

NEW JERSEY CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM STATEWIDE EMERGENCY, DISASTER AND RECOVERY PLAN

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 requires States to have a Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan. As the Lead Agency for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Family Development (DHS/DFD) has prepared this Statewide Emergency, Disaster and Recovery Plan (the Plan) specific to subsidized child care services and programs.

- The Plan adopts the five key topic areas recommended by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) as a framework to support child care providers, children in their care, and their families before, during, and after an emergency or disaster. The five (5) key topic areas are:
 - Planning for Continuation of Services to CCDF Families
 - Coordination with Emergency Management Agencies and Key Partners
 - Regulatory Requirements and Technical Assistance for Child Care Providers
 - Provision of Temporary Child Care Services After a Disaster
 - Rebuilding Child Care

As detailed below, the State of New Jersey has reviewed policies and procedures in order to demonstrate that New Jersey is complying. The Plan outlines key agencies, roles, responsibilities, policies, and procedures.

Disasters can be divided into three different types: (1) Natural, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and snowstorms, and biological; (2) Technological, including power outages, fires, exposure to hazardous materials; and (3) Attacks, resulting from terrorism and other acts of violence, these categories are further expanded as follows:

NATURAL	TECHNOLOGY	ATTACK
Severe Weather Snow and Ice Storms Tornadoes Hurricanes Earthquakes Floods Wildfires and Forest Fires High Winds Volcanic Eruptions Landslides Tsunamis and Tidal Waves Pandemic	Electrical Outages Loss of Water Flooding from broken pipes Gas Outages Fires Exposure to Hazardous Materials Aviation Accidents Oil Spills Dam Failures	Bomb Threats Biological Attacks Chemical Attacks Explosions Nuclear Attacks Radiological Lock Down Cyber Attacks

The Governor, State and local government along with key partners are responsible for ensuring that New Jersey adequately prepares for emergencies of all types and sizes. In situations where a major disaster may be imminent, the Governor of New Jersey or his designee may declare a State of Emergency.

The New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is the Lead Agency responsible for planning, directing and coordinating emergency operations in the State of New Jersey. This Office plays a key role in communicating with government state agencies and the public during an emergency, providing advice and instructions and maintaining calm public order.

OEM at the State and local level play a critical role supporting and assisting Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development (DHS/DFD), carry out its responsibilities assisting and supporting child care providers, both in emergency situations, planning and preparations as well as with recovery efforts.

New Jersey Child Care Subsidy Program administered by multiple state agencies. Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing (DCF/OOL) regulates child care centers and requires licensed centers to notify local law enforcement or OEM of their written emergency plan and procedures through N.J.A.C. 3A:52, for licensed child care centers, including Head Start programs. DCF/OOL is also the regulatory agency responsible for the Family Child Care Registration Program and N.J.A.C. 3A:54 for family child care providers require coordination with OEM.

After Hurricane Sandy in 2012, DHS/DFD and the Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing (DCF/OOL), along with the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies, collaborated to gather information on child care providers impacted by the storm to help inform how to best respond to disaster-related needs of families and the child care providers.

Lessons learned from Hurricane Sandy in 2012, resulted in improved coordinated efforts across key stakeholders at multiple levels, better tracking mechanisms, and an established governance of decision makers to quickly address challenges and achieve shared goals efforts to support working families and child care providers impacted by the pandemic.

March 12, 2020, Governor Murphy declared a State of Emergency with Executive Orders (EO#107, EO#110 and EO#149) to address and respond to the national health emergency, which significantly affected the entire state and severely crippled the child care sector.

A collaborative network of state agencies, responsible for administering the child care subsidy program, worked closely with OEM offices to implement an Emergency Child Care Program – to support the essential frontline workers, help sustain child care providers and provide continuity of child care services to families impacted by the national health pandemic.

May 1, 2022 with the ending of the public health emergency pandemic provisions and policies ceased to apply.

<https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-149.pdf> (Exec. Order 149, 5/29/2020)
<https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-107.pdf> (Exec. Order 107, 3/21/2020)
<https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-110.pdf> (Exec. Order 110, 3/25/2020)
<https://www.childcarenj.gov/Resources/Coronavirus> (NJ DFD/OCC Website)
<https://www.nga.org/governors/powers-and-authority/#orders>

I. PLANNING FOR CONTINUATION OF SERVICES TO CCDF FAMILIES

A. OEM FUNCTIONS

The New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is the Lead Agency responsible for planning, directing, and coordinating emergency operations within the State of New Jersey beyond local control. OEM coordinates the emergency response efforts of state agencies, allied agencies, county Offices of Emergency Management, and the private sector.

OEM works closely with federal, state and local partners to prepare for all hazards, natural or manmade, that could affect New Jersey's families, communities and businesses. Because there are numerous types of hazards, OEM works with many key partners and coordinates services at the state county and local levels. Within each county, there are coordinators to assist local government, not-for-profit, and for-profit agencies, including the child care community, to prepare and plan for emergencies and disasters.

In addition, OEM quickly triages and addresses emergencies and helps entities easily access the various resources and services needed, such as transportation, resource support, search and rescue and human services.

The State OEM typically begins a traditional media and/or social media campaign to keep the public, including the child care community, informed. It would send out an alert to all the State departmental OEMs, which in turn would notify all the departmental divisions, and each division would take appropriate action. Communication flows from the State OEM to the other state agencies, while county specific emergencies are handled at the local level by the county and municipal OEMs.

OEM is the leader in disaster management. All State entities adhere to their guidance and utilize their established partnerships as needed. DHSEOEM team will be at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) coordinating Mass Care operations through any State/County/ and Local Partners. DHSEOEM will also be able to identify and provide resources as needed that impact the child care community in their role at the SEOC. DHSEOEM also works in coordination with NJ Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NJVOAD) for any needed resources to support child care. The Division of Family Development will work in coordination with the Department of Human Services Communications Team to get critical messages out to our community during times of crisis.

B. OOL FUNCTIONS

1. All Hazards Department of Children and Families Disaster Preparedness Plan

DCF maintains a Statewide plan known as the "All Hazards Department of Children and Families Disaster Preparedness Plan" (DPP) that addresses all entities under its purview, including licensed centers and registered homes. The DPP based on the National Response Framework

model, emphasizes a comprehensive and collaborative response following a disaster. The plan is geared towards ensuring the coordination and ongoing provision of all DCF services throughout the State and the continuity of business operations. The DCF Office of Emergency Management (DCF/OEM) has initiated and established connections with DHS, the NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (OHS&P), OEM and the DOH. The plan is distributed to the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and The United Way. According to the DPP each DCF functional component has a designated order of succession. The DPP supports the ongoing 24-hour operation of the State Centralized Registry and a call center. The plan generally contemplates all hazards from Hurricanes and Nor'easters to active shooters, the release of hazardous materials and terrorism, as well as the effects of a National Health Emergency.

Generally, the plan breaks disaster response into three specific phases (1) the Planning and Preparedness Phase, (2) the Response and Mobilization Phase and (3) the Recovery Phase.

Despite the DHS/DFD role in providing a subsidy on behalf of children that attend the child care facilities, DCF/OOL is the regulatory entity; therefore, the bulk of the response efforts are under the purview of DCF/OOL and the other State partners mentioned in this Plan.

2. General Practices

Immediately following a disaster, DCF/OOL reaches out to licensed child care centers in affected areas to assess conditions and needs. In addition, Licensed centers are required to notify OOL if they are impacted in an emergency. N.J.A.C. 3A:52-3.2. Licensed centers are provided with contact numbers for OOL, which includes a toll-free number, the direct office number and the inspector's contact information. They can also contact their local CCR&R, which in turn can contact OOL on the center's behalf. Furthermore, after-hours emergency contact procedures can be implemented; for instance, during Hurricane Sandy, centers could call the State Central Registry (a child protection hotline) to connect with OOL for help. Various mechanisms including social media are used to direct the providers to the State Central Registry.

After connecting with an impacted licensed center, OOL would then inspect the center and assess the situation, to determine, among other things, if the building that the program utilizes would be completely or partially safe to continue operating with children in care. OOL would then issue an inspection report with its findings. In cases where a center is damaged, OOL determines a plan of action on a case-by-case basis to assist the center in attaining compliance with state licensing regulations. OOL works closely with local enforcing agencies to ensure the safety of the child care facility.

If a center deemed unsafe, OOL assists with an emergency relocation so that the children will not be without care. Once an alternate temporary location is found by the local CCR&R, the OOL inspector, or through other entities, OOL works with local enforcing officials to ensure that the alternate location is safe. If this temporary location is a local government run emergency shelter, a plan is required between DCF/OOL, and the local government to ensure a seamless transition for care in the shelter. The local government and OOL must notify the CCR&R in that county of that plan so it may be incorporated into the CCR&R emergency preparedness plan.

C. CCR&R Functions

Pursuant to the contracts between the State and each local CCR&R agency, CCR&Rs must meet various performance standards relating to emergency planning and preparedness. The contract provides that CCR&Rs utilize the disaster planning guides published by Child Care Aware of America ([Child Care Emergency Preparedness - Child Care Aware® of America](#)) as well as Emergency Preparedness Manual for Early Childhood Programs by the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness. Under the contract with the State, the CCR&R disaster plan must include the following:

1. A contingency plan for continuation of services to families and providers
2. Coordination efforts with the local emergency management agency and key partners
3. Outreach efforts to assess need and provide technical assistance to child care providers
4. Assistance to families and providers with rebuilding efforts after a disaster
5. An emergency contact person and team and relocation and evacuation plans

The contract further requires CCR&Rs to get alternative contact information (alternate phone numbers, email addresses, etc.) from providers. Various methods of communication (email blasts, group phone calls, websites, etc.) are required to inform providers and parents of emergencies and continuity of service policies; and, to provide information and resources and coordinate with key partners to help families and providers expedite recovery efforts.

Child Care Aware of America (CCAoA) developed competencies framework for CCR&R staff and leaders to professionalize and support work in child care emergency preparedness, response and recovery, the tool kit incorporated by reference into the State contract with CCR&Rs. This planning tool also provides guidance to CCR&Rs on providing temporary child care after a disaster and restoring child care after a disaster. Finally, the CCAoA guide provides detailed guidance to CCR&Rs on how to help providers prepare for disasters.

Among other functions, CCR&Rs maintain lists of licensed child care providers, as well as registered family care providers in their areas. After a disaster, if certain child care providers are unable to immediately resume services, the local CCR&R will provide referrals to other approved providers.

CCR&Rs will distribute information to victims about available help, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) public assistance grants, state, and local foundation grants, as well as information related to small business loans and emergency preparedness training.

D. Department of Health

For general emergencies, DOH regulations (N.J.A.C. 8:26-6.1) instruct camps to follow OEM guidance in the event of an emergency.

In the event of a public health emergency, such as COVID-19, DOH in conjunction with OEM are the lead agencies. Within the DOH sits the Division of Public Health Infrastructure, Laboratories and Emergency Preparedness (PHILEP). PHILEP works to coordinate the New Jersey's local public health agencies, laboratory services and preparedness for responses to emergencies.

PHILEP oversees the Emergency Preparedness and Operations Section, Office of Emergency Medical Services, Office of Local Public Health and the Public Health and

Environmental Laboratories.

PHILEP interacts with other government agencies on the federal, state, county and local levels, as well as private and non-for-profit sector organizations.

PHILEP has developed a strategic plan that details how the Division will prepare for and respond to public health emergencies.

E. Department of Education

The Department of Education (DOE) Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning has resources and tools on their website ([Office of School Preparedness & Emergency Planning \(OSPEP\) \(nj.gov\)](https://www.nj.gov/education/ospep/)) This unit provides support to districts and school leaders in assisting with the establishment and maintenance of a school safety and security plan that addresses all hazards and follows the phases of crisis management planning-mitigations, preparedness, response and recovery.

Each school has a school safety and security plan. The plan must be reviewed at least once a year. The DOE recommended that the review occur by the third week in October. Additionally, the safety and security plan must be reviewed and updated anytime weaknesses are identified during a drill or actual emergency.

F. New Jersey Advisory Councils

1. New Jersey Council for Young Children

The NJCYC was formed in order to develop high quality, comprehensive systems of early childhood development and care for children, birth to school entry. The NJCYC brings together critical decision makers for discussion on how to better coordinate and enhance services to young children so they have the support that they need to thrive.

2. NJ Child Care Advisory Council

In the fall 2018, DHS/DFD established a child care advisory group to compliment the work of the NJ Council for Young Children. The advisory group consist of a significant number of existing NJ Council for Young Children stakeholders including all the State agencies. The major goals of the advisory group are to provide help DHS/DFD better engage providers, engage input on how to better serve children and families, in the Child Care Assistance Program, and provide recommendations on how to improve quality child care, and help outreach and communicate the benefit and importance of Grow NJ Kids.

G. DHS/DFD ROLE

Core functions that are handled by DFD in the case of a disaster include: (1) establishing policy on any temporary eligibility criteria for CCDF subsidies, and (2) ensuring that there are mechanisms in place for continued subsidy payments to child care providers after a disaster. Local CCR&Rs then implement DFD policy and procedures. In the event of a disaster, DFD provides guidance on how to address temporary, disaster-related needs of impacted CCDF families and impacted child care providers. This typically is accomplished

by issuing program instruction to CCR&Rs or via other routes.

Alternative routes included within the Division of Family Development existing organizational structure:

- Communications:
 - Post information for parent on “Preparing for Disaster”
<https://www.ChildCareNJ.gov/Parents/Resources>
 - Continually updates the DFD Website with information specific to health and environmental related issues
<https://www.ChildCareNJ.gov/Resources/Emergency>
 - Parent Letters
 - Social Media Updates
 - Press Releases
 - Web text
 - Program Launch
 - Briefing Materials for Federal Government
- Facilities:
 - The Facilities/Mail Room staff supported the distribution of emergency materials. During the distribution of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), the Facilities/Mail Room staff facilitated the receiving of shipments and the distribution of materials.
- Quality:
 - Coordinated efforts with Office of Licensing (OOL), Department of Health (DOH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), New Jersey’s Afterschool Network (NJSACC) and other Consultants to discuss and establish “How to Best Practices”
- Professional Development:
 - The Socio-Emotional Formation Initiative (SEFI) Training and Consultation
 - Child Care Development Block Grant (CCBG) – required trainings
- New Jersey Child Care Information System (NJCCIS)
 - NJCCIS is designed to serve as a one-stop for business operations related to licensed child care centers, registered family child care providers, the NJ Workforce Registry and Grow NJ Kids (GNJK) - New Jersey’s Child Care Quality Rating Improvement System.
 - Alerts, as well as specific and general information about programs are posted.
 - Providers are able to look up payments, research discrepancies and notify DFD of any temporary or permanent closures.
- Other DFD functions
 - Collaborates with Key Partners in Coordinating Responses, such as, but not limited to:
 - State of New Jersey’s Governor’s Office
 - New Jersey State Police
 - New Jersey Department of Human Service Office of Emergency Management

- New Jersey Department of Health Emergency Medical Services (OEMS)
- New Jersey Department of Health
- Department of Education
- Active committee members of the Disaster Case Management Plan. Other committee members include, but not limited to: New Jersey Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NJVOAD), Long Term Recovery Groups, Early Childhood Disaster Committee members, Local Municipalities and other government organizations coming together to assess the needs of the community.
- Coordination of Closures and Reopening of Facilities
- Coordination with Technical Assistance (TA) Centers to materials and supplies as available and needed.

<https://www.nj.gov/governor/>

<https://www.njsp.org/>

<http://www.njvoad.org/>

[Need Help? Start Here \(nj211.org\)](http://nj211.org/)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(cdc.gov\)](http://www.cdc.gov/)

[Home | FEMA.gov](http://www.fema.gov/)

[American Red Cross | Help Those Affected by Disasters](http://www.redcross.org/)

H. Continuity of Operations Requirements for Providers

New Jersey's Child Care Assistance Program is administered by multiple state agencies. The Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing (DCF/OOL) regulates licensed child care centers, including Head Start programs, through N.J.A.C. 3A:52. o. DCF/OOL is also the regulatory agency responsible for the Family Child Care Registration Program through N.J.A.C. 3A:54. The Department of Health regulates youth camps through N.J.A.C. 8:25.

New Jersey Administrative Code 3A:52-5.3 (I) – outlines emergency procedures for licensed centers, which requires centers to have written emergency procedures delineating information on evacuation, relocation, procedures for communication with families, continuity of operations, which includes alternate indoor location, and written authorization from parent(s) for emergency medical care for each child. The regulation requires centers to conduct two lockdown drills per year.

This regulation also requires centers to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency or emergency management office of an evacuation location and plans for a lockdown and reunification with families. Additionally, centers are required to ensure that appropriate local enforcement or emergency management office are notified of the number, ages, and special needs of children enrolled.

Supplemental evacuation requirements are required for children under 2 ½ and staff under N.J.A.C. 3A:52-5.3 (m). Centers are also required to conduct fire drills at least once a month under N.J.A.C. 3A:52-5.3 (I).

New Jersey Administrative Code 3A:54-6.4 outlines emergency procedures for family child care providers for ensuring children's safety and communicating with parents in the event of an emergency. The regulation requires these providers to have a written plan for the emergency evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, or lockdown of the children in the event of natural or civil

disaster, and other emergencies. The written plan also addresses continuity of operations by requiring an anticipated relocation site able to provide adequate, safe shelter for providers and enrolled children. The emergency procedures must also include communication with families, family reunification, contacting local law enforcement or emergency management office, transportation for children including those with special needs and addressing the needs of infants, toddlers, and children with special needs or chronic medical conditions.

Providers are required to practice fire, shelter-in-place, lockdown, and evacuation drills with each child from all exit locations at varied times of day and during varied activities, including nap-time. Providers are required to implement a monthly practice for the evacuation and relocation drills, and two shelter-in-place and two lockdown drills per year. When multiple shifts of care are provided, the required drills must be conducted monthly during each shift of care.

New Jersey Administrative Code 8:25-6.1-4-Youth Camps - outline emergency procedures for youth camps and requires written emergency procedures. These procedures address, at a minimum, evacuation of the camp, fires, natural disasters, serious accidents, illness or injury, and lost camper(s). The regulation also requires that camps conduct fire and emergency drills at least once each camp period or every two weeks, whichever is more frequent. The camp director must also ensure that a list of emergency phone numbers be provided and posted at certain locations.

Under the Youth Camp Inspection Form implementing the regulation, the written emergency procedures must also address plan for lockdown, shelter in place, and communication and reunification with parents following an emergency.

Guidance and essential functions established through Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies for Approved Homes –Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies are responsible for ensuring that Approved Homes have written emergency plans in alignment with New Jersey Administrative Code 3A:54-6.4. CCR&Rs are responsible for conducting inspections to ensure written emergency plans include evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, and lock-down procedures, procedures for communication with families and ensuring family reunification, an anticipated relocation site to provide continuity of operations, and the accommodation of infants and toddlers, and children with special needs.

All CCDF providers are required to complete a mandatory pre-service health and safety training, which covers basic information regarding emergency preparedness. In addition, DHS/DFD offers ongoing trainings on emergency preparedness, and posts and provides disaster preparedness and planning related resources and information from NJOEM, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and FEMA.

Updated and current information is available and made accessible to providers through different platforms and approaches, such as DHS/DFD website, provider portal, email blast, meetings, direct trainings, and technical assistance.

Additionally, DHS/DFD uses New Jersey Child Care Information System (NJCCIS) a shared system with Department of Children and Families (DCF), Office of Licensing OOL, which house New Jersey provider data. to communicate and notify providers if an emergency arises.

I. Continuing the Subsidy

Payments to child care providers through the electronic E-Child Care (ECC) system is managed by a vendor, which contracts with DHS/DFD. It directs the deposit of funds into provider-designated bank accounts on a bi-weekly basis.

The New Jersey e-Child Care Provider Web Portal is a powerful tool that gives child care

providers the ability to view information about their agreements, attendance transactions, payments, and other program information. (<https://www.echildcarenj.org> (ECC Provider Web Portal))

The State's vendor is required to have its own disaster plan, to ensure that payments can continue if a disaster occurs in the vendor's state or in a state where equipment is located.

If a disaster disables the ECC system in a particular area of New Jersey for a prolonged period, relevant information obtained manually, and entered in a different geographic part of the State not impacted by the disaster. Either the State, or non-impacted CCR&Rs, could input manual attendance records provided to them, and payments processed accordingly.

Prior to ECC, DHS/DFD used a voucher payment system. In the event of an extended outage, DHS/DFD has experience issuing manual payments. The ECC system promptly implement temporary, disaster-related modifications of program requirements. For instance, if after a disaster, the State allows several additional paid program closure days, this temporary policy change can be programmed into the ECC system so that providers can be electronically paid for the extra days.

The CARES system also has the capacity to set up wait lists, and it contains priority criteria that would apply to wait-listed applicants. Presently, there is no wait list in New Jersey, however, should a disaster strike and the demand for child care exceeds the supply, the CARES wait-list system could be used to manage child care applications based on disaster-related priority category.

II. COORDINATING WITH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND KEY PARTNERS

A. MAIN PARTNERS

In situations where a major disaster may be imminent, the Governor of New Jersey or his designee may declare a State of Emergency. The following entities are the Division's main partners that will coordinate in the event of an emergency.

1. Office of Emergency Management

State and local offices of emergency management (OEMs) play a critical role in the child care world, both in emergencies as well as in more routine areas such as training child care providers. There is a Statewide OEM, as well as OEMs for each separate State department. The Department of Human Services, as well as the Department of Children and Families have Offices of Emergency Management. Both units work in conjunction with the State of New Jersey Emergency Support Function (NJESF) 6 which implements and coordinates all levels of Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and the Private Sector assistance in the provision of mass care and emergency assistance, disaster housing and human services. Each of New Jersey's 21 counties has an OEM, as do many municipalities. The relevant OEMs work with all county and local agencies during emergencies and disasters.

2. Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R's)

In New Jersey, the delivery of child care services funded by CCDF supervised at the State level by DHS/DFD and are administered at the local level by 14 regional Child Care Resource

& Referral Agencies.

3. Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing (DCF/OOL)

DCF/OOL regulates public and private child care centers that are maintained for the care, development, or supervision of six or more children under 13 years of age for less than 24 hours a day under the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers, N.J.A.C. 3A:52. DCF/OOL is also the regulatory agency responsible for ensuring that contracted Sponsoring Organizations comply with all applicable provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Family Child Care Registration, N.J.A.C. 3A:54. Licensed child care centers and registered family child care providers are required to notify local law enforcement or OEM of their written emergency plan.

4. Department of Education

CCDF funds serve many children in before and after school programs on-site in New Jersey public and private schools. The Department of Education's Office of School Preparedness & Emergency Planning (OSPEP) provides support to district and school leaders to assist with the establishment and maintenance of a school safety and security plan that addresses all hazards and follows the phases of crisis management planning – mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

5. Department of Health

The New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) serves as a partner with DCF/OOL for programs that operate as a youth camp and licensed center. DOH and DCF/OOL coordinate their efforts when communicating guidance for these summer camps in the event of an Emergency.

6. The New Jersey Council for Young Children

The Early Childhood Advisory Council in New Jersey, known as the New Jersey Council for Young Children (NJCYC). NJCYC offered recommendations and consulted as this plan was developed.

7. Grow NJ Kids Technical Assistance Centers

The TA Centers are committed to providing technical assistance, coaching and modeling to early childhood educators enrolled in quality improvement initiatives. They are integral to keeping lines of communication open with child care providers, as well as partnering to assess and meet the needs of providers during and after disaster.

8. Head Start

Head Start is a federal program for low-income families that promotes the school readiness of children from birth to age five by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Head Start programs provide a learning environment that supports children's growth in many areas such as language, literacy, and social and emotional development. Head Start emphasizes the role of parents as their child's first and most important teacher. These programs help build relationships with families that support family well-being and many other important areas.

Many Head Start programs also provide Early Head Start, which serves infants, toddlers, and pregnant women and their families who have incomes below the Federal poverty level.

9. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) serves as the national focus for developing and applying disease prevention and control, environmental health, and health promotion and health education activities designed to improve the health of the people of the United States.

CDC is responsible for controlling the introduction and spread of infectious diseases, and provides consultation and assistance to other nations and international agencies to assist in improving their disease prevention and control, environmental health, and health promotion activities. The role of CDC was critical and significant helping New Jersey respond to the Coronavirus public health crisis (COVID-19) matters related to disease prevention and control activities.

III. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS and TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A. Requirements for Licensed Centers

1. DCF/OOL - Licensed Centers

The licensing and inspection of child care centers (public or private with six or more children under the age of 13) is under the authority of DCF/OOL.

Licensed child care centers are required to prepare and post prominently, emergency procedures. Procedures include, among other things: relocation to an alternate indoor location with the same operating hours and procedures for obtaining emergency transportation to the alternate site, and a diagram showing how the center evacuated in an emergency. Additionally, procedures for ensuring the safety of children and communicating with parents in the event of evacuation, lockdown, disaster or other emergency; and requirements to ensure safe and timely evacuation of infants and toddlers. Moreover, licensed child care centers must conduct two lockdown drills per year and maintain on file a record of each lockdown drill. (Monthly fire drills are also required, as is recordkeeping of these drills.) These regulations appear in the New Jersey Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers, N.J.A.C. 3A:52-5.3(n).

Lastly, staff are required to have yearly training on the center's emergency preparedness plan, including but not limited to, emergency evacuation and lock down procedures.

Licensed child care centers are also required to: notify appropriate local law enforcement agency or emergency management office of pertinent information such as the name and location of the center, the number of children and adults on site, the need for emergency transportation, the location to which children will be evacuated and other information. The local law enforcement agency or emergency

management office receiving such notice identified in the posted emergency plan. These regulations among others are contained in the New Jersey Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers, N.J.A.C. 3A:52-5.3.

Moreover, the New Jersey Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers requires licensed child care centers to maintain on file documentation of required staff training N.J.A.C. 3A:52-4.8(g).

OOL ensures compliance with the regulations by conducting yearly inspections of all

licensed child care programs in the State.

2. Registered Family Child Care Providers

Registration of family child care providers (who care for five or fewer children) is also under the authority of DCF/OOL. DCF/OOL approves DHS contracted CCR&Rs, which then handle the voluntary registration of family child care providers.

Registered family child care providers likewise are required by state regulation to maintain and post prominently, a written plan for emergency evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, or lockdown. The plans must address, among other items, the following: an anticipated relocation site; procedures for communicating with parents and ensuring family reunification after the emergency; emergency transportation; and the unique needs of infants, toddlers and children with special needs or chronic medical conditions.

Moreover, providers are required to practice fire, shelter-in-place, lockdown, and evacuation drills with each child from all exit locations and at varied times of the day, and during varied activities, including naptime. Detailed documentation of the drills is required. Required, two shelter-in-place and two lockdown drills per year implemented and documented, as well as monthly evacuation and relocation drills.

N.J.A.C. 3A:54-6.4.

In the event of an evacuation, shelter-in-place, or lockdown, registered family child care providers must have a plan for notifying the local law enforcement agency or emergency management office of pertinent information such as the location of the home, the number of children and adults there, the need for emergency transportation, the location to which children will be evacuated, and other information. The local law enforcement agency or emergency management office are required to be notified and identified in the posted emergency plan. N.J.A.C. 3A:54-6.4.

Approved Homes regulated under the authority of Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development must undergo many of the same inspection requirements that Registered Homes managed and enforced by the CCR&Rs.

3. Programs in Public School Facilities

Child care programs housed in public school facilities fall under the purview of the Department of Education (DOE) disaster preparedness guidelines. The DOE's, Office of School Preparedness & Emergency Planning (OSPEP) provides support to district and school leaders in assisting with the establishment and maintenance of school safety and security plan that addresses all hazards and follows the phases of crisis management planning, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Each school district is required to develop and implement comprehensive plans, procedures, and mechanisms that provide for safety and security in the school district's public elementary and secondary schools. The related rules are contained in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1 through 5.7 (School Safety and Security). Additional rules found in N.J.A.C. 6A-16-6.1 through 6.5 (Law Enforcement Operations for Alcohol, other Drugs, Weapons, and Safety).

4. Summer Youth Camps

Summer camps are required to meet specified health and safety requirements under State statute and regulations (N.J.S.A. 26:12, N.J.A.C. 8:25), with monitoring and enforcement falling under the purview of the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH). Among other requirements, camps required by State regulation to establish written emergency procedures that address, at a minimum, evacuation, fires, natural disasters, serious accidents, illness or injury and lost campers. N.J.A.C. 8:25-6.1. Camp directors are required to train personnel on these emergency procedures.
N.J.A.C. 8:25-3.2.

5. License-Exempt Approved Home Providers

Approval of Homes fall under the authority of DHS/DFD (N.J.A.C 10:15), which authorizes Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies the responsibility for ensuring that Approved Homes have written emergency plans in alignment with New Jersey Administrative Code 3A:54-6.4. CCR&Rs are responsible for conducting inspections to ensure written emergency plans include evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, and lock-down procedures, procedures for communication with families and ensuring family reunification, an anticipated relocation site to provide continuity of operations, and the accommodation of infants and toddlers, and children with special needs.

B. Technical Assistance and Training for Providers

State regulations require licensed child care centers and registered family child care providers to receive emergency preparedness training. These r regulations appear in the New Jersey Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers, at N.J.A.C. 3A:52-4.7 and N.J.A.C. 3A:54-4.2. A variety of training resources are available to providers to assist them in satisfying these training requirements.

DHS/DFD offers a free online pre-service in emergency preparedness, as well as other health and safety training to all providers statewide at <http://www.childcarenj.gov/Providers/Training>.

OOL provides various resources to providers to assist with emergency preparedness. OOL offers technical assistance to licensed child care centers. OOL also coordinates trainings/meetings with Sponsoring Organizations so that they in turn can provide training to registered and approved family child care providers.

Furthermore, OOL has several resources that providers can use to establish individualized emergency preparedness plans for both family child care and center- based providers, including a “Technical Assistance Checklist” and an “Emergency Procedures” template. It can be completed with site-specific emergency information such as the location of the first aid kit, name, and address of hospital where ill children are taken, etc., and then posted in a prominent location on the premises.

Pursuant to their contracts with the State, CCR&Rs must offer providers emergency preparedness and response training. They are directed by their contract with DFD to use the Child Care Aware of America (CCAoA) Child Care Emergency Preparedness Response and Recovery Partnership Toolkit. At a minimum, training must meet Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards; and involve a toolkit that contains a Child Care Program Emergency Plan template, as well as other sample forms

(emergency contact list, records and documents form, evacuation requirements form, and others), to assist providers in structuring their own emergency preparedness plans. <https://nrckids.org/files/CFOC4%20pdf-%20FINAL.pdf>

Furthermore, CCR&Rs are required to coordinate with local OEM offices on emergency preparedness training so that CCR&Rs will be able to assist their local providers. Some county CCR&Rs have already had training with either a local city official or with their County Emergency Management official.

Training related to disaster preparedness for DOE providers is contained in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1 et seq. and for DOH providers in N.J.A.C. 8:25.

IV. Provision of Temporary Child Care Services After A Disaster

DFD and OOL communicate regularly to ensure that CCDF and other providers receive the assistance they need from the appropriate agencies. DFD has also established policies and procedures for continued provision of temporary child care services during and after a state or federal declared emergency or disaster which promote continuity of services to impacted children, families, and child care providers.

The specific policies in place to address temporary child care services after a disaster are established under DFDI 20-05-02, which consist of the following.

A. Emergency and Disaster Plan Submission. CCR&Rs must submit their emergency and disaster plans to the Division for approval prior to its implementation and may modify such plans upon review and approval.

B. Priority Criteria Classification. Families impacted by federal or state-declared emergency or disaster are considered a priority population and therefore, eligibility determinations in these cases must be expedited and processed in accordance with the priority of service policy timelines.

C. Child Protective Services Classification. On a case-by-case basis, certain eligibility criteria may be waived on a temporary base for children of families impacted by federal or state-declared emergency or disaster classified under protective service classification status during the emergency.

D. Alternative Document Verification. If an existing applicant/parent is unable to provide an income verification document to continue eligibility, he/she may complete and submit the work verification form.

E. Extended Recertification Timeline. Recertification timelines shall be extended for three (3) months to allow extra time for submission of required paperwork and/or documentation or processing of applications. Families are eligible for continued child care for at least three (3) months to avoid interruption of child care services.

F. Application/Documentation Submission and Timeline Extension. Families whose initial applications are in pending status are eligible for a three (3) month extension from date of application to provide additional documents, if required.

G. Agreement Flexibility. Families are eligible to change their agreements based on their family needs, such as changing agreement from part-time to full-time for school-age children.

H. Adverse Action Suspension. Families in the process of going into the State Set-Off Individual Liability (SOIL) system should be temporarily suspended.

I. Modified Absence Policy. Families are eligible for additional excused absences and required to document sick days as excused absences in EPPIC for children unable to attend child care.

J. Co-Payment Adjustments. Families are eligible to have their co-payment waived, when requested, due to an emergency or disaster.

K. Delinking Provider Payment. Providers caring for children are eligible for payment when families change providers due to closure.

DFD contracts with CCR&Rs to provide ongoing support and assistance to families and providers, which includes disseminations of information, technical assistance and linking them to available resources and grants.

CCR&Rs are responsible for implementing the Recovery Plan for Federal or State-Declared Emergencies and Disasters policy (DFDI 20-05-02) which provide guidance related to ensuring continued child care services. Additionally, CCR&Rs provide ongoing communication and collaboration with key stakeholders to integrate child care needs into all levels and phases of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

V. RESTORING AND REBUILDING CHILD CARE INFRASTRUCTURE

In the aftermath of a disaster, FEMA, US Small Business Administration (SBA) and other federal agencies, and State OEMs along with other State and local agencies, work together to facilitate recovery.

OEMs coordinate with FEMA and other agencies to direct available FEMA funds where they are needed. For instance, if a child care center is destroyed in a disaster, FEMA, State OEMs, and other agencies are expected to work together to direct available FEMA funds (like small business loans) to eligible needy child care providers. DHSOEM team works in coordination with FEMA/NJOEM in conducting Damage Assessments and applying for both FEMA Public Assistance and Individual Assistance Disaster Grants. At this time, DHSOEM develops information and guidance to share with DFD those centers that may be eligible for disaster assistance under PA/IA or SBA, in a Presidentially Declared Disaster.

<https://www.fema.gov/>

<http://www.nationalmasscarestrategy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/post-disaster-reunification-of-children-a-nationwide-approach.pdf>

Child care providers in New Jersey have a variety of resources to assist with business continuity should a disaster occur. Providers receive training through the CCR&Rs, via a training module, in all key components of emergency preparedness, including adequate insurance coverage and protection of records and assets. The CCR&Rs also provide consumer education to providers on engaging business associations, community

development financial institutions and other organizations that could help allow providers to reopen.

Providers can obtain information through the CCR&Rs and through the State's website about financial assistance available for rebuilding. The New Jersey 211 website have updated information on available financial assistance after a disaster. New Jersey maintains FEMA contacts for consultation regarding child care services that may be eligible for reimbursement under the federal Public Assistance Grant program.

DHS/DFD consumer education website also has a dedicated Disaster and Emergency Plan page, which provides helpful information and resources to keep families and providers informed and prepared for disasters and emergencies.

<https://www.ChildCareNJ.gov/Resources/Emergency>,