

Department of Health and Human Services

**OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**THE RESPONSE TO
SUPERSTORM SANDY
HIGHLIGHTS THE
IMPORTANCE OF RECOVERY
PLANNING FOR CHILD CARE
NATIONWIDE**



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**December 2015
OEI-04-14-00410**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE RESPONSE TO SUPERSTORM SANDY HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOVERY PLANNING FOR CHILD CARE NATIONWIDE (OEI-04-14-00410)

WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

The availability of child care after an emergency or disaster is an important part of recovery efforts because it ensures that children are safe while parents make efforts to rebuild their lives and communities. When Superstorm Sandy made landfall on October 29, 2012, it caused widespread flooding that substantially disrupted child care services in New Jersey and New York. Lessons learned from these States' experiences in responding to and recovering from Superstorm Sandy could help the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to improve nationwide emergency preparedness for child care. In February 2011, ACF recommended that each State develop a statewide disaster plan for child care, and legislation enacted in November 2014 requires each State to do so.

HOW WE DID THIS STUDY

We collected information from the lead agencies in New Jersey and New York that administer the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program. In fiscal year (FY) 2015, the CCDF program made \$5.35 billion available to States to help low-income families obtain child care so that parent(s) could work or participate in training or education. Specifically, we collected information on each State's emergency preparedness for, response to, and recovery from Superstorm Sandy as related to child care. We also conducted telephone interviews with 15 child care providers in these States to gain insight about their experiences during and after Superstorm Sandy. Additionally, we collected information from ACF and reviewed all 51 States' CCDF plans for FYs 2014 and 2015 to determine the status of States' emergency planning for child care since Superstorm Sandy.

WHAT WE FOUND

Before Superstorm Sandy, New Jersey and New York's emergency planning did not include the development of strategies for the restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster as recommended by ACF. After Superstorm Sandy, these States established post-disaster task forces that assisted child care providers with the recovery and rebuilding process. However, some child care providers in New Jersey and New York still reported challenges with rebuilding after Superstorm Sandy. These challenges included paying for repairs out of pocket and a lengthy application process for disaster assistance. Since Superstorm Sandy, ACF has taken steps to improve nationwide emergency preparedness, response, and recovery for child care. However, in their respective CCDF plans for FYs 2014 and 2015, less than half of all States reported including or planning to include the restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster in their emergency preparedness and response plans.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND

Because of legislation enacted in November 2014, States are required to have statewide child care disaster plans. However, the requirements do not explicitly specify that these plans must include planning for the restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster. Therefore, we recommend that ACF require States to include planning for this area in their statewide child care disaster plans. ACF concurred with this recommendation.

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OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the extent to which New Jersey and New York conducted emergency planning for child care before Superstorm Sandy.
2. To describe how New Jersey and New York assisted with the recovery and rebuilding process after Superstorm Sandy and how the storm impacted child care providers in New Jersey and New York.
3. To determine what actions the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has taken since Superstorm Sandy to improve nationwide emergency preparedness, response, and recovery for child care.
4. To determine whether all States included or planned to include the five key areas from ACF's recommended framework in their emergency preparedness and response plans for child care.

RATIONALE

Children and families have specific needs—such as family reunification and temporary child care—that must be considered before, during, and after an emergency or disaster. The availability of child care can help expedite recovery efforts by ensuring that children are safe while parents visit damaged property, access public benefits, and make other efforts to rebuild their lives.¹

On October 29, 2012, Superstorm Sandy (hereinafter referred to as “Sandy”) made landfall in the northeastern United States, severely damaging coastal areas in excess of \$50 billion.² As a result of Sandy, 697 child care providers in Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York closed and thousands more were impacted by the storm.³ Sandy substantially disrupted child care services, particularly in New York and New Jersey,

¹ There are three phases of “recovery” after a disaster: short-term (days after disaster), intermediate (weeks to months after a disaster), and long-term (months to years after a disaster). Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), *National Disaster Recovery Framework: Strengthening Disaster Recovery for the Nation*, September 2011, p. 8. Accessed at http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1820-25045-5325/508_ndrf.pdf on June 23, 2015.

² National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, *Service Assessment: Hurricane/Post-Tropical Cyclone Sandy, October 22–29, 2012*, May 2013. Accessed at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/assessments/pdfs/Sandy13.pdf> on June 22, 2015.

³ Institute of Medicine, *Preparedness, Response and Recovery Considerations for Children and Families*, 2014, pp. 112 and 119. Accessed at <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/18550/preparedness-response-and-recovery-considerations-for-children-and-families-workshop> on October 28, 2014.

and resulted in lessons learned that could improve emergency preparedness for child care nationwide.

BACKGROUND

Child Care and Development Fund

ACF administers the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), which supports low-income working families through subsidized child care services and promotes children’s learning by improving the quality of early care and afterschool programs.^{4,5} In FY 2015, the CCDF program made \$5.35 billion available to States, territories, and tribes (hereinafter collectively referred to as “States”) to help low-income families obtain child care so that parent(s) could work or participate in training or education.⁶ The CCDF program helps 1.4 million children receive child care each month.⁷

Federal Guidance for State Development of Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans for Child Care

In February 2011, ACF issued an information memorandum to States administering child care programs under the CCDBG Act of 1990, as amended.⁸ In this memorandum, ACF recommended—but did not have statutory authority to require—that each State develop a plan to address emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts specific to child care services and programs (hereinafter referred to as “emergency preparedness and response plans”). ACF outlined a framework that States should consider when developing and updating emergency preparedness

⁴ ACF, *Fundamentals of CCDF Administration*. Accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/fundamentals-of-ccdf-administration> on July 30, 2014.

⁵ The CCDF program is authorized by the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 1990, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 9858, et seq.) and section 418 of the Social Security Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 618). The enactment of the CCDBG Act of 2014, P.L. No. 113-186 (Nov. 19, 2014), reauthorized and amended the CCDF program. For ease of reference, we will cite to the U.S. Code and not the CCDBG Act.

⁶ Approximately \$2.435 billion in discretionary funding was appropriated in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, P.L. No. 113-235 (Dec. 16, 2014), and \$2.917 billion in mandatory child care funding was extended for FY 2015 by the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, P.L. No. 113-235 (Dec. 16, 2014).

⁷ ACF, *Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) of 2014 Basic FAQs*, November 2014. Accessed at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/ccdbg_reauthorization_basic_faqs.pdf on January 21, 2015.

⁸ ACF, *Guidance to assist Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies in developing, exercising, and maintaining written child care emergency preparedness and response plans pursuant to submission of the CCDF Plan (CCDF-ACF-IM-2011-01)*, February 17, 2011. Accessed at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/im2011_01.pdf on February 11, 2014.

and response plans. This framework consists of five key areas, shown in Table 1, that are further broken out into elements, shown in Appendix A.

Table 1: Five Key Areas in Framework for States' Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans for Child Care

Key Area	Description
1 Planning for continuation of services to CCDF families	Includes provisions for continuing core CCDF functions, continuing payments to child care providers serving children receiving subsidies, assistance to impacted families, communication plans, and data security and storage
2 Coordination with other State/territorial agencies and key partners	Includes coordination with State and local emergency management agencies, State agencies (e.g., child care licensing and regulatory agencies), volunteer/advocacy organizations, child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies, and contractors and businesses
3 Emergency preparedness regulatory requirements for child care providers	Includes coordination with child care licensing and regulatory agencies to ensure child care providers plan in advance for disasters and strategies to provide ongoing technical assistance and training to child care providers to help prepare for emergencies and disasters
4 Provision of temporary child care services after a disaster	Includes coordination with emergency management agencies, voluntary organizations, and CCR&R agencies; temporary operating standards or provisions for temporarily waiving certain child care regulatory requirements; and identification and training of preapproved child care providers that can provide temporary child care after a disaster.
5 Restoring or rebuilding child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster	Includes strategies for working with emergency officials, licensing agencies, and public health officials to conduct timely damage assessments, education/training for child care providers to ensure business continuity, and information to child care providers on available financial assistance

Note: The wording of certain key areas' titles was slightly different between the information memorandum and the CCDF plan for FYs 2014 and 2015. To be consistent in this report, we used the wording from Section 1.6.2 in the CCDF plan.
Source: ACF, *Guidance to assist Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies in developing, exercising, and maintaining written child care emergency preparedness and response plans pursuant to submission of the CCDF Plan* (CCDF-ACF-IM-2011-01), February 17, 2011.

For a State to be eligible to receive CCDF funds, the State must submit a CCDF plan for ACF review and approval.⁹ ACF asked each State to indicate in its CCDF plan for FYs 2014 and 2015 the status of its emergency planning efforts. ACF also requested that each State indicate whether the five key areas were or would be included in its emergency planning efforts. ACF used this information to identify States' technical assistance needs.¹⁰

Federal Requirements for Statewide Child Care Disaster Plans

On November 19, 2014, the President signed into law the CCDBG Act of 2014, which reauthorized the CCDF program and established the

⁹ 42 U.S.C. § 9858c(a). The CCDBG Act of 2014, P.L. No. 113-186, § 5(a) (Nov. 19, 2014) requires that States submit a CCDF plan every 3 years. 42 U.S.C. § 9858c(b). States previously submitted a CCDF plan every 2 years.

¹⁰ ACF, *Technical Assistance*. Accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/ta> on July 6, 2015. Technical assistance topics on emergency preparedness are listed at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/topics/emergency-preparedness>, accessed on July 6, 2015.

requirement for statewide child care disaster plans.¹¹ In the statewide child care disaster plan, each State must demonstrate how it will address the needs of children in child care before, during, and after an emergency or disaster.¹² Statewide child care disaster plans must include coordination of activities and collaboration among various State agencies—including those with jurisdiction over human services, State emergency planning, and licensing of child care providers—and other organizations (e.g., child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies).¹³ The statute specifies that statewide child care disaster plans must include:

- procedures for evacuation, relocation, sheltering in place, and lockdown; for communication and reunification with families, continuity of operations, and accommodation of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions;
- guidelines for the continuation of child care services in the period following the emergency or disaster, which may include the provision of emergency and temporary child care services, and temporary operating standards for child care providers during that period; and
- procedures for staff and volunteer emergency preparedness training and practice drills.¹⁴

The CCDBG Act of 2014 does not explicitly specify that statewide child care disaster plans must include planning for the restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster, which is the fifth key area in ACF’s recommended framework for States’ emergency preparedness and response plans. However, the statute requires a comprehensive statewide child care disaster plan that addresses the needs of children in child care through all the phases of recovery after a disaster, as described in the five key areas of ACF’s framework.

By March 1, 2016, in its CCDF plan for FYs 2016–2018, each State must certify that the statewide child care disaster plan is fully implemented and

¹¹ The CCDBG Act of 2014, P.L. No. 113-186, § 5(b)(2)(U) (Nov. 19, 2014) (42 U.S.C. § 9858c(c)(2)(U)). See § 5(b)(2)(U).

¹² 42 U.S.C. § 9858c(c)(2)(U)(i).

¹³ 42 U.S.C. § 9858c(c)(2)(U)(ii).

¹⁴ 42 U.S.C. § 9858c(c)(2)(U)(iii).

meets all requirements.¹⁵ If the State cannot certify compliance, it must provide justification and submit an implementation plan for achieving compliance by no later than September 30, 2016.¹⁶

Disaster Assistance Available After Sandy

On January 29, 2013, the President signed into law the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, which provided approximately \$50 billion to 19 Federal agencies to help Sandy-impacted individuals and communities.¹⁷ This law provided the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with approximately \$800 million; however, automatic spending cuts—known as “sequestration”—reduced the funds received by the Department to \$759.5 million.¹⁸ The law authorized \$500 million of the unreduced amount to be transferred to the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) program to be used for social, health, and mental health services for individuals and for the repair, renovation, and rebuilding of health care, child care, and other social services facilities.¹⁹ After sequestration, the total amount available for distribution to States was \$474.5 million.²⁰ Of the funding transferred to the SSBG program, New Jersey and

¹⁵ ACF, *FFY 2016–2018 CCDF Plan Preprint Draft for Public Comment*, Section 1.8. Accessed at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/fy2016_2018_ccdf_plan_preprint_public_comment.pdf on July 6, 2015. See also ACF, *Guidance on Extension and Submission Requirements for the FY 2016–2018 CCDF Plans for States and Territories* (Program Instruction: CCDF-ACF-PI-2015-04), April 10, 2015. Accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/guidance-on-extension-and-submission-requirements-for-the-fy-20162018-ccdf-plans-for-states-and-territories> on June 3, 2015.

¹⁶ ACF, *FFY 2016–2018 CCDF Plan Preprint Draft for Public Comment*, Section 1.8. Accessed at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/fy2016_2018_ccdf_plan_preprint_public_comment.pdf on July 6, 2015.

¹⁷ The Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013, P.L. No. 113-2, Title X, Chapter 8 (Jan. 29, 2013). See also, the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board for Hurricane Sandy Funding, *About*. Accessed at <http://www.recovery.gov/Sandy/about/Pages/default.aspx> on June 22, 2015.

¹⁸ Sequestration actions authorized by the Budget Control Act of 2011, P.L. No. 112-25, and codified in pertinent part at 2 U.S.C. §§ 901-901a, were designed to reduce the Federal deficit. The Office of Management and Budget determined that Sandy disaster relief funds were subject to sequestration. See https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/legislative_reports/fy13ombjcsequestrationreport.pdf on August 24, 2015. See also OIG, *The Department of Health and Human Services Designed Its Internal Controls Over Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief Funds To Include Elements Specified by the Office of Management and Budget*, A-02-13-02010, July 2014, p. 4.

¹⁹ The Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013, Title X, Chapter 8.

²⁰ ACF, *Hurricane Sandy SSBG Supplemental Funds* (Transmittal No. 01-2013), March 28, 2013. Accessed at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocs/ssbg_im_hurricane_sandy_approved_3_27_signed_2_0.pdf on August 24, 2015. See also ACF, *Hurricane Sandy Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Supplemental Funds*. Accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/ssbg/hurricane-sandy-supplemental-funds> on May 28, 2015.

New York received \$462 million.²¹ The Office of Inspector General (OIG) is conducting another study examining the use and oversight of Sandy SSBG supplemental funds in New Jersey and New York, as well as in other States that received this funding.²²

New Jersey's SSBG Supplemental Funding. New Jersey received approximately \$227 million in SSBG supplemental funding.²³ Of this amount, New Jersey allotted \$2.5 million for child care-related programs to assist facilities, providers, and families impacted by Sandy.²⁴ Of the \$2.5 million:

- \$1 million was allocated for building and renovation grants of up to \$50,000 to nonprofit or for-profit child care programs;
- \$1 million was allocated for grants of up to \$3,000 for child care centers or up to \$1,500 for registered family child care providers to replace supplies and materials damaged by the storm; and
- \$500,000 was set aside for subsidies lasting up to 6 months for families whose child care was disrupted by Sandy.²⁵

New York's SSBG Supplemental Funding. New York received approximately \$235 million in SSBG supplemental funding.²⁶ Of this amount, New York allotted about \$65 million for unreimbursed costs of repairs, renovation, and rebuilding resulting from Sandy for certain health and human services facilities, including child day care centers and

²¹ ACF, *Hurricane Sandy SSBG Supplemental Funds* (Transmittal No. 01-2013), March 28, 2013. (See footnote 20 for URL.) Other States that received Sandy SSBG supplemental funding were Connecticut, Maryland, and Rhode Island.

²² OIG, *Use and Oversight of Superstorm Sandy Social Services Block Grant Supplemental Funds*, OEI-09-15-00200, forthcoming.

²³ ACF, *Hurricane Sandy Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Supplemental Funds*. (See footnote 20 for URL information.)

²⁴ New Jersey Department of Human Services, *Christie Administration Launches Child Care-Related Programs For Centers and Families Impacted By Sandy*, 2013. Accessed at <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/news/press/2013/approved/20131122.html> on June 4, 2015.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ ACF, *Hurricane Sandy Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Supplemental Funds*. (See footnote 20 for URL information.) Of the \$235 million in SSBG supplemental funding, New York allotted \$200 million to provide to a broad array of eligible health and human services projects and \$35 million for State priority projects. State of New York, *Social Services Block Grant Superstorm Sandy Supplemental State Plan*, June 30, 2013. Accessed at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocs/new_york_state_sandy_ssbg_intended_use_plan_6_30_2013.pdf on May 28, 2015.

homes.²⁷ Child care providers that were impacted by the storm could apply for funding to receive reimbursement for repairs, renovations, and rebuilding needed as a result of Sandy.²⁸

Additionally, FEMA and the Small Business Administration (SBA) provide disaster assistance after presidentially declared disasters. Eligible child care providers in New Jersey and New York may have applied for and accessed disaster assistance from these agencies after Sandy. See Appendix B for more information on FEMA and SBA disaster assistance available to child care providers after Sandy.

METHODOLOGY

We used multiple data collection activities and sources for this report. First, we sent an electronic questionnaire to the lead agencies in New Jersey and New York that administer the CCDF program. These lead agencies are the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Family Development and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services' Division of Child Care Services. The electronic questionnaire collected information on each State's emergency preparedness for, response to, and recovery from Sandy as it related to child care.

Next, we contacted 20 child care providers in New Jersey and New York that were impacted by Sandy to gain insight about their experience during and after the storm. Eleven of these child care providers were center-based and nine were home-based.²⁹ We successfully completed telephone interviews with 15 child care providers, of which 10 were center-based and 5 were home-based.

Additionally, we collected and reviewed each State's CCDF plan for FYs 2014 and 2015. This plan was the most recent available at the time of

²⁷ New York State Governor's Office, Press Release: *Governor Cuomo Awards \$200 Million in Funding to Meet Healthcare and Human Service Needs Resulting from Superstorm Sandy*, October 10, 2013. Accessed at <http://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-awards-200-million-funding-meet-healthcare-and-human-service-needs-resulting> on June 4, 2015.

²⁸ New York State Division of Child Care Services, *Superstorm Sandy Social Services Block Grant (Sandy SSBG) Funding*. Accessed at <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/defaultdatabaseDetails1.asp?ID=418> on June 4, 2015.

²⁹ Center-based child care is typically provided in a nonresidential building, whereas home-based child care is typically provided in the provider's residence. Child Care State Systems Specialist Network, *Resource Guide: Child Care Information for Families*, January 2015, p. 2. Accessed at https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/1501_child_care_info_families.pdf on September 24, 2015.

our review and is in effect from October 2013 through May 2016.³⁰ Most of the CCDF plans were publicly available online. For those CCDF plans that we could not locate online, we requested and received the plans from ACF. We analyzed information from Section 1.6.2 in the CCDF plan for FYs 2014 and 2015, shown in Figure 1, to determine whether States reported that their emergency preparedness and response plans for child care included or would include each of the five key areas.³¹

Figure 1: Section 1.6.2 in CCDF Plan for FYs 2014 and 2015

1.6.2. Indicate which of the core elements identified in the Information Memorandum are or will be covered in the Lead Agency child care emergency preparedness and response plan. Check which elements, if any, the Lead Agency includes in the plan.

- Planning for continuation of services to CCDF families
- Coordination with other State/Territory agencies and key partners
- Emergency preparedness regulatory requirements for child care providers
- Provision of temporary child care services after a disaster
- Restoring or rebuilding child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster
- None

Source: CCDF plan for FYs 2014 and 2015.

Finally, we collected documentation from ACF of actions taken to improve States' emergency preparedness and response for child care since Sandy.

See Appendix C for a detailed description of the methodology.

Limitations

Sandy affected numerous States along the East Coast. We selected the two States—New Jersey and New York—that were most affected by the storm with respect to child care. For this reason, the experiences of these two States may not be reflective of other States that were affected by Sandy.

Additionally, we discussed with New Jersey and New York the availability of data related to child care providers impacted by Sandy. On the basis of

³⁰ The CCDF plan for FYs 2014 and 2015 is in effect from October 1, 2013, through May 30, 2016. The deadline for submitting the CCDF plan for FYs 2016–2018 is March 1, 2016. ACF, *Guidance on Extension and Submission Requirements for the FY 2016–2018 CCDF Plans for States and Territories* (Program Instruction: CCDF-ACF-PI-2015-04), April 10, 2015. Accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/guidance-on-extension-and-submission-requirements-for-the-fy-20162018-ccdf-plans-for-states-and-territories> on June 3, 2015.

³¹ Includes all 50 States and the District of Columbia.

these discussions and to reduce burden on the States, we did not request that either State's lead agency provide us with a listing of all child care providers that were impacted by Sandy in that State. As a result, each lead agency provided us with a listing of some child care providers in that State that were impacted by Sandy. For this reason and because we purposively selected 20 child care providers from these listings, the experiences of the child care providers that we interviewed for our evaluation may not be reflective of experiences of other child care providers that were impacted by Sandy in each State.

Standards

This study was conducted in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation* issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

FINDINGS

New Jersey and New York’s emergency planning before Sandy did not include the rebuilding of child care facilities after a disaster

Before Sandy, both New Jersey and New York conducted emergency preparedness, response, and recovery planning for child care. However, this planning did not include all five key areas from ACF’s recommended framework for emergency preparedness and response plans for child care. Most notably, neither State conducted emergency planning in restoring or rebuilding child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster.

As shown in Figure 2, before Sandy, New Jersey conducted emergency planning in three of the five key areas and New York conducted emergency planning in four of the five key areas.

Figure 2: Emergency Planning for Child Care in New Jersey and New York Before Sandy

	Key Area	New Jersey	New York
1	Planning for continuation of services to CCDF families	Yes	Yes
2	Coordination with other State/Territorial agencies and key partners	Yes	Yes
3	Emergency preparedness regulatory requirements for child care providers	No	Yes
4	Provision of temporary child care services after a disaster	Yes	Yes
5	Restoring or rebuilding child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster	No	No

Source: OIG analysis of questionnaire responses from New Jersey and New York, 2015.

New Jersey’s response to and recovery from Sandy may have been enhanced if it had conducted planning for certain elements of the fifth key area (i.e., the restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster) before the storm made landfall. For example, New Jersey reported that it did not conduct emergency planning with FEMA regional officials before Sandy to clarify which child care

services were eligible for reimbursement under the Public Assistance grant program.^{32, 33} As a result, New Jersey was initially unclear on the eligibility criteria for that program but has since obtained clarification. Additionally, assessments of the damage to child care providers in New Jersey did not begin until 1 month after the storm because the roles and responsibilities of staff who were to conduct these assessments had not been clearly communicated before Sandy.³⁴ New Jersey has since clarified the roles and responsibilities of staff to ensure that these assessments begin immediately in the event of any future emergency or disaster.

Post-disaster task forces in New Jersey and New York assisted child care providers with the recovery and rebuilding process after Sandy

Both New Jersey and New York established post-disaster task forces after Sandy that focused on various aspects of the recovery and rebuilding process for children and families. Both task forces supported a coordinated approach to addressing the needs of children and families after Sandy by convening Federal, State, nongovernmental, and private stakeholders. Additionally, each task force gathered information on how the storm impacted child care providers and communicated information to child care providers on available resources to assist with the recovery. Although these task forces served similar purposes, the New York Children's Issues Task Force had greater outreach to and focus on child care providers than did the New Jersey State-Led Child Task Force, likely because of its organizational and leadership structure and because it remained active for a longer period of time.

The organizational and leadership structure of the New York Children's Issues Task Force was different than that of the New Jersey State-Led

³² For eligible State, local, and tribal governments, FEMA may reimburse reasonable costs associated with the provision of child care services through the Public Assistance program during presidentially declared major disasters and emergencies. FEMA, *Fact Sheet 9580.107: Public Assistance for Child Care Services*, March 20, 2012. Accessed at http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1908-25045-4588/rp9580_107_child_care_services_fact_sheet_final_032013.pdf on June 4, 2015.

³³ In its framework for emergency preparedness and response plans for child care, ACF recommends as an element of the fifth key area that the plan include preparedness planning with FEMA regional officials to clarify which child care services are eligible for reimbursement under the Public Assistance program. See Table A-5 in Appendix A.

³⁴ In its framework for emergency preparedness and response plans for child care, ACF recommends as an element of the fifth key area that the plan includes a strategy to work with emergency management officials, licensing agencies, and public health officials to conduct timely assessments of the damage to and status of child care providers within the impacted area. See Table A-5 in Appendix A.

Child Task Force. In particular, the New York Children’s Issues Task Force was co-led by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services Commissioner and the ACF Regional Administrator. The Office of Children and Family Services includes the lead agency that administers the CCDF program in New York, as well as agencies that administer other early childhood programs. The task force’s goals included meeting the specific needs of early childhood programs, such as child care, in addition to the broader goals of meeting the needs of children and families. In comparison, the lead agency that administers the CCDF program in New Jersey is within the State’s Department of Human Services, which was a participating—but not a leading—entity in the New Jersey State-Led Child Task Force. The task force’s goals focused more broadly on supporting children and families.

Additionally, the New York Children’s Issues Task Force remained active longer than the New Jersey State-Led Child Task Force, which allowed for more time to provide outreach to child care providers. Specifically, the New York Children’s Issues Task Force remained active for 14 months, from November 2012 through December 2013. In comparison, the New Jersey State-Led Child Task Force remained active for 3 months, from November 2012 through January 2013.

Some child care providers in New Jersey and New York reported challenges with rebuilding after Sandy

The 15 child care providers in New Jersey and New York that we interviewed reported that Sandy caused damage to their facilities. Some of these child care providers also reported challenges with rebuilding their facilities and businesses after the storm. These challenges included initially paying or being unable to pay for repairs out of pocket, a lengthy application process for disaster assistance, delayed communication regarding disaster assistance, and issues with contractors hired to make repairs. All but one of the child care providers that we interviewed temporarily closed after Sandy, which impacted providers’ businesses and may have reduced child care capacity in communities.

Box 1 describes the experience of a group family day care provider in New York during and after Sandy and illustrates structural damage experienced by several of the providers we interviewed.

Box 1: Experience of One Child Care Provider in New York During and After Sandy

During Sandy, the ground floor of the provider's home—which is where the group family day care was located—flooded with about 3 ½ feet of ocean and sewage water. Everything on the ground floor, including child care items (e.g., toys, books, blankets, strollers, high chairs), was destroyed.

After Sandy, this provider reported closing for about 1 month. Rebuilding involved new walls, new drywall, new carpeting, new appliances (e.g., refrigerator, washing machine, and microwave) and electronics (e.g., computer, printer), replacing the underground oil tank with one above ground, repairing the boiler, replacing child care items, a new outdoor fence, landscaping, and removing fallen trees. Some families served by this provider before the storm sought child care services elsewhere while it was closed and did not return after the provider reopened.

This provider reported that, because it did not have flood insurance when Sandy made landfall, private insurance covered only damages unrelated to water. The provider applied for—and was successful in receiving—financial assistance from FEMA, a disaster loan from SBA, and an SSBG grant from the State. According to the provider, the application process was lengthy and tedious but worth it in the end. Although individuals were helpful throughout the process, there was a lot of paperwork, travel, and waiting involved.

Source: OIG telephone interview with child care provider in New York, 2015.

Although disaster assistance was available, some child care providers initially paid for repairs out of pocket and reported other challenges related to rebuilding

Each of the 15 child care providers that we interviewed reported receiving some form of financial assistance or support after Sandy. Thirteen providers received financial assistance from the State in the form of SSBG grants. Additionally, seven child care providers—including the two that did not receive an SSBG grant from the State—received financial assistance or support from FEMA, SBA, and/or voluntary organizations (e.g., Save the Children). While the financial assistance and support was helpful and appreciated, some child care providers reported challenges with rebuilding their facilities and businesses after the storm.

Nine child care providers reported challenges with paying for repairs out of pocket after Sandy. The vast majority of child care providers are not eligible for FEMA financial assistance because they are businesses and for-profit entities. Additionally, many child care providers are not eligible for SBA disaster loans because their profit margins are too small, making them not credit-worthy for a loan. Therefore, repairs not covered by private insurance are generally paid for out of pocket by child care providers. Five child care providers (three in New Jersey and two in New York) initially paid for repairs out of pocket after Sandy. The remaining four child care providers (two in each State) did not have the money to pay for all necessary repairs after the storm. All nine of these child care providers later received financial assistance from the State in

the form of SSBG grants, which helped cover at least some of these out-of-pocket expenses.

Three child care providers in New York reported challenges when applying for disaster assistance. Specifically, they reported that the application process for an SSBG grant was lengthy and required a lot of documentation, which was not always readily available and sometimes—according to one provider—even lost in the chaos after a disaster. In New York, providers that applied for an SSBG grant had to submit an application, a narrative, and a one-page budget. If the provider received an award, it then needed to provide receipts and invoices, and in some cases, before-and-after photographs. Although submitting such documentation is potentially burdensome for the provider, New York required it so that it could ensure that the grant funds were being used appropriately and for the intended purpose. In New Jersey, three child care providers also reported that the application process was lengthy.

Two child care providers in New Jersey said that communication from the State about available disaster assistance could be improved. One child care provider reported not knowing that the SSBG grant funding was available until long after the storm, while another reported that the State could have reached out sooner. New Jersey distributed information to child care providers about the availability of this grant funding but not until one year after the storm, in October and November 2013. The reason for this delayed communication is that the SSBG supplemental funds were not appropriated until 3 months after the storm, and the State needed to complete certain steps before the funds could be awarded.³⁵ For example, States that received SSBG supplemental funds were required to submit pre-expenditure reports detailing the proposed uses of these funds.

Additionally, after disasters, some businesses and individuals try to take advantage of victims and survivors through price gouging and fraudulent home improvement scams.³⁶ In New York, two child care providers reported challenges with contractors. One child care provider that we interviewed reported that it took a long time to find a contractor charging a fair price for repairs. Another child care provider reported that it hired a

³⁵ OIG is conducting another study examining the use and oversight of Sandy SSBG supplemental funds in Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island. OIG, *Use and Oversight of Superstorm Sandy Social Services Block Grant Supplemental Funds*, OEI-09-15-00200, forthcoming.

³⁶ New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, *Tips to Avoid Hurricane Sandy Scams*. Accessed at <http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/oem/event/sandy/sandy-scams.cfm> on July 31, 2015. See also FEMA, *How N.Y. Sandy survivors can protect against fraud* (NR-195), March 27, 2013. Accessed at <https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2013/03/27/how-ny-sandy-survivors-can-protect-against-fraud> on July 31, 2015.

contractor to fix the plumbing and the job later needed to be redone because the contractor did such poor work.

Sandy impacted child care providers' businesses and may have reduced child care capacity in communities

Three child care providers in New York reported that their businesses suffered as a result of Sandy because families sought child care services elsewhere while the provider was closed and did not return when the provider reopened. One of these providers closed for 7 months and stated that only one child that it served before Sandy returned when it reopened. Many parents with young children cannot resume their jobs unless there is safe, secure child care for their children. Therefore, when facilities close for extended periods, parents will seek child care elsewhere and—in order to maintain children's reestablished routines—may not return when the facility reopens.

Additionally, emergencies and disasters can reduce child care capacity in communities. All but 1 of the 15 child care providers that we interviewed temporarily closed because of Sandy, with 3 of them (1 provider in New Jersey and 2 in New York) closing for more than 6 months. One child care provider in New York that closed for 1 month reported that there was an increased demand for child care in its community after the storm. Another child care provider in New Jersey that temporarily closed for 8 months stated that it was the only child care center in the community that served children receiving subsidized child care and that those children were displaced for nearly a year because of Sandy.

Since Sandy, ACF has taken steps to improve nationwide emergency preparedness, response, and recovery for child care

Since Sandy, ACF has developed resources and provided technical assistance to improve States' emergency preparedness, response, and recovery related to child care services and programs. For example, ACF's Office of Child Care developed a six-part Webinar series. Five of the sessions explored the framework in ACF's information memorandum, with each session focusing on at least one of the five key areas. In particular, the fifth session, entitled "Response, Recovery, and Rebuilding," included presentations by FEMA staff about assistance available after a disaster for child care services and providers.³⁷ The sixth

³⁷ ACF, *Child Care Emergency Preparedness and Response Webinar Series: Response, Recovery, and Rebuilding*, October 20, 2014. Accessed at https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/epr_webinar_5_final_0.pdf on March 11, 2015.

session, entitled “Recovery: Responding to Trauma,” provided an introduction to children’s mental health and the impact of disaster-related trauma.³⁸

ACF has also produced a variety of written materials and resources for States, child care providers, and families. In particular, since Sandy the Child Care State Systems Specialist Network—which supports ACF by providing technical assistance to CCDF lead agencies—has revised numerous resources for States on emergency preparedness and response. Some of these resources can be distributed to child care providers and families. Further, after Sandy, ACF’s Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response created two public documents that focus on lessons learned from this disaster and provide recommendations on how States can establish task forces pre- and post-disaster, as well as information on how ACF can provide support.^{39, 40}

Additionally, the Child Care State Systems Specialist Network provided and continues to provide technical assistance to States.⁴¹ From November 2012 to March 2015, State System Specialists provided technical assistance related to emergency preparedness and response plans for child care or training activities at the request of 32 States. Other forms of technical assistance being provided to States include examples or models of supports for responding to emergencies, examples of other States’ emergency preparedness and response plans, and reviewing States’ current emergency preparedness and response plans to ensure that reauthorization requirements are met.

Less than half of all States’ emergency plans included planning for the rebuilding of child care facilities after a disaster

Some key areas from ACF’s recommended framework for emergency preparedness and response plans for child care were less likely than others

³⁸ ACF, *Child Care Emergency Preparedness and Response Webinar Series: Recovering: Responding to Trauma*, November 10, 2014. Accessed at https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/epr_webinar_6_final.pdf on March 11, 2015.

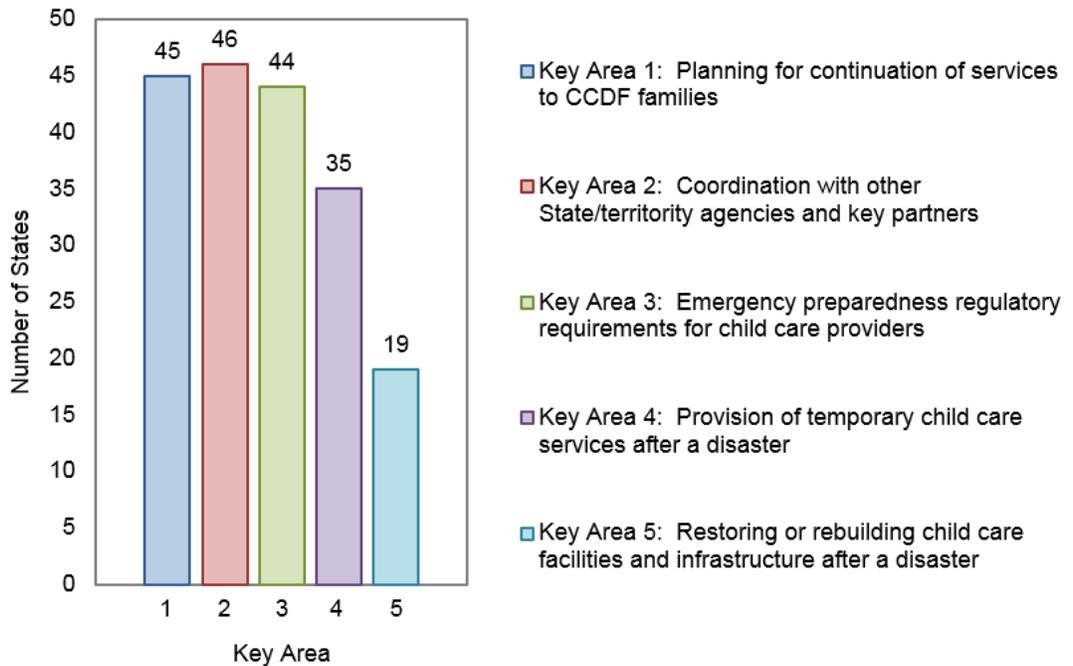
³⁹ ACF, *Child and Youth Task Force in Disasters: Guidelines for Development*, September 4, 2013. Accessed at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ohsepr/childrens_task_force_development_web.pdf on March 11, 2015.

⁴⁰ ACF, *New York Children’s Issues Task Force: Lessons Learned from Response and Recovery in Superstorm Sandy in New York*, August 8, 2014. Accessed at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ohsepr/new_york_childrens_issues_task_force_web.pdf on March 11, 2015.

⁴¹ For information on this network, see ACF, *Child Care State Systems Specialist Network*. Accessed at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/state-systems-specialist-network> on August 24, 2015.

to be included by States in their plans. In their respective CCDF plans for FYs 2014 and 2015, less than half of States (19 of 51) reported including or planning to include the fifth key area (i.e., the development of strategies for restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster) in their emergency preparedness and response plans for child care. Figure 3 shows the number of States that included or planned to include each key area in their emergency preparedness and response plan for child care.

Figure 3: Number of States Including or Planning to Include Each Key Area in Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans for Child Care, 2013



Source: OIG analysis of CCDF plans for FYs 2014 and 2015, 2015.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Natural and manmade disasters can happen anywhere and at any time; therefore, all States must be prepared to respond and assist with recovery efforts, including those for child care, after an emergency or disaster. In particular, planning for the restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster is an important component of emergency planning and one of the five key areas from ACF's recommended framework for emergency preparedness and response plans for child care.

Before Sandy, neither New Jersey nor New York's emergency planning for child care included such planning for restoring or rebuilding. After the storm, these States established post-disaster task forces that assisted child care providers with the recovery and rebuilding process. However, some of the child care providers that we interviewed in New Jersey and New York still reported challenges with rebuilding after Sandy. These challenges included paying for repairs out of pocket and a lengthy application process for disaster assistance.

Since Sandy, ACF has taken steps to improve nationwide emergency preparedness, response, and recovery for child care. However, in their respective CCDF plans for FYs 2014 and 2015, less than half of all States reported including or planning to include the fifth key area—i.e., planning for the restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster—in their emergency preparedness and response plans. Even though overall emergency planning for child care has been strengthened through steps taken by ACF and through legislation enacted in November 2014, planning for this fifth key area remains lacking.

Therefore, we recommend that ACF:

Require States to include planning for the restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster in their statewide child care disaster plans

The main challenge reported by child care providers that we interviewed in New Jersey and New York was rebuilding after Sandy. The CCDBG Act of 2014 requires comprehensive emergency preparedness planning but does not explicitly specify that planning for the restoring or rebuilding of child care after a disaster must be included in statewide child care disaster plans. Therefore, ACF should make it clear that States are required to include planning for the restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster in these plans. This planning could include, for example, strategies for working with emergency officials, licensing agencies, and public health officials to conduct timely damage assessments of child care providers; providing education and training to child care providers to ensure business continuity should a disaster occur;

and providing information and resources to child care providers on available financial assistance for the rebuilding process after a disaster.

Additionally, ACF should encourage States to consider two scenarios as they conduct planning for the restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster: one in which Federal funding to support the rebuilding of child care facilities is available and one in which Federal funding is not available. Planning for both scenarios is important because Federal funding may not always be available after a disaster and each scenario presents different challenges. In the case of Sandy, Federal funding was made available by Congress and the States of New Jersey and New York for the repair, renovation, and rebuilding of child care facilities.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL RESPONSE

ACF concurred with our recommendation to require States to include planning for the restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster in their respective statewide child care disaster plans. ACF stated that it is developing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to implement the CCDBG Act of 2014 and that this proposed regulation will help address our recommendation. ACF anticipates that the NPRM will be published in December 2015.

Additionally, ACF emphasized that planning is not sufficient by itself without the resources to support recovery and that Federal funding for recovery is limited. ACF stated that despite the challenges with funding, it is committed to assisting States with emergency preparedness and response planning.

We support ACF's efforts to address this recommendation and encourage continued progress. For the full text of ACF's comments, see Appendix D.

APPENDIX A

ACF Information Memorandum: Framework for Developing Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans for Child Care

**Table A-1: Key Area 1 – Planning for Continuation of Services to CCDF
Families**

1	The plan includes provisions for continuing core CCDF program functions by Lead Agency management and staff during and after a disaster.
2	The plan includes requirements that subgrantees and contractors administering the child care program make provisions for continuation of core functions.
3	The plan identifies how strategic communications, decisionmaking, and information-sharing will be handled in different emergency or disaster situations.
4	The plan includes procedures for continuing payments to child care providers during and after a disaster.
5	The plan includes policies to temporarily continue to pay providers for absence days in the event that children are unable to attend due to a disaster (e.g., pandemic flu).
6	The plan includes procedures that address systems data security and data storage to ensure adequate backup of family and child care provider records after a disaster.
7	The plan includes a mechanism to collect data and track families receiving subsidies and providers serving subsidized children that are impacted by a disaster.
8	The plan includes provisions for continuing services to families in the event the Lead Agency is unable to conduct eligibility redeterminations or families are unable to submit necessary documentation.
9	The plan includes policies to continue assistance for families receiving child care subsidies that are temporarily out of work or engaged in job search after a disaster.
10	The plan includes policies with anticipate an increased need for child care subsidies among families impacted by a disaster, in addition to families already receiving assistance.
11	The plan includes provisions to quickly establish and manage a waiting list for families needing assistance, if the Lead Agency does not already have one.

Source: ACF, *Guidance to assist Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies in developing, exercising, and maintaining written child care emergency preparedness and response plans pursuant to submission of the CCDF Plan* (CCDF-ACF-IM-2011-01), February 17, 2011.

Table A-2: Key Area 2 – Coordination With Other State/Territorial Agencies and Key Partners

1	The plan has been developed in consultation with the emergency management agency and formalized coordination with child care within statewide emergency planning.
2	The plan includes coordination with CCR&R agencies and incorporates provisions for communication with local child care providers in their respective geographic areas.
3	The plan includes consultation and coordination with child care licensing and regulatory agencies to ensure that providers engage in emergency preparedness and planning activities, including distribution of materials and resources to assist child care providers.
4	The plan includes coordination with Head Start centers, pre-kindergarten and other early care and education programs to ensure collaboration and consistency in planning and preparedness efforts.
5	The plan includes coordination with education agencies and local school districts to ensure planning for schools and child care programs are consistent and complement each other. This is particularly important in communities that provide before- and after-school care or summer child care programs within a public or private school facility.
6	The plan includes coordination with public health agencies to ensure timely and accurate communication with child care providers in the event of a public health emergency.
7	The plan includes coordination with voluntary organizations that provide support for child care and provision of temporary child care or respite care services, if needed.
8	The plan provides for coordination with local business owners and nonprofit organizations to donate supplies (e.g., bottled water, first aid supplies) to child care providers to stock emergency kits.
9	The plan includes coordination with tribal communities and agencies, when applicable, to ensure tribal child care programs are included in statewide emergency planning and response efforts.
10	The plan includes coordination with social service agencies (e.g., child welfare, family courts) that also serve families with young children.
11	The plan includes coordination across State jurisdictional lines, particularly in border States which may serve families that must be evacuated from disaster areas.

Note: The wording of this key area's title was slightly different between the information memorandum and the CCDF plan for FYs 2014 and 2015. To be consistent in this report, we used the wording from Section 1.6.2 in the CCDF plan.
Source: ACF, *Guidance to assist Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies in developing, exercising, and maintaining written child care emergency preparedness and response plans pursuant to submission of the CCDF Plan* (CCDF-ACF-IM-2011-01), February 17, 2011.

Table A-3: Key Area 3 – Emergency Preparedness Regulatory Requirements for Child Care Providers

1	The plan includes coordination with child care licensing and regulatory agencies to ensure providers plan in advance for disasters, including provisions for evacuation and relocation, shelter-in-place, reunification with families, and accommodation of children with special needs.
2	The plan includes strategies to provide ongoing technical assistance, training, resources, and support to center-bases and family child care providers to help them better prepare for emergencies and disasters.
3	The plan includes strategies for engaging local CCR&R agencies to conduct training sessions for child care providers on how to be prepared for a disaster.
4	The plan includes provisions for incorporating emergency preparedness and response planning within quality rating improvement systems, if established by the Lead Agency.

Note: The wording of this key area's title was slightly different between the information memorandum and the CCDF plan for FYs 2014 and 2015. To be consistent in this report, we used the wording from Section 1.6.2 in the CCDF plan. Source: ACF, *Guidance to assist Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies in developing, exercising, and maintaining written child care emergency preparedness and response plans pursuant to submission of the CCDF Plan* (CCDF-ACF-IM-2011-01), February 17, 2011.

Table A-4: Key Area 4 – Provision of Temporary Child Care Services After a Disaster

1	The plan includes coordination with emergency management officials, voluntary organizations, and CCR&R agencies to implement temporary child care services after a disaster, including establishment of contracts or agreements.
2	The plan includes temporary operating standards (or provisions for temporarily waiving certain child care regulatory requirements) to accommodate providers that need to be relocated and/or the provision of temporary child care in alternate facilities, such as shelters.
3	The plan includes a strategy for training and identifying preapproved child care providers who have undergone criminal background checks that are willing to assist with provision of temporary child care after a disaster.
4	The plan includes a strategy for pre-positioning supplies for use in establishment of temporary child care, or to provide additional supplies to child care providers that remain open.
5	The plan includes provisions to quickly establish and manage temporary child care in nontraditional settings when existing facilities have been severely damaged or destroyed.

Source: ACF, *Guidance to assist Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies in developing, exercising, and maintaining written child care emergency preparedness and response plans pursuant to submission of the CCDF Plan* (CCDF-ACF-IM-2011-01), February 17, 2011.

Table A-5: Key Area 5 – Restoring or Rebuilding Child Care Facilities and Infrastructure After a Disaster

1	The plan includes a strategy to work with emergency management officials, licensing agencies, and public health officials to conduct timely assessments of the damage to and status of child care providers within the impacted area.
2	The plan includes engagement and training strategies for child care providers to ensure business continuity should a disaster occur, including adequate insurance coverage and protection of records and assets.
3	The plan includes strategies for providing information and resources to child care providers about financial assistance that is available for the rebuilding process if they need to rebuild.
4	The plan includes a strategy for engaging business associations, community development financial institutions, and other organizations that can potentially provide financial assistance or microloans to help providers reopen.
5	The plan includes preparedness planning with FEMA regional officials to clarify child care services that are eligible for reimbursement under the Public Assistance grant program.

Note: The wording of this key area's title was slightly different between the information memorandum and the CCDF plan for FYs 2014 and 2015. To be consistent in this report, we used the wording from Section 1.6.2 in the CCDF plan.

Source: ACF, *Guidance to assist Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies in developing, exercising, and maintaining written child care emergency preparedness and response plans pursuant to submission of the CCDF Plan* (CCDF-ACF-IM-2011-01), February 17, 2011.

APPENDIX B

Disaster Assistance Available After Sandy

FEMA Financial Assistance. After presidentially declared disasters, FEMA’s Individuals and Households Program provides financial and/or direct assistance to disaster survivors who, as a result of a major disaster or emergency, have necessary expenses and serious needs that are unmet through insurance or other means.⁴² This program does not cover business-related losses that resulted from the disaster.⁴³ The Individuals and Households Program consists of two provisions: housing assistance and “other needs” assistance. Housing assistance is provided to homeowners to secure temporary housing while repairs are being made to their pre-disaster residence, to repair disaster-related damage not covered by insurance, and/or to replace a disaster-damaged home. “Other needs” assistance provides financial assistance for other disaster-related expenses, such as the repair or replacement of common household items (e.g., furnishings and appliances). Eligible home-based child care providers in New Jersey and New York may have applied for and accessed this financial assistance to repair and/or replace their homes and/or certain household items after Sandy.

SBA Disaster Loans. After presidentially and SBA-declared disasters, SBA provides low interest loans to businesses, private nonprofit organizations, homeowners, and renters to repair or replace the following items damaged or destroyed in a declared disaster: real estate, personal property, machinery and equipment, and inventory and business assets.⁴⁴ Eligible child care providers in New Jersey and New York that were impacted by Sandy may have applied for and accessed these loans for rebuilding.

⁴² FEMA, *Fact Sheet: Disaster Assistance – Individuals and Households Program*, May 2014. Accessed at http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1434645692423-da8341b2317b9bcd4eca23aac8e8e1ea/IHP_FactSheet_final508.pdf on June 8, 2015.

⁴³ FEMA, *Help After a Disaster: Applicant’s Guide to the Individuals & Households Program*, July 2008, p. 1. Accessed at http://www.fema.gov/pdf/assistance/process/help_after_disaster_english.pdf on June 8, 2015.

⁴⁴ SBA, *Disaster Loans*. Accessed at <https://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/loans-grants/small-business-loans/disaster-loans> on June 4, 2015.

APPENDIX C

Detailed Methodology

New Jersey and New York: Electronic Questionnaire

In February 2015, we sent an electronic questionnaire to the lead agencies in New Jersey and New York that administer the CCDF program. In March 2015, we received responses to all applicable questions and supporting documentation from each agency. We reviewed and analyzed responses and documentation to determine the extent to which New Jersey and New York conducted emergency planning for child care before Sandy and whether each State had an emergency preparedness and response plan for child care in place before the storm. We also determined the extent to which each key area from ACF's recommended framework for emergency preparedness and response plans for child care was addressed before, during, and/or after Sandy. Additionally, we reviewed documentation (e.g., reports, meeting minutes) related to each State's post-disaster task force. In June 2015, we met with each agency to clarify responses, as needed.

Child Care Providers: Selection and Telephone Interviews

In March and April 2015, we contacted child care providers that were impacted by Sandy to gain insight about their experience with New Jersey and New York's responses during and after the storm.

To identify child care providers that were impacted by Sandy, we requested information from the lead agencies in New Jersey and New York. Prior to requesting this information, we met with each lead agency to discuss the availability of data related to child care providers impacted by Sandy. On the basis of these discussions and to reduce burden on the States, we did not request that either lead agency provide us with a listing of all child care providers that were impacted by Sandy in their respective State. As a result, each lead agency provided us with a listing of some child care providers that were impacted by Sandy in their respective State, which at a minimum included the provider's name and address and whether the provider was awarded SSBG supplemental funding. Consequently, the completeness of our sampling frame of child care providers impacted by Sandy in New Jersey and New York could not be verified. For this reason and because we purposively selected child care providers from this sampling frame, the experiences of the child care providers that we interviewed for our evaluation may not be reflective of experiences of other child care providers that were impacted by Sandy in each State.

New Jersey provided us with information on 42 child care providers that were impacted by Sandy. Half (21) of these providers were licensed child care centers, and the remaining half were registered family day care providers. All 42 received SSBG supplemental funding and were each located in one of the following counties: Atlantic, Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Union, and Warren.

New York provided us with a listing of 19 child care providers that were impacted by Sandy. Ten of these providers were group family day care providers, seven were day care centers, and two were family day care providers. Nine child care providers had received SSBG supplemental funding. The 19 providers were each located in one of following counties: Kings, Nassau, New York, Queens, Richmond, Suffolk, and Westchester.

We selected a total of 20 child care providers from these listings—10 each in New Jersey and New York. When selecting child care providers, we considered provider type, geographic location, and the availability of contact information (i.e., address, phone number). We contacted and successfully completed telephone interviews with 15 of the 20 child care providers. Our interview questions focused on:

- whether the child care provider closed or relocated because of Sandy,
- the extent of damage to the child care provider’s facility from the storm,
- the extent to which the child care provider needed to make repairs or rebuild after Sandy, and
- whether the child care provider applied for any financial assistance from the Federal or State government to assist with repairs and rebuilding after Sandy, and if so, what the child care provider’s experience with the application process had been.

These 15 child care providers were in business when Sandy hit and at the time of our interview. They were also located in counties in New Jersey or New York for which a disaster had been declared for Sandy. For the remaining 5 of the 20 child care providers, we made a minimum of three attempts either to establish contact or complete the telephone interview, but these attempts did not succeed. Table C-1 provides descriptive information on the selected and interviewed child care providers.

Table C-1: Selected and Interviewed Child Care Providers in New Jersey and New York, 2015

State	Child Care Providers Selected				Child Care Providers Interviewed					
	Provider Type	County	SSBG		Provider Type	County	SSBG			
New Jersey	Licensed child care center	Hudson	3	Yes	10	Licensed child care center	Hudson	3	Yes	8
	Family child care provider	Ocean	5			No	0	Family child care provider		
			Monmouth	1				Monmouth	1	
		Union	1							
	Subtotal				10		8			
New York	Group family day care	Nassau	5	Yes	7	Group family day care	Nassau	4	Yes	5
	Day care center	Queens	3			No	3	Day care center		
	Family day care	Suffolk	1			Family day care	Westchester	1		
		Westchester	1							
	Subtotal				10		7			
Total				20		15				

Source: OIG analysis of information on child care providers that were impacted by Sandy, 2015.

APPENDIX D

Agency Comments



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

NOV 17 2015

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Office of the Assistant Secretary, Suite 600
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

The Honorable Daniel R. Levinson
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Inspector General Levinson:

I am writing to you concerning the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) response to the recommendations for ACF found in the draft report entitled, *The Response to Superstorm Sandy Highlights the Importance of Recovery Planning for Child Care Nationwide*. ACF appreciates the work that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) performed in this area. Below is a discussion of our response to the report's recommendation.

Recommendation: Require States to include planning for the restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure after a disaster in their statewide child care disaster plans.

Response: We concur that States should include planning for restoring or rebuilding of child care facilities and infrastructure as part of their statewide disaster plans. As noted in OIG's report, ACF has taken steps to improve child care emergency preparedness, response, and recovery nationwide through written guidance and technical assistance to States. ACF is committed to working with States on their emergency preparedness and response planning and will continue to take further steps where feasible, including the establishment of policy requirements. For example, as the report indicates, in February 2011, ACF issued an information memorandum that provided a framework for statewide emergency preparedness and response plans. The framework outlined five key areas, including rebuilding child care after a disaster. We also sponsored a six-part webinar series on emergency preparedness and response, which included a focus on creating a disaster plan for child care services (<https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/emergency-preparedness-0>). For more details on past efforts, see: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/initiatives

While we endorse the need to plan for post-disaster recovery and rebuilding, ACF would emphasize that planning is not sufficient by itself without the resources to support recovery. Federal funding for recovery is limited. For example, Federal law prohibits the use of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) monies for construction or major renovation (except for Tribes who may apply to use a portion of their grant for this purpose). In the case of Superstorm Sandy, funding became available because Congress appropriated supplemental funding for the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), and States used the supplemental funding for rebuilding. Without a readily-available source of money, child care providers and the families they serve will continue to experience uncertainty and delays in the aftermath of disasters, with child care providers having to pay up-front and out-of-pocket for any expenses necessary to resume services without knowing whether they will be reimbursed.

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Despite the challenges with funding, ACF is fully committed to assisting States with emergency preparedness and response planning, including ensuring timely and full implementation of the new requirement for statewide disaster plans as required by the Child Care and Development Block Grant

Act of 2014, which reauthorized the CCDF program. ACF is currently developing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to implement the reauthorization law. This proposed regulation will help address the proposed recommendation through the required statewide disaster plans, as well as other provisions related to emergency preparedness and response. We anticipate the NPRM will be published in December 2015.

In addition to establishing policy requirements, ACF will continue to provide technical assistance to States on emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. In October 2015, ACF launched a new cross-sector Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) System that brings together funding, knowledge, and skills from the Office of Child Care, the Office of Head Start, and our health partners in HHS – the Maternal and Child Health Bureau and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

In late September 2015, we awarded grants for new national centers to build the capacity for excellence in early childhood services. One of these new centers, the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness, will provide resources and support to ensure the health and mental wellness of young children and their families, as well as program staff. This center will provide technical assistance to advance best practices on a range of topics, including emergency preparedness and response. Another TA center, the State Capacity Building Center, will assist States on a range of issues to build systems and infrastructure at the State level, including emergency preparedness and response. We are currently working with the new TA centers to finalize their work plans for the year.

ACF appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the draft report and welcomes any further questions that the OIG may have regarding these issues. Please direct any follow-up inquiries to our Office of Legislative Affairs and Budget OIG liaison, Scott Logan, at (202) 401-4529.

Sincerely,

/S/

Mark H. Greenberg
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was prepared under the direction of Dwayne Grant, Regional Inspector General for Evaluation and Inspections in the Atlanta regional office, and Jaime Stewart, Deputy Regional Inspector General.

Rachel Bessette served as the team leader for this study. Other Office of Evaluation and Inspections staff from the Atlanta regional office who conducted the study include David Samchok. Central office staff who provided support include Kevin Farber, Christine Moritz, and Sherri Weinstein.

Office of Inspector General

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