Emergency Planning for Child Care Centres
Preparing for Disaster

- It is very difficult for child care programs to prepare for disasters.
- Some disasters are more common than others.
- All child care programs, regardless of where they are located, face some risk from emergencies or disasters.
Preparing for an Emergency

There are four steps you can take to help you prepare for an emergency:

- Know the risks
- Make a plan
- Prepare an emergency kit
- Know what to do
A risk assessment study done by the County of Simcoe has identified the following as potential hazards in this area:

- **Severe weather** – snow/ice storms, extreme temperatures, windstorms, tornados, floods, fires.
- **Major accidents** – Hazardous materials, explosions, accidents, water contamination, train derailments.
- **Technological failures** – extended power failures, phone system failures.
- **Intentional acts** – Arson, crime, civil unrest
- **Disease outbreaks** – Widespread health emergencies, pandemic influenza, human or animal borne diseases.
Types of disasters

- Disasters can be divided into three different types:
  - Natural – hurricanes, tornados & snowstorms;
  - Technological – power outages, fires, exposure to hazardous materials;
  - and intentional attacks – labour strike, crime, arson and civil unrest.
Floods advisories are fairly common in Simcoe County.

- Flood effects can be local, impacting a neighbourhood or community, or very large, affecting entire river basins and multiple areas.
Flood
Floods in Ontario can result from:

- snowmelt,
- spring rainfall storms,
- summer thunderstorms,
- tropical storms or hurricanes,
- or ice jams.

The major cause however, is spring snowmelt.
Woodbridge during Hurricane Hazel – 1954
Flooding during Hurricane Hazel – Toronto, 1954
Damage from Hurricane Hazel – Toronto, 1954
Extent of Hurricane Hazel's destruction:
Additional significant storms

- **The Timmins Storm – August, 1961**
  - Local flash floods lasting only a couple of hours but ripped apart roads, smashed houses
  - 5 fatalities

- **The Winisk Flood - May, 1986**
  - Caused by an ice jam in the spring thaw
  - Entire village was swept away
  - 2 fatalities

- **The Saguenay Flood – July, 1996**
  - Flooding and mud slides in Quebec’s Saguenay River valley
  - Canada’s first billion dollar natural disaster
Intentional Acts

Labour strikes / Crime / Arson / Civil Unrest / Terrorism

These threats can bring:

- Large-scale losses of life;
- the destruction of property;
- widespread illness and injury;
- the displacement of large numbers of people;
- and devastating economic loss.
Terrorism – September, 2001
Tornadoes

- Tornadoes are nature’s most violent storms.
- Tornadoes can cause fatalities and devastate areas in just a couple of seconds.
- A tornado appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground with whirling winds that can reach 300 miles per hour.
- Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long.
Tornado
Tornado Facts:

- They strike quickly without warning.
- May appear transparent until dust and debris are picked up or a cloud forms the funnel.
- Average forward speed is 30 mph but varies from stationary to 70 mph.
- Waterspouts are tornados that form over water.
- Tornados most likely occur between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m.
Barrie Tornado – May 1985

- 8 fatalities
- 155 injured
- 300 homes destroyed
- $100 million in damages
Barrie Tornado

ZeroReality.Dynip.com/storms/storms.html
Tornado of August 2009

- Collingwood
  - Minor damage reported
- Durham
  - One fatality with damage to several communities
- Vaughan
  - Declared a state of emergency
  - Approx 120 seriously damaged homes
  - Opened evacuation shelters
Midland Tornado – June 2010

- $15 million in damages
- Knocked down power lines
- Inflicted widespread damages
- Smith’s Camp Trailer Park hardest hit
In 2009, in Ontario alone, there were approx. 13,000 loss fires.

A loss fire is a fire which results in an injury, fatality or a loss of property.

The losses associated with these fires are estimated at 872 injuries, 97 fatalities and over 640 million dollars in damages.
Fire

- Fire spreads quickly – there is no time to gather valuables or make a call.
- In just 2 min. a fire can become life threatening.
- In 5 min. a building can become engulfed in flames.
Heat and smoke can be more dangerous than the actual flames.

Asphyxiation is the leading cause of fire deaths, exceeding burns by a 3:1 ratio.
Winter Storms

- Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region.
- Even areas that normally experience mild winters can be hit with a major storm.
Winter storms can result in:

- Flooding
- Storm surge
- Closed highways
- Blocked roads
- Downed power lines
- Hypothermia
Ice Storm of 1998
One of the most expensive natural disasters in Canada.

Directly affected more people than any other weather event in Canadian history.

130 power transmission towers were destroyed and more than 30,000 utility poles fell.

Millions of trees fell and more continued to break and fall for the rest of the winter.
- 28 fatalities, many from hypothermia.
- Close to 1000 people were injured.
- Over 4 million people in Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick lost power.
- 600,000 people had to leave their homes.
Power Outage – August 2003

- Ontario and much of the Northeastern US were hit by the largest blackout in North America’s history
- Electricity was cut to 50 million people
- Affected all traffic lights
- Subway trains stopped mid-tunnel
- Some areas were affected from 1 to 3 days
Roles of a Child Care Provider

- Knowing the types of disasters you could experience will make it easier to develop a disaster preparedness plan and carry it out if a disaster occurs.
- One of the most important roles a child care operator can perform is to help ensure that the program is prepared for disasters.
- Preparing for disasters can:
  - help reduce the loss of life when a disaster strikes.
  - help reduce the damage to the facilities (and provider home) and your equipment and supplies.
Benefits of Preparing for Disaster

- Preserve and restore operations more quickly following a disaster.
- Help ensure child care services will be available to first responders following an event and for parents who need care and support for their children in the aftermath of a disaster.
- Parents / employers rely on child care programs to provide care for children so businesses and organizations that are prepared can continue to operate after a disaster occurs.
- Continue to provide child care services and protect your program’s assets.
Many small businesses and agencies struggle to stay in business after a disaster and many never recover.

Child care programs are especially vulnerable to the impacts of disasters because most are small in comparison to corporations and usually lack the financial resources for recovery.

All child care programs, regardless of their size, type or who runs them, should develop a disaster plan.

Family Home providers and even relative providers should all have plans.
Child care centres are also faced with the challenge of helping their employees plan for their own families and transporting groups of children, if evacuation is required.

Home child care providers must have a plan that protects the health and safety of their own family, as well as the children for whom they are providing care.

They must minimize the impacts of the disaster on the home in which they both live and work.
Preparing for an Emergency

- There are some actions that all child care facilities should take to prepare for any disaster:
  - Collect and keep information on employees and any students working in the program.
  - Collect and keep information on the children and families enrolled.
  - Stock supplies needed:
    - to remain in the centre or family child care home;
    - or to evacuate the site.
- Develop a key contacts list (phone and email).
- Develop a plan for protecting your vital records.
- Develop an evacuation plan.
- Train employees and children on the evacuation plan and practice the plan.
- Encourage employees to have a family emergency plan.
Communication

- Communication with staff is central to emergency planning. These could include:
  - training, newsletter reminders, emails, website, bulletin boards.
- Set up a call-in voice recording to communicate with program staff and parents during an emergency.
- Consider designating an out-of-town phone number.
- Consideration should be given to employees or children in your program with disabilities.
- Individuals should be assigned and trained on their responsibilities for assisting these individuals.
Employee Information

- Having accurate and complete information on each employee is critical during disaster.
  - During disasters, a program must be able to reach employees at any hour of the day.
  - Consider a call order, or telephone tree.
  - Programs may need to call family members of employees to notify them if an employee cannot leave the facility or has been injured.
  - Following a disaster to notify if the program will reopen and when it will open.
Prepare for problems in communicating with employees and parents during and following a disaster:

- Have several phone numbers for each staff member (home, cell, spouses work & out of area contact).
- Have a programmable phone (voice recorded message or call forward function).
- Provide cards for employees to carry with them with emergency contact numbers.
- Let employees and parents know which radio or television stations will be used.
The information programs have for children and families may not be enough if a disaster strikes.

It may be impossible to reach parents if the disaster is in that area – Parent may have been injured or evacuated.

To ensure that someone responsible can be reached consider collecting the following information:

- The names and contact information of two local emergency contacts.
- The names and contact information of two emergency contacts that live outside the area (to assume responsibility of child if parent not able to do so).
Items recommended for your Evacuation Kit

- First Aid kit
- Critical medication
- Emergency contact information for children
- Emergency contact information for staff
- Non perishable food
- Water
- Disposable cups
- Games, books etc

These items should be contained in something that is easily transported.
Shelter in Place Order

- During a disaster, a program may need to keep the children/adults in the facility for an extended period of time.
- It may not be safe to leave or to transport children, employees/family members away from the center.
- If it is decided the program should stay in place, decide what is the safest location inside the facility.
- There are some circumstances, such as during a chemical incident or during a tornado, when specifically how and where to take shelter is a matter of survival.
  - Basements provide the best protection during a tornado – away from windows, doors and outside walls.
Shelter In Place - Sealing the Centre

- If the air outside is suspected to be contaminated the program may be told to take shelter and “seal the centre”.
- The process used to seal a centre is a temporary protective measure to create a barrier between the children / adults and any potential contaminated air outside.
- In a large centre it may be necessary to seal more than one room.
- Choose an interior room in the centre with as few windows and doors as possible.
- Take the emergency kits into the area to be sealed.
- Close as many internal doors as possible.
- Seal all windows, doors and air vents in the rooms with plastic sheeting and duct tape – to save time this can be done in advance as part of emergency planning.
- Everyone should remain in the sealed space until the person in charge has been notified by a local official that they can evacuate the space.
If a child care program has to remain in the facility, the facility utilities may be disrupted.

The power may be out, leaving the program without lights, phone service, heat or cooling.

Staff should know how to store food and how to determine if food is safe to be eaten.

If water is still available, is it safe to consume? If unsure, does your staff know how to boil and disinfect water.
Be Prepared for 72 hours

- Child care programs must consider what they would need to operate for as long as 72 hours without help from outside.

- In determining what you will need, you must also consider that your program may be without electrical power, heat, water, and/or telephone service during this period.

- The following list of supplies and equipment that child care programs should consider having to be prepared if required to “Shelter in Place”:
Be Prepared for 72 hours

- Change of clothes for each child
- Extra diapers/pull-ups
- Wet wipes / Kleenex
- Water
- Powdered or canned infant formula for each infant
- Baby food for each older infant
- Powered or canned milk
- Non-perishable food items
- Non-electric can openers
- Critical medications
- Disposable cups, bowls, plates and eating utensils
- Paper towels, toilet paper and personal sanitation items
- Hand sanitizer/cleaning supplies
- Blankets for both children and staff
- Crank or battery operated radio
- Flashlights with extra batteries for each room
- Well stocked first aid kits
- A cell phone

- A land line phone
- Whistle
- Dust and filter masks
- Wrench/pliers to turn off utilities
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to seal off rooms
- Camp stove with fuel

Organize these items into two separate kits – one for situations in which you must remain in the centre and one for evacuations. Store items where they will be accessible but remain undamaged.
Protecting Vital Records

- Determine what information is needed to continue to operate the program and how you can ensure it is available.

- You need to consider:
  - Information needed to take along during an evacuation?
  - Information will you need to have access to if you have to operate from a remote location?
  - Information will you need to support an insurance claim if property, equipment and supplies are lost or damaged?
  - How you will back up the program computer records so they will be available if the computers are damaged or destroyed.
Assigning Responsibilities

- During an emergency - Someone needs to be in charge.
- Responses are more effective if critical functions are assigned.
- The list of tasks should include such items as:
  - Provide first aid
  - Bring medications
  - Bring attendance sheets / log book
  - Bring emergency cards
  - Call for help
  - Carry cell phones
  - Carry the evacuation kits
  - Be responsible for each group of children
  - There should be a back up for each person assigned to a task
Does your Centre have a Plan?

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