

Save the Children Response Team on the ground in Texas, Supporting Children and Families Displaced by Hurricane Harvey

August 26, 2017

The Emergency

Hurricane Harvey made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane late Friday night, bringing 130 mph winds to parts of Texas, including the cities of Houston, Galveston and Corpus Christi.

Torrential rainfall from the storm is expected to continue throughout the week. With as much as 40 inches of rain predicted for some locations, the US National Hurricane Center expects “catastrophic and life-threatening flooding,” and a FEMA administrator commented that recovery will “take years.” As many as 1 million children may be affected.

Hundreds of evacuees from coastal cities are now in shelters in San Antonio, with children comprising approximately 40% of the shelter population. Shelters have also been set up in Victoria and other Texas locations.

Our Response

As hundreds of displaced families, including many with infants and toddlers, continue to arrive in San Antonio each day seeking refuge from Hurricane Harvey’s catastrophic flooding, Save the Children has moved quickly to provide the city’s shelters with the necessary equipment and services to keep children safe.

We are currently distributing essential supplies to families in three shelters. These supplies include Pack n’ Play cribs, strollers and infant and toddler hygiene supplies such as plastic wash basins and baby shampoo and lotion packs.

Child-friendly spaces in San Antonio shelters will be set up beginning on Monday, August 28. These are



Nine-month-old Malachi peeks over the side of his new pack and play crib donated by Save the Children. Malachi bumped his nose when he rolled off the cot on which he was sleeping before our crib distribution in a San Antonio shelter. *Photo: Jeanne-Aimee De Marrais*

safe, designated areas where children can play, socialize and begin to recover after a disaster. They are run by trained staff and give parents a supportive place to leave their children while attending to their family’s immediate and longer-term recovery needs.

We are also in contact with four shelters in Victoria and will begin distribution of supplies and establishment of child-friendly spaces there as soon as road conditions make access possible. Likewise, we will begin operations in Houston as soon as conditions allow.

As always in such an emergency, Save the Children is working closely with local authorities and other responders such as the Red Cross to ensure the unique needs of babies and young children in shelters are met.

We are also in touch with our partner Collaborative for Children, the leading child-care and early education strengthening network in Texas, to assess damage and identify child-care and early education programs in need of our support.

We are seeking both financial and gift-in-kind donations to help us expand our immediate relief efforts, as well as long-term recovery activities to meet the needs of children and families over the coming days and weeks. With your help, we will:

- 1. Provide support to children and their families in shelters:**
 - Continue to set up our signature child-friendly spaces to help protect children.
 - Expand distribution of essential materials for children and families.
 - Provide Healing and Education through the Arts (HEART) activities for children. This signature program is designed to support children's emotional recovery after traumatic events.
- 2. Support child care and early education service restoration.** We are the national leader in providing child-care restoration support in emergencies. We are working with partners to assess need among the more than 5,000 early education programs and the schools that may be affected by flooding. We will support the recovery of child-care programs, Pre-K classrooms, schools and afterschool programs.
- 3. Host Children's Coordination Working Groups in affected communities** to help ensure children's needs will be prioritized throughout the response and recovery. Save the Children is a national leader in bringing together community, state and national stakeholders to support and prioritize children's needs in emergencies.
- 4. Provide psychosocial support** in the weeks ahead. As communities start the long-term recovery process, we will offer one or more of our signature psychosocial support programs (Journey of Hope, Shelter from the Storm and HEART) to affected children and families.

“San Antonio is ground zero for evacuees, providing beds for up to 6,000 people. The city has done a great job mobilizing support, but we are finding basic needs of mothers and small children in shelters are being overlooked. We can do better, and we are here to make it happen.”

**Jeanne-Aimee De Marrais
Senior Director, U.S. Emergencies**

Why Save the Children?

Save the Children has over 80 years' experience serving the needs of U.S. children and is the national leader for U.S. children in emergencies. We respond when children and families are affected by hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, wildfires and other disasters. We also mobilize to assist children affected by domestic man-made crises.

We are exceptional among the aid agencies that respond to emergencies in the U.S. because we provide comprehensive emergency preparedness, relief and recovery programs designed to meet the needs of children and their families. We have well-trained national staff ready to deploy anywhere at a moment's notice to assess needs and launch relief.

Because we work directly with children and families in the heart of the crisis, we know immediately when conditions change and can adapt our programs to meet children's most urgent needs. Save the Children stays as long as it takes to help America's children, families and communities recover from their losses, rebuild their lives and become more resilient to future shocks.

Your flexible contribution, pooled with other resources, will help our teams on the ground deliver essential humanitarian relief today and initiate longer-term recovery programming.

Nobody knows when the next crisis will strike. That's why 10 percent of your generous gift goes to helping our emergency teams prepare for and provide critical assistance when and where children need us the most.