

## CHILD CARE PREPARE

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR INFANT AND TODDLER CAREGIVERS: EVACUATION

Child care providers have many responsibilities, including providing for the health and safety of the children in their care. One component of health and safety includes emergency preparation.

Evacuation is necessary when conditions are safer outside the building than inside the building.

## BE PREPARED: IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU

**20%** Almost 1 in every 5 child care providers have had to evacuate infants and toddlers due to an emergency

## INFANTS AND TODDLERS HAVE UNIQUE NEEDS

- Physical and emotional reliance on caregivers to keep them safe
- Communication limitations, including lack of ability to identify themselves and their family
- Limited mobility
- Need for safety and protection from harmful items
- Physical needs, including greater susceptibility to chemicals and smoke
- Nutritional needs that require special emergency planning
- Emotional needs
- Need for routine and comfort



# BE PREPARED BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

## HAVE A WRITTEN PLAN AND MAKE SURE EVERYONE KNOWS THEIR ROLE

- Maintain an updated emergency plan.
- Provide staff and volunteers with regular training on the emergency plan.
- Be sure your plan accommodates children's changing developmental needs.

## PERFORM REGULAR PRACTICE DRILLS

- Include infants and toddlers in every practice drill, regardless of the weather or time of day

## HAVE A METHOD TO EVACUATE MULTIPLE CHILDREN AT ONCE

- Evacuating infants and toddlers can be difficult because they are often non-mobile or not strong walkers. Evacuation cribs, strollers/buggies, or wagons can be helpful.
- Make sure your evacuation device works in all types of weather.

## HAVE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES PREPARED AND READILY AVAILABLE

- Emergency supply kits should be prepared and stored in a place where they can be accessed quickly.
- Consider how to safely transport formula or breast milk and how you will make individual comfort items, such as pacifiers or blankets, available.
- Ensure you have a way to protect children from all types of weather.

## ENSURE THAT ADULTS STAY CALM

- Speak to children in a calm voice and give simple instructions.
- Songs can be used to provide instruction and to calm the children.

## MAKE SURE THERE ARE ENOUGH ADULTS TO HELP WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

- Be sure you can safely evacuate all children with the adults who are available.
- Extra staff, older children in your care, and neighbors can assist, but be sure to make arrangements with them in advance.



Child Care Aware of America® asked early learning professionals how they prepare for and respond to emergencies when caring for infants and toddlers. Survey responses contributed to this information.