

Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program Policy Manual
Attachment B Emergency Procedures

**PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE
ASSISTANCE**

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I. OVERVIEW

Childcare is a critical part of the community infrastructure that enables families to rebuild and return to work after a state or federal declared disaster. The Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) has developed a disaster plan to support childcare providers and give families safe and healthy alternatives for the care of their children during and after disasters. The following information was developed to instruct staff regarding emergency preparedness, emergency management, and disaster recovery. DCDEE makes the decision to activate the following emergency procedures if conditions are severe enough and if funding permits. Emergency childcare is considered as continued subsidy assistance for families rendered by a disaster.

The development of emergency childcare helps to establish:

1. keeping children safe during and immediately after disasters;
2. expanding capacity/access to childcare;
3. enabling emergency workers with children to work.

Conditions include natural and man-made disasters, such as fire, tornado, hurricanes, flood, power failures, chemical spills, bomb threats earthquakes, blizzards, nuclear disasters or a dangerous person or persons in the vicinity.

A. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Annually Review and Update Disaster Plan

The DCDEE Disaster Plan will be reviewed annually. The DCDEE Disaster Coordinator will oversee the annual review of the plan collaborating with DCDEE Section and Regional Teams with input from partner agencies. After the DCDEE EDT decides on changes, the Administration Section will finalize the plan and make the revised version available on DCDEE website.

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II. FUNDING

Emergency subsidized childcare occurs when funding is received and available. When DCDEE has determined that emergency subsidized childcare assistance (SCCA) will be offered, guidance and instructions will be given to the local DSS/LPA that is affected.

III. APPLICANT/RECIPIENT ELIGIBILITY

Should an applicant/recipient request emergency childcare, childcare assistance can be provided to families affected by an emergency for up to four months without regard to income and without a parental fee. In certain circumstances, emergency services may be provided beyond the four (4) month period. Refer to [Section II.B](#) below.

A family is affected by the emergency when they have suffered loss due to property damage or loss of income as a result of damage to their work facility. The DSS/LPA may accept the applicant/recipient's statement that they were affected by the emergency, unless questionable. If the applicant/recipient's statement is questionable, contact the Local Emergency Management Coordinator or other government agencies for verification and document that the family was affected in the comment section of the Emergency Child Care Voucher ([DCDEE-0447](#)).

A. Child Care Voucher Information

In situations where individuals need emergency subsidized childcare, the DSS/LPA should enter an application into NC FAST if the DSS/LPA has access to NC FAST. If the DSS/LPA does not have access to NC FAST, the application for Child Care Assistance ([DCDEE-0456](#)) can be completed. If the DSS/LPA does not have access to NC FAST or the, [DCDEE-0456](#) an application does not have to be completed.

Once determined eligible, a childcare voucher should be issued via NC FAST if the DSS/LPA and chosen childcare provider both have access to NC FAST. If there is no access to NC FAST, the

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Emergency Child Care Voucher (DCDEE-0447) may be substituted.

The DSS/LPA should develop a temporary voucher by hand if there is no access to NC FAST, or the Emergency Voucher (DCDEE-0447). The information noted below must be obtained from the applicant/recipient or responsible adult, the agency and the facility's information must be recorded on the temporary voucher.

1. Information needed from the applicant/recipient or responsible adult includes:
 - a. Child's name;
 - b. Age of child and the date of birth, if available;
 - c. Applicant/Recipient's or responsible adult's name and address (must indicate if it is a relative's or friend's address);
 - d. Telephone number (must indicate if it is a relative's or friend's telephone number);
 - e. Eligibility period (up to four (4) months);
 - f. Hours that care is needed (the Division of Child Development and Early Education will allow reimbursement for evening, overnight, and weekend care, if needed); and
 - g. Signature of the applicant/recipient and date the applicant/recipient signed the voucher.
2. Agency information needed includes:
 - a. The county where the agency is located;
 - b. The date the form is completed;

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c. The family case number will be shown as EMERGENCY;

d. The assigned voucher number;

A log of the vouchers issued must be maintained;

e. The FEMA claim number, if available;

Every family may not have a FEMA claim number;

f. The Child ID Number will be assigned later;

g. The Category Code is (without regard to income) and there is no parental fee;

h. The Fund Source is Emergency if funding is available;

i. The Need Reason is “Disaster Assistance” with an indication of the level of care;

j. The income and family size are not needed.

If using a temporary voucher, the agency representative must print their name, sign, and date the form after it has been signed by the recipient/responsible adult. The attendance rosters must be completed and submitted through NC FAST or by hand by the agency or the operator of the childcare facility.

In an emergency the facility can exceed the group size provided the staff/child ratios are maintained.

3. If there is a handwritten voucher, the following information about the facility must be included on the emergency voucher.

a. Facility name;

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- b. Facility telephone number;
- d. Facility ID number or license number, if assigned;
- e. County in which care is given;
- f. Address of the site where the child is receiving care;
- g. Owner or sponsor of the program;
- h. Telephone number of the owner or sponsor of the childcare program;
- i. Mailing address for payment;
- j. Signature of the person accepting the voucher and their name in print;
- k. Enrollment date of the child.

In the event of an emergency, all emergency childcare vouchers and attendance rosters must be completed and submitted to the DSS/LPA.

B. Procedure for Extending Emergency Care

In some situations, there may still be a justifiable need for emergency subsidized childcare beyond the four (4) month period. These cases must be approved for extended emergency care by the DSS/LPA and by the Subsidy Services Consultant or DCDEE staff in the Subsidy Services Section. The following procedures apply:

1. The local DSS/LPA must verify circumstances if a child still needs care after four (4) months of emergency childcare;
2. The applicant/recipient or responsible adult must apply for extended emergency care;
3. The DSS/LPA should document in the case narrative a brief description of the need for, and length of extended emergency subsidized childcare assistance.
5. If there is a handwritten voucher, the DSS/LPA must update the voucher stating the reason for the extension.

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IV. CHILD CARE PROVIDER PARTICIPATION

A. Licensed Programs Currently Enrolled that are Affected by a Disaster

If a licensed childcare facility is already enrolled in the SCCA Program but is not operational due to flooding or fire from hurricane, adverse weather or other disasters, the childcare facility may operate temporarily in another location. The following procedures will apply:

1. A Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) Regulatory Services Section Licensing Consultant must make an on-site visit to the temporary location.
2. Programs providing emergency childcare must have at least one (1) qualified childcare staff person present at the location. Other staff may be temporary. Staff/child ratios must be maintained.
3. If DCDEE staff receives information that a licensed program is operating in a temporary location, every effort will be made to inform the DSS/LPA so they will be aware of the site where the children are being served.
4. If the DSS/LPA receives information that a licensed childcare facility is operating in a temporary location, then the DSS/LPA should immediately inform the local Regulatory Services Section Licensing Consultant or staff at the DCDEE office in Raleigh. Once DCDEE obtains the address of the site where the care is being provided, they will arrange for an on-site visit of the program to be conducted.
4. If a childcare facility temporarily relocates to another county, they will not have to re-enroll unless a new family requests

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assistance for their child in the new county. If a licensed facility is operating in a temporary location, the facility should complete enrollment in the NC FAST Provider Portal and complete enrollment with the state's payment vendor. After the first 45 days, the facility receives a new ID number, and a temporary license is issued. The temporary license is valid for 6 months. After six months the expectation would be for a facility to transition to a star rated license.

5. A Child Care Voucher must be issued for each child. Refer to section A. regarding Child Care Voucher Information.
6. Accurate attendance must be kept. Attendance should be entered into the NC FAST Provider Portal if the childcare facility has access. If the childcare facility does not have access to the NC FAST Provider Portal, the DSS/LPA should make a supply of attendance rosters available to the childcare operator.

B. Enrolling Licensed Programs on a Temporary Basis

If a 3-, 4-, or 5-star licensed childcare facility is not already enrolled in the SCCA Program, the childcare operator must enroll through the NC FAST Provider Portal in order to receive payment. If they do not have access to the Provider Portal, provider enrollment applications can be completed via telephone call with the local DSS/LPA or Raleigh-based DCDEE staff. A Subsidized Child Care Assistance (SCCA) Approval Notice must be generated. The following procedures will apply:

1. The payment rate will be the private rate, or county market rate whichever is lower;
2. Payment will be made through Fund Source Emergency;
3. A Child Care Voucher must be completed for each child. Refer to section A. regarding Child Care Voucher Information.

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4. Accurate attendance must be kept. The DSS/LPA should make a supply of attendance rosters available to the childcare operator.

In the event of an emergency, all emergency childcare vouchers and attendance rosters must be completed and submitted to the DSS/LPA.

C. Child Care Payments

In the event of an emergency, and NC FAST is not available, childcare facilities that are due payments for services rendered must complete a W-9 and submit the W-9 along with their attendance rosters to the local DSS/LPA. The DSS/LPA will calculate the payment due to the childcare facility and submit the request to DCDEE. Once DCDEE receives the request, the request will be forwarded to the Department of Health and Human Services Comptroller's office where the payment will be issued.

If the DSS/LPA is unable to calculate payments for the rosters submitted, then childcare facilities must complete a W-9 and submit the W-9 along with their attendance rosters to DCDEE. Once DCDEE receives the request, the request will be forwarded to the Department of Health and Human Services Comptroller's office where the payment will be issued.

D. Subsidy Services Disaster Response

1. Continuing the Reimbursement for Subsidized Child Care Assistance ensures that childcare facilities who offer subsidized childcare are reimbursed as quickly as possible.
 - a. The Subsidy section evaluates assessment of DSS/LPAs to determine scope of impact, delay, or any disruptions to subsidized childcare system (NC FAST) and processes.

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- b. If NC FAST is down throughout the state and it is not anticipated that the system can be reestablished within two weeks, the DCDEE Subsidy section and DCDEE Executive team will identify procedures for counties and childcare facilities to follow in the interim. Subsidy Services staff members contact DSS/LPAs to make them aware of new procedures. If phone, fax, and email communications are disrupted, Subsidy Services Consultants will make contact on-site if it is possible to travel.
 - c. If NC FAST experiences only partial disruption and the Regulatory System database is not affected, the subsidy on team continues automated procedures with unaffected counties. The team and DSS/LPAs follow the procedures for manual operation (described above) in the counties that were affected by the disaster.
2. Child Care Subsidy Emergency Procedures (“Emergency Child Care”)
 - a. Based on assessments by DCDEE staff, partners, or statewide disaster reports, the DCDEE Director or the Director’s designee determines that emergency childcare procedures are needed. DCDEE Budget Officer or the alternate verifies that state funding is available for emergency childcare. (The DCDEE Assistant Director of Administration, Budget Officer, or another member of DCDEE Executive Team might seek assistance from the DHHS Division of Budget, Planning, and Analysis, other related offices or DHHS executive staff to quickly identify funding that may be used for emergency childcare.)
 - b. After confirming that funding exists and obtaining permission from the DCDEE Director and/or DCDEE Executive Team to activate emergency childcare procedures, the emergency child care disaster response team leader (with the help of the team)

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- notifies DSS/LPA staff that the emergency child care procedures as defined in Appendix 7 or in the Subsidy Child Care Services Manual Appendix D have been activated.
- c. DSS/LPAs in affected areas will have staff available to take calls and/or see families to process requests for assistance, in accordance with the Division of Social Services Disaster Plan. If shelters or Disaster Application Centers are set up following the disaster, DSS/LPAs are encouraged to go on-site to inform and enroll families in emergency childcare. (Note that emergency childcare may be offered elsewhere in the community.)
 - d. DCDEE staff will contact the Division of Social Services (DSS) or individual LPAs in affected areas to determine the county's situation (needs of families, number of children needing care, etc.) and identify a contact person/ information for the DSS/LPA. (Particularly for counties with severe damage, DSS/LPAs may have to re-assign staff or move to different locations).
 - e. The Division will also let all DSS/LPAs know who their primary contact with DCDEE will be and try to funnel information through that person to the extent possible. Depending on the disaster scenario, the DCDEE contact person could be a Raleigh-based or regional DCDEE Subsidy Services staff member.
 - f. The DSS/LPA will follow the instructions found in DCDEE's Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program Manual Appendix D, "Procedures for Emergency Subsidized Child Care." These procedures outline an initial eligibility period of four months for families needing emergency childcare. If extenuating circumstances continue beyond the four months, these families may be approved for extended emergency childcare.
3. Identify the needs of families currently receiving subsidy services and implement procedures to process new applications for families needing assistance due to emergency or disaster.

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- a. Assistance to families so they know where to find childcare – NC Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Council, local CCR&R agencies, departments of social services/other local purchasing agencies, and DCDEE (Regulatory and Subsidy Services Sections). As resources and communications allow, DCDEE will maintain information on childcare facilities that are operational (including relocated, new and temporary child care) in the disaster area. Partners may help with outreach.
- b. Inspections required for childcare facilities to reopen— Environmental health consultants (DENR – Division of Environmental Health), local building inspectors, and local fire inspectors. DCDEE Licensing Consultants will help owners/directors of damaged childcare facilities work with these partners to get the necessary inspections and address hazards before reopening.
- c. General assistance to regulated childcare programs (childcare centers and family child care homes) – DCDEE Licensing Consultants; local CCR&Rs and Smart Start partnerships (with support from the NC CCR&R Council and the NC Partnership for Children); DCDEE Subsidy Services Consultants; and for school-age care programs that have chosen to be licensed additional resources are 4-H Youth Development and the North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs. Needs and agency roles will vary depending on the disaster.
- d. General assistance to license-exempt childcare providers (including temporary care arrangements) – DCDEE Subsidy Services Consultants; local CCR&Rs and Smart Start partnerships (with support from the NC CCR&R Council and the NC Partnership for Children); 4-H Youth Development. Needs and agency roles will vary depending on the disaster.

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V. DCDEE SERT ROLES AND DISASTER RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

DCDEE

SERT has centered disaster planning and planned response activities around the following anticipated disaster roles: Communication, Assessments, Regulatory, and Subsidy. DCDEE will undertake the following actions to fulfill the Division's role in supporting childcare providers and providing families with safe and healthy alternatives for childcare during and after disasters or emergencies.

A. Communications

- Disseminate emergency preparedness information to childcare providers and partners.
- Disseminate information to help childcare providers in areas affected by a disaster.
- Collaborate with key partners (Appendix 4) and facilitate information about Emergency Child Care and other types of assistance and resources to parents and providers in affected areas.
- Communicate known FEMA assistance programs and FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers
- Coordinate assessments of operating status and damages of providers and partnerships.
- Collect and share information on response/recovery efforts with DCDEE partners (act as a central clearinghouse to reduce the chance of duplication).
- Ensure that childcare providers, the public, and partners are aware of DCDEE and other agencies' assistance.
- Facilitate communication among partner agencies to improve collaboration and assistance.

1. The DCDEE Director's Office takes the lead in preparing and reviewing press releases, disaster updates, and other written communications regarding the disaster. DCDEE SERT

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2. Coordinator and DCDEE regulatory regional teams will work closely with DCDEE Executive Team on all perceived communications needs.
3. DCDEE Disaster Coordinator coordinates with DCDEE Executive Team to develop information on preparedness and disaster resources to disseminate to DCDEE staff, partners, childcare providers, and families in preparation for emergencies.
4. DCDEE Disaster Coordinator and Executive Team develop/collect information to share with DCDEE home based staff and providers specific to their geographical location. Types of information that may be shared includes event specific Emergency Preparedness reminders/instructions, location of evacuation shelters, information added to website, plans for continued subsidy payments and investigations of maltreatment, potential federal and state resource information.
5. The DCDEE Executive Team will coordinate with DHHS's SERT Coordinator and Secretary's Office to help disseminate information via media outlets in the affected areas.
6. The Administration Section provides updates for DCDEE's web site <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/> under Provider/Provider Resources/Emergency Preparedness tab to include pertinent and specific event preparedness information that needs to be disseminated to partners and providers.
7. Regulatory Regional Teams, Managers and staff serve as the funnel for general information between the local and state levels, and among regions. (DCDEE Regulatory Regional Managers communicate with home-based staff, Assistant Director of Regulatory, providers and local partners.)
8. Subsidy Services and Regulatory Services' home-based staff work closely with local partners to disseminate information to childcare providers and families regarding local relief/recovery efforts.
9. Share information about the plan with their local counterparts so that all local childcare contacts are familiar with the disaster

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plan and their roles. (For example, the CCR&R contact for a regional team will be responsible for sharing information with all other CCR&Rs in the region.)

10. Relocation communication: The Division does not have the authority to require childcare providers to relocate children, but will assist providers, parents, and emergency personnel as needed. Childcare programs are required to have a plan for relocating and reunification of children as part of their Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan as required by Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .0607 and .1714.

The Division recommends that providers designate in advance the site where children would be relocated, periodically notify parents of this relocation site, and have a plan for safely transporting the children. Providers are expected to follow instructions from local authorities regarding when to relocate the children.

DCDEE will work to develop and source new partners specializing in disaster response along with known partners. DCDEE will ask partners to assist DCDEE with communication and assessment efforts and will in turn seek opportunities to make partners' activities known to childcare providers and families.

DCDEE will work with the NC Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) network, NC Partnership for Children (NCPC), local Departments of Social Services (DSS), State and local health agencies, federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and potentially other sourced partners to determine what information, capabilities, or resources that are related to their disaster efforts should be disseminated to providers.

Regional staff should be aware of local emergency manager/coordinators and provide input and awareness for counties in the development of local DCDEE Executive Team plans ensure county plans address the need for safe care of children throughout the response and recovery phases of a disaster.

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VI. Recovery/DCDEE Assistance with Partner-Led Efforts

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

Donation Collection/Distribution – DCDEE staff via the State Emergency Response Team (SERT), Child Care Services Association, Smart Start partnerships, the CCR&R Council/local CCR&R agencies, Cooperative Extension Service, and/or Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center. DCDEE will coordinate its efforts with agencies such as these to share its information on childcare providers' needs and find additional resources for the providers who have been impacted by the disaster. DCDEE may also coordinate with the NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Governor's Office), which organized general donation collection/distribution efforts following Hurricane Floyd.

Volunteer coordination to assist childcare providers— Smart Start – primarily local Smart Start partnerships -- possibly in conjunction with statewide efforts organized by the NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Governor's Office) and Volunteer Organizations After Disaster (VOAD). Volunteers could be used to help staff with temporary care arrangements or improve caregiver/child ratios in licensed facilities that may be short-staffed temporarily (e.g., while teachers take care of their own families' needs).

Efforts to help children and their childcare providers cope with disaster related trauma and stresses – the Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services (DMH/DD/SAS) and the Cooperative Extension Service, in conjunction with local CCR&Rs, the NC CCR&R Council, local Smart Start partnerships, the North Carolina Partnership for

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Children, DCDEE Licensing Consultants, and DCDEE Subsidy Services Consultants. DMH/DD/SA and the Cooperative Extension Service could play the lead roles. Agencies that work with parents and childcare providers (CCR&Rs, local Smart Start partnerships, and DCDEE home base consultants) could help children, families, and child care providers access these services and materials.

Partners may want to clarify their roles after a disaster strikes. (The Regional Teams would be good vehicles for coordination with local and regional partners. See Section V.) Because disasters are inherently unpredictable, DCDEE and partners may need to modify functions and roles after the disaster event.

FEMA – if the event is a Presidential declared disaster, then FEMA resources and assistance become available. These resources come in the form of several federal programs and when available should be communicated and encouraged for providers to seek assistance through FEMA and their Disaster Recovery Centers:

1. Individual Assistance (IA)
2. Other Needs Assistance (ONA)-Can be used for childcare expenses for parents eligible.
3. Small Business Administration (SBA) – Low-cost small business loans for childcare providers
4. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) can potentially offer grants through
5. the state using CCDF & SSBG funds.

VII. DCDEE Authority to Promote Quality Child Care and Services for Families

The Division's authority to assume these roles stems from the following laws, regulations, plans, and policies:

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Federal

- Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014
- Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-193)
- Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-199)
- 45 CFR, Parts 98 and 99 (Child Care and Development Fund Final Rule)
- Child Care and Development Fund Plan for the State of North Carolina, FFY 2019-21

State

- North Carolina General Statutes, Article 7, Chapter 110
- Session Law 2003 – 284; Session Law 2004 – 124; Session Law 2005 - 276
- 10A NCAC Chapter 09 – Child Care Rules
- 15A NCAC 18A .2800 – Rules Governing the Sanitation of Child Care Centers
- DCDEE’s Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program Manual (revised October 2002)
- 10A NCAC Chapter 10 – Rules for Subsidized Child Care
- North Carolina Governor’s Executive Order No. 39
- North Carolina General Statutes, Article 36A, Chapter 14
- North Carolina General Statutes, Article 166A – 5(1) a.6
- North Carolina General Statutes, Article 143 B-476

The authority for disaster functions listed in the DCDEE Disaster Plan is implicit in these laws, regulations, plans and policies. Emergency childcare is also explicitly referred to and described in the Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program Manual

DCDEE may take on other functions that are consistent with its mission and supportive of the public health and mass care goals cited in the North Carolina Emergency Operations Plan.