# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Plan Overview ........................................................................................................................................... 2  
Purpose ................................................................................................................................................... 2  
Scope ...................................................................................................................................................... 2  
Emergency Organization ....................................................................................................................... 2  
Prioritized Listing of Identified Critical Processes and Functions ...................................................... 2  
Plan Development .................................................................................................................................. 3  
Posting and Distribution ......................................................................................................................... 3  

Disaster Response .................................................................................................................................. 4  

Emergency Communication ..................................................................................................................... 5  

Coordination of Post-Disaster Recovery of Child Care Services ............................................................. 6  

Guidelines for the Continuation of Child Care Services ........................................................................ 7  
  Provisional License and Self-Declaration Document Requirements .................................................... 7  
  Temporary Child Care Services ............................................................................................................. 8  
  Additional Staff and Volunteers ............................................................................................................ 8  

Continuation of Child Care Subsidies ...................................................................................................... 9  

Requirements for Child Care Providers ................................................................................................. 10  
  Emergency Evacuation and Disaster Plan ........................................................................................... 10  
  Staff and Volunteer Emergency Preparedness Training and Practice Drills ...................................... 11  
  Emergency Reporting Procedures ....................................................................................................... 11  
  Infectious Diseases ............................................................................................................................... 11  

Resources for Child Care Providers ....................................................................................................... 12  


PLAN OVERVIEW

PURPOSE
The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance to early childhood programs when there is an emergency or disaster in North Dakota. The plan encompasses a state-wide approach, which includes people, systems, processes, and supporting infrastructure. This plan is designed to inform, organize, and prepare for the impact of disaster on early childhood programs in our state to ensure safe care for children in disaster situations. The plan is also designed to provide steps to ensure that services are continued for eligible child care subsidy recipients during the unexpected disruption of services.

SCOPE
The North Dakota Department of Emergency Services – Division of Homeland Security (NDDES-HLS) houses the Planning Section which develops and maintains prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery plans which comprise the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP); provides planning guidance, review, and support to local and tribal governments, incorporating federal and state grant guidance and applicable laws, inclusive of Incident Command/Unified Command system (ICS/UCS) concepts for incident, emergency, disaster or catastrophic response operations. The North Dakota Department of Human Services Emergency preparedness plan supports the SEOP and helps guide the execution of agency responsibilities as outlined in the SEOP. The plan was developed to include the entire child care enterprise, including licensed and non-licensed providers in facilities or homes. The plan also addresses communications internally and externally to recipients and providers.

EMERGENCY ORGANIZATION
The Early Childhood Services Administrator and Child Care Subsidy Administrator provide leadership to the Early Childhood Licensing Team and Human Service Zones and make decisions regarding emergency plans for early childhood services in the state of North Dakota. This team coordinates with the Executive Director of North Dakota Department of Human Services and the Department of Human Services Disaster Preparedness Administrator. The Executive Director and the Department’s Public Information Officer will interface with the Governor’s Office and the media.

PRIORITIZED LISTING OF IDENTIFIED CRITICAL PROCESSES AND FUNCTIONS
The following core processes and functions have been assessed as critical to the mission of the North Dakota Department of Human Services Early Childhood Division and Economic Assistance Policy Division - Child Care Assistance Unit. These agencies will continue core Child Care Development Fund functions during and after a disaster.

- Ensure the health and safety of providers and children in care
- Issue subsidy payments promptly to providers and families
- Ensure business continuity internally and externally
- Maintain recipient/provider confidence
PLAN DEVELOPMENT
The plan was developed in collaboration with:
- Child Care Aware of North Dakota
- North Dakota Early Childhood Education Council
- North Dakota Department of Emergency Services
  - Division of Homeland Security
- North Dakota Department of Health
  - Division of Emergency Preparedness
- North Dakota Department of Human Services
  - Early Childhood Division
  - Economic Assistance Division
  - Risk Management

An ad hoc committee will convene annually to review the plan, provide any recommendations, propose updates, and draft a revised plan as necessary.

POSTING AND DISTRIBUTION

Additionally, the plan is shared with the following partners:
- Governor’s Office
  - 701-328-2200
- Child Care Development Fund Regional Office
  - 303-844-1164
- N. D. Department of Human Services Executive Office
  - 701-328-2310, 800-472-2622 or dhseo@nd.gov
- Early Childhood Licensing Staff
  - [https://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childcare/docs/nd-ecs-map.pdf](https://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childcare/docs/nd-ecs-map.pdf)
- Child Care Aware of ND
  - 1-800-997-8515 or Referral@ndchildcare.org
- Director, Early Childhood Division
  - 701-328-2115, 800-997-8516 or dhsec@nd.gov
- Director, Economic Assistance Division
  - 701-328-2332, 800-755-2716 or dhseap@nd.gov
- North Dakota Department of Emergency Services – Division of Homeland Security
  - [https://www.des.nd.gov/](https://www.des.nd.gov/)
  - 701-328-8100 (Main)
  - 24/7/365 Duty Officer (for emergencies) – Contact NDDES-Division of State Radio (NDDES-SR) at 701-328-9921 and request the NDDES Duty Officer
- North Dakota Department of Health Resources and Response
  - [https://www.health.nd.gov/health-resources-and-response](https://www.health.nd.gov/health-resources-and-response)
- Human Service Zones
  - [www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/)
DISASTER RESPONSE

Disasters come in many forms, and can occur anywhere, at any time. Disasters can be caused by natural events such as severe weather, fires and floods as well as a human caused event such as an active shooter or a hazardous material incident. Emergency management preparedness is addressed through five Mission Areas – Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery; with only Response and Recovery having a beginning and end. Other Mission Areas are continuous in nature, and influence our ability to respond and recover from emergencies and disasters.

To ensure the safety of children in care, facilities are required to receive yearly fire inspections by a certified fire inspector, and they must perform monthly drills/exercises to practice fire, inclement weather and lockdown procedures. Frequent practice of emergency procedures will facilitate a calm and competent reaction in response to an actual emergency, should it occur.

In response to a disaster or public health emergency, the Lead Agency will:

- Assess the need for adjustments to Child Care Assistance payment rates, dependent on available funding
- Support child care providers through coordinated efforts with Child Care Aware of ND, Licensing Specialists, and other key entities, such as the ND Department of Health
- Support child care families through coordinated efforts with Child Care Aware of ND and other key entities, such as the ND Department of Health
- Communicate grant opportunities for child care providers via email, the DHS Early Childhood Division webpage, and social media efforts
- When needed, provide SFN 517 Child Care Evacuation Disaster Plan for affected providers to Local Emergency Management

In response to a disaster or public health emergency, Child Care Aware of North Dakota will:

- Connect providers to community specific resources that become available for distribution, such as bottled water, diapers/wipes, and formula
- Work with providers to update their status, available openings, and relocation information
- Assist programs in contacting families if means of communication have ceased
- Help make available and distribute emergency resources to families
- Provide mental health resources

Return to Table of Contents
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

Local emergency services are the first line of communication for child care providers in an emergency. When an emergency occurs, child care providers can call 9-1-1, the universal number for reaching emergency services. Emergency service personnel (for example, law enforcement, fire fighters, and emergency medical technicians) will immediately respond to the scene of an emergency to provide assistance. In non-urgent situations following a disaster, or in situations where the 9-1-1 system is overloaded, it is appropriate to call the local law enforcement non-emergency phone number. For direct access to local emergency services from a cell phone, child care providers can enter the direct-dial local emergency services number into their cell phone’s contact list. The non-emergency phone number and the direct-dial local emergency number can be found by calling local emergency services or looking on their website. They provide first response services and support to child care programs; act as the primary point of contact from emergency response agencies to child care programs, staff, and families; and report assessments of the disaster’s impacts on the affected child care community to the regional response level.

In the event of an emergency, it is important for child care programs to report details about the incident to local emergency response agencies and provide updates as needed, including:

- Accurate and up-to-date information about the number and ages of children affected by the disaster
- The needs of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions
- Missing children
- Children unable to be reunited with their families
- Cultural and linguistic characteristics of children, families, and staff
- Damage/destruction to the facility
- Interruption in utility service such as water, electricity, sewers, and gas. Local emergency service agencies collect information and reports about the emergency from the affected area.

The information is then analyzed to determine if more help is needed from outside agencies. Situation reports with pertinent information are further communicated to county, regional, state, and federal emergency response agencies through established channels.

Child care providers are encouraged to contact their Local Emergency Manager for a list of natural disasters most likely to occur in their geographic region and to identify potential human caused events including technological accidents and hazardous materials incidents. Other kinds of emergencies that might affect child care programs include medical emergencies, pandemics and epidemics, power outages, disgruntled staff, an intruder, or an impaired adult (for example, a parent who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs).
COORDINATION OF POST-DISASTER RECOVERY OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

In the event a child care must close, relocate, or evacuate, providers are required to report their location to their Licensing Specialist or the North Dakota Early Childhood Division within 24 hours. To contact the North Dakota Early Childhood Division, call (701) 328-2115, or (800) 997-8516, or e-mail their location to dhsec@nd.gov.

- The Lead Agency will use the resource and referral data system to maintain a shared database of providers who are closed, providers who are relocated, and providers who have capacity to provide temporary care. Child Care Aware of ND and the Human Service Zone Offices will work with DHS to help connect families who need temporary care with programs who are able to provide temporary care.

- Operators will follow guidelines for disaster recovery as directed by local emergency managers.

- Operators will report to their Licensing Specialist when their program is able to be reopened.

- The Lead Agency will issue provisional licenses according to policy.
GUIDELINES FOR THE CONTINUATION OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

A secure workforce is necessary to respond to critical needs in the community following a disaster. It is essential that safe childcare is available for children of emergency workers. Childcare programs in affected areas may need to close or be relocated because of damage to their facilities. Displaced families will need to find childcare in their new location as they recover from the disaster. In addition, childcare centers in affected areas may be short staffed since staff members may be personally affected by the disaster resulting in absence from work. Childcare slots may also be lost when programs located in school district buildings close after a disaster. Appropriate and safe alternatives for temporary childcare must be identified as soon as possible following a disaster.

PROVISIONAL LICENSE AND SELF-DECLARATION DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS

In the event of an emergency, the department may issue a provisional license or self-declaration document for the operation of a child care in accordance with the rules of the department.

A provisional license or self-declaration document must:

- State that the operator has failed to comply with all applicable standards and rules of the department
- State the items of noncompliance
- Expire at a set date, not to exceed six months from the date of issuance
- Be exchanged for an unrestricted license or self-declaration document, which bears an expiration date of one year from the date of issuance of the provisional license or self-declaration document, after the applicant or operator demonstrates compliance, satisfactory to the department, with all applicable standards and rules

The department may issue a provisional license or self-declaration document only to an applicant or operator who has waived, in writing:

- The right to a written statement of charges as to the reasons for the denial of an unrestricted license or self-declaration document
- The right to an administrative hearing, in the manner provided in North Dakota Century Code chapter 28-32, concerning the non-issuance of an unrestricted license or self-declaration document, either at the time of application or during the period of operation under a provisional license or self-declaration document

Any provisional license or self-declaration document issued must be accompanied by a written statement of violations signed by the department and must be acknowledged in writing by the operator.

Subject to the exceptions contained in this section, a provisional license or self-declaration document entitles the holder to all rights and privileges afforded the holder of an unrestricted license or self-declaration document.

The operator shall display prominently the provisional license or self-declaration document and agreement.
The operator shall provide parents written notice that the center is operating on a provisional license or self-declaration document and the basis for the provisional license or self-declaration document.

TEMPORARY CHILD CARE SERVICES
If a child care program is not affected by an emergency or disaster, they may choose to take on additional children from affected programs. License capacity, maximum group size, and staff to child ratios must be maintained. SFN 812 Child Intake Record must be completed and kept on file with the temporary provider if a program takes in additional children during an emergency/disaster response.

Child Care Aware of ND and the Human Service Zone Offices will work with DHS to help connect families who need temporary care with programs who are able to provide temporary care.

ADDITIONAL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS
In the aftermath of a disaster if a child care provider finds the need to hire additional staff or volunteers to support reopening or to provide temporary child care services for additional children, they must continue to fulfill Criminal Background Check requirements. For more information about the requirements for background checks, visit https://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childcare/info/ or http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/cbcu/child-care-index.html.
CONTINUATION OF CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES

North Dakota has a web-based eligibility system that allows human service zone workers to extend eligibility, process re-determinations, and process payments to providers for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) remotely during and after a disaster.

Cases can be worked in any Human Service Zone of the state, and is not limited to the zone the family resides in. Child care providers have the option to submit their payment requests online through the self-service portal.

CCAP policy allows the authorization of payments to a provider for up to 40 hours when the child is absent for care, with the option for additional absent hours allowed in situations that result in closures or absences due to inclement weather, state and national emergencies, or other emergencies as determined by the department.

North Dakota CCAP staff will be available to families, child care providers, and other stakeholders during and after a disaster by calling (800-755-2716) or emailing dhseap@nd.gov.
REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

EMERGENCY EVACUATION AND DISASTER PLAN
Licensed and self-declared providers shall establish and post an emergency disaster plan for the safety of the children in care. The operator shall develop written disaster plans in cooperation with local emergency management agencies.

Child care providers are required to complete and submit to the Lead Agency, SFN 517 Child Care Evacuation and Disaster Plan (revised 11-2021). Providers should conduct an annual review of their SFN 517 Child Care Evacuation Disaster Plan. If any of the information included in their plan changes, the updated plan must be provided to the Licensing Specialist within 14 days of the change.

The SFN 517 Child Care Evacuation Disaster Plan must include:
- Procedures for shelter-in-place, lockdown, evacuation, and relocation
- Procedures for accommodation of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions
- What will be done if the child care must be relocated or must close as a result of the emergency
- Procedures for communication and reunification with families
- What will be done if parents are unable to pick up their child as a result of the emergency
- Procedures for continuity of operations
- Emergency procedures, including the availability of emergency food, water, and first-aid supplies

Child care providers shall prepare a list of contact information for all staff and parents of children enrolled in their program. This list should be kept with the operator at all times so that if a disaster occurs when a program is closed and the location of the program is inaccessible, the operator will be able to contact staff and parents to let them know that the facility has experienced a disaster.

Providers should also consider having a written plan for reporting and managing any incident or unusual occurrence that is threatening to the health, safety, or welfare of the children or childcare personnel to the licensing authority. The following types of incidents should be considered:
- Lost or missing child
- Suspected maltreatment of a child
- Injuries or illness requiring hospitalization or emergency treatment
- Death of child or childcare personnel
- Presence of a threatening individual who attempts or succeeds in gaining entrance to the facility

See Resources for Child Care Providers section for suggested links to prepare for emergencies and disasters.

See Resources for Child Care Providers section for suggested links to prepare for emergencies and disasters.
STAFF/VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING AND PRACTICE DRILLS

All staff members and volunteers shall receive a two-day, onsite orientation to the child care program during the first week of employment. The director shall document orientation of each staff member responsible for caring for or teaching children on an orientation certification form. The orientation must address emergency health, fire, and safety procedures for the center.

All licensed and self-declared providers and staff members of licensed programs must complete, as part of the basic child care requirements, two hours of training on emergency preparedness.

Monthly fire and emergency evacuation drills must be performed and documented.

A current attendance record/classroom rosters and parent contact information should accompany child care personnel during the drill or actual emergency and be used to account for all children. Daily classroom attendance rosters should be used to account for all children once gathered in a safe space after exit and upon return to the program.

EMERGENCY REPORTING PROCEDURES

In the event a child care must close, relocate, or evacuate, providers are required to report their location to their Licensing Specialist or the North Dakota Early Childhood Division within 24 hours. To contact the North Dakota Early Childhood Division, call (701) 328-2115, or (800) 997-8516, or e-mail their location to dhsec@nd.gov.

The report will be documented on SFN 1596 Child Care Emergency Closure and Relocation Report and should include:

- Provider’s name and provider number
- Provider’s physical address and county
- Number of children enrolled in the program
- Number of children in the program who receive child care assistance
- Other pertinent information, including relocation plans
- Update on whether provider has been able to notify all parents
  - DHS will provide support to notify parents of relocations and closures via mass media if necessary
  - Child Care Aware of ND will provide support to notify parents of relocations and closures

INFECTIONOUS DISEASES

The Child Care and School Infectious Disease Exclusion Guide outlines the recommendations from the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) for exclusion for specific diseases. These guidelines should be followed unless a school or child care facility has a more stringent policy in place. The guide also denotes reportable conditions that should be reported to the NDDoH Division of Disease Control at 800-472-2180.

For more information about infectious diseases, please visit https://www.health.nd.gov/diseases-conditions or call 800-472-2180.
RESOURCES FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

American Red Cross  
http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/plan

Centers for Disease Control  
https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/schools.html

Child Care Aware of America  
https://www.childcareaware.org/our-issues/crisis-and-disaster-resources/

Child Care Aware of North Dakota  
https://ndchildcare.org/providers/emergencies-disasters.html

Federal Emergency Management Agency  
https://www.fema.gov/

National Association for the Education of Young Children  
https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/coping-disasters

North Dakota Child Care and School Infectious Disease Exclusion Guidance  

North Dakota Department of Emergency Services  
https://www.des.nd.gov/  
https://ndresponse.gov/

Office of the Administration for Children & Families  
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohsepr/information-providers

Ready Campaign  
http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan
Questions?
Early Childhood Division
(701) 328-2115 or (800) 997-8516 or 711 (TTY)
dhsec@nd.gov
www.nd.gov/dhs/services/earlychildhood/