



**2005  
HURRICANE  
KATRINA  
STRIKES**

**2010  
AMERICA  
REMAINS  
UNPREPARED**

**1.2 MILLION GULF COAST RESIDENTS EVACUATE IN ANTICIPATION OF THE STORM 163,105 CHILDREN IN LOUISIANA AND MISSISSIPPI ARE DISPLACED FOLLOWING THE STORM 50,000 CHILDREN IN THE REGION DO NOT ATTEND SCHOOL DURING THE 2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR SIX MONTHS AFTER KATRINA, THE LAST OF 5,192 CHILDREN IS UNITED WITH FAMILY 37 PERCENT OF LOUISIANA CHILDREN EXPERIENCE CLINICALLY-DIAGNOSED DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, OR BEHAVIOR DISORDER**



**Save the Children®**

**A National Report Card on  
Protecting Children During Disasters**

“The most vulnerable Americans in the most vulnerable settings are made more vulnerable because of government inaction.”

– Mark Shriver, Senior Vice President, U.S. Programs, Save the Children

It's been five years since the worst natural disaster in our history struck U.S. soil, virtually destroying an entire city and region and revealing severely unprepared federal, state and local governments. Five years later, the United States remains seriously and unnecessarily unprepared to protect children when they are most vulnerable during major disasters.

There are 67 million children in American schools and child care facilities at any given point on a weekday, separated from their families and dependent on school officials and caregivers to provide protection.

If a disaster strikes, it's crucial that children are in a safe place and are able to quickly reunite with their parents.

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## A REPORT CARD ON THE STATES

Most parents expect that when they drop their kids off at school or at a child care facility, they are protected if disaster strikes. Unfortunately, that's not the case.

Save the Children's U.S. Programs Report Card graded all 50 states and the District of Columbia on four criteria of preparedness. We found:

- Less than a quarter of all states and the District of Columbia meet all of four basic preparedness standards.
- Less than half require all licensed child care facilities to have an evacuation and relocation plan.
- Less than half require all licensed child care facilities to have a family reunification plan.
- Less than two-thirds do not require all licensed child care facilities to have a plan that accounts for kids with special needs.
- Almost a dozen do not require K-12 schools to have a disaster plan that accounts for multiple types of disasters.

“Enacting protections for children is low cost and the lynchpin to West Virginia’s preparedness.”

– West Virginia State Senator Corey Palumbo

## PROGRESS IS SLOW, BUT REAL

- Twelve states meet all four minimum standards of preparedness in 2010 as opposed to seven in 2009.
- The five states that improved to reach all four standards this year (California, Mississippi, New Mexico, Washington, and Wisconsin) all worked closely with Save the Children to meet the standards.
- As the result of a specific call to action in the 2009 report card, the Federal Emergency Management Agency established the Children’s Working Group to ensure that a federal disaster response better meets the unique needs of children.
- The Child Safety, Care, and Education Continuity Act of 2010, introduced in early 2010 by Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and Congresswoman Corrine Brown (D-FL) would provide, among other things, counseling and health care coverage to disaster-affected kids and requires child care centers that receive federal funds to implement the criteria highlighted by this report. Passage of this bill would ensure better protection of children.

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## THE BP OIL SPILL AND CHILDREN

This year’s oil spill in the Gulf has had a catastrophic effect on the local economy and the community psyche, much like Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Ike and Gustav did.

No children died in the explosion on the Deep Horizon oil rig, but the economic effects will impact them for years. One economist calculated the total economic impact in the region would be \$11.5 billion. The Louisiana fishing industry—a large employer in the state—will suffer greatly as 75 percent of Louisiana’s coastal waters were closed for fishing in June.

The economic effects of the spill have placed enormous strain on local parents who are forced to pull their kids out of child care, sometimes leaving their kids at home alone while they look for work.

In addition, BP claim centers have also become overwhelmed, with long lines extending outdoors in the summer heat. Struggling parents frequently must bring their kids with them to the center—putting children at risk to the effects of heat exposure—a situation similar to shelters and recovery centers following natural disasters.

	1	2	3	4
	Evacuation/ Relocation Plan	Reunification Efforts	Special Needs Of Children In Child Care	K-12 Written Procedure For Disaster Planning
ALABAMA	•	•	•	•
ARKANSAS	•	•	•	•
CALIFORNIA	•	•	•	•
HAWAII	•	•	•	•
NEW HAMPSHIRE	•	•	•	•
MARYLAND	•	•	•	•
MASSACHUSETTS	•	•	•	•
MISSISSIPPI	•	•	•	•
NEW MEXICO	•	•	•	•
VERMONT	•	•	•	•
WASHINGTON*	•	•	•	•
WISCONSIN*	•	•	•	•
DELAWARE	•	•		•
D OF COLUMBIA	•	•	•	
NEW YORK	•	•		•
NORTH CAROLINA	•		•	•
OHIO	•	•		•
OKLAHOMA	•	•		•
PENNSYLVANIA	•	•		•
SOUTH CAROLINA*	•	•		•
TENNESSEE		•	•	•
TEXAS*	•	•		•
UTAH	•	•		•
WEST VIRGINIA	•	•	•	
ALASKA			•	•
COLORADO		•		•
FLORIDA		•		•
MINNESOTA		•		•
RHODE ISLAND			•	•
VIRGINIA	•			•
ARIZONA				•
CONNECTICUT				•
GEORGIA				•
INDIANA				•
ILLINOIS				•
KENTUCKY				•
LOUISIANA*				•
MAINE				•
NEVADA	•			
NEW JERSEY				•
NEBRASKA				•
NORTH DAKOTA	•			
OREGON				•
SOUTH DAKOTA				•
IDAHO				
IOWA				
MISSOURI				
KANSAS				
MICHIGAN				
MONTANA				
WYOMING				

Research was conducted by Brown Buckley Tucker and reflects action in relevant state administrative offices and state legislatures as of July 15, 2010. The asterisk\* signifies that regulations are under revision and a draft of the proposed regulations was reviewed and met criteria.

**1**  
**A PLAN FOR EVACUATING KIDS IN CHILD CARE**

The state requires all licensed child care facilities to have a written plan for evacuating and moving kids to a safe location for multiple disasters.

*If your local community floods, does your child's child care center have plans for moving kids to higher ground or another safe place?*

**2**  
**REUNIFYING FAMILIES AFTER A DISASTER**

The state requires all licensed child care facilities to have a written plan to notify parents of an emergency and reunite them with their kids.

*Does your child's day care have a list with your name and phone number to contact you and reunite you with your child?*

**3**  
**CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

The state requires all licensed child care facilities to have a written plan that accounts for kids with special needs.

*If there is a fire, does your child care center have a plan for evacuating and transporting children in wheelchairs?*

**4**  
**AN EVACUATION PLAN FOR SCHOOLS**

The state requires all schools to have a disaster plan that accounts for multiple hazards.

*Does your child's school have plans that account for the kinds of disasters your community might encounter, such as earthquakes, wildfires and terror attacks?*

“It looked like a giant spoon  
had stirred everything around.”

— Diane Trest, Southern Alabama resident and  
mother of six describing her home,  
flooded in four feet of water after Hurricane Katrina.



For more information about this report, including methodology or background materials,  
please contact Save the Children's U.S. Programs at 202-640-6600.

[www.savethechildren.org/USA](http://www.savethechildren.org/USA)