

**FOR RELEASE AUGUST 15, 2006**

Contact: Jen Schill  
Senior Communications Manager  
(703) 341-4148  
jschill@naccrra.org

## **IS CHILD CARE READY?: NEW NATIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVE WILL PREPARE CHILD CARE PROGRAMS FOR DISASTERS**

WASHINGTON, DC—Today, the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) released *Is Child Care Ready?: A Disaster Planning Guide for Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies*, which will be used to train child care providers on how to prepare for and recover from disasters. NACCRRA has also published a brochure to help parents ensure that their child care program is prepared for emergencies. The distribution of these publications is the initial step in the first-ever nationwide effort to prepare child care programs for catastrophes.

Across the nation, nearly 12 million children under the age of 5—including 1.5 million infants under age 1—are cared for in some kind of child care setting every week. Although many of the 2.3 million adults who work in child care programs have training for fires, most have no training in responding to any other disasters, including hurricanes, floods, or terrorist attacks. The NACCRRA-led planning initiative seeks to protect children, our most vulnerable citizens, regardless of the danger.

“Hurricanes Katrina and Rita made it clear that we have much to do to ensure that child care programs are fully prepared to protect children in the face of disaster,” said Linda Smith, NACCRRA’s Executive Director. “Children, parents, and entire communities depend on child care and its ability to withstand and recover quickly from emergencies. NACCRRA’s initiative aims to strengthen child care programs so they can do just that.”

*Is Child Care Ready?* serves as a guide for Child Care Resource & Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) to train child care providers in their communities, as well as to provide support during and after a disaster to providers and the children and families they serve.

CCR&Rs will train providers on when to evacuate and when to stay put; what kinds of critical emergency information they should have on file; and how to connect with local emergency agencies so that they are aware that the child care program may need special assistance during a disaster.

CCR&Rs will also use NACCRRA’s parent brochure—*What’s the Plan?: Ask Your Child Care Program Before a Disaster*—to reach out to families about the importance of asking their provider if he or she has a disaster plan in place, and knowing the what, when, where, and how of that plan. CCR&Rs will encourage parents to readily provide emergency information

for their child, and to confirm that their provider has an identification tag for their child in the case of a disaster.

Through the nationwide planning initiative, NACCRRA and CCR&Rs will work with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure that child care services are integrated into emergency preparedness plans, as well as into funding guidelines for disaster relief efforts.

“By engaging all of the key players – including state and federal agencies, parents, providers, and CCR&Rs – in our initiative,” said Smith, “NACCRRA will ensure that every child in child care is protected in the face of any disaster.”

*What’s the Plan?*, NACCRRA’s parent brochure, highlights 10 questions that parents should ask of child care providers to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their children:

- 1) Do you have an emergency preparedness plan for disasters that are likely to occur in our area?
- 2) How will you safely evacuate my child to a safe, predetermined location?
- 3) How and when will I be notified if a disaster occurs when my child is in child care?
- 4) If I cannot get to my child during or after a disaster, how will you continue to care for my child?
- 5) Have you and your staff received training on how to respond to my child’s physical and emotional needs during and after a disaster?
- 6) Will you teach my older child what to do during an emergency?
- 7) Do you have a disaster kit or supply kit with enough items to meet my child’s needs for at least 72 hours or three days?
- 8) Do the state and local emergency management agencies and responders know about your child care program and where it is located?
- 9) How may I help you during and after a disaster?
- 10) After a disaster occurs, how will I be notified about your plan to reopen?

*What’s the Plan?*, *Is Child Care Ready?*, and the disaster planning initiative are the result of a national panel – facilitated by NACCRRA – of early childhood experts who assisted child care programs after the hurricanes, 9/11, the Oklahoma City bombing, California earthquakes, and other natural disasters. NACCRRA and CCR&Rs will focus their initial efforts on those geographic areas most prone to disaster, especially the Gulf Coast.

To download a free copy of *What’s the Plan?* or *Is Child Care Ready?*, visit [www.naccrra.org](http://www.naccrra.org). Printed copies of the report will be available next month for purchase online.

# # #

NACCRRA, the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, is our nation’s leading voice for child care. We work with more than 800 state and local Child Care Resource & Referral agencies to ensure that families in every local community have access to high-quality, affordable child care. To achieve our mission, we lead projects that increase the quality and availability of child care, offer comprehensive training to child care professionals, undertake research, and advocate child care policies that positively impact the lives of children and families.