

## Emergency Preparedness

Emergency preparedness is all about being ready at all times to deal with the unexpected and keeping children safe.

Emergencies can cause a disruption in your child care. Having a written plan in place in an emergency situation can help you and your child care staff meet the health and safety needs of the children. A comprehensive emergency preparedness plan addresses

- Natural disasters, such as hurricanes, droughts, tornadoes, floods, fires, blizzards, earthquakes, ice storms, and disruptions in gas, electrical, water, and telephone service.
- Food recall - an action taken by a manufacturer or distributor to remove a food product from the market for health concerns.
- Food defense - protecting food from intentional contamination.

**Use the following steps to write an emergency preparedness plan for your child care center or family day care home.**

1. Identify potentially hazardous events that may impact your program, including natural disasters, food recall, and food defense. Identify how these events may impact your program.
2. Identify contacts and related resources you may need to respond effectively to emergencies. Keep staff members' contact information on file.
3. Identify who has keys to the building, storage units, or equipment that is locked.
4. Develop policies and standard operating procedures that tell you what to do in an emergency situation for your emergency preparedness plan. Consider addressing the items listed below and adding others to meet the needs of your program.



- a. Handling an electrical outage
- b. Handling a gas utilities disruption
- c. Dealing with a water supply disruption
- d. Handling foods in malfunctioning freezers
- e. Meeting special needs in emergencies (for example, breast fed babies or children with food allergies)
- f. Handling a food recall
- g. Handling a food defense crisis



# *Mealtime Memo* FOR CHILD CARE

5. Identify who will implement the emergency preparedness plan.
6. Develop emergency menus and a three-day inventory of food, water, and other basic supplies. For example, maintain a supply of items such as bottled water (one gallon for each person per day), non-perishable and canned foods that do not require cooking, flashlights, bleach for sanitizing, and similar staples. For more information or additional guidance on building a disaster supply kit, visit the American Red Cross' website at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).

Train staff on how to use your emergency preparedness plan. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the emergency preparedness plan and update as needed.

## **Contact List**

One of the first steps in planning for emergencies is to write a contact list. Include all of the people you would need to contact in an emergency situation. Some examples include:

- Child care director
- Child care employees
- Parents of children in your care
- Substitute child care employees
- Local public health contacts, such as sanitation and fire and rescue department representatives
- Local police department
- Utility emergency contacts
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) emergency contacts (state-level)
- Community relief organization contacts
- Local cleaning and chemical suppliers

## **Emergency Menus**

Another important step in emergency planning is to write emergency menus and have non-perishable food on hand to use in emergency situations. A sample emergency menu is included in this *Mealtime Memo*.

When planning emergency menus, think about

- foods that you generally have on hand.
- the number of meals that can be prepared from the emergency inventory.
- availability of bottled water.
- documentation of food and supplies used and damaged food or supplies to receive reimbursement.
- shelf stability of goods and supplies.



# Mealtime Memo FOR CHILD CARE

## Emergency Menus for Breakfast

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cereal variety Fruit juice Milk, from non-fat dry	Cheese sandwich Canned apricots Milk, from non-fat dry	Cereal bar Bottled fruit juice Milk, from non-fat dry	Cereal variety Sliced apples Milk, from non-fat dry	Peanut butter and jelly sandwich <sup>1</sup> Canned mixed fruit Milk, from non-fat dry

## Emergency Menus for Lunch

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Canned ham sandwich Canned peas Canned peaches Milk, from non-fat dry	Peanut butter and banana sandwich <sup>1</sup> Canned green beans Milk, from non-fat dry	Tuna sandwich Canned tomatoes Canned pineapple Milk, from non-fat dry	Pork and beans Canned pears Crackers Milk, from non-fat dry	Chicken salad sandwich using canned chicken Canned carrots Canned pears Milk, from non-fat dry

## Emergency Menus for Snack

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Yogurt Canned apricots Water <sup>2</sup>	Graham crackers Canned peaches Water <sup>2</sup>	Apple slices String cheese Water <sup>2</sup>	Crackers with peanut butter <sup>1</sup> Water <sup>2</sup>	Vanilla wafers Milk, from non-fat dry Water <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sunflower butter can be substituted for peanut butter.

<sup>2</sup>Water is suggested as a beverage for all snacks even when other beverages are offered to encourage children to drink water.

Consider the following tips for preparing emergency meals.

- Use stock on hand first, starting with refrigerated and frozen foods.
- If electrical power is lost, use items in refrigerators and freezers that do not pose a food hazard. It is important to have a supply of foods that can be prepared without electricity in the event that power is lost and a generator is not available. Make menu substitutions when necessary to replace cooked foods with shelf-stable products. Remember to check the new menu against meal pattern requirements. Be sure there is a manual can opener available.
- When hot water is not available, use disposables.
- Remember to have a supply of water available to use for cooking, drinking, and sanitation needs.

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## Sources

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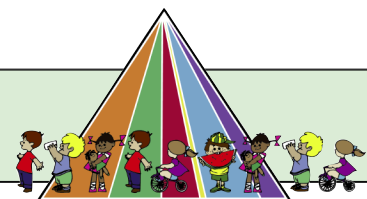
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