

 <b>Policy #:</b> Education 3.5	<b>Effective Date:</b> 09/2009	<b>Page #:</b>
<b>Ref #:</b> PS: 1304.22 (a) TNL: 1240-4-3-10 (9)	<b>Policy Council Approval Date:</b> 09/2009	<b>Revision Date:</b> 07/2009

**POLICY: EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:** Every Teacher and Administrator has the responsibility to provide a safe environment and to promote the safety of all individuals connected with the Head Start/Early Head Start System.

**PROCEDURE:**

Each HS/EHS Center disaster plan shall be distributed and discussed with the HS/EHS staff, children and parents and their support enlisted for its use and effectiveness. Parents will be given the information needed to avoid waste of valued time. Teachers and children should practice the Emergency Evacuation Plan over and over so that everyone understands how to do it without panic. Do not wait for your community fire inspector to make this happen. It is your responsibility to yourself, the children, and their families to see that fire drills, tornado drills, blizzard plan, and power failure are accomplished with ease. If any children have physical disabilities you may need to make special arrangement for their safe exiting. Assign one staff person there daily to assist the child with a physical disability out of the building.

**Prepare for emergencies in advance by taking these important actions:**

1. Keep up-to-date emergency information for children and staff. Make a specific person responsible for having this information on hand in emergencies, on trips, and in the event of program site evacuation. Ask parents to update emergency contact information every 6 months, and verify it by phone or mail.
2. Know where you are going to stay if the building has to be evacuated. Families must know where to look for their children. Prearrange an emergency shelter where you will stay and inform parents by letter.
3. Record daily attendance of staff and children. Designate a staff member to carry the list out of the building so that complete evacuation is assured.
4. Post emergency telephone numbers (police, fire, rescue, or central emergency code, and poison control) beside every phone. All individuals using the building should be familiar with these numbers and the procedures to be used in an emergency.
5. Plan two exit routes from every area of the building. Post emergency evacuation exit instructions in every room where they can be seen easily.
6. Have unannounced evacuation drills monthly. Evacuation should include use of alternative exit routes in case of blockage. Time should vary to include all activities (naptime too) and when the fewest adults are at the center.

7. Maintain logs of evacuation drills for on-site inspection and review by the building inspector. For most buildings, evacuation in less than 2 minutes is possible. Fire-resistant exit routes in large buildings are usually required to provide enough time to exit safely.
8. Contact the public education division at your local police and fire departments and ask them to arrange on-site visits to help staff make appropriate emergency plans. You will also need to contact the Emergency Management Civil Defense Organization for earthquake and tornado information.

## **Emergency Procedures**

### **Blizzards**

In the event of a blizzard while the children are at the program, the children's safety and well-being will be the prime concern for the staff.

If the school closes and the highway department advise no unnecessary travel, parents will be notified immediately and asked to pick up their children.

Proper staff ratios will be maintained while children are in the program. Staff living furthest away from the program will be sent home first.

If weather is such that parents cannot get to the school, children will be kept at the school overnight. Parents will be informed and assured of their child's safety. In that event, children will be supervised through the night. The building will be kept warm and children will sleep on their cots or carpet, infants/toddlers in their cribs or cots. Meals will be served to children and staff - dinner in the evening, breakfast the next morning. The next day, arrangements will be made to get the children home.

If bad weather occurs when the program is closed, an announcement will be made over designated radio stations to notify parents.

### **Fire**

#### **Fire Prevention**

Fire safety is a regular part of the curriculum for the children and the emphasis is on safety procedures. Evacuation routes and actual staff responsibilities during evacuation are posted in each room. All emergency telephone numbers are posted by the telephone.

Instructions on how to use the fire extinguishers are posted in every classroom. Each staff member should have the opportunity to practice using the fire extinguisher.

#### **Fire Drills**

Each month a fire drill will be held. These drills will be scheduled monthly. The drills will be a combination of scheduled and surprise drills, both for the children and the staff. The drills will be logged in on the fire drills checklist sheet: date and time noted.

## **Actual Fire**

If a staff person discovers a fire, he/she will activate the fire alarm. A designated person will call 911. Staff will exit the children, following fire drill procedures. All will calmly proceed to the designated area outside of the building. Take along the sign-in sheets to check attendance. A designated person will check all of the classrooms and bathrooms for children and will shut classroom doors. A designated person will use the fire extinguisher from the wall if he/she feels it is safe to do so. Never re-enter the building without proper approval.

## **Tornado and Severe Thunderstorm**

A "tornado watch" means the national weather service is alert to possible development in a specified area over a specified period of time. There is no siren, but public warning over TV and radio. Bring the children inside immediately. One staff person will listen to the radio. Open a few windows to listen for sirens. Keep the children calm and preoccupied with constructive activities.

A "tornado warning" means the national weather service has confirmed a tornado sighting and location, time of detection and direction of movement. There is a steady siren and public warning over TV and radio. Take shelter immediately. Gather the children and go into an identified shelter. Take along a radio, flashlights, books, and a TV, record player, or cassette player in case the electricity stays on. Also take crackers or snacks.

Stay calm and comfort any child showing signs of distress. After assisting the children to the designated shelter, one staff member will check the building to be sure all children are in the shelter. The local siren, radio and TV will sound an all clear when it is safe to resume normal activity. \*Refer to article.

The siren is only sounded in cases of actual tornado warnings.

With severe thunderstorms or windstorms, move the children indoors. Keep children away from the windows or doors if the storm appears to be strong. Stay tuned to a radio for further developments.

## **Tornado Drills**

The procedure for tornado drills is the one that would be followed for a tornado or severe weather warning.

Each month between September and May tornado drills will be held. The staff will be instructed during their orientation of the location of the emergency shelter. These drills will be logged in on the Fire - Tornado Drill Checklist Sheet with date and time period.

1. One staff member will sound the alarm and all children will be lead by their teacher to the prearranged safe emergency shelter.
2. The assistant or aide will check the bathrooms and school building to make sure that all children have joined the group in the shelter area.

3. The last staff person shall take the attendance sheet and join the group where attendance shall be taken.
4. In case of a real emergency, one staff member should monitor the weather radio and follow instructions as stated.
5. Flashlights (mounted on the walls throughout the school) should accompany the children to the shelter area.
6. The teachers should remain calm, leading the children in songs or stories.
7. The children should be informed as to why they have left their classroom and what steps are being taken to ensure their safety.

### **Tornado Information**

Check your weather radio on a regular basis. Make sure it is plugged in and in the "alert" mode.

To protect yourself inside the building do the following:

1. If you are located on a main floor, move to the center of the building. Make every effort to locate yourself behind an object, wall or partition, away from windows. The concern is flying glass. Areas providing good structural support are: closets, bathrooms, and hallways. If possible, stay under a desk or table. Place your arms around your head and face to protect from flying debris.
2. If you have access to a basement, this is the best place for protection from a tornado. Go to any wall, face onto the floor with arms around your head and face. Additional protection could be gained from staying under a desk or table.

Please discuss with your children the dangers and safety procedures with tornadoes. If you have questions, please contact the owners.

### **Power Failure**

In the event of power failure at the program, the teacher, or designees, will immediately determine if the failure is program based or covers a larger area.

The children will be kept inside if the power failure is due to downed power lines nearby.

As soon as probable cause for power failure is located, the local power facility will be called for emergency service. When notifying the power facility, explain that we are a preschool with children in the building and they will respond immediately.

The children must be kept calm and any distress comforted immediately by the staff.

If the weather conditions outside are such that proper heat or cooling will not be maintained at the program, the parents of the children will be notified.

In the event of a power failure, the phone will not ring. Outgoing calls can be made.

**Reference: Tennessee Department of Human Services Child Care Emergency Preparedness Guidelines Manual.**