



National Commission on Children and Disasters



What About The Children? How to Meet Their Unique Disaster Needs

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Why now?



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- Children make up 25% of the population, but overlooked in disaster planning and management
- **Presidential disaster declarations more than doubled since 1980's**
- Only seven states require child care providers to have basic written emergency plans in place addressing evacuation, reunification and accommodating children with special needs (Save the Children report, 2009)



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Children make up 25% of the general population, but...

- Training, exercising, medicines and equipment generally intended for adult populations
- Children lumped into broad categories: “at-risk” “vulnerable” or “special needs”
- Children are not on par with laws protecting pets in a disaster
- Recovery focused on rebuilding infrastructure rather than needs of children and families
- Unique needs of children are apparent in recent disasters: American Samoa, Haiti



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Commission Background

- **Independent:** Authorized by Congress under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-161)
- **Bi-partisan:** 10 members appointed by President Bush, Senate and House leaders
- **Diverse:** Expertise drawn from multiple disciplines: pediatrics, state and local emergency management, non-governmental organizations, and state elected office



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Commission Purpose

- Examine the needs of children in relation to the preparation for, response to and recovery from all-hazards, including major disasters and emergencies
- Report findings and recommendations to the President and Congress



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Commission Structure

- **Commission Chairperson, Mark Shriver, Save the Children**
- **Evacuation, Transportation, and Housing Subcommittee**
Chairperson, Bruce Lockwood, Bristol-Burlington (CT) Health District
- **Pediatric Medical Care Subcommittee**
Chairperson, Dr. Michael Anderson, University Hospitals (OH)
- **Education, Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Subcommittee**
Chairperson, Hon. Sheila Leslie, Nevada General Assembly
- **Human Services Recovery Subcommittee**
Chairperson, Dr. Irwin Redlener, Columbia University



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Important Milestones

- **October 14, 2008: First Public Meeting**
 - Public meetings held on a quarterly basis
- **October 14, 2009: Interim Report delivered to President Obama and Congress**
- **February 1, 2010: Long-Term Disaster Recovery Workshop**
- **May 11, 2010: Next Public Meeting**
- **October 2010: Report due to the President and Congress**



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NATIONAL COMMISSION
ON
CHILDREN AND DISASTERS

INTERIM REPORT
OCTOBER 14, 2009



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND DISASTERS

Interim Report: Findings and Recommendations

<http://www.childrenanddisasters.acf.hhs.gov/>



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Evacuation

- Develop a standardized, interoperable national evacuee tracking and family reunification system

- ❖ Key issues in evacuation the Commission is focusing on:
 - ❖ Interoperability of existing evacuee tracking systems
 - ❖ What information should be collected, especially for purposes of identifying unaccompanied minors and aiding reunification efforts?
 - ❖ Who should information be shared with?
 - ❖ What are the barriers to information sharing under current law and policy, and what modifications can help us overcome these barriers?



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Sheltering Standards, Services and Supplies

- Provide a safe and secure mass care shelter environment for children, including access to essential services and supplies
- ❖ **Shelter standards developed by the Commission**
 - ❖ Used by the American Red Cross
 - ❖ Examples of these standards include:
 - ❖ Children are sheltered together with their families or caregivers
 - ❖ Every effort is made to designate an area for families away from the general shelter population
 - ❖ Every effort is made to set aside space for family interaction
- ❖ **Shelter Supply List for Infants and Toddlers**
 - ❖ Identifies basic supplies necessary to sustain and support 10 infants and children up to 3 years of age for a 24 hour period.
 - ❖ Recommended supplies include baby food, formula, diapers, feeding bottles, cribs
 - ❖ FEMA created a cache based on this supply list, resulting in quick distribution to Haiti following the recent earthquake



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Disaster Management and Recovery

- Integrate the needs of children across all inter- and intra-governmental disaster planning activities and operations
- Accelerate the development of a National Disaster Recovery Strategy

Mental Health

- Integrate mental and behavioral health for children into all public health and medical preparedness and response activities
- Enhance the research agenda for children's disaster mental and behavioral health
- Enhance pediatric disaster mental and behavioral health training for professionals and paraprofessionals



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Child Physical Health and Trauma

- Ensure availability and access to pediatric medical countermeasures at the federal, state and local level
- Expand the medical capabilities of all federally funded response teams through the comprehensive integration of pediatric-specific training, guidance, exercises, supplies and personnel
- Ensure all health care professionals who may treat children during an emergency have adequate pediatric disaster clinical training
- Fund a formal regionalized pediatric system of care for disasters
- Ensure access to physical and mental health services for all children during recovery from disaster

EMS and Pediatric Transport

- Improve the capability of EMS to transport pediatric patients and provide comprehensive pre-hospital pediatric care



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Disaster Case Management

- Establish a holistic federal disaster case management program

Child Care

- Require disaster planning capabilities for child care providers.
- Improve capacity to provide child care services in the immediate aftermath of and recovery from a disaster

Elementary and Secondary Education

- Establish a school disaster preparedness program and appropriate funds to the U.S. Department of Education for a dedicated and sustained funding stream to all state education agencies
- Enhance the ability of school personnel to support children who are traumatized, grieving or otherwise recovering from a disaster



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Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice

- Assist child welfare agencies in meeting current disaster planning requirements and require collaboration with key stakeholders
- Conduct a national assessment of disaster planning and preparedness among state and local juvenile justice systems

Housing

- Prioritize families with children for disaster housing assistance and expedited transition into permanent housing, especially families with children who have disabilities or other special health, mental health or educational needs



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Partnership with States

- Cooperative solutions to challenging problems
- No unfunded mandates
- Disaster planning as a shared responsibility
- Integration of children's needs across preparedness, response, and recovery
 - Children's Working Groups at FEMA and HHS and other interagency collaboration will increase sustainability, progress
 - FY10 HSGP approved planning, training, exercise, equipment



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Child-Focused Disaster Planning Ideas for States

- ✓ Include needs of children across disaster training and exercises, EEG's and AAR's
- ✓ Designate an individual as children's needs coordinator
- ✓ Include child tracking and family reunification procedures in emergency plan
- ✓ Provide safe shelter environment for children and families, including access to essential age-appropriate supplies



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Child-Focused Disaster Planning Ideas for States

- ✓ Capability of emergency personnel to transport children and provide effective pre-hospital pediatric care
- ✓ Capability of hospital Emergency Departments to provide effective care for children
- ✓ Basic psychological first aid training for emergency personnel to assist children
- ✓ Access to medical countermeasures for children
- ✓ Establish a state disaster case management system



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Child-Focused Disaster Planning Ideas for States

- ✓ **Disaster plans for child congregate care facilities**
 - ✓ Schools, child care, juvenile justice and courts
 - ✓ Evacuation, reunification, children with disabilities or special medical needs, staff training and drills
 - ✓ Plans on file with state emergency management office
 - ✓ Plan for establishing emergency child care (new FEMA guidance)

- ✓ **Identify resources in state and surrounding states to address surge in needs for children...especially health and mental health needs**

- ✓ **Long-term disaster recovery plan for children and families**
 - ✓ Includes family-appropriate housing, schools, child care, mental health, medical care, child welfare, juvenile justice and court facilities



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Commission Messages

- Children are not simply “small adults”
- Children are the center of family and community
- Disasters are especially disruptive to children
- Children as assets, not liabilities in disasters
- Recovery = more than rebuilding infrastructure
- Disaster planning is a shared responsibility



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For More Information

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Thank You For Your Commitment to Children !

