



National Commission on Children and Disasters



www.childrenanddisasters.acf.hhs.gov

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National Commission Calls on Governors to Improve Disaster Plans for Children

The National Commission on Children and Disasters is calling on Governors to lead state efforts to improve disaster plans for children. The commission developed recommendations for states based upon its *2010 Report to the President and Congress*.

“We see progress in emergency planning for children at the federal level, but urgent work remains in the states,” said Commission Chairperson Mark Shriver. “As the tragic events in Japan remind us, children are the most vulnerable during and after disasters. Our nation’s governors should help lead in making sure every child is protected when disaster strikes. That means implementing the Commission’s recommendations without delay.”

Shriver sent a letter to all 50 governors urging them to take five immediate actions to improve disaster planning for children:

1. Establish an advisory body to ensure that the state appropriately incorporates, coordinates and supports the safety and unique needs of children in preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters.
2. Ensure accountability by designating permanent staff responsibility in the governor’s office and relevant state agencies to focus on integration and coordination of children’s disaster needs.
3. Direct federal disaster preparedness grants to support the needs of children in schools, child care, child welfare, juvenile justice facilities and courts.
4. Require all-hazards disaster planning standards for schools, child care and other child-serving systems, including: written guidelines for evacuation, family reunification and accommodation of children with disabilities or other special needs, and collaborative planning, training and exercises with emergency management professionals.
5. Adopt standards for emergency shelters that are responsive to children (e.g. keep families intact, provide supervised play areas). Purchase age-appropriate supplies (e.g. formula, baby food, diapers, cribs, wash basins).

The Commission is an independent, bipartisan body established by Congress and the President to identify gaps in disaster preparedness, response and recovery for children and make recommendations to close the gaps.

To view the *2010 Report to the President and Congress* go to www.childrenanddisasters.acf.hhs.gov.