

Section 7 Emergency Preparedness

Emergency preparedness is important to all communities and families, but when children with special health needs and/or disabilities are involved, emergency preparedness planning becomes especially urgent. A disastrous event often involves the loss of electrical power. For technology-dependent children, the loss of electrical power (a common occurrence even in the absence of natural disasters) is critical. A simple temporizing measure is that all critical life-support devices should include an internal battery back-up, a power-failure alarm, and a secondary means of back-up power). Lack of access to medications, water, food, shelter, and transportation should also be considered.

You can begin this process by gathering family members and making sure each person is well-informed on potential hazards and community plans ([Be Informed](http://www.ready.gov/be-informed) - <http://www.ready.gov/be-informed>). Discuss with them what you would do if family members are not home when a warning is issued. Additionally, your family plan should address the following:

Escape routes	http://www.ready.gov/escape-routes
Evacuation plans	http://www.ready.gov/evacuating-yourself-and-your-family
Family communications	http://www.ready.gov/family-communications
Utility shut-off and safety	http://www.ready.gov/utility-shut-safety
Financial Preparedness	http://www.ready.gov/financialpreparedness
Access & functional needs	http://www.ready.gov/individuals-access-functional-needs
Care for pets	http://www.ready.gov/caring-animals
Care for livestock	http://www.ready.gov/caring-animals
Safety skills	http://www.ready.gov/safety-skills

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Disability and Other Access and Functional Needs	Additional Steps
Visually impaired	May be extremely reluctant to leave familiar surroundings when the request for evacuation comes from a stranger. A guide dog could become confused or disoriented in a disaster. People who are blind or partially sighted may have to depend on others to lead them, as well as their dog, to safety during a disaster.
Hearing impaired	May need to make special arrangements to receive warnings.
Mobility impaired	May need special assistance to get to a shelter.
Single working parent	May need help to plan for disasters and emergencies.
Non-English speaking persons	May need assistance planning for and responding to emergencies. Community and cultural groups may be able to help keep people informed.
People without vehicles	May need to make arrangements for transportation.
People with special dietary needs	Should take special precautions to have an adequate emergency food supply.
People with medical conditions	Should know the location and availability of more than one facility if dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.
People with intellectual disabilities	May need help responding to emergencies and getting to a shelter.
People with dementia	Should be registered in the Alzheimer's Association Safe Return Program http://www.alz.org/safetycenter/we_can_help_safety_medicalert_safereturn.asp

If you have a disability or Other Access and Functional Needs: Find out about special assistance that may be available in your community. Register with the office of emergency services or the local fire department for assistance so needed help can be provided.

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Check for hazards in the home

During and right after a disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, break or cause fire is a home hazard. Check for items such as bookcases, hanging pictures, or overhead lights that could fall in an earthquake or a flood and block an escape path.

Be ready to evacuate

Have a plan for getting out of your home or building (ask your family or friends for assistance, if necessary). Also, plan two evacuation routes because some roads may be closed or blocked in a disaster.

- Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends, and coworkers to aid you in an emergency. Discuss your needs and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment.
- Discuss your needs with your employer.
- If you are mobility impaired and live or work in a high-rise building, have an escape chair.
- If you live in an apartment building, ask the management to mark accessible exits clearly and to make arrangements to help you leave the building.
- Keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, prescriptions, food for service animals, and any other items you might need.
- Be sure to make provisions for medications that require refrigeration.
- Keep a list of the type and model numbers of the medical devices you require.
- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to identify your disability.
- Know the location and availability of more than one facility if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.

Additional Resources:

CDC Emergency Preparedness

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/>

Estate Planning

http://wpic.org/images/PDF/Disability_Brochures/14EstatePlanning0112.pdf

ARC: Prepare Your Home and Family

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family>

FEMA: Plan and Prepare for Families

<http://www.fema.gov/plan/index.shtm>

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Packaging Wisdom: A Family Centered Care Coordination Notebook
Parent Information Center | 500 W Lott St Suite A Buffalo, WY 82834 | 307-684-2277

Household Emergency Information

Address: _____

Directions from:

Fire Department Number: 911 or _____

Police Department Number: 911 or _____

Ambulance: 911 or _____

Poison Control Hotline: _____

Fire Escape Plan:

CHECK SMOKE ALARMS MONTHLY! CHECK FIRE EXTINGUISHERS MONTHLY!

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Primary Emergency Contact Person(s)

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Who else should be notified in the event of an emergency? (Clergy, other relatives, friends, etc.)

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

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Emergency Room Preparedness

Children with special health care needs are those who have, or are at risk for, chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions and who also require health and related services of a type or amount not usually required by typically developing children. Formulation of an emergency care plan has been advocated by the Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) program through its Children with Special Health Care Needs Task Force. Essential components of a program of providing care plans include use of a standardized form, a method of identifying at-risk children, completion of a data set by the child's physicians and other health care professionals, education of families, other caregivers, and health care professionals in use of the emergency plan, regular updates of the information, 24-hour access to the information by authorized emergency health care professionals, and maintenance of patient confidentiality.

Emergency care of children with special health care needs is frequently complicated by a lack of a concise summary of their medical condition, precautions needed, and special management plans. This policy statement introduces a standardized information form that can be used to prepare the caregivers and health care system for emergencies of children with special health care needs. Emergency data sets, summaries, or "passports" have been used in several of the US Department of Health and Human Services, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Emergency Medical Services for Children. Children with special health care needs are those who have or are at risk for chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions and who also require health and related services of a type or amount not usually required by children.¹ Children with special health care needs frequently require emergency care for acute life-threatening complications that are unique to their chronic conditions. Emergency hospital and pre-hospital care is believed to be negatively affected by a frequent lack of accurate timely information about the children's special needs and particular histories.

To address this identified need for the group of children with special needs, creation of a passport plan or emergency medical information set has been advocated by the US DHHS-MCHB-NHTSA EMSC program through its Children with Special Health Care Needs Task Force Report of January 1997. The report notes:

"If the child is at risk for future medical emergencies, the child and family should participate in developing a written emergency care plan. Copies of this plan should be kept in easily accessible places at the child's home and any other location where the child regularly spends time. The plan should include provisions for any special training that will be needed by emergency medical personnel, family members, or other persons who may be called on to provide emergency care for the child."

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for transition is a process, not an event. If your child is receiving supports and services under the special education law, the IDEA 2004, your child's school's IEP will have a section in it for transition planning. However, a plan for transition can be developed outside of the special education process. As parents, how do you do that and where do you start? It can seem overwhelming to try to figure out how to make sure that all the aspects of transition are covered, but it is important to have a written plan. A written plan enables youth to monitor their progress and practice important self-advocacy skills.

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