

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & CHILDREN PROTECTING OUR FUTURE

Children are one of our most vulnerable populations. They have unique needs that are often overlooked during emergencies.



WHY IT MATTERS

One in four people in the United States is a child between the ages of 0-18 years. One in five children has a special healthcare need. As the largest vulnerable population in the country, children are affected by all emergencies and their unique needs need to be taken into account.

Effective emergency response and recovery systems must be prepared, practiced, and ready to support the needs of all children, including those with special healthcare needs. Emergency planning at the local, state, and federal levels must consider issues related to children, including safe sheltering, mental health services, and access to healthcare providers, medications, and medical devices.

CHILDREN ARE AT A HIGHER RISK THAN OTHER GROUPS DURING AND AFTER EMERGENCIES BECAUSE:



The vaccines, medicines, and equipment that are specially designed for children in emergency situations often have limited or no availability.



They may not be able to communicate their symptoms or feelings.



They breathe in more air relative to their size than adults, which means they absorb harmful materials in the air faster.



They spend more time on the ground and put their hands in their mouths more often than adults, which exposes them to greater amounts

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PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE
READY FOR EMERGENCIES



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

WHY CDC?

CDC ensures families, healthcare professionals, and public health planners have the tools and support necessary to protect children in emergencies. The CDC [Children's Preparedness Unit](#) (CPU) is a team of experts who champion the needs of children in public health emergencies through:

LEADERSHIP. CDC educates families, healthcare professionals, and public health planners about steps they can take to better protect children in emergencies.

EXPERTISE. CDC offers expertise, training and consulting to federal, state, and local public health organizations to ensure children's needs are incorporated into preparedness planning and response.

PARTNERSHIP. CDC partners with pediatric organizations and other federal agencies to develop guidelines and communication materials, plan and facilitate exercises, and leverage resources to include children's needs in emergency planning.

CHILDREN'S PREPAREDNESS UNIT IN ACTION

10

.... In the past 10 years, CDC's CPU has addressed children's needs in 10 emergency responses, including infectious disease outbreaks, natural disasters, and community crises.

1ST

.... In 2016, CDC's CPU conducted the first multi-state preparedness exercise, which brought together public health and pediatric professionals to focus on the needs of children in emergencies.

144,500

.... During the 2017 Hurricane response, CDC's CPU developed and distributed over 140,000 activity books to educate children about staying safe and healthy after the storms and floods in the United States, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands.

CHILDREN HAVE DIFFERENT NEEDS IN AN EMERGENCY, INCLUDING:

DIFFICULTY COMMUNICATING SYMPTOMS



UNDEVELOPED SENSE OF SELF-PRESERVATION



MORE TIME SPENT PLAYING OUTSIDE AND ON THE GROUND



HIGHER RESPIRATORY RATE



MORE PERMEABLE SKIN



"More work needs to be done to meet children's needs in emergencies—from ensuring medicines and medical devices are available, reunification plans are in place, to providing support to help them cope. Our children should be a main priority."

- Georgiana Peacock, Director,
Division of Human Development
and Disability