MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN

2018



Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan 2018

**CONTENTS**

[Summary of the Department of Early Education and Care’s Overall Responsibilities for Emergency Preparedness and Response 3](#_Toc241909437)

# I. Plan Summary…………….………………………………………………………………………………………………….3

II. Command and Control Process………………………………………………………………………………………9

III. Emergency Preparedness…………………………………………………………………………………….……….11

IV.Emergency Functions……………………………………………………………………………………………………13

A. Coordination of Emergency-Related Communications……………………………………..13

B.Assistance with Relocation of Children Off-Site………………………….…………………….16

C. Assessment of EEC/Partner Agency Functionality……………………………………………..19

D. Assessment of Child Care Providers’ Damages and Needs………………………………..23

E. Facilitating the Development of Temporary Child Care………………………...............26

F. Special Licensing Policies and Reestablishment of Safe/Healthy Care.………………29

G. Continuing the Reimbursement for Subsidized Child Care………………………………..31

H. Emergency Access to EEC Financial Assistance”)………………………………………..…….33

V. General Support/EEC Assistance with Partner-Led Efforts……………………………………………35

**Summary of the Department of Early Education and Care’s**

**Overall Responsibilities for Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan**

**I. PLAN SUMMARY**

1. Purpose

This Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan is intended for use by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and by all licensed programs and all CCDF-funded programs, whether they are licensed or not, in the event of an emergency. It is a compilation of new and existing policies and procedures to ensure the continuous performance of EEC’s essential functions during an emergency and to assist in the provision of safe and healthy child care alternatives for families before, during, and after disasters and emergencies.

EEC has developed this plan to provide information to instruct EEC staff and early child care providers regarding emergency preparedness, disaster response, and disaster recovery. This plan

* provides detailed information for EEC staff in order to carry out specific agency essential functions such as coordination of disaster communication, licensing, relocation of children, assessment of child care facilities, facilitation of temporary child care, and subsidy reimbursement;
* specifies clear lines of succession and roles for management to continue core agency functions;
* facilitates the continuation of core child care functions during and after a disaster or emergency by supporting providers and giving families safe and healthy alternatives for the care of their children; and
* provides necessary information and templates to EEC providers and other partners.

1. Applicability and Scope

This document focuses on agency essential functions, critical systems, orders of succession, delegations of authority, and vital records. Development of procedures that address emergencies and work in concert with business continuity and disaster recovery plans allow for uninterrupted delivery of EEC’s essential functions.

This document applies to the full spectrum of threats and emergencies that may affect EEC offices and its providers. Some examples of these threats and emergencies are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NATURAL HAZARDS:**  Severe Weather  Snow and Ice Storms  Tornado  Hurricane  Earthquake  Flooding | **TECHNOLOGICAL HAZARDS:**  Fire  Utility Disruption (Heat, water, power)  Hazardous Materials  Bomb threat or threatening  telephone call  Cyber threats to internal or web-based computer systems | **PERSONAL SAFETY:**  Medical Emergency  Missing Child  Unauthorized/Suspicious Person  Police and Fire Response (in  immediate area) |

1. Emergency Preparedness

EEC’s on-going emergency preparedness efforts include:

* Periodic training of emergency response teams, dialogue with EEC partners about their roles, update of emergency preparedness and response plan, and communications encouraging providers to prepare for emergencies
* Ongoing development of partnerships with state and federal emergency response

agencies

* Year-round distribution of alerts and technical assistance about potential threats and emergencies
* EEC staff’s ongoing maintenance/testing of emergency procedures
* Nightly automatic backup of EEC and related state information systems in the cloud and online archives plus weekly offsite storage
* Development of phone call and text notification protocols and other methods for EEC internal and external communication
* Extra preparations if given notice of an imminent disaster

1. Possible EEC Disaster Functions

EEC has identified the following as activities it *may* carry out during or after a disaster to make sure that children remain safe and healthy depending upon the particular threat or emergency in issue and the availability of resources:

* Communicating with EEC providers, parents, and partners during, after, and in anticipation of emergencies
* Ensuring that children are relocated off-site if hazardous materials, fire, or another emergency poses a threat to their safety while they are in care
* Assessing whether EEC’s capacity to carry out its roles has been affected by the disaster and making provision for the continuation of core agency functions (e.g., abuse/ neglect investigations, subsidized child care services)
* Assessing licensed and/or funded programs’ damages and needs resulting from a disaster
* Facilitating the development of temporary child care and residential arrangements to improve access to care
* Activating special licensing policies and reestablishing safe and healthy child care
* Using subsidy funds to pay for emergency child care, with due consideration given to EEC’s “emergency closure” policies.
* Other assistance tailored to specific disaster needs

The following chart highlights approximately when in the disaster/emergency management cycle EEC’s emergency functions may be carried out. Efforts highlighted in blue indicated preparation and efforts highlighted in green indicate contemporaneous action items. Emergency *response* refers to actions that occur immediately before, during, or directly after an emergency. Emergency *recovery* refers to assistance that occurs later to return the community to normal or near-normal conditions. Phases of disaster/emergency management tend to overlap to some degree.

**Timeline -- Emergency Preparedness, Response, Recovery**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Emergency Preparedness** | **Emergency Response** | **Emergency Recovery** |
| Partnering Efforts |  |  |
| Training Efforts |  |  |
| Ongoing Communication | | |
|  | Relocation of Child Care Children | |
|  | EEC/Provider Needs Assessment | |
|  | Temporary Child Care | |
|  | Special Licensing Policies | |
|  | Continued Payment of Subsidized Child Care | |
|  | | Emergency Child Care |

It should be noted that emergency functions may require extra staff, equipment, supplies, or financial resources. How EEC carries out an individual emergency functions depends on the specific needs at the time, as well as the resources available to EEC. EEC’s Commissioner, in coordination with the Senior Management team, will determine which emergency activities or functions should be carried out.

E. Coordination of Effort in Carrying Out Disaster Response Functions

Under Chapter 639 of the Acts of 1950, the Governor of Massachusetts may declare a state of emergency due to, among other circumstances, “the occurrence of any disaster or catastrophe resulting from attack, sabotage or other hostile action; or from riot or other civil disturbance; or from fire, flood, earthquake or other natural causes.” If a state of emergency is declared by the Governor, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) representative and/or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) representative will notify the EEC Commissioner when Emergency Management has been activated before, during and after a disaster or emergency. The EEC Commissioner will then contact the EEC Senior Management Team to report the activation, email, and phone emergency team leaders letting them know of the situation. This communication plan will continue during the disaster or emergency.

Decisions will be made at the Senior Management level. The situation may likely require activation of EEC’s Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). EEC’s Commissioner will determine which functions in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan are to be carried out. EEC staff will be called upon, as needed, to assist in making decisions and/or facilitating responses. EEC staff may also be temporarily reassigned to carry out specific duties. Under certain specific circumstances, special licensing policies may also be implemented.

After the disaster or emergency, recovery functions will be put into place. Assessment should continue periodically thereafter until EEC determines that providers impacted by the disaster or emergency are able to offer families safe and healthy child care.

F. EEC/Partner Agency Responsibilities by Emergency Function

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Disaster Function** | **EEC unit/staff responsible for function**  **\*=lead responsibility** | **Partner agencies who may play a role** |
| **Emergency Preparedness**  EEC preparations, including emergency preparedness and response plan update/training | -EEC Commissioner  -Secretariat Human Resources Director  -Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations  -Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance  -General Counsel  -Deputy Commissioner for Program Administration  -Regional Directors  - Commissioner’s Liaison  -\*Senior COOP Official  -EEC Program Manager | -MA Child Care Resource & Referral (CCRR) Network  -MA Family Child Care Systems  -Office of Head Start, Head Start programs and MA Head Start Association  -Department of Children and Families (DCF)  -MEMA  -Emergency Management Coordinators for local cities and towns  -Department of Public Health and local health departments  -Other partners who work with EEC on special emergency responses  -Providers in affected areas  -MASS 2-1-1 |
| **Coordination of Emergency-Related Communications**  Making the public/partners aware of EEC assistance; facilitating communication among partners to improve emergency response and recovery | -EEC Commissioner  -Human Resources Director  -\*Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations  -General Counsel  -Regional Directors  -Commissioner’s Liaison  -Senior COOP Official  -EEC Program Manager  -Director of Communication and External Affairs | -MA Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Network  -MA Family Child Care Systems  -Office of Head Start, Head Start programs and MA Head Start Association  -DCF  -MEMA  -Emergency Management Coordinators for local cities and towns  -Department of Public Health and local health departments  -Other partners who work with EEC on special emergency responses  -Providers in affected areas -- may be a conduit for information to families  -MASS 2-1-1 |
| **Assistance with Relocation of Children Off-Site** if an emergency strikes while children are in child care | -EEC Commissioner  -\*Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations  -General Counsel  -Regional Directors  -Commissioner’s Liaison  -Senior COOP Official  -EEC Program Manager | -CCRR Network  -MA Family Child Care Systems  -Office of Head Start, Head Start programs and MA Head Start Association  -DCF  -MEMA  -Emergency Management Coordinators for local cities and towns  -Department of Public Health (DPH) and local health departments  -Other partners who work with EEC on special emergency responses  -MASS 2-1-1 |
| **Assessment of EEC/ Partner Agency Functionality** | -EEC Commissioner  -Human Resources Director  -\*Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations  -Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration  -General Counsel  -Regional Directors  -Commissioner’s Liaison  -Senior COOP Official  -EEC Program Manager  -Director of Business Project Management | -Massachusetts Executive Office of Education (EOE)  -CCRR Network  -MA Family Child Care Systems  -Office of Head Start, Head Start programs and MA Head Start Association  -Community Partnerships for Children (CPCs)  -DCF  -Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)  - Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS) (if state computer systems have been affected)  -MEMA  -Department of Mental Health (DMH)  -DPH  -Landlords for EEC’s offices  -Utility companies (e.g., if power, phones are down)  -MASS 2-1-1 |
| **Assessment of Child Care Providers’ Damages and Needs** | -EEC Commissioner  - Secretariat Human Resources Director  -\*Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations  -Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration  -General Counsel  -Regional Directors  -Commissioner’s Liaison  -Senior COOP Official  -EEC Program Manager  -Contract and Procurement staff  -All other EEC staff as necessary | -CCRR Network  -MA Family Child Care Systems  -Community Partnerships for Children (CPCs)  -DCF  -Department of Youth Services (DYS)  -DTA  -EOE  -MEMA  -Department of Mental Health (DMH)  -Department of Developmental Services (DDS)  -DPH  -Emergency Management Coordinators for local cities and towns  -Red Cross  -MASS 2-1-1 |
| **Facilitating the Development of Temporary Child Care**  Help establish to: 1) keep children safe during and immediately after emergencies; 2) expand capacity/ access to child care; and 3) enable emergency workers with children to work | -\*EEC Commissioner  -Secretariat Human Resources Director  -Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations  -Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration  -General Counsel  -Workforce Development Specialist  -Regional Directors  -Deputy Commissioner for Program Administration  -Commissioner’s Liaison  -Senior COOP Official  -Contracts and Procurement staff  -All other EEC staff as necessary | -CCRR Network  -Office of Head Start  -MA Family Child Care Systems  -Community Partnerships for Children (CPCs)  -DCF  -DYS  -DTA  -EOE  -MEMA  -DMH  -DDS  -DPH  -Emergency Management Coordinators for local cities and towns  -Red Cross  -Licensed childcare facilities  -MASS 2-1-1 |
| **Special Licensing Policies and Reestablishment of Safe/Healthy Care**  Enable providers to operate if assurance of safe/healthy care | -\*Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations  -General Counsel  -Regional Directors  -EEC Licensing Staff (licensors, supervisors, etc.) | -CCRR Network  -MA Family Child Care Systems  -Local building, fire and environmental health inspectors |
| **Continuing the Reimbursement for Subsidized Child Care**  Enable providers who offer subsidized care to continue to get reimbursed after a disaster | -EEC Commissioner  -\*Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance  -Associate Commissioner for Contracts and Accounting  -Director of Caseload and Financial Assistance  -General Counsel  -Regional Directors  -EEC Program Manager  - Director of Business Project Management  -Contracts and Procurement staff  -All other EEC staff as necessary | -CCRR Network  -Contracted Providers  -Office of the State Comptroller (OSC)  -Operational Services Division (OSD)  -Information Technology Division (ITD)  -Treasurer and Receiver General (TRG)  -MASS 2-1-1 |
| **Child Care Subsidy Emergency Procedures (“Emergency Child Care”)** services for families rendered needy by a disaster | -EEC Commissioner  -General Counsel’s office  -\*Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance  -Director of Caseload and Financial Assistance  -Regional Directors  -Financial Assistance Staff  -Commissioner’s Liaison  -EEC Program Manager  - Director of Business Project Management  -Contract and Procurement staff  -All other EEC staff as necessary | -CCRR Network  -MA Family Child Care Systems  -Community Partnerships for Children (CPCs)  -Office of Head Start, Head Start programs and MA Head Start Association  -DCF  -DTA  -OSC  -OSD  -ITD  -TRG  -Licensed child care providers and programs  -MASS 2-1-1 |

**II. COMMAND AND CONTROL PROCESSES**

1. Emergency Response Activation Process

* Activation of EEC Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) by EEC’s Commissioner
  + Considerations for activation of a disaster response:
    - Declaration of State of Emergency by the President of the United States, Governor of Massachusetts, or other leader(s)
    - Activation of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and/or the Department Operations Center by the Department of Public Health (DPH)
    - Need for immediate action by EEC
* Because disasters may require immediate action, the Commissioner or her/his designee (i.e. the Senior COOP Official) has full authority to activate disaster functions and temporarily reassign staff as needed to carry out response functions.

1. Management Structure

EEC will implement its COOP plan to oversee its emergency response. The COOP plan will provide oversight and specific emergency response tasks that will be undertaken by EEC; coordination and collaboration across functions may also be managed by EEC’s Regional Offices, particularly if specific regions are impacted.

EEC may also develop response teams, as needed, to make important decisions about emergency strategies, policies, and resources. Examples of decisions for which a response team might be responsible:

* Development of new disaster responses/policies as required;
* Development of requests for emergency resources (funding/personnel/equipment); and
* Facilitate communication and collaboration among EEC and partner agencies at the regional level.

1. EEC’s Participation in Broader Disaster Response

* EEC will collaborate with other state agencies on disaster response activities.
* EEC’s Commissioner or her/his designee will participate in any statewide emergency planning processes and make strategic decisions about coordination with other agencies.
* EEC’s Senior COOP Official will participate, as needed, in MEMA and DPH meetings and will share information about emergency management with EEC staff.

**III.** **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

1. Regular Review and Update of EEC’s Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan

EEC’s Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan will be reviewed annually. The EEC Commissioner or her/his designee will oversee the annual review of the plan which will involve review by emergency function (with input from partner agencies), updating EEC and partner lists as needed, and development of recommended changes. Following approval of recommended changes, a project team will incorporate the recommended changes, finalize the plan, and post the revised version on EEC’s web site and intranet site.

1. Training of EEC Staff and Partners

* All EEC staff will be provided with access to the current Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan via EEC’s web site and intranet site from which staff can view/download the plan. New staff will receive the plan as part of their general orientation with the EEC Human Resource Specialist. EEC’s key partners will be provided with copies of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan or referenced to the EEC web site from which to view/download the plan.
* EEC staff may be asked to participate in emergency drills or attending meetings to discuss emergency roles and procedures. The Senior COOP Official, with assistance from the Senior Management Team, may plan and facilitate an emergency scenario drill for EEC staff in all EEC offices. The emergency scenario drill would be used to test procedures and develop recommendations to improve the plan.
* EEC will explore emergency preparedness and response training with its partners and other state agencies.

1. Specific EEC Preparations for Storms and Major Disasters

* *EEC/State backup of computer systems*. EEC’s Program Manager, and his/her designee, should ensure that regular backup processes are maintained. EEC backs up its network and all files maintained on its server every night using a cloud storage system, complemented by weekly off-site storage. Many of EEC’s computer applications are part of EOTSS and are backed up according to state procedures.
* *Backup and printing of key files*. Staff (particularly regional staff with laptops/home computers) may be required to identify their own critical files and back them up to thumb drives and/or print out key documents on a regular basis.
* *Inventory of staff information*. EEC might, as part of its emergency plan, ask staff each year to volunteer information to help EEC quickly develop solutions in emergencies. For instance, staff could be asked if they have four-wheel drive vehicles, live within 5 or 10 miles of an EEC office, speak a foreign language, or have other resources or attributes that could be useful in an emergency.
* *Quick review of emergency roles and processes*. If EEC is alerted to the possibility of an impending disaster, the Senior COOP Official should put the EEC staff on alert, ask them to review the emergency plan and emergency functions, be sure there are updated contact lists to execute the emergency functions, identify steps they might take to respond to the specific scenario, and contact partners to walk through how they might work together to respond to the emergency.
* *Communications to child care providers prior to disasters*.
  + EEC will make available at licensing potential provider information sessions, and via the web site, materials for all licensed child care centers and homes in the state regarding emergency preparedness and response.
  + EEC will provide child care providers with the Emergency Plan Template to assist them to prepare for emergencies and develop their own emergency plans.

**IV. EMERGENCY FUNCTIONS**

EEC may undertake the following emergency functions in order to fulfill the Department’s role in supporting child care providers and providing families with safe and healthy alternatives for child care during and after disasters or emergencies.

**A. Coordination of Emergency-Related Communications**

*Ensure that EEC employees, child care providers, the general public, and partners are aware of EEC and other state and private agencies’ assistance. Facilitate communication among partner agencies to improve collaboration and avoid duplication****.***

Overall EEC responsibilities:

* Help develop and disseminate emergency preparedness information;
* Disseminate information to help child care providers in areas affected by

an emergency;

* + - Help disseminate information about Emergency Child Care and other

types of assistance to parents in affected areas; and

* + Collect and share information on response/recovery efforts with EEC

partners (act as a central clearinghouse to reduce the chance of duplication).

**Functional Team Members**

EEC Commissioner

Secretariat Human Resources Director

Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations

Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

Regional Directors

General Counsel

Head Start State Collaboration Office

Deputy Commissioner for Program Administration

Director of Communication and External Affairs

Commissioner’s Liaison

Senior COOP Official

EEC Program Manager

Director of Business Project Management

**EEC Partners Who May Be Enlisted to Help Carry Out Function**

MA Child Care Resource & Referral (CCRR) Network

MA Family Child Care Systems

Office of Head Start, Head Start programs, and MA Head Start Association

Department of Children and Families

Department of Transitional Assistance

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Emergency Management Coordinators for local cities and towns

Department of Public Health and local health departments

Other partners who work with EEC on special emergency responses

Providers in affected areas -- may be a conduit for information to families

**Before an Emergency**

The Commissioner of EEC, in conjunction with the Senior COOP Official, the Secretariat Human Resources Director, the Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations, the Director of Communication and External Affairs, the Commissioner’s Liaison, and Regional Directors develop a plan to prepare and disseminate information to EEC staff, partners, child care providers, and families in preparation for emergencies.

**Implementation of Emergency Communications**

* + Upon declaration of emergency from the Governor, the EEC

Commissioner or her/his designee activates emergency communications.

* + The Commissioner’s Liaison takes the lead in preparing and reviewing

press releases, emergency updates, and other written communications regarding the emergency. The Senior COOP Official and the Commissioner’s Liaison assign all communications responsibilities and, as appropriate, ask for help from other EEC units. The Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations, the Secretariat Human Resources Director, the Director of Communication and External Affairs, and other members of the EEC Senior Management Team will work closely with the Senior COOP Official and Commissioner’s Liaison, making EEC staff aware of perceived communications needs.

* If children need to be relocated from child care facilities facing potential

danger, the Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations will work with Regional Directors, Licensing Staff, the Deputy Commissioner for Program Administration, Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO), CCRRs, MA Family Child Care Systems and/or providers to obtain information about the relocation and assist as needed in contacting parents.

* The Commissioner’s Liaison and the Director of Communication and External Affairs will help disseminate information via media outlets in the affected areas. The Department will also work with the Governor’s Office and MEMA to ensure the appropriate contacts are made that will enable timely dissemination of all information.
* EEC’s Program Manager will update EEC’s web site to include pertinent information that needs to be disseminated to providers.
* The Regional Directors, in coordination with the Deputy Commissioner for Field

Operations, will serve as the funnel for general information between the local and state levels, and among regions.

* Licensing Staff and Program Administration Staff will work closely with local partners and providers to disseminate information to child care providers and families regarding local relief/recovery efforts.
* As coordinated by the Commissioner or her/his designee, EEC will ask partners to assist with communication efforts and will, in turn, seek opportunities to make partners’ activities known to child care providers and families. EEC will work with local health departments, local social services agencies, DPH, MEMA, and other partners to determine what information related to their emergency efforts should be disseminated to providers.

**B. Assistance with Relocation of Children Off-Site**

*“Relocation” (also known as “off-site evacuation”) refers to the movement of children away from regulated child care facilities to a safer location during an emergency.*

EEC requires that child care providers have a plan for relocating children as part of their emergency procedures. EEC recommends that providers designate in advance the site where children would be relocated, periodically notify parents of this relocation site, and plan for safely transporting the children. Providers are expected to follow instructions from local authorities regarding when to relocate children.

EEC’s role in the event of relocation will be to serve as a central point of contact to:

* ensure that emergency personnel who may be activating the evacuation/relocation of children have accurate information so that they can find all the providers in the area
* ensure that all providers in the area being relocated by local authorities are aware of evacuation
* inform providers, as needed, of sites designated by local authorities where they might relocate
* assist providers, as needed, in locating transportation to relocate children
* obtain information as to where evacuating providers are relocating and when they leave (to relay to parents or emergency personnel as needed)
* remind providers who are relocating children of safe transportation procedures so that there is the safe accounting for every child
* inform Family Child Care Systems and/or local CCRR agencies of providers who are relocating and whether they need assistance
* enlist Family Child Care Systems and/or local CCRR agencies in contacting providers or parents as needed, or in helping to transport children as needed

**Functional Team Members:**

EEC Commissioner

Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations

General Counsel

Regional Directors

Deputy Commissioner for Program Administration

Commissioner’s Liaison

Senior COOP Official

EEC Program Manager

Director of Business Project Management

**Partners Outside EEC to Help with Function:**

MA CCRR Network

MA Family Child Care Systems

Office of Head Start, Head Start programs and MA Head Start Association

DCF

MEMA

Emergency Management Coordinators for local cities and towns

Department of Public Health and local health departments

Other partners who work with EEC on special emergency responses

**Before an Emergency**

* Regional Directors and Licensing Supervisors determine the specific information Emergency Management Coordinators in their areas may desire to have in advance of an emergency – e.g., lists of child care facilities in their areas, estimates of the number of children/adults at each facility, and contact information for licensing field staff.
  + If possible, Regional Directors will obtain a list of locations designated by local authorities in advance as possible relocation/evacuation sites where affected children in child care arrangements could be taken.
  + Regional Directors, Licensing staff and Program Administration staff, in conjunction with the EEC Program Manager will work with MEMA and DPH to make key information available to other partners, providers, and families.

**During Emergency – Steps to Implement a Special Response**

* + EEC will activate the relocation function to assist child care facilities once it is confirmed that local authorities require public schools in an area to evacuate, or that individual child care providers may face health/safety concerns due to the emergency. EEC staff work with the Senior Management Team to determine which roles EEC may play in offering guidance to providers or giving information to parents during relocation.
  + The Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations, along with Regional Directors, will work with MEMA, DPH, and local Emergency Management Coordinators as needed to collect information about the nature of the threat, the geographic area involved, child care providers that may be at risk, and the number of children and adults who should be relocated. If time allows, providers in the affected area could be polled to determine whether they have child seats/vehicles that could be used to transport children and adults to safety.
  + The Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations will immediately discuss the needs with the MEMA Emergency Coordinator, and request help from MEMA as appropriate.
  + Child care providers in the threatened area(s) will be alerted about the relocation and told what key supplies and child records to gather. EEC staff will determine whether state or local emergency personnel will be contacting child care facilities.
    - If emergency personnel are contacting facilities, EEC will ensure that emergency personnel have the latest information on location of child care facilities, and EEC will find out where emergency personnel are directing providers/facilities to relocate. EEC and partners will assist providers in locating transportation, if needed.
    - If emergency personnel are not contacting facilities, EEC will find out from state or local emergency personnel where providers should relocate, if needed. EEC will enlist partners to assist in calling child care facilities to alert them of the relocation, and to share information from emergency personnel on relocation sites. EEC and partners will also assist providers in locating transportation, if needed. Regional Directors and Licensing Supervisors will be informed of what is being communicated to providers and share that information with the Senior Management Team and other EEC staff.
  + To the extent possible, EEC staff or partners will work with child care providers throughout the relocation to coordinate records on the location and status of children/adults who were evacuated. Information will be made available to parents as quickly as possible concerning where their children are and how/when the parents can pick up their children. EEC will keep local emergency personnel informed of providers who have relocated with the affected children. Strict procedures will be established to make sure that children are released only to adults who have been authorized by each child’s parent/ guardian and that the names/contact information of these authorized persons is recorded and taken to the relocation/evacuation site.

**C. Assessment of EEC/Partner Agency Functionality**

*Determine how EEC and/or key partners’ ability to function has been affected by the emergency.*

Determine how EEC staff, equipment, and offices may have been affected by the emergency in order to develop appropriate Department responses. EEC may also consider polling key early childhood partners about their functionality to be able to develop appropriate emergency response activities, taking into account the status of the overall child care system.

**Functional Team Members:**

EEC Commissioner

Secretariat Human Resources Director

Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations

Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

Deputy Commissioner for Program Administration

General Counsel

Regional Directors

Commissioner’s Liaison

Senior COOP Official

EEC Program Manager

Director of Business Project Management

**Partners Outside EEC to Help with Function:**

Massachusetts Executive Office of Education (EOE)

Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)

MA CCRR Network

MA Family Child Care Systems

Office of Head Start, Head Start programs and MA Head Start Association Community Partnerships for Children (CPCs)

DCF

DTA

Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS) (if state computer systems have been affected)

MEMA

DMH

DPH

Landlords for EEC’s offices

Utility companies (e.g., if power, phones are down)

**Before an Emergency**

The Senior COOP Official, in conjunction with EEC Senior Management Team members, will ensure that all EEC staff is familiar with EEC’s Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Regional Directors will clarify with their staff members which roles they may be likely to assume in assessing EEC/key partner functionality.

**Following Emergency -- Steps to Implement Special Response**

*As soon as possible after the emergency:*

* If EEC’s Central office is impacted by the emergency, the Senior COOP Official will work with the Commissioner and other members of EEC’s Senior Management Team to identify any impacts on Boston-based staff and computer/phone systems – and what resources may be needed to address negative impacts. The key personnel of the EEC Central Office staff will relocate to the identified Emergency Relocation Site (ERS) in the Metro-Boston area or an alternative ERS. The Secretariat Human Resources Director will determine the availability of office space convenient to an employee’s home address. The ERS Official (Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations), as identified in the EEC COOP and the Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance will assist to address negative impacts, as needed. For example, EEC’s Associate Commissioner for Accounting and Contracts would report EEC’s needs to the Massachusetts Office of the Comptroller and Operational Services Division. Partners such as EOTSS may also be called upon to help with the assessment, and may be asked to help the EEC Program Manager or his/her designee to develop solutions. Regional offices affected by an emergency will follow similar procedures, with the Regional Director coordinating directly with the Senior COOP Official.
* EEC’s Senior Management Team and Regional Directors will activate phone call and text notification protocols to determine how EEC staff have been affected, what resources are needed to enable staff to resume operations, and any information EEC staff know about the status of partners in their areas.
* If EEC’s Central office are so severely impacted that Boston-based staff were unavailable to assume leadership roles in the immediate aftermath of the emergency, Regional Directors will assume primary leadership roles until Boston staff are available to reassume these responsibilities.
* If areas outside Boston are impacted, EEC’s Central Office will activate phone call and text notification protocols to determine how regional EEC staff have been affected, what resources are needed to enable regional staff to resume operations, and any information the regional staff know about the status of partners in their areas. At the request of the Senior COOP Official, key state agencies such as DTA and DCF will be contacted to determine the status of their local counterparts.
* At the request of EEC’s Commissioner or her/his designee, Community, Family Engagement and Program Monitoring Staff may contact key partners such as MA CCRR Network, MA Family Child Care Systems, Office of Head Start, Head Start programs and MA Head Start Association Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) to determine their status in impacted areas.
* The Senior COOP Official, in conjunction with the Commissioner’s Liaison and designated members of EEC’s Senior Management Team, will work with EOE, MEMA, DPH, and other state agencies as needed to collect information about the emergency, the geographic area involved, child care providers who may be at risk and/or impacted, and, if required, the number of children and adults who should be relocated.
* Child care providers in impacted area(s) will be alerted about possible relocation and will be told what key supplies and child records to gather (such as medications, a list of allergies, and parent/guardian contact information). EEC staff will be in contact with other emergency response personnel to determine whether town or local Emergency Management Coordinators are contacting child care programs. If so, EEC will ensure that emergency personnel have the latest information on the locations of child care programs, and will find out where emergency personnel are directing programs to relocate. EEC and its partners will assist providers in locating transportation, if needed. If emergency personnel are not contacting child care programs directly, EEC will find out from state or local emergency personnel where providers should relocate, if needed. EEC will enlist partners (such as the local CCRR and Family Child Care System) to assist in calling child care programs to alert them of the relocation, and to share information from emergency personnel on relocation sites. EEC and its partners will also assist providers in locating transportation, if needed. Regional Directors and Program Administration staff will be informed so that they will know what information is being communicated to providers.
* To the extent possible, EEC staff or its partners will work with child care providers throughout a relocation event to coordinate records on the location and status of children/adults who were evacuated. Information will be made available to parents as quickly as possible concerning where their children are and how/when the parents could pick up their children. EEC will keep partners or local emergency personnel informed of providers who have relocated with the affected children. Procedures will be established to ensure that children are released only to adults who have been authorized by each child’s parent/ guardian and that the names/contact information of these authorized persons is recorded and taken to the relocation/evacuation site.
* Depending on the nature of a relocation, Program Administration staff may work with DMH, EEC Early Childhood Mental Health grantees, and other appropriate agencies to offer mental health services to children who may have been traumatized by the evacuation.
* Assessments should be updated or repeated periodically until EEC and key partners have returned to normal operations. EEC’s Senior Coop Official and Senior Management Team will be provided with the latest information about the Department’s needs in order to develop appropriate responses.

**D. Assessment of Child Care Providers’ Damages and Needs**

*Identify child care facilities affected by the emergency/the extent of the damage.*

**Functional Team Members:**

EEC Commissioner

Secretariat Human Resources Director

Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations

Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

General Counsel

Regional Directors

Head Start State Collaboration Office

Commissioner’s Liaison

Senior COOP Official

EEC Program Manager

Contract and Procurement staff

All other EEC staff as necessary

1. **Partners Outside EEC to Help with Function** *(mostly in follow-up stage):*

Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)

MA CCRR Network

MA Family Child Care Systems

Office of Head Start

Community Partnerships for Children (CPCs)

Department of Children and Families (DCF)

Department of Youth Services (DYS)

Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)

Massachusetts Executive Office of Education (EOE)

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)

Department of Mental Health (DMH)

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

Department of Public Health (DPH)

Emergency Management Coordinators for local cities and towns

Red Cross

**Before an Emergency**

The Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations will clarify with Regional Directors which roles Licensing Staff, and other EEC staff, as required, may assume to assess the needs/damages of child care centers and homes.

**Following Emergency -- Steps to Implement Special Response**

* EEC’s Commissioner, in consultation with the Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations and the Senior COOP Official, will activate a needs assessment function of licensed child care programs and determine whether, given the emergency scenario, Regional or Central Office staff should take the lead.
* If the Regional staff is given the lead role:

* At the direction of the Regional Director, EEC Licensing staff will gather information about licensed child care providers in their area. Program Administration staff may contact EEC partners, such as CCRRs, CPCs, and Family Child Care Systems for further information about child care providers whom Licensing staff could not reach.
* Licensing staff will provide information gathered and, if applicable, information received from Program Administration staff, to their Licensing Supervisor(s) and Regional Director and indicate which child care programs may require additional follow-up.
* Regular updates will be provided to the Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations, the Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance, the Senior COOP Official, the Commissioner and the Commissioner’s Liaison.
* If the EEC Central Office is given the lead role:

* + A team of designated EEC staff in the Central Office will conduct an initial survey of child care programs in affected area(s) by making phone calls to licensed child care providers.
  + A designated team member will identify child care programs for which information is incomplete and asks Regional Licensing staff and/or Contract and Procurement staff to complete the missing information.
  + As requested by their supervisors, Licensing staff and Contract and Procurement staff will track down as much information as they can (e.g., contacting EEC partners such as CCRRs, CPCs, Family Child Care Systems, Head Start programs; visiting programs that could not be reached by phone; etc.) to complete the missing information.
* The EEC Program Manager or his/her designee will update a database or create a spreadsheet to update the status of affected programs as the information from various sources is consolidated.

* The Regional Directors or, if appropriate, a designee from the Central Office team, will share the data gathered through the needs assessment with the Senior COOP Official, the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations, the Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance, the Commissioner’s Liaison, and the Senior Management Team. These individuals will then use this information to help determine what types of emergency responses may be needed.
* Assessments should be updated or repeated periodically until most, if not all, licensed child care providers have resumed normal operations. EEC may call upon state agencies to help with follow-up efforts.

1. **Facilitating the Development of Temporary Child Care**

*Work with partners to ensure that healthy and safe child care arrangements are accessible to meet the needs of children and parents.*

Definition of “temporary child care” for the purposes of this plan: organized supervision of unrelated children that may ordinarily be subject to child care licensure, but due to the severity of an emergency, may be allowed to operate without a license for a limited amount of time. Temporary child care arrangements would be allowed to protect the health and safety of children, as well as promote families’ efforts to recover from the emergency.

**Functional Team Members:**

EEC Commissioner

Human Resources Director

Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations

Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

Deputy Commissioner for Program Administration

General Counsel

Director of Caseload and Financial Assistance

Workforce Development Specialist

Regional Directors

Licensing Staff

Commissioner’s Liaison

Senior COOP Official

Director of Business Project Management

Contracts and Procurement staff

All other EEC staff as necessary

**Partners Outside EEC to Help with Function:**

Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)

MA CCRR Network

MA Family Child Care Systems

Office of Head Start

Community Partnerships for Children (CPCs)

Department of Children and Families (DCF)

Department of Youth Services (DYS)

Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)

Massachusetts Executive Office of Education (EOE)

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)

Department of Mental Health (DMH)

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

Department of Public Health (DPH)

Emergency Management Coordinators for local cities and towns

Red Cross

Licensed childcare facilities

**Before an Emergency**

As a special emergency preparedness activity, EEC works with the partners listed above to make them aware of conditions under which temporary child care may be allowed and encouraged, such as:

* Existing licensed child care providers are temporarily or permanently unable to continue providing services. For example, the overall supply of child care in the community is no longer sufficient, as determined through the needs assessment (*See* Section D) or through other sources;
* Families need child care while they are seeking emergency assistance or living in temporary housing/shelters so they can focus on recovering from the emergency and their children can get special attention; and/or
* Emergency workers with young children need child care to be able to report for duty.

**Following Emergency -- Steps to Implement Special Response**

* The EEC Commissioner, in conjunction with the Deputy Commissioner of Field Operations, EEC’s General Counsel, and Senior Management Team members, will decide whether temporary child care arrangements are needed to supplement existing capacity or make child care more easily accessible to families affected by the emergency or assisting with the relief effort. If temporary child care arrangements are needed, the Commissioner will determine the appropriate scope of EEC involvement.
* Using information on providers’ and families’ needs gathered by Regional Directors, Licensing Staff, Program Administration staff, local CCRRs, CPCs, and community partners, the Commissioner will work with the Deputy Commissioner of Field Operations, EEC’s General Counsel, the Director of Educator/Provider Support, the Director for Caseload and Financial Assistance, and Senior Management Team members to determine what kind of temporary child care arrangements may be allowed and encouraged, with due consideration given to EEC’s “emergency closure” policies. *Examples* may include:
  + expanding the license capacity of existing providers/programs;
  + utilization of staff from programs temporarily closed;
  + temporary child care arrangements set up through the Office of Head Start or other partners;[[1]](#footnote-1) and/or
  + utilization of approved volunteers. [[2]](#footnote-2)
* EEC’s Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, Associate Commissioner for Contracts and Accounting, Associate Commissioner for Finance, and the Director of Caseload and Financial Assistance will determine whether funds can be made available to help local partners finance temporary care arrangements.
* If an emergency function is approved for the development of temporary child care arrangements, EEC’s Contracts and Procurement staff, in consultation with the Licensing staff, may enroll temporary or new providers into the Subsidized Child Care Program or may temporarily expand the capacity of current subsidized child care providers. Temporary child care providers may be approved for a period of up to four months.
* The Workforce Development Specialist may advise on strategies for local partners to recruit trained child care staff and screen volunteers who would assist staff.
* The Commissioner or her/his designee will convene team meetings and work with partners as needed to facilitate local agencies’ development of temporary care arrangements. EEC Central Office may maintain a role in the development of temporary child care, serving primarily to communicate with partners about child care needs and resources. Once local partners are in communication with each other and understand what their parameters/possible resources are, EEC may be involved in periodic communication to learn about the outcomes of temporary child care.

**F. Special Licensing Policies and Reestablishment of Safe/Healthy Care**

*Provide flexibility for child care programs meeting basic health and safety standards to reopen or expand capacity.*

**Functional Team Members:**

Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations

General Counsel

Regional Directors

EEC Licensing Staff

**Partners Outside of EEC to Help with Function:**

MA CCRR Network

MA Family Child Care Systems

Local building, fire and environmental health inspectors

**Before an Emergency**

As a special emergency preparedness activity, EEC may work with the partners listed above to make them aware of conditions under which special licensing policies may be allowed and encouraged.

**Following Disaster - Steps to Implement Special Response**

* Activation of special licensing policies occurs on a case-by-case basis. EEC Regional Directors have the authority to approve special licensing policies pursuant to a waiver of compliance in emergencies.
* EEC Licensors provide technical assistance to licensed providers who sustain damages. Licensors, in conjunction with EEC Licensing Supervisors, help providers whose facilities were damaged by disaster determine whether they can continue operating, must temporarily close/reduce enrollment, or relocate. If a provider decides to relocate, Licensors may help the provider reestablish licensed care on a temporary basis in a new, approved location.
* If local child care is impacted by the disaster and EEC decides that it is necessary to expand capacity, Licensors may provide technical assistance to any of the largely-affected providers who are willing to provide care for additional children.
* Licensors, with communications assistance from EEC, may make it known that EEC can assist local organizations interested in providing temporary child care. Notification should be made to EEC’s BRC managers to ensure the BRCs for temporary child care staff are expedited. Licensors, in conjunction with EEC Licensing Supervisors, who learn of temporary child care providers should make them aware of EEC emergency child care reimbursement policies.
* If communication with providers or potential temporary care providers is interrupted, EEC may work with partners to send an alert to emergency management and through the media on how EEC can provide assistance.

**G. Continuing the Reimbursement for Subsidized Child Care**

*Ensure that child care providers who offer subsidized child care are reimbursed as quickly as possible.*

**Functional Team Members:**

EEC Commissioner

Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

Associate Commissioner for Accounting and Contracts

General Counsel

EEC Program Manager

Director of Business Project Management

Associate Commissioner for Finance

All other EEC staff as necessary

**Partners Outside of EEC to Help with Function:**

MA CCRR Network

Contracted Providers

Family Child Care (FCC) Systems

Office of the State Comptroller (OSC)

Operational Services Division (OSD)

Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS)

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

**Steps to Re-establish Function**

* On the first day of disruption, the EEC Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance, EEC Program Manager or his/her designee, the Associate Commissioner for Accounting and Contracts, the Associate Commissioner for Finance, and the Director of Caseload and Financial Assistance will meet to determine the extent and estimated duration of the disruption.
* If EEC’s subsidized child care reimbursement system (CCFA) is down and it is not anticipated that the system can be reestablished within two weeks, EEC’s Commissioner, in conjunction with the Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Finance and the Associate Commissioner of Accounting and Contracts, will implement an interim payment procedure after consultation with the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC). EEC has a mechanism in place known as the “Alternative Payment Method” (APM) that can process payments to Contract Providers and CCRRs outside of CCFA through the MMARS system. The APM method assures payments to the field without delay so Child Care Providers can continue to deliver child care services.
* Once it is determined that CCFA is not functional and operational, EEC’s Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance and the Associate Commissioner for Accounting and Contracts will contact CCRRs and Contract Providers to make them aware of the alternative payment process. All payments processed through APM will be reconciled when CCFA is operational. EEC will work with Contract Providers and CCRRs to reconcile payments so that prior to the end of the fiscal year, payment for expenditures equal services delivered.
* In the event that phone, facsimile, and email communications are disrupted, EEC Licensing staff and Program Administration staff may be asked to make contact with CCRRs and Contract Providers on-site if possible.

**Steps to Continue Individual Provider Reimbursement**

* In the event that a Child Care provider is required to close temporarily due to an emergency as ordered by state or local officials (i.e. in the event of pandemic influenza or gas explosions), the provider must immediately notify its regional EEC licensor. Before making a decision to close a program voluntarily (as opposed to an emergency situation in which there is no choice), all providers must contact EEC before making the decision and obtain technical assistance and approval from their regional EEC licensor.
* Child Care Providers who temporarily close their programs either as required by state/local officials or voluntarily, and have received EEC approval, shall be reimbursed for children enrolled in their program through any EEC financial assistance program during the temporary emergency closure in accordance with EEC policy and daily reimbursement rate less any parent fees.

Child Care Providers are expected to follow EEC reimbursement policy for emergency closures.

* **H. Emergency Access to EEC Financial Assistance**

*Identify the needs of families currently receiving subsidy services, and implement procedures to process new applications for families needing assistance as a result of the emergency.*

**Functional Team Members:**

EEC Commissioner

General Counsel

Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

Associate Commissioner for Finance

Associate Commissioner for Contracts and Accounting

Director for Caseload and Financial Assistance

Regional Directors

Financial Assistance Staff

Commissioner’s Liaison

EEC Program Manager

Director of Business Project Management

Contract and Procurement staff

All other EEC staff as necessary

**Partners Outside EEC to Help with Function** :

MA CCRR Network

MA Family Child Care Systems

Office of Head Start, Head Start programs and MA Head Start Association

Department of Children and Families (DCF)

Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)

Office of the State Comptroller (CTR)

Operational Services Division (OSD)

Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS)

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Licensed child care providers and programs

**Following Emergency -- Steps to Implement Special Response**

* Based on information provided by EEC staff, partners, or statewide disaster reports, EEC’s Commissioner, in consultation with the Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance, General Counsel and the Senior Management Team, will determine what emergency child care procedures are needed. EEC’s Associate Commissioner for Contracts and Accounting and Associate Commissioner for Finance will verify that state funding is available for emergency child care. (EEC’s Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration might seek assistance from the Child Care Development Fund, the Office of the Comptroller, and/or the Operational Services Division to quickly identify funding that may be used for emergency child care.)
* After confirming that funding exists and obtaining permission from the Commissioner and/or the Senior Management Team to activate emergency child care procedures, the Associate Commissioner for Contracts and Accounting and the Director of Caseload and Financial Assistance will notify CCRRs and Contract Providers that emergency child care procedures have been activated. Regional Directors will also be notified and will inform regional EEC staff of the activation.
* Regional offices in impacted areas will make staff available to process requests for assistance, if deemed necessary. If shelters or emergency community centers are set up following the disaster, regional office staff are encouraged to inform families that emergency child care exists and to direct families to the appropriate partner for processing. (Note that emergency child care may be offered elsewhere in the community).[[3]](#footnote-3)

* EEC staff will contact DTA and DCF as well as CCRRs and Head Start, in affected areas to determine a region’s situation (needs of families, number of children needing care, etc.).

**V. GENERAL SUPPORT/EEC ASSISTANCE WITH PARTNER-LED EFFORTS**

To help EEC address the child care needs of disaster-stricken children and families without duplicating other agencies' efforts, the Department has (with the input of partners) identified collaborative activities that could be carried out in the event of a future disaster. The following are services that would generally be led by other agencies, or services that involve especially flexible responses by EEC and therefore do not lend themselves to the step-by-step descriptions included in section IV of this plan.

**A**. **General Health and Human Services Updates** - Mass 2-1-1- is an easy to remember telephone number that connects caller to information about critical health and human services available in their community. It serves as a resource for finding government benefits and services, nonprofit organizations, donation programs, and other local resources. In addition, during times of crisis, Mass 2-1-1 responds immediately to field calls and direct callers to services most appropriate for their needs.

**B**. **Assistance to parents so they know where to find child care** - Local CCRR agencies and Family Child Care Systems. As resources and communications allow, EEC will maintain information on child care programs that are operational (including relocated, new, and temporary child care) in the disaster area. Partners may help with outreach.

**C. Inspections required for child care facilities to reopen**— EEC Licensors and local building and fire inspectors. EEC Licensors will help owners/directors of damaged child care centers and family child care homes work with these partners to get the necessary inspections/address hazards before reopening.

**D. Donation collection/distribution** *-* EEC staff via the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), CCRRs and Family Child Care Systems. EEC will coordinate its efforts with agencies such as these to share its information on child care providers' needs and find additional resources for the providers who have been impacted by the disaster.

**E. Efforts to help children and their providers cope with disaster-related stresses –**EEC Early Childhood Mental Health grantees and EEC staff who have received traumatic incident response training to provide psychological first aid following a disaster will be available to respond and offer referral options for those families and providers who need continued support.

1. Notification should be made to EEC’s BRC managers to ensure the BRCs for temporary child care staff are expedited. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Notification should be made to EEC’s BRC managers to ensure the BRCs for volunteers are expedited. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Notification should be made to EEC’s BRC managers to ensure the BRCs for temporary child care staff and/or volunteers are expedited. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)