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Children and Disasters Commission Moves Recommendations Forward

Immediate steps for emergency preparedness, response and recovery around children

The National Commission on Children and Disasters recently voted on an initial set of recommendations for its interim report to President Obama and Congress. The report, due in October, will reflect an assessment of persistent gaps in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery for children and include recommendations to fill the gaps.

“Children aren’t little adults, but are often victims of an adult-sized disaster relief system,” said Chairperson Mark Shriver. “With hurricane season upon us and the threat of a severe flu outbreak on the horizon, now is our opportunity to make children a higher priority in disaster planning.”

Shriver noted the Commission approved immediate steps that the Federal government, emergency managers and local partners can take to protect children:

- **Creating an office within the Federal Emergency Management Agency specifically focused on incorporating children into disaster planning, response and recovery**
- **Creating a standing advisory body to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to formulate guidance on emergency medical countermeasures for children**
- **Adopting standards for providing safe and age-appropriate environments and supplies to children housed in emergency shelters**
- **Elevating child care to an essential service in community recovery efforts**
- **Requiring comprehensive disaster plans, training and exercises for facilities that serve or house children—schools, child care centers, group homes and juvenile justice systems—and are developed and approved in partnership with local and state emergency managers**



FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate addresses Commissioners at the June 26, 2009 public meeting.

To learn more about the National Commission on Children and Disasters, please visit www.childrenanddisasters.acf.hhs.gov. The website will allow visitors to view details of the Commissions reports and areas of interest, read over public meeting minutes, featured news, sign up for E-alerts, and read background information on the Commissioners.