



Two-Thousand Days to Make a Difference

Emergency Preparedness Peer-to-Peer Networking: Favorite Tips and Tricks Shared by Providers

Through the Emergency Preparedness Peer-to-Peer Networking Sessions, many tips and tricks were shared from experienced providers in the field, which we've compiled in this handy document. Thoughtful emergency preparedness helps you confidently handle emergencies while maintaining a calm and supportive environment for the children in your care. Remember, preparedness is not just about having the right supplies—it's also about fostering a sense of security and readiness through practice and communication. By integrating these tips into your routine, you'll be better prepared to face any challenge that comes your way. Stay safe, stay prepared, and let's support each other in creating a safer environment for all.

**Find the resources referenced in this document linked on our website at <https://mochildcareaware.org/child-care-educators/emergency-preparedness/>.*

General Tips

- Have bottled water, non-perishable food, space blankets, first aid kit, etc. packed. Have a "jump" or "run" bag packed with your non-ambulatory evacuation transport (mine is my 4-seater wagon).
- Practice so you will be calm and confident. The kids will feed off your energy!
- Have photos and waterproofing on your emergency info so that others can be informed and help. Perhaps make 3 identical sets – one for home, one in your vehicle, and one in your jump bag.
- Ensure you have a backup person to contact if you're working alone.
- For iPhone users, activate emergency settings that allow quick access to 911 or designated contacts. Consider having a landline for easy 911 access for children, as it doesn't require unlocking like a cell phone.
- Make safety drills fun and non-scary for children, using songs and repetitive actions to ensure they understand what to do without fear.
- Share how you are doing drills with family so they know the language you are using and can back that up at home.



General Emergency Resources:

[Plan for Awesome](#) – A free resource library packed with free printables to help with your emergency preparedness.

[Tools, Publications and Resources – Child Care Aware® of America](#) – Find resources to help you prepare for any kind of emergency.

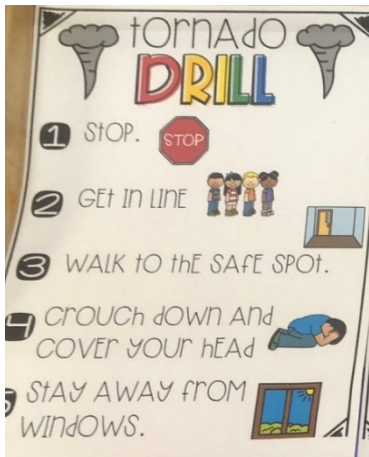
[Emergency Supply Kit](#) – A list of items for short-term and long-term emergencies.

[Sample Emergency Disaster Drills](#) – Information to help you prepare and carry out your emergency disaster drills.

[Emergency Preparedness Checklist](#) – Emergency Preparedness Considerations for Infant and Toddler Child Care Providers.

[American Red Cross of Missouri](#) – The Red Cross serves the people of Missouri to help prevent and alleviate suffering in the face of emergencies.

Severe Weather/Natural Disaster Resources:

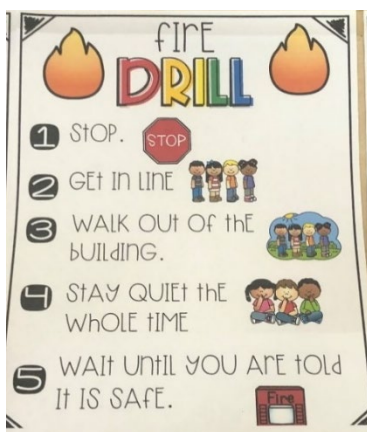


Severe Weather

- Keep bike helmets in your shelter space to protect children's heads from falling debris.
- Having extra flashlights for little hands will help anxiety as they will serve as a positive distraction.
- Play the turtle game/song during tornado drills to keep children entertained and calm.

Fires/Evacuation

- Having a basket by the door for shoes in case of an emergency exit.
- Have a close by evacuation location (like a neighbor's house) for an emergency with just your residence and a further away evacuation location (like a community center) for an emergency affecting the whole neighborhood.
- Have markers, paper, plastic covering for wet weather, etc. available to make a sign (if possible) to leave for parents, giving your plans.



[National Weather Service](#) – Get safety tips and information from the National Weather Service on a variety of emergency topics.

[Tornado Information](#) – A variety of graphics with valuable tornado information.

[Child Care Aware of America Tornadoes](#) – Get information to stay safe during a tornado.

[American Red Cross Tornadoes Preparedness Checklist](#) – Use this checklist from the Red Cross to make sure you're prepared for a tornado.

[Tornado Safety](#) – Information from the Red Cross on how to stay safe and prepare your home.

[Missouri Office of Childhood Fire/Tornado Drill Record](#) – Record your fire/tornado drills using this document.

[Thunderstorms and Lightning](#) – Make sure you're prepared for thunderstorms and lightning, so you can help children stay calm and ease fears.

[Home and Business Fires](#) – Child care providers need to know ways to prevent fires as well as what to do in the event of a fire.

[Child Care Aware of America Earthquakes](#) – Get information to stay safe during a pandemic.

[The 7 Steps of Earthquake Safety](#) – A simple guide to survive and recover from a damaging earthquake.

[Ready.gov Earthquakes](#) – Stay safe before and during an earthquake.

[FEMA Earthquake Scenarios](#) – Scenarios to help you think through how you may prepare and respond in a variety of situations.

[Child Care Aware of America Floods](#) – Get information to stay safe in the event of a flood.

[Flooding in Missouri](#) – Missouri-specific information regarding flood risks, disaster relief, and more.

[Missouri Flood Disaster Response/Recovery](#) – Important phone numbers to know for flood disaster response and recovery.

[Health in the Aftermath of a Flood](#) – How to keep children safe from mold, contaminated water, and more in the aftermath of a flood.

[Winter Weather](#) – Gets tips to stay safe during winter weather.

[Winter Storm Safety Steps](#) – Steps to take and information to prepare for winter storms.



Threatening Behavior/Intruders

- Keep a composed demeanor to avoid escalating the situation. Speak slowly and clearly, using a calm tone to de-escalate the situation. Do not use confrontational or aggressive language.
- Pay attention to Red Flag behavior. Contact your police department for suggestions on how to handle this.
- After the situation is resolved, report the incident to the appropriate authorities for further action and documentation.
- Address any custody issues, understanding restraining orders or restrictions, and aligning with parents to ensure compliance. If necessary, providers can also seek restraining orders for added protection.

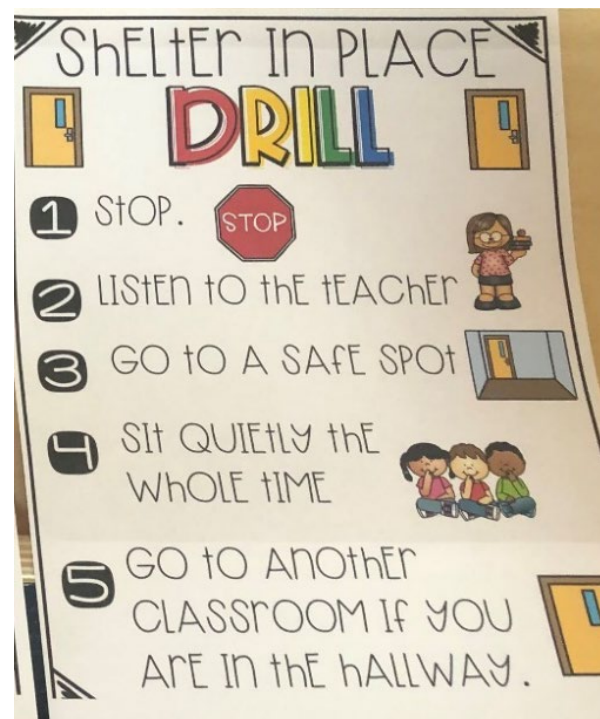
Threatening Behavior/Intruder Resources:

[Violence](#)– Child care providers can plan ahead to help protect children and reduce the risk and impact of violence.

[FEMA- Active Shooter](#) – How to stay safe during an active shooter threat.

[Sesame Street – School Safety Drills](#) – Tips on talking to children about school safety drills.

[Stay Safe Procedures in Early Childhood Programs](#) – Key components to include in your stay safe procedures and considerations for young children.



Poisoning or Health Risks

- Don't mix bleach and dish detergent when sanitizing – it's toxic.
- To prevent poisoning in childcare spaces, keep diaper bags out of the childcare area. When parents bring a diaper bag, ensure they put it up and away, never allowing it into the childcare space. This prevents children from accessing potentially dangerous items, like misplaced medicines.



Poisoning/Health Risk Resources:

[Hazardous Materials](#) – Prepare for a hazardous materials incident.

[Poisoning](#)– Information to help prevent poisoning.

[Poison Control Center](#) – Information about poisoning incidents, substances, and first aid. Contact Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222. Call 911 right away if the individual collapses, has a seizure, has trouble breathing, or can't be awakened.

[Missouri Poison Center](#) – Learn about poison risks and find educational materials to teach children how to stay safe.

[Carbon Monoxide Fact Sheet](#) – Information to help protect from carbon monoxide poisoning.

[Carbon Monoxide Brochure](#) – Information about carbon monoxide poisoning, safety tips, and what to do in the event of a carbon monoxide event.

[Carbon Monoxide Levels of Concentration](#) – The effects of CO at different concentrations.

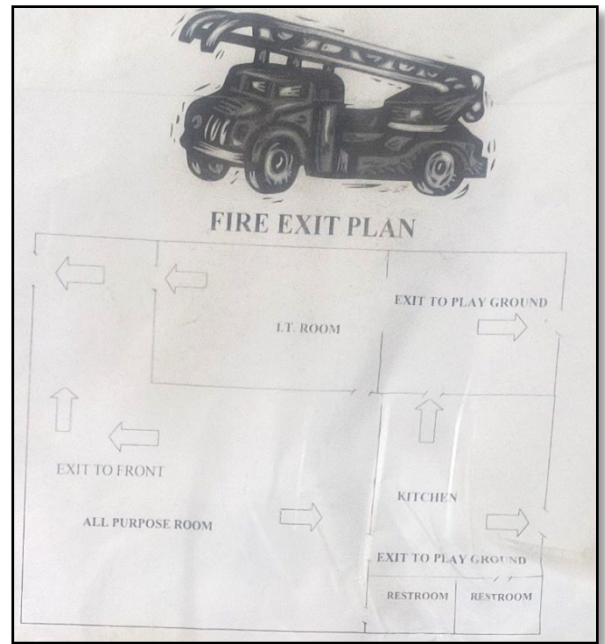
[CDC Cold or Flu?](#) – How to determine if it is a cold or the flu.

[Respiratory Illnesses on the Rise- What To Do](#) – What to do when cases of respiratory illnesses surge.

[Pandemics](#) – Get information to stay safe during a pandemic.

Reputational Risk

- Keep the facility clean, clutter-free, free of odors and welcoming.
- Display posters that show you care about safety and hygiene (food, safety, and diaper changing practices.)
- Display accreditation and certificates prominently to showcase achievements.
- When addressing issues, always provide a solution along with the problem.
- Always maintain professionalism, as staff behavior represents your business inside and outside of work.
- Monitor online postings for appropriateness, both for yourself and your staff.
- Be prompt and professional in all communications, especially online reviews.
- Build positive relationships with families. Contact parents regularly with updates, especially daily during the first week of attendance. Share positive feedback about their child either written or via phone call.



Financial Risk

- Consider an umbrella policy. Basic insurance does not cover all business needs. An umbrella policy on top of your business insurance offers greater coverage.
 - Check the fine print to ensure coverage is in writing, not just verbal.
 - Consider insurance for the following circumstances: Professional liability, legal defense in the case of a lawsuit, child abuse, medical costs of an injured child/parent/employee, accidents occurring away from the home (field trips, walks, etc.), etc.
- Have a backup financial plan with a savings plan. Check financial websites like schwab.com or any bank for customized savings or retirement plans.
- Set up a payment plan where you pay yourself every week, choosing the amount to contribute.
- Ensure all policies are documented and included in the employee and/or family handbook. Verbal policies should be supplemented with written documentation. Make sure policies are included for closures and payment.
- Maintain separate emergency funds for business and personal use. This helps manage funds separately and ensures availability in case of emergencies on both sides.
- Create contingency plans for scenarios where payments are delayed or absent (e.g., state budget issues affecting subsidies), how to sustain operations, and possibly stockpiling essential items like diapers and food. Determine whether to ask parents for cash payments during such periods.

Protecting Your Business Resources:

[How Insurance Protects You in an Emergency](#) – Learn how proper insurance can significantly reduce the costs associated with natural disasters/emergencies.

[Reducing the Financial Toll of Emergencies](#) – Learn the five steps you can take to plan ahead so you recover as quickly as possible from emergencies.

[Business Continuity](#) – Information to help you recover quickly and continue providing services at the same level as before after a disruptive event.

Risk of Injury

- Use labeling and signage to remind staff and families of safety measures (e.g., hand washing, food safety). Highlight hazards (e.g., potholes, uneven floors) with signs, chalk, or tape.
- Perform daily safety checks, ensuring the environment is clean and safe daily (are the garden hoses put away, down branches picked up, gates closed, carpets in the house tacked down, chairs pushed in, etc.). Put away personal items and secure pets before beginning the day. Keep walkways inside and outside the home clear of hazards. Regularly assess the environment from a parent's viewpoint to identify potential safety issues. Address known issues promptly to avoid liability.
- Implement a wellness policy for sick children, including temperature checks. Put it in writing and make sure it's in the parent handbook and posted. Do a wellness check at drop off and note any scratches, abrasions, etc.
- Prepare clear policies and procedures for pick-up times, like dealing with individuals seemingly under the influence (drugs, alcohol, severe illness) or families without proper car seat/safe transportation. Display the policy prominently and include it in the handbook. Practice a kind but firm script for speaking to families when there is a concern. Inform families that you are a mandated reporter and be prepared to call authorities, if needed.

Meeting Children's Needs Resources:

[Protecting Children's Health During and After Natural Disasters](#) – How to keep children in the aftermath of natural disasters.

[Child's Life Disaster Relief Activity Sheets](#) – Activity sheets to be used to guide children with gentle prompts for conversation in the immediate aftermath of an event (1 day to 3 months).

[Creating a Comfort Care Kit for Kids](#) – A comfort care kit for kids can help children cope with stress & anxiety during and after an emergency situation. ([Crear un kit de cuidado reconfortante para niños](#))

[Disaster Media Fact Sheet for Families](#) – Helping your child cope with media coverage of disasters.

[5 Essential Needs of Children After Disaster](#) – Videos and tips sheets to guide families and caregivers wanting to support the 5 Essential Needs of Children after a disaster.

[Helping Children Cope](#) – Information to help parents and caregivers be informed and ready to help children cope with stress from traumatic events.

