For parents with children in child care, knowing what kind of plan is in place and what to do in case of emergencies is essential. Make sure you know the what, when, where, and how of your child care provider’s emergency action plan by asking these 10 questions.

1. Do you have an emergency preparedness plan for disasters that are likely to occur in our area?
   - Make sure they have one. Ask for a copy of it. If they do not have a plan, find out when they will. Let them know you feel it is necessary.

2. How will you safely evacuate my child to safe, predetermined location?
   - Find out what procedures will be used, how the children will be moved, and to where. Make sure the place they move to is safe and acceptable to you. Ask if there is a secondary evacuation location.
   - If your child has special needs, make sure your provider will take these into consideration.

3. How and when will I be notified if a disaster occurs when my child is in child care?
   - Make sure you have at least two ways to be contacted, including another person with whom messages could be left for you (someone out of your geographic area would be ideal).
   - Keep your contact information current: phone numbers, other people who can reach you, etc.
   - Find out if there is a person/number you can call or a central phone number that will have information.
4. If I cannot get to my child during or after the disaster, how will you continue to care for my child?
- Provide any extra supplies and important information the provider will need to care for your child for a longer period of time.
- Discuss any plans or procedures you do not agree with or understand.

5. Have you and your staff received training on how to respond to my child’s physical and emotional needs during and after a disaster?
- Training in responding to emergencies is critical.
- Find out how the provider will help calm and reassure children, as well as provide first aid.
- Ask how vital records on children are kept and made available during a disaster.
- Make the provider aware of your child’s special needs.

6. Will you teach my older child what to do during an emergency?
- Ask what kinds of drills the provider will have to help older children follow directions and understand what they are to do.
- Can parents participate in drills? This can help you learn what steps are being taken and to be comfortable about the plan.

7. Do you have a disaster kit or supply kit with enough items to meet my child’s needs for at least 72 hours?
- If a kit is not available, ask how you can help get one. Talk and work with other parents.
- If your child is on regular medication, make sure the provider knows. If possible, provide an extra supply to have on hand, just in case.

8. Do the state and local emergency management agencies and responders know about your child care program and where it is located?
- Ensure local emergency management agencies know about the child care providers in the area.

9. How may I help you during and after a disaster?
- Becoming familiar with the way disasters will be handled will help you see what can be done before and after a disaster.
- Volunteer to help your provider prepare by organizing supplies, collecting or getting supplies donated, or organizing a “phone tree” of parents to make calls during or after a disaster.
- Ask what other kinds of assistance are needed and volunteer.
- Offer suggestions and solutions if you see needs they have not addressed.

10. After a disaster occurs, how will I be notified about your plan to reopen?
- Ask if there is a phone number, website, or other way the child care program will notify parents of plans to reopen or not. Will you be informed or will it be up to you to contact them?