



Write a Disaster Plan for Your Family Child Care Home

Following the steps on this handout for creating a disaster plan for your family child care home is easy, and will help you write a plan that will work for you and the children in your care. The plan will help you identify what steps to take as you teach the children and periodically practice the plan with them so they are prepared for an emergency. Your disaster plan will be unique because it will be based completely on the layout of your home and local neighborhood. As you write the plan, feel free to expand on, or include any additional information you feel may be necessary.

Any Emergency

1. Do your children know where to call if something were to happen to you in an emergency? Children over the age of three can learn how to dial 911. Allow children to practice using a TOY PHONE, not a real one! Children younger than three can be taught to dial the operator. If children are too young to know your address, teach them to stay on the phone or leave it off the hook so emergency services can trace the call. Teaching these skills can be part of your disaster plan.

2. Do you create an emergency card for every child in your care? These cards should contain the child's full name, birth date, the name, phone number and location of the parent/s or responsible adult to contact in an emergency, the name and phone number of the child's physician and the parent's authorization for you to seek emergency care if they cannot be reached. Additionally, noting food and drug allergies or physical conditions is a good idea. Be sure to include a list of approved family members or friends authorized to pick up the child when the parent/guardian cannot be reached.

3. Do you have an adult nearby who can watch the children in your absence due to an emergency? In your disaster plan identify that person and how long it would take for he/she to come to your home. Many providers have special arrangements with a neighbor, or with their substitute.

4. Have you given the children's parents a handout with information on where you plan to take their children in case of a fire, hurricane or other disaster? It is a good idea to update this list at least once yearly, and give it to parents at the start of each hurricane season.

5. Do you have a battery operated radio and flashlight, as well as spare batteries on hand in case the electricity goes out? Mention their location in your plan. **The local emergency radio stations are WKXY 930 AM, WQSA 1220 AM, WAMR 1320 AM, WENG 1530 AM, WHPT 102.5 FM, WKZM 104.3 FM, WSRZ 106.3 FM, WCTQ 106.5 FM.**

6. Do you have a first aid kit? Are your CPR and First Aid certificates current?

Fire Safety Plans

1. Identify your fire drill signal. Is it a bell, whistle, etc.

2. What exits should the children use? You should have at least two separate exits and practice using both since one exit can be blocked. Also, practice evacuating from different spaces in your house. Create a floor plan of your house and draw two emergency exits from each room.

3. What is your plan for evacuating infants? If multiple infants need transporting, you can wrap up each infant in a separate crib sheet. Having a specially designed apron with pouches for carrying multiple infants is one possibility, or if you have a ramp or easy access to the outside a sturdy crib with wheels can be used.

4. When should you dial 911- before or after getting the children out? Your first responsibility is to get all children out of danger. However, call 911 if possible. You can leave the phone off the hook and yell "FIRE!" since most fire departments can identify the caller's phone number and address as long as the call is not coming from a cell phone. Once out of the house, **ACCOUNT FOR EVERYONE.**

5. Where will you take the children after they have left your house? A neighbor's house or lawn, or a nearby church, library or school grounds are good options. Always be sure to **ACCOUNT FOR EVERYONE** before you get to the spot you have chosen, and after you reach the destination. You should decide on two alternative locations, the first nearby, the second can be a little further away, and put them in your plan. Be sure to inform the children's parents of these relocation sites.

6. What is the first thing you should do once you arrive at your relocation site? **ACCOUNT FOR EVERYONE.**

Once you have established your fire drill routine, practice it at least once a month and be sure that any new children can easily learn the rules.

Fire Safety Rules and Education- these activities and questions can be included in your monthly disaster drills, or during circle time that day. Teaching these skills should be done in an appropriate way that does not make children anxious or scared.

1. Do your children know what a hot door means? A fire may be burning on the other side and the door should not be opened. If there is only one door to a room, children should be taught to climb out a window or how to open one and call for help. It is common for young children to try to hide during an emergency, let them know it is NEVER safe to hide.

2. Do your children know what to do if caught in smoke? Demonstrate how to crawl out holding your breath as much as possible, and let the children practice. Remember to stay as close to the floor as possible because smoke rises.

3. Should anyone ever return to a burning building to retrieve a treasured item? NO NO NO!

4. Do your children know what to do if their clothes catch on fire? They should STOP, DROP to the ground and ROLL. Again, demonstrating and having the children practice to remember is a good idea.

5. What fire safety devices do you have in your home? Make sure you list in your plan the devices you have and where they are located in your home.

- SMOKE DETECTOR- should be located in sleeping areas and the kitchen. Check the batteries monthly and change them annually on a date you'll remember.
- FIRE EXTINGUISHER- should also be checked yearly. Make sure the arrow on the gauge is pointing to the green area.
- ROPE LADDER- or other means of exit for a second story, if you have one.

Hurricane/Tornado Safety Plans

1. Do you have a safe spot in your home in case of a tornado or lock down? Have you identified a local shelter where you and the children can go in case of an emergency? Identify your safety spot in your plan. If you are using a local shelter, it is a good idea to have at least two choices. Make sure you inform the children's parents which local shelters you plan to go to.

2. Do you have someone for the children's parents to call as backup if they cannot locate you? Choose one out of town and one local friend or relative in case local lines are down. Make sure you contact both contacts if a disaster happens so if a parent calls, they can let the parents know where you are.

3. Do you know how to turn off your water, gas and electricity at main switches, if necessary?

Now if a disaster does strike, remain calm and follow your safety plan!

