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## **Statement by Commission on FEMA's Creation of Children's Working Group**

**Washington, D.C.** – In response to FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate's announcement of the creation of a Children's Working Group, the [National Commission on Children and Disasters](http://www.childrenanddisasters.acf.hhs.gov) has released the following statement:

"When it comes to disaster planning and disaster management, the unique needs of children are typically misunderstood and unaddressed," said Mark K. Shriver, Chairperson for the National Commission on Children and Disasters. "By creating a working group on children, FEMA is taking an important first step towards breaking the cycle of benign neglect. The Commission applauds Administrator Fugate's action and the opportunity to collaborate."

Fugate announced the creation of the Children's Working Group yesterday while testifying before the Senate Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery. FEMA issued a release following Fugate's testimony stating that the Children's Working Group will "explore and implement planning and response strategies specific to children throughout the agency and ensure that during a disaster the unique needs of children are not only considered, but fully integrated into how FEMA administers this support to states and the public."

FEMA went on to state that the areas of focus for the Children's Working Group will include:

- Child-specific guidance as to evacuation, sheltering, and relocation;
- Tracking and reunification of families;
- Coordinated case management supports;
- Enhanced preparedness for child care centers and schools as well as for children in child welfare and juvenile justice systems;
- Enhanced national planning, including incorporation of children into national planning scenarios and exercises;
- Incorporation of children's needs into grant guidance;
- Improved recovery coordination across the federal family and with state and local partners in support of children's education, health and housing;

- Consideration as to how the federal family can help ensure child care centers are able rebuild and restore services more quickly following a disaster, and;
- Increased public awareness efforts to educate families and protect children during disasters.

FEMA's full news release can be viewed [here](#).

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