



National Commission on Children and Disasters



www.childrenanddisasters.acf.hhs.gov

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Federal Government Shows Modest Progress in Disaster Planning for Children

The National Commission on Children and Disasters has delivered a report to the White House and Congressional leaders that revealed only modest progress of federal agencies in implementing recommendations designed to ensure better protections of children during major domestic disasters.

The new report (www.childrenanddisasters.acf.hhs.gov) measured the response of six federal agencies to an earlier commission report released in late 2009 that identified several shortcomings in disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

The Commission found signs of progress in the design of safer emergency sheltering environments for children. However, the report also showed federal agencies made limited progress in pediatric disaster medical care and training, disaster mental health research, and the need to encourage states and child care providers to improve their disaster preparedness plans.

“Hurricane Season is just around the corner. Kids are the most vulnerable Americans during disasters. To protect children, much more needs to be done, and it needs to be done now,” said Mark Shriver, Chairperson of the Commission.

Disasters are especially traumatic and disruptive for children. Following a catastrophic event like a hurricane, earthquake or flood, it is essential for schools and child care centers to have plans for evacuation and reunification with families. Shelters need to have age-appropriate supplies, like formula, diapers and cribs. All settings must have a plan for children with disabilities.

The Progress Report urges the Obama Administration and Congress to take bold and swift action to prepare and respond to the unique needs of children in disasters. The Commission calls for the White House to develop a National Strategy for Children and Disasters to command better integration, coordination and outcomes from federal agencies and state, Tribal, local, and non-governmental partners. Congress must provide adequate resources to support first responders, hospitals and a national disaster human services case management program to meet the recovery needs of children and families.

The National Commission on Children and Disasters is an independent, bipartisan Commission established to examine and assess the needs of children in the preparation for, response to, and recovery from all hazards. The next Commission report is due to the President and Congress in October 2010.

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