

Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria: With Your Help, We're Doing Whatever it Takes for Children and Families to Recover

Three times in a month, beginning in late August, catastrophic hurricanes upended the lives of children in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico.

Hurricane Harvey, the most powerful hurricane to strike Texas in over 50 years, damaged coastal communities and created unprecedented floods. Hurricane Irma crashed into the Florida Keys, carving a path of destruction and triggering floods statewide. Puerto Rico was staggered by Hurricane Maria's 155-mile-per-hour winds. Together, these storms caused billions of dollars in damage and put hundreds of thousands of children at risk.

Save the Children, the national leader in child-focused emergency preparedness, response and recovery, was one of the first humanitarian organizations on the ground once the storms passed. We continue to meet the most urgent needs of children and families in Puerto Rico who remain extremely vulnerable because of the massive damage to their island; our teams there and in Florida and Texas have also launched programs to provide a helping hand as children, families and communities recover.

We are focused on restoring children's access to child care services and education and supporting distressed children's need for emotional support, as many girls and boys continue to carry the stress and fear of what they endured during the storms and in their aftermath.

We are grateful to you and all our donors for providing the resources we required to quickly deploy trained staff, mobilize relief and plan our longer-term recovery work, knowing that we have the secure funding to do whatever it takes to help children, families and communities rebound. Here are highlights of work you've helped to make possible so far.

Puerto Rico

- Our teams and local partners have provided children and families with food, water, baby supplies, hygiene supplies and hundreds of kits that families need to repair damaged homes.
- We've opened safe spaces and community child centers so that children who are surrounded by damage and destruction can take part in structured play and learning activities run by trained adults.



A young girl enjoys activities at a child-friendly space we opened at her shelter in Canovanas, a community outside of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Children use the space to read, play and recover from the distress they experienced as a result of Hurricane Maria.
Photo: Noel Del Pinar/Save the Children

- We're working with Head Start programs, child care providers and education officials to make sure that children can return to comforting routines and school as soon as possible – enabling parents to focus on their recovery knowing children are safe.
- Trainings have been conducted for teachers and social workers so they can respond with emotional “first aid” to children who are distressed.
- Small grants have been provided to child-focused community organizations to help them provide much-needed services to children and their families.

Florida

- In Irma's immediate aftermath, we opened child-friendly spaces in evacuation centers that provided a “time-out” from the stress children felt while in these unfamiliar places.
- We've partnered with service agencies to reach children and families in the poorest communities in southwestern Florida with diapers, baby wipes, portable cribs and sheets, hygiene kits and children's clothing.
- In the Florida Keys, we are distributing books and backpacks filled with school supplies to children.
- Our grants are helping child care providers and children's and family service agencies resume and expand programs. To date, grants we've made will impact programs serving over 22,300 children.
- Our child protection specialists are partnering with local mental health professionals and social workers to launch programs for children and their caregivers to help overcome stress and build their resiliency.



A mother and her nine-month old boy play at our child-friendly space in San Antonio, Texas after being evacuated from Hurricane Harvey's path. We also provided the family with a crib and a stroller while they remained out of their home.

Photo: Susan Warner/Save the Children

Texas

- As in Florida, we opened child-friendly spaces in shelters and provided families with infant and toddler supplies and other items they left behind while evacuating.
- Our grants are enabling local community service organizations to meet the immediate needs of children and families they serve. So far, 27 grants will support programs for over 14,300 children.
- We are working with partners to restore child care, early learning and Head Start programs.
- We're launching psychosocial programs to help children and adult caregivers cope with their losses, fears and stresses. We anticipate that over 100,000 children will benefit.