

2011

TEN YEARS AFTER 9/11

America Is Unprepared to Protect Children

A National Report Card on Protecting Children During Disasters



Save the Children®



As the most horrific attack on American soil unfolded on the morning of September 11, 2001, the thought that raced through every parent's head was the whereabouts, safety and security of their children. Parents working in New York and Washington, D.C., dropped what they were doing and rushed across cities in crisis, abandoning cars and subways, and walking the streets and bridges to the boroughs and suburbs to retrieve their children from school or child care. America was in chaos and the need to know our children were safe was absolute.

On any given day in the United States, 67 million children are in school or child care, where parents place their trust in their children's safety for upwards of 2,000 hours every year. Most parents have no idea if those facilities have rules and systems in place to protect children and reunite families when disaster strikes.

Following September 11th, the United States experienced a series of unprecedented disasters—Hurricane Katrina, California wildfires, Southeast tornadoes. To this day, there remains one constant in the chaos, whether it's natural or man-made: Schools and child care facilities don't sufficiently plan for disaster, because most states don't require them to be prepared in the first place.



A DECADE OF DEDICATION AND DELAYS

It took less than two hours on the morning of September 11th to forever alter the way American families would define safety and security in their lives. Yet 10 years later, more than two-thirds of the country do not require the four basic preparedness and safety standards for children in schools and child care during a disaster: written plans for evacuation and relocation, family reunification, children with special needs and multiple disasters.

For the fourth year, Save the Children's U.S. Programs National Report Card graded all 50 states and the District of Columbia on four criteria of preparedness. We found:

Good News

- Five new states—Connecticut, Kentucky, New York, Tennessee and West Virginia—now meet all four basic preparedness standards, bringing the total to 17 states.

Bad News

- Thirty-four states failed to meet all four basic preparedness standards.
- Twenty-one states still do not require all licensed child care facilities to have an evacuation and relocation plan.
- Twenty-two states still do not require all licensed child care facilities to have a plan to reunite families.
- Nine states still do not require K–12 schools to have a disaster plan that accounts for multiple types of disasters.
- More than half of all states still do not require all licensed child care facilities to have a plan that accounts for kids with special needs.
- Six states do not require any of the four basic disaster safety and preparedness standards for licensed child care facilities or schools.





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I thought, ‘Oh my God, I have these eight little people in my care and what am I going to do with them if their parents don’t come back today?’ I had absolutely no plans in place. I didn’t realize how unprepared I really was; how prepared I really should have been.

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I never want to experience that feeling again, and I never want another provider to go through it either.

— Donna Fowler, Bowie, Maryland. Donna was a home child care provider during 9/11 in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. Prior to that day, Donna would have said she was ready to protect the eight infants and toddlers in her care in any emergency. The disaster of 9/11 proved how unprepared she, and the thousands of other child care providers around the country really were. As a result, Donna became an advocate for disaster preparedness for child care centers and schools, testifying before the Maryland legislature on behalf of Save the Children. Today, she is the Vice President of the National Association for Family Child Care, chairing its public policy committee and fighting for the readiness requirements that Save the Children champions in this report, and in every state in the nation.

STATE SUCCESSES

Connecticut Responds

More than 3,000 people died in the September 11th attacks, many of them residents of Connecticut, one of five states and the District of Columbia most directly affected by the disaster. Today, Connecticut is a leader in the push for disaster preparedness for children. In 2010, the state engaged Save the Children's U.S. Programs in disaster planning and training for child care facilities. We also worked with Connecticut officials and local advocates to create state-wide, grassroots support for making the safety and security of children a priority. And in June 2011, Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy signed into law new legislation that brought the state up to full compliance with Save the Children's standards.



Missouri Recovers

In June 2011, a deadly F-5 tornado tore a seven-mile-wide path of destruction through Joplin, Missouri. For the second time this summer, Save the Children's U.S. Programs deployed to a tornado-stricken state; this time to assess the needs of the child care community destroyed in Joplin. While Joplin recovers, disaster preparedness is at the top of its list.

After a failing grade on last year's report, Missouri lawmakers and child safety advocates resolved to raise the bar. In 2011, the state proposed legislation that will make written evacuation and relocation, parent reunification, and special needs planning a requirement for child care facilities—a huge leap forward in a year's time.

NATIONAL REPORT CARD

DOES YOUR STATE HAVE A PLAN?

	1 - Evacuation/ Relocation Plan	2 - Family-Child Reunification Plan	3 - Children with Special Needs Plan	4 - K-12 Multiple Disaster Plan
Alabama	✓	✓	✓	✓
Arkansas	✓	✓	✓	✓
California	✓	✓	✓	✓
Connecticut	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hawaii	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kentucky*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maryland	✓	✓	✓	✓
Massachusetts	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mississippi	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Hampshire	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Mexico	✓	✓	✓	✓
New York	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tennessee	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vermont	✓	✓	✓	✓
Washington*	✓	✓	✓	✓
West Virginia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wisconsin	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alaska	✓		✓	✓
Delaware	✓	✓		✓
District of Columbia	✓	✓	✓	
Missouri*	✓	✓	✓	
North Carolina	✓		✓	✓
Ohio	✓	✓		✓
Oklahoma	✓	✓		✓
Pennsylvania	✓	✓		✓
Texas*	✓	✓		✓
Utah	✓	✓		✓
Colorado		✓		✓
Florida		✓		✓
Minnesota		✓		✓
Nevada	✓			✓
Rhode Island			✓	✓
South Carolina*		✓		✓
Virginia	✓			✓
Arizona				✓
Georgia				✓
Illinois				✓
Indiana				✓
Louisiana*				✓
Maine				✓
Nebraska				✓
New Jersey				✓
North Dakota	✓			
Oregon				✓
South Dakota				✓
Idaho				
Iowa				
Kansas				
Michigan				
Montana				
Wyoming				

Research was conducted by Brown BuckleyTucker and reflects action in relevant state administrative offices and state legislatures as of July 2011. The asterisk* signifies that regulations are under revision and a draft of the proposed regulations was reviewed and met criteria.

THE FOUR STANDARDS

A Plan for Evacuating Kids in Child Care

The state requires all licensed child care facilities to have a written plan for evacuating and moving kids to a safe location for multiple disasters.

If your local community floods, does your child's child care center have plans for moving kids to higher ground or another safe place?

2 Reunifying Families after a Disaster

The state requires all licensed child care facilities to have a written plan to notify parents of an emergency and reunite them with their kids.

Does your child's day care have a list with your name and phone number to contact you and reunite you with your child?

3 Children with Special Needs

The state requires all licensed child care facilities to have a written plan that accounts for kids with special needs.

If there is a fire, does your child care center have a plan for evacuating and transporting children in wheelchairs?

4 An Evacuation Plan for Schools

The state requires all schools to have a disaster plan that accounts for multiple hazards.

Does your child's school have plans that account for the kinds of disasters your community might encounter, such as earthquakes, wildfires and terror attacks?

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A state is not prepared for a disaster if it doesn't have plans in place to protect its children.

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— West Virginia State Senator Corey Palumbo
on West Virginia meeting all four standards for
disaster preparedness for kids



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For more information about this report, including methodology or background materials, please contact Save the Children's U.S. Programs at 202-640-6600.

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