



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

**Administration for Children and Families**  
**Office of Human Services Emergency**  
**Preparedness and Response**

# Children and Youth Task Force in Disasters

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## Guidelines for Development

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## Developing a Children and Youth Task Force

### Background

Children and youth are at heightened risk in disasters and public health emergencies. Children and youth under the age of 18, who comprise 25% of the United States population, have “unique vulnerabilities that must be addressed in disaster management activities and policies,” as the National Commission on Children and Disasters noted in its 2010 final report.<sup>1</sup>

A particular challenge addressing the complex needs of children, youth, and families is that the systems providing services to this population are diffusely spread across a number of different sectors, including the schools, child care providers, Head Start programs, pediatric health and behavioral health providers, recreation groups, community- and faith-based organizations, child welfare authorities, emergency management, social services, family violence prevention and services, public health authorities, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs), and other governmental, nonprofit, and private sector partners. To promote effective coordination of these diverse systems and agencies, a promising practice that has emerged in several recent disasters is the **Children and Youth Task Force** model.

This model, which was successfully implemented in such disparate disasters as the 2011 Joplin, Missouri tornado and 2012 Hurricanes Isaac and Sandy, brings together Whole Community child- and youth-serving agencies, organizations, and professionals in a single forum for shared strategic coordination to meet the needs of children and youth. Task forces were used to engage and support vulnerable children, youth, and families after a disaster by restoring critical services to clients, addressing new disaster-caused needs, and supporting longer-term recovery efforts for children and youth.

This document is designed to introduce Whole Community partners to the Disaster Children and Youth Issues Task Force concept. It provides recommendations to states, Tribes, territories, and local communities interested in launching their own task forces, and outlines how the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is able to provide support. The guidelines are intended for emergency management, human services, and public health professionals to support a coordinated, integrated, and effective approach to children’s needs in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

This document is produced by ACF, based on our experience as a convening partner on Children and Youth Task Forces. These guidelines are designed to introduce state and local partners to the task force concept, and to outline ways ACF is ready to assist and support in task force formation and its work. ACF was actively involved in the following task force case studies, and represented the federal role in programs, including child care, Head Start, child and youth protection and disaster case management.

Some Children and Youth Task Forces are implemented and meet regularly prior to a disaster’s impact. Planning considerations for these task forces appear under “Children and Youth Task Force in the Preparedness Phase,” below. Other task forces emerge in response to disaster events affecting communities; the four case studies below illustrate this type of task force.

Regardless of the type of disaster, a coordinated approach to children’s needs, involving a broad constellation of governmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), agencies, and providers that

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<sup>1</sup> National Commission on Children and Disasters (2010). *2010 Report to the President and Congress*. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, pg. 20.

serve children and families, promotes improved outcomes for children. The Children and Youth Task Force model is a promising practice to support such a coordinated approach and strategy.

### Children and Youth Task Force Planning Considerations

The scale and program impacts of each community vary, as do the size and focus of the task forces. Task forces are set up based on state, local and community needs and participation. Ideally, a task force is set up prior to a disaster to prepare for disaster effects on the immediate community. If a task force is created post-disaster, the first meeting usually is set up one week post-disaster, depending on the size and scope of the disaster. The leadership, configuration, meeting format, sub-committees and duration of each task force will vary accordingly. The task force models that have been used have shared a mission – which is to advocate for children, youth, and families so that they plan, prepare for and recover more rapidly post-disaster and use a shared strategic plan for identifying needs and achieving goals.

Common to all these flexible models is the concept of a task force led by a state agency with lead equities in children, youth, and family services, bringing together child-serving stakeholders at the local level, with involvement by federal agencies, including ACF, the HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and national NGOs active in children's post-disaster needs, such as Save The Children.

Planning considerations that can support a children and youth task force model include:

- Pre-planned state and local identified task force stakeholders with pre-established partnerships as the ideal method for starting a task force;
- If a pre-planned model does not exist, utilizing federal assets such as the ACF regional office to help identify partners at the federal, state and local level can be an option post-disaster;
- If no partnership exists before an event, the ACF regional office serving the impacted state should take quick action and provide support in the task force development, especially if the event impacts more than one state in one ACF region (e.g. Superstorm Sandy for New York and New Jersey);
- Engaging local agencies and providers, families and youth, state, federal and non-governmental stakeholders;
- Utilizing existing collaborations and creating new ones to meet needs in affected communities;
- Identifying disaster-caused gaps in services and programs for children, youth and families;
- Creating an easy plan to outline the disaster-caused challenges and identify possible solutions that can be addressed by local, state, and/or federal partners, as appropriate;
- Identifying assets and resources to help fill the gaps;
- Identifying long-term needs, gaps and sustainability of assistance over time to meet critical needs of children and youth (e.g. behavioral health programs).

### Children and Youth Task Force at Work: Four Examples

#### The Joplin Child Care Task Force

In May 2011, Joplin, Missouri was struck by one of the deadliest tornadoes in U.S. history. Nineteen child care centers were destroyed and eight others damaged, affecting approximately 670 child care slots. This severe disruption of the community's child care capacity jeopardized the recovery of hundreds of families with children—without child care, how would parents return to work, begin repairs on damaged

homes, or search for new housing?

Shortly after the disaster, partners formed the Joplin Child Care Task Force to address children's and families' needs caused by the tornado's disruption of the community's child care infrastructure. The task force's purpose was to identify issues and needs of the early childhood service providers and the families and children they serve in the Joplin, Missouri area; to develop plans to address these issues and needs; and to coordinate response and actions across federal, state, local, and NGO partners.

### *Convening Organizations*

The Joplin Child Care Task Force was convened by the Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division and ACF.

### *Participating Organizations*

The task force included over 35 members from federal agencies, Missouri State Offices, regional and local service providers and other stakeholders. State agencies that participated included the Departments of Social Services, Children's Division; Health and Senior Services, Child Care Licensing and Home Visiting; Commission on Mental Health; and Elementary and Secondary Education. Federal government partners included ACF's Immediate Office of the Regional Administrator (IORA), Office of Child Care (OCC), Office of Head Start (OHS), and Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response (OHSEPR); ASPR; FEMA, and the Small Business Administration (SBA). NGO and private sector participants included Missouri Child Care Aware (the child care resource and referral agency), The Ozark Center (the local behavioral health service provider), Save the Children, and community child care providers.

### *Activities and Accomplishments*

The task force met twice weekly with members giving updates on activities of respective organizations and status of child care facilities in Joplin and surrounding areas. The federal staff from various agencies and offices provided technical assistance to state and local participants regarding emergency response and recovery, child care policy, and behavioral health issues. Activities the task force undertook include:

- Establishment of the child care resource and referral agency (CCR&R) as the communication hub for providers, families, businesses, and general public.
- Policies for temporary increase in license capacity for unaffected providers, and for child care subsidy availability under state's "Extraordinary Circumstances" put into place and communicated to public, families in care and providers.
- Information on numbers of child care providers destroyed or damaged was gathered and updated weekly. Contact with these facilities provides information on plans for reopening, repairs, and issues they experience.
- Information gathering on numbers of remaining child care facilities in the area, including capacity by age group, numbers of affected families seeking care, and other key planning metrics.
- Production of child care specific information on FEMA and SBA assistance.
- Coordination with crisis counseling teams from Ozark Center, who were able to canvas child care providers to assess mental health needs of the provider staff, children in care, and their families.
- Dissemination of information to providers on mental health assistance and general information on dealing with stress and trauma in children.

- Task force representation on Long-Term Recovery Committee convened by the American Red Cross and on the Chamber of Commerce response meetings.
- Identification and planning for short and longer-term training opportunities on disaster response and dealing with stress and trauma.
- Beginning process for longer-term recovery efforts to address infrastructure rebuilding and addressing behavioral health needs of families and providers.

### **The Hurricane Isaac Children's Needs Task Force**

After Hurricane Isaac struck Louisiana in 2012, partners collaborated in two of the hardest-hit parishes, Plaquemines and St. John the Baptist to address children, youth and families needs post-disaster. Plaquemines Parish experienced major challenges with their transportation – children, youth, and families were unable to get to the child care facilities or Head Start Centers due to the geographic and isolated nature of the parish. Two child care centers in the St. John the Baptist Parish were permanently closed. The disaster affected some local child care providers' staff, which increased challenges for reopening the facilities. The economic effects of the disaster on local families increased the number of families requiring funding assistance to afford child care. One concern identified by local children and youth service providers was to address the post-disaster behavioral health needs of children, youth, families, and provider staff.

Soon after the disaster, partners formed the Hurricane Isaac Task Force for the purpose of addressing children, youth and families' needs caused by the hurricane, and the resulting disruption of the community's infrastructure. The task force's purpose was to identify gaps and challenges for children and families in the Plaquemines Parish and St. John the Baptist Parish; to create a shared plan for recovery; and to coordinate response and actions across federal, state, local, and NGO partners.

#### *Convening Organizations*

The Hurricane Isaac Task Force was convened by the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services and the ACF Region 6 IORA, which included the RA, Deputy RA, and the Regional Emergency Management Specialist (REMS). This task force was implemented in partnership with Save the Children and FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons (VALs).

#### *Participating Organizations*

The task force included over 60 participating individuals and agencies from federal agencies, Louisiana State Offices, regional and local service providers, and other stakeholders. State agencies that participated included Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Children and Family Services Child Welfare, and Department of Children and Family Services Child Care Licensing. Federal government partners included ACF's IORA, OCC, OHS, and OHSEPR; FEMA; and ASPR's Recovery Field Coordinator. NGO and private sector participants included Louisiana's Partnership for Youth Development, Louisiana Children's Defense Fund, Catholic Charities of New Orleans, Louisiana Children's School Superintendants, community child care providers, community Head Start providers, public health partners and local pediatricians.

#### *Activities and Accomplishments*

The task force met every two weeks. In a coordinated effort, members reported on recovery activities of the respective organizations. The task force as a group continuously reassessed gaps, challenges, and needs faced by children, youth, and families, and reported on progress and shared strategies to address those challenges. Federal staff from various agencies and offices provided technical assistance to state

and local participants regarding emergency response and recovery, child care and Head Start policy, and behavioral health needs. Through the task force, an effective public/private partnership model was established to engage survivors as well as local, state, and federal stakeholders in the community's recovery.

Activities the task force undertook include:

- Establishment of the resource and referral agency as the central communication hub for providers, families, businesses, and general public.
- Mapping resources to address disaster caused short-term and long-term needs in order to facilitate recovery of community services and return to "steady state" operations.
- Development of short and longer-term training plans on disaster response and coping with stress and trauma.
- Providing a forum for multi-sector coordination, so that behavioral health, infrastructure rebuilding, and other long-term recovery efforts affecting children, youth, and families were all integrated and informed with "ground truth" on children's needs.

### **The Superstorm Sandy New Jersey State-Led Children's Task Force**

October 29, 2012 Superstorm Sandy made landfall in New Jersey resulting in more than 60% of the population being without power as well as gas shortages. All of the state's 21 counties were included in the Presidential major disaster declaration. The storm not only impacted the citizens but was also responsible for a nine-day closure of the regional HHS government offices.

Superstorm Sandy was responsible for 697 child care provider closures and 86 Head Start Center closures spanning the states of Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York. This severe disruption of the government offices and community's child care capacity jeopardized the recovery of thousands of families with children.

Shortly after the disaster, partners formed the New Jersey State-Led Children's Task Force to address children's and families' needs caused by Superstorm Sandy's disruption of the community's infrastructure. The task force's purpose was to identify issues and needs of children and families in the state; to develop immediate, short-term, and long-term needs of children and families impacted by the storm; and to coordinate response and actions across federal, state, local, and NGO partners.

#### *Convening Organizations*

The New Jersey State-Led Children's Task Force was convened by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, supported by ACF's IORA, OCC, OHS, and FEMA.

#### *Participating Organizations*

The task force included members from federal agencies, New Jersey State Offices, and regional and local service providers and other stakeholders. State agencies that participated included the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Human Services, Department of Health, and New Jersey Department of Education. Federal government partners included ACF's IORA, OCC, OHS, and OHSEPR; the ASPR Recovery Field Coordinator for the Health and Social Services Recovery Support Function (H&SS RSF); and FEMA. NGO and private sector participants included University of Medicine and Dentistry Traumatic Loss Coalition, Montclair State University Center for Autism and Early Childhood Development, American Red Cross, Save the Children, Children's Health Fund, Southern Baptist, Church of the Brethren, American Academy of Pediatrics, Zero to Three, Child Care Resources of Monmouth

County, and the Children's Home Society of New Jersey, Ocean County Office.

### *Activities and Accomplishments*

The task force met weekly with members working to focus on targeted areas for children and families. The federal staff from various agencies and offices provided technical assistance to state and local participants regarding emergency response and recovery, child care policy, and behavioral health issues.

Activities the task force undertook include:

- Coordinated with the New Jersey Department of Education to identify children and families who were unable to attend schools while they were residing in temporary housing. The goal was to ensure educational stability.
- Targeted services for families with children in FEMA's Transitional Sheltering Assistance program.
- Gathered information on numbers of child care providers destroyed or damaged, with weekly updates. Contact with these facilities provided information on plans for reopening, repairs, and issues they experienced.
- Provided subject matter expertise in the needs of children, youth, and families on the New Jersey State-Led Housing Disaster Task Force.
- Coordinated with the Montclair State University Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health to address disaster recovery needs of infants, toddlers, and young children. This created a sub-group within the task force called the Sandbox.
- Developed of an infant and early childhood behavioral specialists' directory with over 90 volunteers to serve as resources.
- Identified crisis counselors and child specialists, who were able to provide immediate help in the FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers.
- Assisted ACF OHS to identify barriers to recovery of Head Start service delivery, resulting in policy changes and targeted assistance to Head Start grantees.
- Promoted coordinated communication on available federal resources for child care providers, by bringing together stakeholders, including ACF OCC and FEMA Public Assistance.
- Established foundational goals for long-term recovery.

### **The Superstorm Sandy New York Children's Task Force**

October 29, 2012 Superstorm Sandy made landfall in New York. As described above, Superstorm Sandy was responsible for 697 child care provider closures as well as 86 Head Start Center closures across the states of Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York. This severe disruption of the government offices and community's recovery affected thousands of families and children.

Shortly after the disaster, partners formed the New York Children's Task Force to address children's and families' needs caused by Superstorm Sandy's disruption of the community's infrastructure. The task force's purpose was to identify issues and needs of children and families in the state; to identify immediate, short-term, and long-term needs of children and families impacted by the storm; and to coordinate response and actions across federal, state, local, and NGO partners.

### *Convening Organizations*

The Commissioner of the New York Office of Children and Families Services, and the ACF RA co-convened the New York State Children's Task Force.



### *Participating Organizations*

The task force included members from federal agencies, New York State Offices, regional and local service providers and other stakeholders. State agencies that participated included the Administration for Children's Services, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, New York State Housing Task Force, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, New York State Office of Children and Family Services Regional Offices, New York State Office of Mental Health, and New York State Department of Health. Federal government partners included ACF's IORA, OCC, OHS, and OHSEPR; ASPR's Recovery Field Coordinator for the H&SS RSF; FEMA; SBA; Human Resources and Services Administration (HRSA); Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH); and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). NGO and private sector participants included Save the Children, CCR&R agencies, New York State Council on Children and Families, Head Start Collaboration Project, Children's Health Fund, Docs for Tots, Early Care and Learning Council, First Book, Family Child Care Association of New York State, Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, Civil Service Employees Union, New York Federation of Teachers, and United Way of New York City.

### *Activities and Accomplishments*

The task force began two weeks post-disaster to address ways in which they could support the needs of children in the impacted areas. Soon after, the task force held its first meeting, and the weekly meetings commenced. Four months later, the meetings were held every two weeks, and currently, meetings are scheduled once per month with the ongoing focus on long-term recovery for children and families. The federal staff from various agencies and offices provided technical assistance to state and local participants regarding emergency response and recovery, child care policy, and behavioral health issues.

Activities the task force undertook include:

- Collected information on numbers of remaining child care facilities in the area, including capacity by age group, numbers of affected families seeking care, and other key planning metrics.
- Created bilingual documents on disaster assistance from FEMA, SBA, and other resources for child care providers to efficiently reopen their doors.
- Aided the movement of families out of congregate care shelters to housing by providing targeted services for families with children in FEMA's Transitional Sheltering Assistance program.
- Provided a conduit to inform federal policy makers regarding community needs for child care and Head Start and promote those early childhood programs' recovery. Information on numbers of child care facilities destroyed or damaged was gathered and updated weekly. Contact with these facilities provided information on plans for reopening, repairs, and issues they were experiencing.
- Coordinated behavioral health resources and expertise to mitigate possible behavioral health issues that arose, to build resilience for the future and to prepare for future disasters.
- Promoted coordinated communication on available federal resources for child care providers, bringing together stakeholders, including ACF OCC and FEMA Public Assistance.
- Provided early childhood program providers with expert science-based public health information on mold and other post-disaster hazards to children's health and safety.
- Facilitated communication between donors and child care program providers to appropriately match donation and provider needs.
- Coordinated discussions and presentations from ACF Office of Community Services (OCS) regarding Social Services Supplemental Block Grant (SSBG) funding to help with recovery efforts.

- Convened a group under the task force to address outreach to immigrant populations. The Committee on Hispanic Children and Families and the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies conducted outreach to immigrants who were afraid of possible implications due to their legal status in the U.S.

### How to Get Started: Children and Youth Task Force Development Process

The best practice for launching a task force is to start in the preparedness phase and forge partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies prior to a disaster striking the community. Initiating this process in the preparedness phase ensures a more effective response and cooperation once a disaster does hit. Preparedness-phase organizing efforts and models are discussed elsewhere in these guidelines.

If not established in the preparedness phase, child-serving agencies and organizations may need to convene the Children and Youth Task Force after a disaster impact occurs, in the stressful and busy environment of disaster response and early recovery. The steps below outline methods for creating a Children and Youth Task Force after disaster strikes that will assist child-serving organizations with jump-starting task force efforts in affected communities.

1. ACF's RA or IORA staff, in partnership with Save the Children or other VOADs on the ground, engage community leaders, seeking their buy-in and requesting their input. ACF Regional Program Managers (RPMs) (for programs including child care, Head Start, child welfare, runaway and homeless youth, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) can connect ACF REMS with state staff, associations, and local CCR&R agencies.
2. Regional office staff, such as the ACF RA and/or REMS discuss the Children and Youth Task Force concept with the appropriate state and local partners.
3. Once state government officials select an appropriate task force model, ACF engages FEMA contacts, ASPR Office of Emergency Management Division of Recovery, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Department of Education, SBA, FEMA and other federal partners as appropriate.
4. The RA or REMS works with VOAD/local CCR&R and state to identify a task force principal and to schedule the first state-level, in person meeting.
5. Leadership schedules local meetings open to providers, families and youth.
6. As a starting point, draft a simple plan outlining needs with solutions proposed by local partners
  - Issues will overlap jurisdictions and agencies, but assign them to task force members by local (to a local designee), state (to a state designee), and federal (to a federal designee) levels of research and resolution. Over time, this will likely become a much smaller core group, but it remains important to keep the larger group engaged with updates (especially when a goal is achieved). Committees may work better in larger disasters.
7. Solve problems raised in the plan through researching local, state, or federal policy flexibilities, seeking funding or other resources, engaging FEMA staff, reaching across state or federal agencies, or seeking donations from other disaster relief organizations.
8. Hold periodic update calls with the larger group to report progress and to brainstorm challenges.
9. Update the plan as problems evolve in the recovery process and share with the larger group.
10. Close out the plan.
11. Transition to disaster preparedness activities that maintains the group for the next disaster, including identification of lessons learned, training needs, and other action steps for capacity-building.

### Potential Partners

Based on lessons learned from disasters such as the Joplin tornado, Isaac, and Sandy, the success of the task force is based on building a strong partnership between federal, state, local, private, and NGO agencies serving children, youth, and families. Three key elements of a strong partnership are:

- The state agency (or agencies) with lead equities in children and youth services is the convener or co-convener of the task force;
- Federal agencies (e.g., ACF, FEMA, and ASPR) and national NGOs (e.g., Save The Children) provide national-level subject matter expertise to the task force;
- Local organizations that directly serve children, youth, and families are all engaged to provide “ground truth” about the needs of children, youth, and families.

Working together, these partners can share a common operating picture on community needs and an integrated strategy to address those needs. As part of this partnership effort, important players to involve in the task force include:

- Affected parents, youth and children
- Local faith based and trusted neighborhood organizations
- Parent policy councils
- Family shelters
- Community action agencies
- Family advocates
- Local child care providers (family and center-based)
- Local Head Start providers
- Local counseling/behavioral health agencies
- Local teen/youth service providers
- Local child protective services
- Local law enforcement, if appropriate
- Local school social workers, teachers, or superintendents
- Individual pediatricians, pediatric nurses, child life specialists, child psychologists, and pediatric social workers
- Elected officials
- ACF grantees and administrators
- ACF regional office staff and leadership
- Save The Children
- NGOs active on children’s needs in disaster, including Church of the Brethren and Southern Baptists
- State child care associations, resource and referral networks, and leaders
- State Head Start associations
- Child serving organizations
- Runaway and homeless youth and their providers
- Transitioning foster youth providers
- After school care providers
- Human trafficking programs
- Language or cultural experts
- State Domestic Violence Coalition and domestic violence shelters serving the community

- Agencies serving children and youth with disabilities or access and functional needs
- ASPR Recovery Field Coordinator for the H&SS RSF
- Business leaders
- Philanthropic organizations, funders and donors
- National and federal partners as appropriate, such as USDA, Department of Education, FEMA VALs, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), SBA and others as necessary.

### Children and Youth Task Force in the Preparedness Phase

In October 2012, the ACF Region 3 REMS, and the regional FEMA Individual Assistance Branch leadership established a jointly-chaired task force called the Regional Children and Disasters Workgroup. The task force was created based on lessons learned from previous national disasters, as well as recommendations from the National Commission on Children and Disasters. The workgroup brings partners from the HHS Region 3 states, Commonwealths and the District together on a monthly basis to discuss issues, challenges and planning efforts affecting children and families in disasters.

The purpose of the workgroup or task force is to share information, coordinate resources, and identify promising practices and lessons learned. The group has been successful in scheduling subject matter experts who provide training related to children's needs in response and recovery. These presentations included Save the Children Director for Domestic Emergencies discussing lessons learned from Superstorm Sandy, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Supervisor of the Sex Offender Tracking Team and the United States Marshall's Service discussing challenges in protecting children from sexual predators in congregate care shelters.

### Conclusion

The development of a Children and Youth Task Force supports state and local partners in building capacity that addresses the needs of children youth, and families in future disasters. This tool is designed to guide state and local partners in designing a Whole Community task force approach that is tailored to their community's specific needs.

Based on past successes and lessons learned, a Children and Youth Task Force can support state governments in six important ways. A task force:

- Serves as a venue for Whole Community coordination, in support of the state and federal recovery strategy, by bringing together the shared knowledge and capabilities of child- and family-serving partners throughout the disaster affected area;
- Develops a common operating picture of recovery for children, youth, and families impacted by the disaster;
- Provides local-level service providers with a ready channel of subject matter expertise from federal agencies such as ACF, FEMA, and ASPR, and national NGOs, such as Save The Children;
- Fosters a multi-sector, multi-disciplinary strategy and unity of effort in identifying gaps and addressing needs of children, youth, and families in recovery;
- Ensures alignment in recovery mission between the children's behavioral health recovery mission and early childhood programs that serve children and youth;
- Enables "resource pooling" by communities to address identified needs and gaps.

The Children and Youth Task Force model is a state-driven process in which decisions are made based on the state's agenda and leadership. The case studies from Joplin, Isaac, and Sandy demonstrate that Child and Youth Task Forces are not "one size fits all," but instead reflect state-specific and disaster-specific approaches. These guidelines are designed to help your state and local planners develop a task force geared toward your specific strengths and identified needs. The task force model facilitates building a community that is more resilient, and can result in achieving better outcomes for children, youth, and families who are impacted by disaster.

### Contact Us

For any comments, suggestions or questions please contact the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) [Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response](#) (OHSEPR) at [ohsepr@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:ohsepr@acf.hhs.gov).

You can also follow us on Twitter: [@OHSEPR](#) and like us on Facebook: [OHSEPR](#).

## Acronyms

<b>ACF -</b>	Administration for Children and Families	<a href="https://www.acf.hhs.gov">https://www.acf.hhs.gov</a>
<b>ASPR -</b>	Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response	<a href="http://www.phe.gov">http://www.phe.gov</a>
<b>CCR&amp;R -</b>	Child Care Resource & Referral agencies	
<b>FEMA -</b>	Federal Emergency Management Agency	<a href="http://www.fema.gov">http://www.fema.gov</a>
<b>H&amp;SS RSF -</b>	Health and Social Services Recovery Support Function	
<b>HHS -</b>	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	<a href="http://www.hhs.gov">http://www.hhs.gov</a>
<b>HRSA -</b>	Healthy Resources and Services Administration	<a href="http://www.hrsa.gov">http://www.hrsa.gov</a>
<b>HUD -</b>	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	<a href="http://www.hud.gov">http://www.hud.gov</a>
<b>IORA -</b>	ACF Immediate Office of the Regional Administrator	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/oro">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/oro</a>
<b>NGO -</b>	Nongovernmental Organization	
<b>OASH -</b>	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health	<a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ash/">http://www.hhs.gov/ash/</a>
<b>OCC -</b>	ACF Office of Child Care	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ</a>
<b>OCS -</b>	ACF Office of Community Services	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs</a>
<b>OHS -</b>	ACF Office of Head Start	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs</a>
<b>OHSEPR -</b>	ACF Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohsepr">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohsepr</a>
<b>RA -</b>	ACF Regional Administrator	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/oro">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/oro</a>
<b>REMS -</b>	ACF Regional Emergency Management Specialist	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/oro">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/oro</a>
<b>RPMs -</b>	ACF Regional Program Managers	
<b>SAMHSA -</b>	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	<a href="http://www.samhsa.gov/">http://www.samhsa.gov/</a>
<b>SBA -</b>	U.S. Small Business Administration	<a href="http://www.sba.gov">http://www.sba.gov</a>
<b>SSBG -</b>	Social Services Block Grant	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/ssbg">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/ssbg</a>
<b>USDA -</b>	U.S. Department of Agriculture	<a href="http://www.usda.gov/">http://www.usda.gov/</a>
<b>VALs -</b>	FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons	
<b>VOAD -</b>	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters	<a href="http://www.nvoad.org">http://www.nvoad.org</a>