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Policy Title:	Emergency Preparedness in Child Care Programs
Policy Number:	FO-26-01
Release Date:	March 4, 2026
Effective Date:	May 1, 2026
Policy Link:	Link to full policy document

OVERVIEW

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) has updated the requirements for child care programs' emergency preparedness plans. This policy describes the new content and implementation/maintenance steps required for these plans. The emergency planning requirements outlined in this policy are designed to help child care programs prepare in advance so they can keep children and staff as safe as possible in the event of natural or man-made disasters.

As of April 1, 2026, child care programs may begin submitting their updated emergency preparedness plans via LEAD, EEC's online licensing portal. Beginning May 1, 2026, programs must submit their updated emergency preparedness plan prior to their license renewal date and new programs must do so prior to licensure and enrolling children.

Programs must address each of the 10 requirement areas detailed in the Emergency Preparedness in Child Care Programs Policy individually in their LEAD submission. In addition, they will have the option to upload their emergency preparedness plan in its entirety. Programs should be prepared to discuss their emergency preparedness plan with EEC staff during program visits.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all licensed and funded child care programs.

KEY TOPICS

Child care programs must create and maintain an emergency preparedness plan with information that addresses each of the following requirements (those marked with " * " contain new requirement content that was not present in previous EEC Emergency Contingency Plan policies):

1. Communication with Authorities*
2. Communication and Reunification with Families*
3. Power, Heat, and Water*
4. Missing Child
5. Shelter in Place
6. Lockdown
7. Evacuation
8. Relocation*
9. Immediate Continuity of Operations*
10. Staff Training and Practice Drills*

The Emergency Preparedness Policy also includes new sections that support the implementation of these plan requirements:

- Emergency Preparedness Plan Training
- Practice Drills
- Posting and Notification
- Submission to EEC

OBSOLETE

- EEC Policy: Emergency Contingency Plans (2014)
- EEC Policy: Emergency Contingency Plans for Funded Programs (2019)