

# Emergency Preparedness and Response in Child Care

## Questions and Answers



Date: 1/8/16  
Division of Child Development and Early Education  
NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center

**Emergency Preparedness and Response in Child Care**  
**Questions and Answers**

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## *Question and Answer*

### **Already have an EPR Plan**

**Question:** *I am already required to have an EPR Plan for my corporation and it must meet their specifications. Do I still have to create an EPR Plan on the template provided by the Division?*

**Answer:** Yes. The Division of Child Development and Early Education has partnered with NC Emergency Management to create a template that is standardized for all child care programs in the state. Having a standardized format ensures all licensed programs have the information needed to respond effectively in emergency situations. The template also ensures you meet all the requirements of the Child Care Rules. It is likely much of the information in the your corporate EPR Plan meets the EPR Plan required by Child Care Rule. You may copy and paste information from your current plan into the applicable fields of the EPR Plan template. The Child Care Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan is available on the NC Risk Management Portal, <https://rmp.nc.gov/portal/>.

**Child Care Rules:** .0607(c); .1705(b)(7)

## **Attendance Lists**

**Question:** *Some of the larger facilities use computerized sign in sheets. Do they need to have paper copies of daily attendance sheets? Can they write into their plans that in the event of an emergency, they will print out the attendance sheets? What if the power goes out and they can't print out their attendance sheets?*

**Answer:** Even if programs have computerized attendance lists, each classroom should have a paper with the list of children they are tracking. For example, in a child care program that uses a computerized check in system, each teacher also has a clipboard with a document they use to track when children come in the room and when they leave the room. As parents bring or pick up children, the teachers check that they are present or mark them off the list. They use the list when accounting for children whenever they leave the classroom to go to another area and when they return. For example, they count the children when they line up to go outside, then again when they come back inside. They make sure the number of children they count is the same number that is on their clipboard list. These lists would be an acceptable way to track a child's attendance even if it were not the computerized list.

In an emergency, programs may not have time or the ability to print computerized attendance lists. They could put in their Plan, if time allows, that they will print the attendance list, but the teacher attendance lists would be the primary lists used to account for children.

**Child Care Rule:** .0607(d)(1)(A)

## Computer Challenges

**Question:** *What if I do not have a computer or am not comfortable using a computer? Do I still have to use the online EPR template to create my plan?*

**Answer:** Yes, you do have to use the online EPR template to create your plan. The Child Care Rules require programs to enter the program's EPR Plan on a template provided by the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE). DCDEE partnered with NC Emergency Management to create the template online so that it could be standardized across the state and across agencies.

If you do not have a computer, you may access the NC Risk Management Portal, <https://rmp.nc.gov/portal/>, on a computer at the public library. Another option would be for you to ask a friend, neighbor or relative if you can use their computer and if they can help you get started.

Go to the DCDEE website for details about the EPR Plan Template and how to access it: [http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/providers/pv\\_emergency.asp](http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/providers/pv_emergency.asp). If you need assistance completing the template, you can ask your *EPR in Child Care* Trainer, your Child Care Consultant or you can contact the DCDEE. You may also send an email to [dcdee.epr@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:dcdee.epr@dhhs.nc.gov)

**Child Care Rules:** .0607(c); .1705(b)(7)

## **Designated Person**

**Question:** *Can the person designated to take the *EPR in Child Care* training be a preschool coordinator or regional company representative?*

**Answer:** The Child Care Rules state existing and new child care facilities must have one person on staff who has completed the *EPR in Child Care* training. This is interpreted to mean the person must be employed by the program and work on site. The trained person is also responsible for ensuring the Plan is current and would review the EPR Plan with the other staff in the program at orientation and annually.

**Child Care Rules:** .0607(b-f)

## **Documentation**

**Question:** *Most of the EPR rules require providers to maintain documentation in individual files. However rule .0607(f) allows them to either maintain documentation in individual files or in a file designated for EPR Plan documents. Will the program be in violation of the rules if they put all the EPR documents in a file designated for EPR Plan documents?*

**Answer:** The intent of the rule was to maintain documentation. As long as the Child Care Consultant can review the documentation upon request, the facility will not be in violation of the rules. Facilities may keep the documentation in a central file designated for EPR Plan documents.

**Child Care Rules:** .0607(b-g); .1701(d); .1705(b)(6)

## ***EPR in Child Care Training***

**Question 1:** *Why am I only getting in-service training credit for the EPR in Child Care training while my friend in another county is getting CEU credit?*

**Answer:** All EPR trainers can offer *EPR in Child Care* for in-service training credit/hours. To offer continuing education units (CEUs) for the course, trainers and their agency must meet specific eligibility and planning requirements. Some EPR trainers or their agencies do meet the qualifications required to offer the course for CEUs. The training offers the same information.

If you are interested in getting CEUs for the *EPR in Child Care* training, check to see if it is offered by the closest CCRR agency or in CCRRs in neighboring counties.

**Question 2:** *I heard a program say they were going to wait until Spring 2017 to take the training so they could delay meeting the new requirements.*

**Answer:** The Division encourages providers to take the training as soon as classes are available. If they wait until Spring 2017 they may not be able to get into a class. They may be cited a violation if there were a reasonable number of opportunities to take the training prior to the deadline and they did not take the opportunity.

**Rule:** .0607(b); .1705(b)(6)

**Question 3:** *I have already completed an EPR in child care training. Do I have to take this one? Do I have to take it again in a few years?*

**Answer:** If you took an EPR in child care training prior to July 2015, then you must complete the new *EPR in Child Care* training. The new training includes the EPR rules, how to complete the EPR Plan template and how to conduct the shelter-in-place and lockdown drills. You will not have to take the training again once this training has been completed.

If you are trained in EPR and leave the child care center, that center will have four months from your last day of employment to have another person on staff trained in EPR. Once you have completed the training, any child care center that hires you can list you as the staff person trained in EPR. When you are listed as the staff trained in EPR, you assume the responsibility for being familiar with the EPR Plan, reviewing/revising the Plan annually, and reviewing the Plan with other staff members at orientation and annually.

**Child Care Rules:** .0607(b); .1704(b)(6)

**Question 4:** *What if participants cannot or do not return to the 2nd session or complete EPR Plan within the allowed time frame? Do they have to start all over?*

**Answer:** The trainer can only issue a certificate of completion or CEUs for the *EPR in Child Care* training when the participant has attended both training sessions and completed the assignment. Current programs must have one person on staff complete the training by July 1, 2017. New programs have one year from the date on the license to complete the training. If they do not have one person complete the training by the applicable date, they may be cited out of compliance with the Child Care Rules.

The person who completed the training from the child care center or family child care home is responsible for completing the EPR Plan. The Child Care Consultant may cite a program out of compliance if they have not completed the EPR Plan four months from the date they completed the *EPR in Child Care* training. Completion of the EPR Plan is required by Rule, but not required as part of the EPR in Child Care training.

**Child Care Rules:** .0607(b),(c); .1705(b)(6),(7)

## **FCCH – Orientation**

**Question:** *In Child Care Rule .1705(b)(9) it requires FCCH operators to review the EPR Plan with additional caregivers during orientation and on an annual basis. Are FCCH operators required to have an orientation?*

**Answer:** No, FCCH operators are not required to have an orientation. Child Care Rule .1701(d) requires the operator to review all the rules and the EPR Plan with additional caregivers prior to the individual assuming responsibility for children. Child Care Rule .1705(b)(9) states again that the operator is required to conduct an initial review of the EPR Plan and an annual review with additional caregivers. The intent was not to require an orientation.

**Child Care Rules:** .1701(d) and .1705(b)(9)

## **Floor Plans**

**Question:** *Do the floor plans have to be posted?*

**Answer:** The floor plan and evacuation diagram must be maintained on file and available for review by the fire code official [NC Fire Code 2012, Chapter 4 404.2]. The evacuation diagram must be part of your EPR Plan. You can access it in your *Ready to Go File* where you have a copy of EPR Plan. While you are not required to post the floor plan or evacuation diagram, the evacuation diagram serves to orient people when they need to evacuate the building by either the primary or secondary route.

**Child Care Rules:** .0607(d)(7); .1705(b)(7)(G)

## Lockdown Procedures

**Question:** *An ECE program is proceeding with lockdown due to a dangerous intruder on the premises. After a teacher locks her classroom doors and windows, she reviews information to account for all adults and children. She realizes her assistant teacher and a child were out of the classroom due to a trip to the restroom down the hall from the classroom.*

*Should she open the classroom door to look for the missing child and teacher?*

**Answer:** No. During a lockdown situation, classroom doors should not be opened for anyone until emergency responders have communicated that it is safe to do so.

A review of the basic steps of lockdown is helpful:

The first step in lockdown is to use a known signal to let staff know an intruder is on the premises and to then call 911. All doors and windows to the classroom are to be locked and blinds drawn. Children are moved to the previously agreed location that protects them from outside view, if possible.

Cell phones can be used to communicate information. Children and adults not accounted for should be reported to emergency responders. The facility should remain in lockdown until staff are notified by first responders that they may open the doors.

During staff training on lockdown it should be made clear that all classroom doors will be locked when the signal is given. Staff who might find themselves outside a classroom should seek shelter where they can be as safe and inconspicuous as possible.

## **Monitoring**

**Question 1:** *When do child care facilities have to start practicing the new quarterly drills (shelter-in-place and/or lockdown)? When will licensing consultants start monitoring to see if the drills are conducted?*

**Answer:** DCDEE Child Care Consultants will monitor for records of lockdown or shelter-in-place drills after a staff member has completed the *EPR in Child Care* training. The rationale is that providers will receive the information on how to conduct the drills in the training.

**Child Care Rule:** .0604(f); .1720(a)(12)

**Question 2:** *When will licensing consultants start monitoring for the Ready to Go Files at child care facilities?*

**Answer:** DCDEE will monitor for *Ready to Go Files* once a facility has completed the EPR Plan or four months after a staff member has completed the *EPR in Child Care* training.

**Child Care Rule:** .0607 (d) (10); .1705(b) (7)(J)

## **NCID**

**Question 1:** *When getting an NCID can I use the business account if I represent a corporation that wants to put multiple EPR plans under one NCID?*

**Answer:** At this time, you can only use the Individual Account.

**Question 2:** *What happens if the person who completed the EPR template at our facility leaves? If they used a personal NCID, how will we be able to get access to our EPR Plan?*

**Answer:** Each EPR plan is registered to one user NCID. If the registered user is no longer going to be administering the plan, the plan must be transferred to another user. The new EPR plan administrator at the facility will need to know the old user's email address and user name. They will need to obtain an NCID.

Directions for transferring the plan to another user can be found on the DCDEE EPR webpage: [http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/providers/pv\\_emergency.asp](http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/providers/pv_emergency.asp).

## **NC Pre-K Programs**

**Question:** *Are NC Pre-K Programs that are part of a public school expected to follow the Child Care Rules for Emergency Preparedness and Response or are they covered by their school system plans? Do they need to submit an EPR Plan and send a representative to training?*

**Answer:** Since NC Pre-K Programs are licensed child care facilities, they must meet the requirements of the Child Care Rules pertaining to EPR. They can copy and paste applicable information from the school's plan into their own EPR Plan. To keep everyone in the school informed, the NC Pre-K classroom should communicate with the school principal or appropriate official about their EPR plan.

**Child Care Rule:** .0607(c)

## **Ready to Go Kit**

**Question 1:** *Am I required to have a Ready to Go Kit?*

**Answer:** Child Care Rule .0607(d)(4) requires programs to describe how children's nutritional and health needs will be met. Child Care Consultants will review the program's EPR Plan to determine if the program has a description of how the nutritional and health needs will be met. In the *EPR in Child Care* training a Ready to Go Kit is recommended, but not required, to hold the items needed to meet children's nutritional and health needs. A checklist is available to assist providers in determining the types of items to include in the Kit.

**Child Care Rules:** .0607(d)(4); .1705(b)(7)(D)

**Question 2:** *Our shelter-in-place location is the bathroom. If we store our Ready to Go Kit in the bathroom, will we be out of compliance with the Sanitation Requirements?*

**Answer:** Yes, you would be out of compliance with the Sanitation Rules. The Sanitation Rules require programs to limit storage in bathrooms to toileting and diapering supplies. You may store the Ready to Go Kit somewhere else nearby, then bring it to the bathroom if an emergency occurs requiring you to shelter-in-place. You also may want to work with your Child Care Consultant or local emergency management office to find another location for sheltering-in-place.

**Sanitation Rule:** .2817(a)

**Question 3:** *How are child care facilities supposed to haul water or store water for everyone in case of an emergency? They do not have anywhere to store that amount of water. Can they use the water at the offsite locations instead of hauling as long as it is available?*

**Answer:** The Child Care Rules .0607(d)(4) and .1705(b)(7)(D) require you to provide a description of how you will meet the nutritional and health needs of the children in your care. Consider the recommendations from the training, then discuss a realistic amount of water you can store. Write that amount in your EPR Plan. Transportation of water is a consideration when you have to evacuate off-site. When you plan for off-site evacuation, one option is to make arrangements to store the water you will need at the offsite evacuation location(s). Another option is to bring some water with you and store some at the off-site evacuation site. You can put in your description that you plan to use the water available at the evacuation site.

**Child Care Rules:** .0607(d)(4); .1705(b)(7)(D)

## Ready to Go Kit

**Question 4:** *Are we supposed to purchase expensive formula to have in our kit for it to expire and have to be thrown away?*

**Answer:** Child Care Rules .0607(d)(4) and .1705(b)(7)(D) require that you provide a description of how you will meet the nutritional and health needs of the children in your care. You are not required to purchase formula or any item. Review the recommendations in the *EPR in Child Care* training and then determine what your program can realistically do. Think about what you will need in an emergency situation to address the nutritional and health needs of children. Then think about the ways you can obtain the items you need. For example, people may be willing to donate items as a way to support your emergency preparedness efforts. Describe in your EPR Plan what you will do to meet the nutritional and health needs of the children in your care.

When you obtain items for your kit, you do not need to wait for the item to expire and then throw it away. Before the expiration date, replace the item. You can then use the one before it expires. For example, say the formula has an expiration date of May 23, 2016. On April 22, 2016, you replace the formula with one that has an expiration date of September 25, 2016. You can then use the formula you took out of kit before it expires. An easy way to track expiration dates is to check them during each time change.

**Child Care Rules:** .0607(d)(4); .1705(b)(7)(D)

## **Review of EPR Plan**

**Question 1:** *Do I get in-service training credit for the annual review of the EPR Plan?*

**Answer:** No, you do not get in-service training credit for participating in the review of the EPR Plan. A review can be a training, but it does not constitute all the components of an approved inservice training.

**Child Care Rules:** .0607(f) and .1705(b)(9)

**Question 2:** *What is the difference between a review of the EPR Plan and being informed of the EPR Plan?*

**Answer:** According to Child Care Rule .0607(f), all staff in a center must receive a review of the EPR Plan by the staff person trained in *EPR in Child Care* at orientation and annually. The objective of a review is to ensure all staff are aware of the contents of the program's EPR plan, their roles and actions in the event of an emergency and the roles and actions of others. An exception to this review is substitutes and volunteers counted in ratio. They must be informed of the EPR Plan. Any program staff can inform them of the plan which means they tell them there is an EPR Plan and the location of the EPR Plan. Program staff must maintain documentation of both the review and the notice of the Plan and its location.

In Family Child Care Homes the EPR Plan must be reviewed with additional caregivers prior to assuming responsibilities with children and annually. The additional caregiver should know the contents of the Plan, their roles and actions they should take if an emergency occurs.

**Child Care Rules:** .0607(f)(g); .1701(d) and .1705(b)(9)

## Transportation

**Question 1:** *We do not have any public transportation in our county. Our child care centers do not have vans or buses, except for one which has one van for school age kids. No one has a way to transport off site other than to use personal cars. Also, we do not have car seats in any of our centers! What are our options for transporting children in the event of an emergency?*

**Answer:** You must include a description of how you will transport children if evacuation off-site is needed. You must plan to transport children in compliance with laws governing child restraints. You may use private vehicles to transport children.

### ***Options for transportation:***

If time allows, parents should be called to pick up children. This option would ensure child seat restraints are available for all children.

Programs could consider working with a local transportation company, a school or church with buses or cars in the event of an emergency. With this option most children would not have access to child seat restraints. Programs can use this option only when the need to evacuate is immediate or when emergency personnel acting in an official business capacity directs you to evacuate immediately.

The program can plan to use staff and parent vehicles to transport children. The facility will need to make arrangements with individuals to drive the cars during emergencies. Facilities should have all contact numbers for the individuals who will operate the vehicles. A list of backup vehicles and drivers should be ready in case the emergency makes the original drivers unavailable. Any transportation option that does not include child seat restraints should only be used if the need to evacuate is immediate and is recommended by a first responder acting in an official business capacity.

**Child Care Rules:** 0607 (d)(2); .1705(b)(7)(B); .1720(a)(9) *Requirements and Recommendations for the Transportation of Children by Schools, Child Care Centers and Other Organizations in North Carolina* [http://www.buckleupnc.org/resources/nc\\_cps\\_bus-van-transportation.pdf](http://www.buckleupnc.org/resources/nc_cps_bus-van-transportation.pdf)

## Transportation

**Question 2:** *If the need arises that a Family Child Care Home has to evacuate, they have to put all the children and supplies in their car. With one person it will be hard for this to happen in a timely manner. Any suggestions?*

**Answer:** Family Child Care Home (FCCH) operators should think through what will work best for their situation. They may be able to store supplies in a container that is often referred to as the *Ready to Go Kit*. They might store the supplies in a backpack they can put on and bring to the car when they bring the children out. A container with wheels is another option. The operator might easily wheel the container as they bring the children to the car. They can store the *Ready to Go Kit* near the exit from the house or in the trunk of the car.

A FCCH operator will have the names and numbers of the individuals who will assist during emergencies in the EPR Plan and he or she can call them to come help.

Operators may also ask local emergency personnel if they have recommendations.

## Water

**Question:** *The recommendations say to plan for one gallon of water per person per day in an emergency. I would need 224 gallons of water in my center, I have no room to store this. Any suggestions?*

**Answer:** The Child Care Rules .0607(d)(4) and .1705(b)(7)(D) require you to provide a description of how you will meet the nutritional and health needs of the children in your care. Consider the recommendations from the EPR in Child Care training, then describe in the EPR Plan what your program plans to do to meet the nutritional and health needs of children in an emergency situation. If realistically your program can only provide and store a certain amount of water, then write in your plan the amount the program plans to provide and store. One option is to store some water onsite and some water at the evacuation site. Another option may be to use the water available at the evacuation site. For more guidance on water provisions and storage, contact your Child Care Consultant, Child Care Health Consultant, or EPR in Child Care Trainer.

**Child Care Rules .0607(d)(4) and .1705(b)(7)(D)**