first aid to those who need it.
5. Director will take attendance outside to account for all children and adults.
6. Check utilities for disruption/damage (gas, water, sewer). If you smell gas, turn the gas off with the wrench stored \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Have a Building Team of two individuals (at least one trained in building assessment) inspect the exterior of the building and report findings to the Director. The Team consists of: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, who are trained in building assessment.
8. Determine if it is safe for a rescue team to go into building to locate anyone missing or injured.
9. Listen to regional radio station (\_\_\_\_ AM) for information on the surrounding area.
10. Determine status of emergency supplies and equipment.
11. Call program's out-of-area contact with information on the center's status (injuries, evacuation, children remaining in care, children who have been picked up).
12. Have the same team of two individuals (Building Team) assess the interior of the building and determine if it is safe to move children back into the building or whether it is best to evacuate. Report findings to the Director.
13. If evacuating to an alternate location post a notice indicating your new location, and the date and time you left. Follow Site Evacuation Procedure.
14. Call parents with center status information. If not possible, report center status information to local radio station (\_\_\_\_ AM) for announcement over the air for parents to hear.
15. If parents cannot be contacted after 4 hours, the child's out-of-area contact will be called, if possible.
16. Director will report incident to licensor.
17. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

*"Drop, Cover, and Hold" should be taught and practiced with all the children in your center.*

## FLOODING

1. During severe weather, director or designee will listen to regional or local radio station for flood watch and flood warning reports.
2. If a flood warning is issued, move children and staff to the alternate site location. Follow Site Evacuation Procedure.
3. Director will notify all parents immediately.
4. Director will report incident to licensor.
5. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.
6. Director will call insurance company (if needed).

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## **BUILDING AND SITE EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

### **Building Evacuation Procedure:**

1. Staff makes a quick assessment of the situation in the classroom and of any injuries to the children or adults, and reports findings to director.
2. Director evaluates the evacuation route to be sure that it appears clear of obstructions.
3. Director gives instructions to evacuate.
4. If possible and time allows, have children take jackets and coats.
5. Staff should take the following items:
  - Disaster supplies, which are stored \_\_\_\_\_
  - Class/staff attendance sheets and visitor sign-in sheets
  - Children's emergency and medical information and supplies
  - Cell phone, if available.
6. Staff should assemble children in pairs to evacuate the building (preferably with one teacher leading the children and one teacher following behind). Infants will be placed into rolling evacuation cribs for evacuation.
7. Take attendance. If safe to do so, search the building for anyone missing.
8. Have children sit down, if possible.
9. If a gas leak or other incident requires individuals be located further away from the child care center, have teachers move children to the pre-designated area not less than one block from the building. The pre-designated location is: \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Director will evaluate the situation with the help of responding agencies (fire, police, etc.) or the Building Team and determine if it is safe to enter the building. If it is not safe, Director will determine if it is necessary to move to the alternate site location (follow site evacuation procedure, page \_\_\_\_), or if children and staff should stay where they are until it is safe to re-enter the building.
11. Director will notify parents immediately if evacuation looks to be long term or if children are moved to alternate site location.
12. Director will report incident to licensor.
13. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.
14. All parents will be notified of incident.

### **Site Evacuation Procedure:**

1. If it is determined that staff and children will be moved to the alternate site location distant from the child care center, assign children to a designated staff member.
2. Staff should bring the following items to the alternate sites:
  - Disaster supplies which are stored \_\_\_\_\_
  - Class/staff attendance sheets and visitor sign-in sheets
  - Children's emergency and medical information and supplies
  - Cell phone, if available.
3. Children will be taken to the alternate site location by (how?) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Once at the alternate site location, take attendance again. Staff must remain with their group of children until the children are picked up by parents or emergency contacts.
5. Director will continue to communicate with parents and coordinate pick-up of children.
6. Director will report incident to licensor.
7. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

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## FIELD TRIP INCIDENT

1. Before leaving for a field trip make sure the trip coordinator has the following information:
  - Child list by assigned vehicle
  - Supervisor/chaperone list by assigned vehicle
  - Map of intended route
  - Children's emergency and medical information and supplies
  - Name and license number of driver, vehicle license number
  - List of important phone numbers significant to the trip (including children's emergency contact information and chaperone cell phone numbers)
  - First aid kit

If an incident occurs, staff must:

- Attend to any medical needs if there are injuries or complaints of pain
  - Call 911 if emergency medical treatment or police are required
  - Contact center and provide update and actions being taken. Center should consider deploying personnel to the scene, hospital, or to appropriate locations.
2. Director will contact parents and give update of actions being taken and indicate meeting locations or pick-up times at the child care center.
  3. Director will report incident to licensor.
  4. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.
  5. Director will call insurance company (if needed.)

## POWER OUTAGE

Director or designee will try to locate the problem and activate alternate lighting system. Flashlight and batteries are located\_\_\_\_\_.

1. Call 911 if concerned about a fire or safety hazard.
2. Unplug all electrical equipment; turn off all but one light.
3. Director will contact property manager, if needed.
4. Director will call electrical utility\_\_\_\_\_.
5. Call your licensor, DEL health specialist, or local health department to help determine if center needs to be closed. Also, consider the following items in making your decision:
  - Can you safely prepare/store food?
  - Do you have hot water to wash hands after diapering and toileting?
6. All parents will be notified if power outage is prolonged.
7. Director will report incident to licensor.
8. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

## STORMS & SNOW

1. Director will determine prior to opening hours whether or not to open the center. Families will be notified by\_\_\_\_\_(refer to center's parent policy.)
2. If the child care center must close during hours of operation because of snow or storm the director will notify parents by telephone.
3. If weather conditions prevent a parent or legal guardian from reaching the facility to recover a child, the center staff will care for the child (maintaining proper staff-to-child ratios) until such time as the parent, legal guardian, or emergency contact person can safely claim the child. The disaster supplies will be used as needed.
4. If the above persons cannot claim the child within 72 hours of the center's closing, the director will contact police to transport the child to a Child Protective Services care site.
  - Director will report incident to licensor.
  - Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

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## EXTERNAL HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT

1. Call 911 immediately. Have staff initiate a Shelter in Place Procedure unless directed to do otherwise by emergency personnel via the dispatcher.
2. Have the following items ready for police and fire personnel:
  - Location and description (liquid, gas) of hazard, if known
  - Number of children in care, staff, volunteers, and visitors
  - Floor plan and internal systems information
3. Follow instructions given by responding agency for either Shelter in Place Procedure or Building and Site Evacuation Procedure.
4. If evacuated, call on transportation resource to take children and staff to alternate child care site. Our transportation resource is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Notify parents of move to alternate site location.
6. If Shelter in Place Procedure occurs and media attention is significant, Director will call parents to let them know of situation.
7. Director will report incident to licensor.
8. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.
9. All parents will be notified of incident.

## INTERNAL HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT

1. In the event a person comes into contact with a suspected hazardous material, follow safety precautions posted on-site or listed on the container. Call the hospital emergency room for additional instruction. Contact poison control center for common household product poisonings.
2. Call 911 if additional assistance is needed.
3. Director will report incident to licensor.
4. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

All potentially Hazardous Materials must be stored separately, locked up, and stationary so they do not fall over in the event of an earthquake.

MSD sheets for all potentially hazardous materials on site are located at \_\_\_\_\_.

## SHELTER IN PLACE PROCEDURE

Shelter in Place Procedure should be conducted when you are instructed to do so by emergency personnel, your radio or television emergency broadcast, you see a vapor cloud, or if you smell an unusual odor outside.

1. Gather all children inside.
2. Call 911, if you have not already done so. Director or designee should turn on and listen to the regional or local radio station. Listen for emergency information from your local fire or police department.
3. Director or facility maintenance person will turn off all fans, heating, cooling, or ventilation systems, & clothes dryers.
4. Close and lock windows and doors (locked windows seal better) and close as many interior doors as possible.
5. Close off non-essential rooms such as storage areas, laundry room, etc.
6. Seal gaps around windows, doors, heating/air conditioning vents, bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans, stove, and dryer vents with pre-cut plastic sheeting, wax paper, or aluminum foil and duct tape.
7. Stay alert to loudspeaker announcements. Emergency personnel from your local police or fire departments may give you specific instructions via loudspeaker or door-or-door.
8. If determined necessary, you can provide a minimal amount of breathing protection by covering mouths and noses with a damp cloth.
9. If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds, or curtains. To avoid injuries, keep children away from windows.
10. Director should stay in touch with responding agencies/emergency personnel.
11. Director and emergency personnel in charge will determine whether to stay sheltered in place or to evacuate.
12. Advise parents not to pick up children from the child care center until the incident is over. The presence of parents searching for their children will cause confusion and may lead to exposure to toxic chemicals. Once sheltered in place, you will not want to open the door to let parents in and out.
13. Have emergency disaster supplies and emergency contact cards handy.
14. Once the incident is over, inform parents, take down plastic, and turn ventilation system back on.
15. Director will report incident to licensor.
16. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

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## **BOMB THREAT**

### **During the Bomb Threat Call:**

1. DO NOT HANG UP! KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING AND ATTEMPT TO GET THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:
  - Where is the bomb?
  - What time will it go off?
  - What kind of bomb is it?
  - Who are you?
  - Why is this going to happen?
2. LISTEN FOR:
  - Voice of male or female
  - Speech impediment or accent
  - What kind of background noise there is
  - Cell phone or land-line
3. NOTE: Time \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Immediately after the Call:**

1. Notify center Director.
2. Call 911.
3. Initiate a lockdown. Follow Emergency Lockdown procedure on page \_\_\_\_.
4. Confer with fire and police about evacuation.
5. Have floor plan ready for police/fire personnel (see page \_\_\_\_\_).
6. Have teachers and staff glance around their area for suspicious items. (DO NOT MOVE SUSPICIOUS ITEMS.)
7. If the decision is made to evacuate, follow Building and Site Evacuation Procedure.
8. Director will notify parents if evacuated or moved to alternate location.
9. Director will report incident to licenser.
10. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.
11. All parents will be notified of incident.

## **SUSPICIOUS MAIL OR PACKAGE**

1. Do not touch, smell, or taste unknown substances.
2. Cover substance with paper, trash can, clothes, or other material.
3. Evacuate and seal off room.
4. Wash hands thoroughly.
5. Mark room as "Dangerous."
6. Call 911.
7. Make a list of all staff and children present in the room at the time of the incident to provide to local health authorities and the police.
8. Director will inform all parents of the incident.
9. Director will report incident to licenser.
10. Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

## **EMERGENCY LOCKDOWN/INTRUDER ALERT PROCEDURE**

From time to time, schools and child care centers have been faced with the threat of unauthorized individuals entering the facility. An intruder is defined as any visitor who, through act or deed, poses a perceived threat to the safety and welfare of children and employees. If at any time you are dealing with a person you feel uncomfortable around, or who makes you fearful for your safety or the safety of others, then you may be faced with an intruder situation.

Key recommendations to implement regarding a lockdown, including those conducted because of an intruder:

1. It is important that all members of the building's staff understand, support and participate in the Intruder Alert Procedure.
2. It is important to practice the Intruder Alert Procedure in the facility several times per year, just as you practice fire drills.

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3. Lockdown information will be given to parents upon enrollment. Parents will be notified of all lockdown drills and events. The facility will provide written materials for parents to help children understand and cope.
  4. Parents will be given a pre-designated alternate pick-up site if children and staff are evacuated. Parents should not try to enter the facility during a lockdown, and may be kept away from the child care center until authorities determine it is safe.

### **Intruder Alert Procedure**

1. If a person(s) comes into the facility, the Director or designee will assess the situation. If they are uneasy or suspicious of the person(s) immediately have someone call 911.
2. If a weapon is present, DO NOT CONFRONT – give another staff member the pre-determined hand signal to call 911 immediately.
3. If no weapon is suspected, the Director will confront the intruder in the following manner:
  - Approach the individual in a non-confrontational manner with the assistance of another staff member.
  - Introduce yourself and the person with you to the individual in a non-confrontational way.
  - Ask the individual who he/she is and how you can be of assistance.
  - Inform the individual of the policy that all visitors need to sign in, and guide him/her to the area where that is done.
  - If the individual refuses, do not confront him/her. Give the other staff members the pre-designated hand signal to call 911.
4. If it is determined that the safety and health of children and staff are in jeopardy:
  - If the intruder is already inside the building, a hand signal (which has been predetermined and is known by all staff) shall be made to the first staff member seen. That staff member will pass on the hand signal to others throughout the building and will call 911.
  - If the suspected intruder is not yet in the building, an announcement will be made (or a bell sounded) to alert the staff of potential danger. The announcement will be “This is a Code Red Emergency, repeat, this is a Code Red Emergency” – or – write your own.
  - If children are outside when a “Code Red” is called, or shots are heard/fired, teachers will quickly direct and move children back into the facility and into the nearest classroom for lockdown.
5. Upon hearing the chosen lockdown announcement (example: Code Red), the following steps must be implemented:
  - Staff should quickly check the hall and restrooms closest to their classrooms and get children into the rooms.
  - Lock all doors, close and lock all windows, cover all windows and doors, and turn off lights.
  - Keep children away from windows and doors. Position children in a safe place against walls or on the floor. Turn a classroom table on its side to use as a buffer.
  - Staff will maintain (as best they can) a calm atmosphere in the room, keeping alert to emotional needs of the children. You may want to gather in a story circle behind the table and gather infants into one or two cribs (preferably on wheels) along with items to help keep them quiet, such as bottles, pacifiers, and small, quiet toys.
  - Teachers will keep all children in the classroom until an all-clear signal has been given.
  - Director or designee will immediately call 911 and stay on the phone until help arrives. Await further instructions from emergency response personnel. You will be informed when it is safe to move about and release children from your rooms. Children should not be released to parents until an “all clear” has been called.
  - Upon arrival, the local police, in conjunction with the Director, will assume controlling responsibility and may evacuate the building per police standard operating procedures.
  - When “All Clear” is heard, the director will apprise the staff of the situation and counsel with children. When the threat has been eliminated, normal activities should be resumed as soon as possible as instructed by the Director.
  - Director will apprise parents of all “lockdowns,” whether practice or real.
  - Director will report incident to licenser.
  - Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

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## **CRISIS/DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN**

### **Crisis Response**

When a tragedy strikes, teachers and staff are torn between the need to deal with children's reactions and the need to cope with their own reactions. With some advanced planning, this process can be much smoother than when tragedy takes a child care center by surprise.

Crisis: A sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects a significant segment of the child care population and often involves serious injury or death. The psychological and emotional impact will be moderate to severe. Outside assistance may be needed.

Director responsibilities include the following tasks:

- Determine whether or not to maintain normal schedules or to set aside the normal schedule for an all out effort to deal with the crisis. Depending on the crisis, it may be necessary to close the center for the day.
- Determine if parent notification becomes an item of priority or if it can wait for a letter to go home in the evening.
- If center-specific, keep the local radio station (\_\_\_\_ AM) informed as to the status of the child care center so parents will have accurate information.
- Identify high risk children, staff and parents likely to be most affected by the news (e.g., children of the teacher who is deceased/injured or parents whose children are in the same class as the deceased).
- Gather and inform closest friends of the victim(s), providing support and information to them before a general announcement is made. If close friends or classmates are absent, ensure that a supportive adult gives the news to them, so that they do not get initial information from the media.
- Prepare a formal statement for initial announcement, including minimal details and noting that additional information will be forthcoming. Also prepare statements for telephone and media inquiries. Have all staff members practice role plays answering calls so that whoever is assigned or is left with the task is able to follow through.
- Give teachers the facts about the tragedy and instructions on how to share the information with the children in their care as well as suggestions for assisting children to cope (Appendix D, page \_\_\_\_).
- Send a letter home to parents explaining the situation. Include specific factual information as well as information on how the child care center is dealing with the situation. Some parents will need to be contacted by phone, particularly if their child's reaction to the crisis is severe.
- Determine if additional community resources are needed to be on "stand by" to manage the crisis effectively. It is essential to minimize the number of "strangers" standing around.
- Facilitate a staff meeting and, if possible, a parent meeting to provide information related to the crisis. The following are some suggestions:
  - o Assist with children's processing of information about the crisis.
  - o Provide counselors to work with children/staff individually or in groups in a variety of locations.
  - o Provide support and counseling for parents.
  - o Provide helpful, factual information to parents.
  - o Have an individual assist with answering phones, providing information and handling non-media inquiries.
  - o Maintain a record of offers of assistance and ensure that proper personnel respond.
  - o Deal with the "empty chair/desk" problem. For example, a counselor would provide therapy while sitting in the child's chair. The chair would then be moved to the back of the classroom. Finally the chair would be removed. Make sure children are part of the entire process.
- Personally deal with or assign a staff member to talk with media/reporters promptly and factually.
- Provide information as requested by police, hospital, or other agencies.
- When appropriate, contact the friends/family of the deceased to get information regarding funeral arrangements, and pass on information to child care staff and parents who may wish to attend.
- Report incident to licensor.
- Report incident to Child Protective Services if necessary.

- Arrange for a child care center/community debriefing 48-72 hours after the event.
- Complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.
- Other considerations:
  - o Have designated locations for the use of media, family, friends and workers, as needed.
  - o Have transportation available to assist the family.
  - o Young members of the victim's family should be cared for if possible.
  - o Children and staff should be given permission to feel a range of emotions. Typically, individuals go through a sequence of emotional reactions following a crisis: high anxiety, denial, anger, remorse, grief and reconciliation.
  - o Provide for grief counseling through local grief hospice program: .
- The phone number is \_\_\_\_\_.

### ***APPENDIX A-1: Sample Parent Letter***

DATE:

Dear Child Care Parents:

Attached please find a copy of our "Crisis/Disaster Plan." With the implementation of this Plan, you can rest assured we will do everything we can to protect your child in the event of a crisis or disaster.

With any disaster or crisis, your cooperation is necessary for the following:

- Encourage and explain to your child why the best place for them is at the child care center.
- Explain that if you are unable to pick them up quickly, the child care staff will care for them until you or your emergency contact comes to get them.
- Please do not telephone the child care center. Telephone lines will be needed for emergency communications for the first 4 hours.
- Listen to local or regional radio station for updates (\_\_\_\_\_).
- Provide an emergency/comfort kit for your child.
- Include an out-of-state contact number with your kit.
- Provide a 72-hour supply of any medication or medical supplies/equipment that your child may need.

The child care staff will care for your child until you or your designee are able to reach him/her. Be sure to keep your child's emergency release card updated. Your child will be released only to those specified by you on his/her card. We will also utilize the phone numbers on the emergency release card should we need to re-locate to our alternate site.

If local telephone lines are unavailable, utilize your out-of-state contact number for information. If possible, we will call that number to give information on your child and to see if you have left any information for us.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact the child care center if you have any questions regarding our Crisis/Disaster Plan.

Keeping your children safe,

Center Director

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**APPENDIX A-2: Sample Parent Communication Form**

Dear Parent or Family,

During a disaster, communication may become challenging. Often it is easier to contact an out-of-area phone number than a local or cell number. Our facility is establishing an out-of-area number to relay information throughout a disaster. Please put this number in a convenient and accessible place so that you are able to get information about your child should local calling become challenging. Our out-of-area contact is:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Please familiarize yourself with the disaster plans and policies established for our child care facility.

Please sign and return the following portion:

I have received information regarding your child care facility's out-of-area emergency contact. I have received information about your Crisis/Disaster Plan. I understand a full copy is available for my review \_\_\_\_\_ (where)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the following information for our emergency records:

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's out-of-area contact (100+ miles away) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contacts (friends, family or loved ones) 1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: \_\_\_\_\_

Local contacts (the "nearest" acquaintances) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ***APPENDIX B: Disaster Supply Lists***

Our Disaster Kits contain the following items:

- Batteries
- Battery Operated Radio
- Bleach, unscented
- Books or games
- Bucket
- Can opener (manual)
- Comfort kits for children
- Crowbar
- Disaster Plan (copy)
- Disposable diapers/wipes
- Emergency Information Cards for children
- First Aid Kit (for disasters)
- First aid book
- Flashlights
- Food (3-day supply) including infant formula, mixes, bottles, and infant food
- Gloves, disposable and heavy material/leather
- Hand sanitizer
- Matches or lighter
- Medications and/or equipment for children/staff with special needs
- Money, change, and small bills
- Office supplies (pen, paper, tape)
- Paper towels
- Pet supplies (if appropriate)
- PineSol® or similar product
- Plastic garbage bags (large, one per child for rain protection)
- Plastic garbage bags (medium, for toilets)
- Plastic kitchen supplies
- Pliers
- Safety Pins
- Sanitary napkins
- Soap
- Tarp or tent
- Toilet paper
- Water (3-day supply) including water to reconstitute infant formula
- Whistle
- Wrench

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***APPENDIX C: Center for Floor Plan and Internal Systems***

1. Attach a copy of your child care center floor plan here.
2. List the security and utility systems in place at the center, and where the controls are located.

***APPENDIX D: Helping Children Cope with Disaster***

Disasters can be very traumatic, especially for young children. There are several things that you can do to help the children in your care cope with their feelings.

1. Reassure the children that they will not be left alone and that you are there to protect them.
2. Be aware of changes in a child's behavior but also know that some children may not outwardly show their distress.
3. Keep to routines such as meals, activities, and naps, as much as possible.
4. Avoid allowing young children to watch or listen to news coverage of the disaster.
5. Give simple but truthful answers to children's questions and make sure children understand your answers. Do not give more information than the children can use and understand.
6. Give children opportunities to express their feelings through activities such as play-acting, using dolls, storytelling, painting, or drawing.
7. Be especially supportive of the children's feelings and their need to be close. Give lots of hugs, smiles, and kind words.
8. Reassure children that they are not responsible for the disaster. Listening to children's stories about disasters and feelings may help.
9. If possible, take a moment away from the children and make sure you address your own fears and anxieties by talking with other adults.
10. Seek professional assistance when needed. Your own knowledge of a child and your instincts about the child's needs will help you make a decision. When in doubt, call for professional help.

**LOCAL RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION ARE:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In the event of a disaster or crisis, grief counseling may be provided through the following local program or organization \_\_\_\_\_.  
The phone number is \_\_\_\_\_.