



Hurricane & Storm Preparedness

Top 10 Tips for Hurricane Preparedness for Child Care Providers

1. **Create an emergency preparedness plan ahead of time.** Don't wait until it is too late. Emergencies are not just limited to hurricanes, so being prepared for ALL emergencies like earthquakes, floods, or fires is a good idea. Create a meet-up point for situations where communication is eliminated. In the event you need to evacuate, parents need to know where they can pick up their children. You can use this [template](#) to help you get started or fill in any gaps in your existing plan. It is a good idea to have this in a digital format or hard copy binder that you can take with you in the event you are unable to return to your facility. This will ensure that you have the needed information to contact all families and community resources before, after, and during an emergency. Make sure your local child care licensing agency and Early Learning Coalition have an emergency contact number/cell phone for the owner/director so they can reach you post-disaster. These agencies will contact you to assist in coordinating recovery efforts and report opening/closure information to families and within the community. ELC's may also be able to coordinate local, state, or federal emergency grants to providers to expedite the recovery/re-opening efforts.
2. **Communicate to staff and families early.** Make sure your families have a copy of your emergency preparedness plan and understand your emergency response plan. This also includes how you will communicate with staff and families in the event cell/internet service is interrupted. Get this information disseminated before a storm hits. Using your business Facebook page or Facebook Messenger is another way to contact families if cell service is lost.
3. **Do a [Business Impact Analysis \(BIA\)](#).** A BIA helps you predict the potential effect a disaster could have on your business, including lost or delayed income, increased expenses due to repair work, and delayed implementation of business plans. Completing a BIA may help you create and refine your emergency response, communications and business continuity plans. Use this [template](#) to help you get started.
4. **Review your insurance policy** and contact your insurance company with any questions. Does your policy cover flooding or wind damage? Most policies don't, so it is a good idea to talk to your agent about adding these on.
5. **Take pictures of your facility** from top to bottom. Include all items that may not be in plain sight. The goal is to document all assets that you have which may become helpful for insurance recovery purposes.
6. **Consult expert resources.** Know how to reach your local emergency management center for disaster response and emergency services. Business owners can get free storm preparedness information from [Ready.gov](#) and the [American Red Cross](#). For example, the [Red Cross' Ready Rating program](#) offers free online disaster preparedness planning.
7. **Protect your data.** Place all on-site paper records in a waterproof container or consider moving all records to a digital format. A cloud-based server is even better.
8. **Consider investing in a generator** tied to the building. Unlike a portable generator, a whole-house generator is permanently wired into the building and turns on automatically when the power goes out and may last for a longer period.
9. **Think about creating a child-finder book, binder, or name tags.** In the event children may be separated from their caregiver during an emergency, this will allow first responders to quickly identify children.
10. **Protect your property** with shutters, plywood, sandbags, and removing any branches or trees adjacent to the building. Roll up area rugs, move furniture, curriculum materials, and supplies towards the center of the rooms/buildings to help minimize damage due to flooding. In the event the topography becomes unrecognizable after the storm, paint your business name and address on a piece of plywood covering your facility. This will help staff, families, first responders and others find your facility in the event all street signs and landmarks have been knocked down.