

## APPENDIX B: STANDARDS AND INDICATORS FOR DISASTER SHELTER CARE FOR CHILDREN

### Purpose

To provide guidance to shelter managers and staff that ensures children have a safe, secure environment during and after a disaster – including appropriate support and access to essential resources.

### Standards and Indicators for All Shelters

- Under most circumstances a parent, guardian or caregiver is expected to be the primary resource for their children, age 18 and younger.
- In cases where parents or guardians are not with their children, local law enforcement personnel and local child protective/child welfare services must be contacted to assist with reunification.
- Children are sheltered together with their families or caregivers.
- Every effort is made to designate an area for families away from the general shelter population.
- Family areas should have direct access to bathrooms.
- Parents, guardians and caregivers are notified that they are expected to accompany their children when they use the bathrooms.
- Every effort is made to set aside space for family interaction:
  - This space is free from outside news sources thereby reducing a child's repeated exposure to coverage of the disaster.
  - If age-appropriate toys are available they will be in this space, with play supervised by parents, guardians or caregivers.
- Shared environmental surfaces in shelters that are frequently touched by children's hands or other body parts should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis. High contact areas may include diaper changing surfaces, communal toys, sinks, toilets, doorknobs and floors. These surfaces should be cleaned daily with a 1:10 bleach solution or a commercial equivalent disinfectant based on the manufacturer's cleaning instructions. Local health department authorities may be consulted for further infection control guidance.
- When children exhibit signs of illness, staff will refer children to on-site or local health services personnel for evaluation and will obtain consent from a parent, guardian or caretaker whenever possible.
- When children exhibit signs of emotional stress, staff will refer children to on-site or local disaster mental health personnel and will obtain consent from a parent, guardian or caretaker whenever possible.
- Children in the shelters come in all ages and with unique needs. Age appropriate and nutritious food (including baby formula and baby food) and snacks are available, as soon as possible after needs are identified.

- Diapers are available for infants and children as soon as possible after needs are identified. General guidelines suggest that infants and toddlers need up to 12 diapers a day.
- Blankets, for all appropriate ages, are also available.
- A safe space for breastfeeding women is provided so they may have privacy and a sense of security and support (this can include a curtained off area or providing blankets for privacy).
- Basins and supplies for bathing infants are provided as soon as possible after needs are identified.

### Standards and Indicators for Temporary Respite Care for Children

Temporary Respite Care for Children provides temporary relief for children, parents, guardians or caregivers. It is a secure, supervised and supportive play experience for children in a Disaster Recovery Center, assistance center, shelter or other service delivery site. When placing their child or children in this area, parents, guardians or caregivers are required to stay on-site in the disaster recovery center, assistance center or shelter or designate a person to be responsible for their child or children, who shall also be required to stay on-site.

In cases where temporary respite care for children is provided in a Disaster Recovery Center, assistance center, shelter and other service delivery site, the following Standards and Indicators shall apply:

- Temporary respite care for children is provided in a safe, secure environment following a disaster.
- Temporary respite care for children is responsive and equitable. Location, hours of operation and other information about temporary respite care for children is provided and easy for parents, guardians and caregivers to understand.
- All local, state and federal laws, regulations and codes that relate to temporary respite care for children are followed.
- The temporary respite care for children area is free from significant physical hazards and/or architectural barriers and remains fully accessible to all children.
- The temporary respite care for children area has enclosures or dividers to protect children and ensure that children are supervised in a secure environment.
- The temporary respite care for children area is placed close to restrooms and a drinking water source; hand washing and or hand sanitizer stations are available in the temporary respite care for children area.
- Procedures are in place to sign children in and out of the temporary respite care for children area and to ensure children are only released to the parent(s), guardian(s), caregiver(s) or designee(s) listed on the registration form.
- All documents---such as attendance records and registration forms (which include identifying information, parent, guardian or caregiver names and contact information), information about allergies and other special needs, injury and/or incident report forms---are provided, maintained, and available to staff at all times.
- Toys and materials in the temporary respite area are safe and age appropriate.

- Prior to working in the temporary respite care for children area, all shelter staff members must receive training and orientation. In addition, such staff must successfully complete a criminal and sexual offender background check. Spontaneous volunteers are not permitted. When inside the temporary respite area, staff shall visibly display proper credentials above the waist at all times.
- When children are present, at least two adults are to be present at all times. No child should be left alone with one adult who is not their parent, guardian or caregiver.
- All staff members must be 18 years or older. Supervision of the temporary respite care for children area is provided by a staff person at least 21 years of age.
- An evacuation plan will be developed with a designated meeting place outside the center. The evacuation plan will be posted and communicated to parent(s), caregiver(s), and guardian(s) when registering their child.
- The child to staff ratio is appropriate to the space available and to the ages and needs of the children in the temporary respite care for children area at any time.