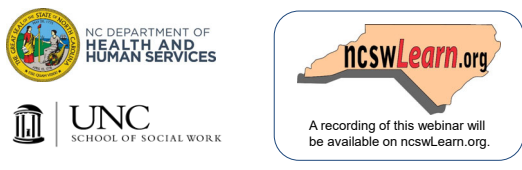


NC Department of Health and Human Services
Webinar: Disaster Plan Requirements and Resources for NC's Local Child Welfare Agencies
September 22, 2021

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About this webinar

This webinar was developed through funding from the North Carolina Division of Social Services by the Family and Children's Resource Program at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work.



A recording of this webinar will be available on [ncswLearn.org](https://ncswlearn.org).

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Goals for this Webinar

By the end of this webinar, we hope you will know:

- Why child welfare agencies need disaster plans
- What's expected to be addressed within a child welfare disaster plan
- Where to access all NCDSS disaster plan information




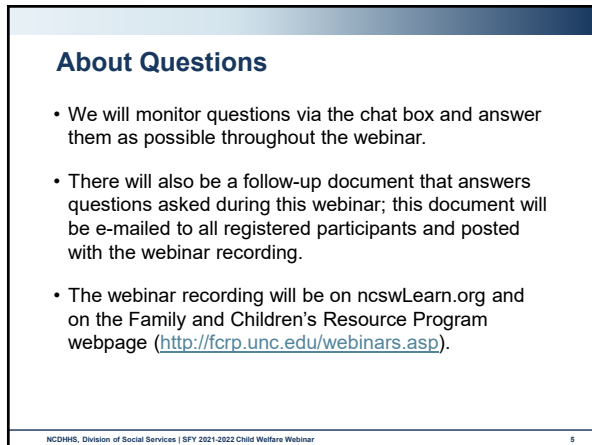
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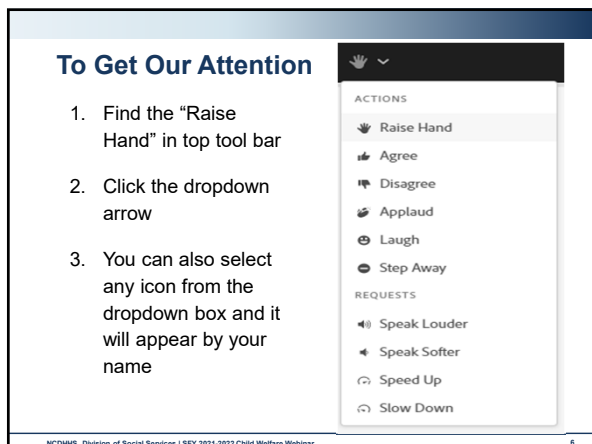
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Presenter		
Debra McHenry, MSW <i>NC Division of Social Services Fatality Review Administrator</i>		
Moderator	Tech Support	
Jonathan Rockoff <i>UNC School of Social Work FCRP Training Specialist</i>	Phillip Armfield John McMahon	

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Disaster Plan



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Why Does NC Child Welfare Services Need a Disaster Plan?

Federal law, Title IV-B, Subpart 1, §422. [42 U.S.C. 622] of the Social Security Act, requires every state to have a disaster plan to address how child welfare agencies mitigate risk, plan for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

2020 in NC:
Tropical Storm Eta – *November*
Hurricane Isaias – *August*
Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Flooding – *February*

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County Child Welfare, Private Agency, & Resource Parent Opportunities

- Two 90-minute focus groups of county child welfare staff
- One 90-minute focus group attended by NCDSS staff
- Seven interviews with key informants, including county directors and representatives from private child-placing agencies
- One online survey of resource parents from counties that participated in the focus groups

Feedback informed the development of a toolkit for child welfare agencies

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What is Expected of County Child Welfare Agencies?

Purpose of child welfare plan: address requirements specified in federal law

Child welfare agencies need to address how they will:

1. Identify, locate, and continue services for children;
2. Respond to new child welfare cases;
3. Remain in communication with case workers and other essential personnel;
4. Preserve essential program records; and
5. Coordinate services and share information with other states.

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Child Welfare Disaster Plan Summary

Summary checklist includes:
Points of contact, types of disasters addressed, when it was distributed to staff and partners.

Assurances child welfare agencies have a plan to:

1. Identify, locate, and continue services for children;
2. Respond to new child welfare cases;
3. Remain in communication with case workers and other essential personnel;
4. Preserve essential program records; and
5. Coordinate services and share information w/ other states.

Staff is supported before, during, and after the disaster

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1. Identify, Locate, & Continue Services

Your child welfare plan should include how you will:

- Continue to provide services in the event you are not able to return to your offices
- Locate families being assessed by child welfare
- Provide ongoing child welfare services
- Assess families' needs after a disaster and ensure their needs are being met
- Connect families to services offered through FEMA (i.e., mental health counseling, emergency food assistance, housing, etc.)


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2. Respond to New Child Welfare Cases

Your plan should include how you will:

- Take new CPS reports: power outage, damaged office
- Respond to immediate response reports
- Address the needs of unaccompanied minors
- Address reports from shelter staff or emergency responders




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3. Communication with Workers & Essential Personnel

Your plan should include how you will:

- Know if a disaster has impacted staff
- Remain in contact with resource families, congregate care providers
- Handle media requests
- Report data to the state – impact to your county, ability to provide services



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4. Preserve Essential Program Records

Your plan should include how you will:

- Protect and preserve paper records
- Electronically back-up paper records
- Access your records when not going to the office
- Document and preserve agency activities completed during a disaster

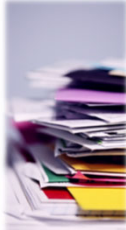


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5. Resides in NC: Coordinate Services & Share Information with other States

- Locate each child and provide an update on their safety and well-being **within 48 hours**
 - RCWCs will provide a spreadsheet to assist with tracking

Your plan should include how you will:

- Maintain contact with families served through ICPC
- Designate a point of contact to respond to and update data requests



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Resides in Other State: Coordinate Services & Share Information

- NC ICPC office will obtain a list of children that are placed in another state and will share the names of these children to the receiving state's ICPC office.
- The receiving state's ICPC office will communicate with NC local child welfare agencies as soon as possible, regarding the status of the child.



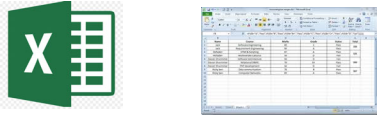
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Data Reporting

Within 24 hours of the disaster onset, Regional Child Welfare Consultants will request a status report of identified children in DSS custody or in a placement in their county who may be impacted by the disaster.



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During a Disaster: What can child welfare agencies expect from NCDSS?

- Support!
- When down, we will help identify and coordinate child welfare service provision and meet other needs as identified



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When are county plans due and where can I find the information for child welfare agencies?

- Plans are due April 1st, every year
- See "Disaster Preparedness Resources" section of NC Child Welfare Manual

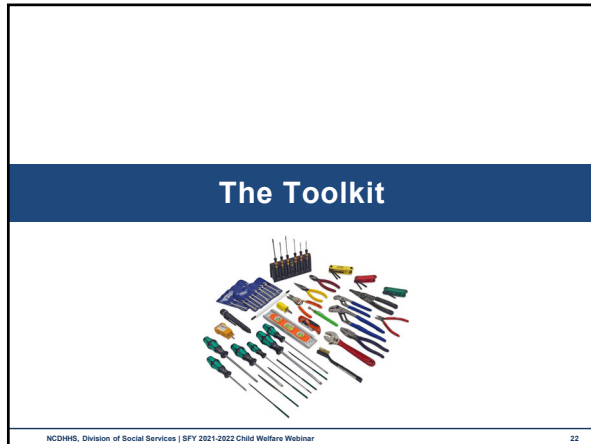
Child Welfare Manual

- [Purpose, Philosophy, Legal Basis and Staffing](#)
- [CPS Intake Assessments](#)
- [In-Home Services](#)
- [Permanency Planning](#)
- [Adoptions](#)
- [Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children](#)
- [Foster Home Licensing Manual](#)
- [Child Fatality Prevention and Review](#)
- [Cross Function](#)
- [Disaster Preparedness Resources](#)
- [Appendix 1, CPS Data Collection](#)
- [Appendix 2, CPPS Manual](#)

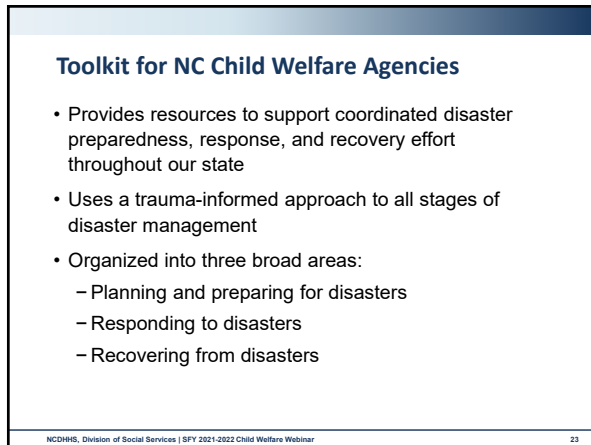
<https://policies.ncdhhs.gov/divisional/social-services/child-welfare/policy-manuals/disaster-preparedness-resources>

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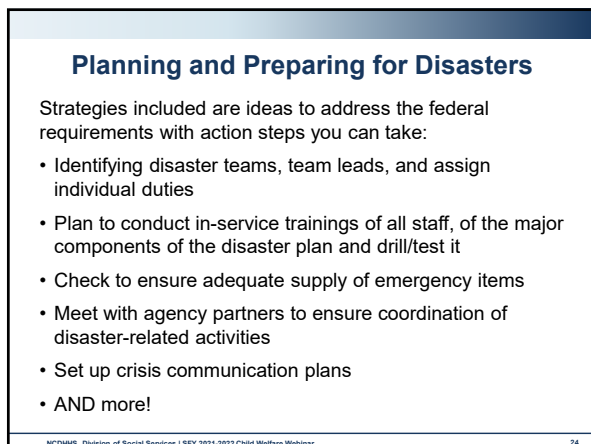
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Responding to Disasters

Examples of challenges agencies may face in disaster response and ways to avoid or address those challenges

- Ideas for when typical communication methods may be inoperable
- How to ensure staff is clear about work responsibilities during and immediately after the disaster
- Strategies for locating children that are unaccounted for
- Preventing confusion over what agency services are available
- Having a trauma-informed response to staff and families – supporting their physical and emotional safety

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Recovering from Disasters

- Shifts to responding to a broad array of needs – best approached in partnership with community supports
- Leaders should check in with staff, listen and to ask what staff need, and meet those needs
- Encourage staff, acknowledge and celebrate successes, and promote activities to support physical, emotional, social, and spiritual wellness
- **Parallel process** – when staff feels supported, they can then more easily support families to address all of their physical and emotional needs

Lots of resources for staff and families in the toolkit!

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Where and when can I find the toolkit?

- See "Disaster Preparedness Resources" section of NC Child Welfare Manual
- See below for direct link

Child Welfare Manual


- Purpose, Philosophy, Legal Basis and Staffing
- CPS Intake
- Assessments
- In-Home Services
- Permanency Planning
- Adoptions
- Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children
- Foster Home Licensing Manual
- Child Fatality Prevention and Review
- Cross Function
- Disaster Preparedness Resources
- Appendix 1. CPS Data Collection
- Appendix 2. CPPS Manual

<https://policies.ncdhhs.gov/divisional/social-services/child-welfare/policy-manuals/disaster-preparedness-resources>

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Resources & Wrap-up



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A Course for Resource Parents

- 1-hour course for Resource parents:
Preparing for and Responding to Disasters
- Expectations & best practices
- Create a trauma-informed family disaster plan for before, during, and after a disaster
- Maintain contact during a disaster
- Available November 2021
- **Strongly encouraged for all resource parents**
- Subscribe to fosteringnc.org


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Additional Resource

Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative
<https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/coping-with-disasters-and-strengthening-systems/>

- *Resource Roadmap to Coping with Disasters and Strengthening Systems*
- *Guide: Coping with Disasters and Strengthening Systems*



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Summary of Next Steps

- We hope you now know why child welfare agencies need disaster plans, what's expected to be addressed within them, and where to access all NCDSS disaster information
- The plan and toolkit are available on the NCDHHS website.
- The resource parent course will be available 11/2021
- Follow-up Q&A document will be e-mailed to registered participants and posted with the webinar recording
- The webinar recording will be on ncswLearn.org & [HERE](#)
- Contact your Regional Child Welfare Consultant if you have additional questions

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Questions 

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Type into Chat . . .

What's one thing you will do in response to what you have learned today?



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Contact Information



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Final Steps for County DSS Staff


- 1. Please take a brief survey**
 - We will provide link for those logged on
 - Can also access thru ncswlearn.org
- 2. To receive training credit, you must "Complete Course" WITHIN ONE WEEK**
 - Log in to www.ncswlearn.org
 - Select "PLP"
 - Select "Webinars"
 - Click "Enter"
 - Click "Complete Course" button

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Passcode is: **plan**

To take the survey now, just click on the link below:



[Webinar Survey](#)

Don't forget - You have only one week to "complete course"

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