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TO: Connecticut General Assembly

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Under Public Act No. 11-66, now codified in Connecticut General Statutes Section 28-11, the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection is required to submit an annual report to the General Assembly on planning and activities for children and youth as part of homeland preparedness and emergency response planning for natural disasters, man-made disasters and terrorism. The report must include provisions that address (1) the distinct health needs of children for purposes of bioterrorism and other public health emergency preparedness, (2) public education and communications for families concerning public safety issues relating to disasters and terrorism, (3) training in safety and security measures and multi-hazard response plans for child care providers, school personnel and personnel in before and after school programs, family homeless shelters, summer camps, and juvenile justice system facilities, (4) coordination of school health and mental health strategies, and (5) amendments to the state civil preparedness plan and program made pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 28-5(c).

The Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), is responsible for a coordinated and integrated program of emergency management and homeland security. At the direction of the DESPP Commissioner, DEMHS convenes the Statewide Emergency Management and Homeland Security Advisory Council. One of the key committees of the Advisory Council is the Child Emergency Preparedness Committee (CEPC), with established governance to define its purpose, goals, and membership.

The Sandy Hook tragedy, taking place on December 14, 2012, at the very end of this reporting period, poignantly highlights the critical nature of emergency planning related to children. It was

this recognition that prompted DEMHS to propose legislation in 2009 that resulted in the statutory requirement that each local or regional school board substitute a crisis response drill for a fire drill once every three months and develop the format of such crisis response drill in consultation with the appropriate local law enforcement agency. See Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-231(b). Governor Dannel Malloy has created the Sandy Hook Advisory Commission to review current policy and make specific recommendations in the areas of public safety, with particular attention paid to school safety, mental health, and gun violence prevention. DESPP, DEMHS, and other state, local, federal and private sector partners will work closely with the Commission to address these issues in a collaborative and coordinated manner.

## **2012 ACTIVITIES:**

### **Child Emergency Preparedness Committee**

CEPC's primary purpose is to make recommendations to the Advisory Council and the Deputy Commissioner of DESPP/DEMHS with regard to the development and implementation of statewide strategic planning and guidance related to children in emergencies.

In 2012, the CEPC was co-chaired by a local emergency management representative and a Commission on Children representative, with staff support from DEMHS. The committee is made up of representatives from the following agencies and organizations:

- Commission on Children
- DESPP/DEMHS Planning Representative
- DESPP/DEMHS Regional Coordinator
- Local Emergency Management Director/CT Emergency Management Association
- Department of Education
- Department of Public Health
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Children and Families
- CT Association of Boards of Education
- CT Association of School Superintendents
- CT State Education Association
- Office of Policy and Management
- DESPP/CT State Police
- Department of Correction
- 211 Child Care/United Way of CT
- CT Association of Schools
- CT Council of Municipalities
- American Red Cross.

Additional committee membership pending approval includes:

- CT Charts-A-Course
- Emergency Medical Services Children - EMSC

During 2012, CEPC held 4 meetings:

- January 18 – DEMHS, Hartford
- May 23 – State Emergency Operations Center
- September 20 – American Red Cross, Farmington
- November 28, State Department of Education, Middletown

During 2012, the CEPC, an Emergency Support Function (ESF) #5 (Emergency Management) working group of the DEMHS Advisory Council, carried out numerous activities in continued pursuit of enhancing Connecticut's emergency preparedness activities for children in disasters. The role of the CEPC, as both a planning and policy advisor and a response resource, continues to be refined.

In July 2012, the CEPC Co-Chairs attended the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Youth Preparedness Workshop in Boston, Massachusetts. The workshop dealt with implementing youth preparedness within organizations with a major emphasis on the unique abilities children have to prepare themselves, their families, schools and communities. Workshop highlights:

- Children are great messengers for home-based preparedness and can convince their parents to be prepared. For example, children brought home the lessons of seat belt safety that are now considered second nature.
- Today's children can become leaders who will ensure future generations are also prepared. Earlier youth-targeted, anti-smoking education helped reduce usage rates among today's teens.
- During an actual emergency, prepared children are more confident than their peers. This confidence can translate to impact—for their own lives and for family, friends, and neighbors.

### **Governor's Emergency Planning and Preparedness Initiative (EPPI)**

In the wake of Tropical Storm Irene and the October Nor'easter in the summer and fall of 2011, DEMHS worked with state, local, federal, and private sector partners to meet the directives of the Governor's Emergency Planning and Preparedness Initiative (EPPI), which included conducting a four-day hurricane exercise in July 2012. CEPC participated in the exercise to provide guidance as necessary regarding children's issues. The overall goal of this initiative was to enhance planning and preparedness by:

- Improving information-sharing during an emergency between state and local officials, and utility providers;

- Increasing awareness and understanding of Connecticut emergency management systems, including the use of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), within the local, state, and utilities organizations;
- Developing a more comprehensive storm preparation and response plan that enhances existing planning by providing specific assignment of responsibilities in mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery activities that will apply to all hazards, including utility disruption events;
- Creating an All-Hazards Energy and Utilities Plan as an annex to the State Response Framework, to address response to and management of widespread utility outages;
- By September 1st, conducting a statewide real-time exercise in which each DEMHS region participates.

### **Amendments to State Plans and Programs**

In 2012, CEPC members participated in the Statewide Mass Care Workgroup and provided guidance and information to ensure children and their unique needs were incorporated into the Mass Care Standards and Guidance documents provided to local emergency management and other public safety officials as another facet of the Governor’s EPPI. As described in the State of Connecticut’s Instructions/Consensus Standards for Mass Care, children under the age of 18 comprise about 25 percent of the population and have unique needs when an emergency or disaster strikes. Issues identified in the Mass Care guidance to be included in each town’s mass care plan include: “children safe” areas within shelters; infant bedding and supplies; procedures for unaccompanied children, and; family reunification. As described in the shelter assessment tool, child safe spaces include:

- clean diaper-changing facilities
- adequate toy hygiene
- safe toys
- clean food/bottle preparation area
- hand-washing facilities available
- adequate child/caregiver ratio

In addition to the above, the CEPC made a recommendation that the guidance include age-appropriate bedding, including folding, portable cribs or playpens. Based on this recommendation, DEMHS purchased 250 playards/playpens with crib sheets to provide safe sleeping accommodations for infants up to 12 months of age in an emergency shelter environment.

### **Training – Public Safety Community**

To enhance emergency planning and preparedness efforts for the children in Connecticut, the CEPC sponsored six FEMA L-366 “Planning for the Needs of Children in Disasters” training

workshops across the state in November and December of 2012. Connecticut trained approximately 150 individuals in emergency preparedness for children. Participants represented almost 50 communities (emergency management, fire, police, social services, parks & recreation, school nurses, public health, CERT and MRCs), 4 hospitals, 6 state agencies, including the Office of the Child Advocate, the American Red Cross, the United Way, other child services agencies and even one of the State's largest utility companies.

At the beginning of each session, participants were asked to identify ways they could improve their community's plans for children's needs in disasters. They were then asked to take the list and over the course of the next several weeks implement each item listed. While most participants came armed with a wealth of experience in dealing with children, all left with additional tools to further address the unique needs of children prior to, during and following disasters.

While the L-366 course can be completed as an Independent Study, classroom interaction has proven to be invaluable. Bringing L-366 into a classroom environment allows for various subject matter experts to share ideas, best practices and develop relationships that continue to thrive long after the workshop is over.

### **Training – Child Care Community**

Preparedness, Response and Recovery planning within the child care community is essential to ensuring the safety of children, their child care providers, and the greater community. Child care programs provide a foundation for young children's physical, emotional and cognitive well-being, and are essential to community recovery in the aftermath of an emergency. The inability of child care facilities to re-open following an emergency can force families to leave children unaccompanied or in unsafe, informal care, increasing their risk of injury or abuse while parents seek recovery assistance. Child care is essential to jump-starting local economies following an emergency. A reliable workforce needs safe, secure child care for employees to resume work.

The Connecticut Department of Social Services partnered with CT-DEMHS, CT Department of Public Health, United Way 2-1-1 Child Care, the child care resource and referral agency for the State of Connecticut and the CT Board of Regent's CT Charts-A- Course project and worked with Save the Children, Inc for the period of July 2010 to August 2012 to strengthen the readiness of the child care community and to protect and support children, their families and child care providers before, during and after emergencies. Save the Children assigned a full time staff person to CT to provide technical guidance, planning support and training opportunities to increase the capacity of the child care community to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. A core planning team composed of representation from the departments of Social Services, Public Health and Emergency Management/Homeland Security, Connecticut United Way 2-1-1 Child Care, CT

Charts-A- Course and Save the Children, outlined deliverables to address and meet critical gaps to strengthen lead agency and child care provider readiness.

The Project Management Team worked with stakeholders from across the child care community, statewide departments, and local emergency personnel to build a stronger foundation and offer recommendations for the State of Connecticut to continue to enhance the level of emergency readiness and resiliency amongst the child care community.

Utilizing the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies' (NACCRRRA), "Is Your Child Care Program Ready?" training program, and supplemental materials developed by Save the Children, Save the Children and NACCRRRA delivered a train-the-trainer workshop to 21 pre-certified child care professionals. All participants were required to be a Connecticut-Charts-A-Course trainer and hold a certificate in the FEMA Independent Study Course IS-366 Planning for the Needs of Children in Disasters. Connecticut-Charts-A-Course monitored and managed all training recruitment and implementation logistics. The Department of Social Services allocated funding for trainer reimbursement and United Way 2-1-1 Child Care incorporated the emergency preparedness training into the core training regiment offered by the agency. As of August 2011, 310 providers have participated in this emergency preparedness training. (This was in addition to the 1300 child care providers that were trained by DPH beginning in 2008). Training has continued past the project end date in August 2011 with a revised curriculum that is more Connecticut state specific. As of November 2012, 257 providers have participated in the revised emergency preparedness training.

Supplemental to training opportunities, United Way 2-1-1 Child Care, the State of Connecticut Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) purchased 5,500 copies of the joint NACCRRRA/Save the Children publication called "Protecting Children in Child Care During Emergencies" that highlights best practice standards for incorporating disaster preparedness in state child care regulations and guides child care providers in their emergency preparedness planning. The United Way 2-1- 1 Child Care has distributed 2,711 Standards Documents to Family Child Care providers and 1,759 Center Child Care providers- including child care centers, family day care homes, group homes, nursery schools and school based preschools. The remaining Standards Documents will be stored at United Way 2-1-1 Child Care and distributed to newly licensed providers in the standard welcome packet.

Developed in 2007, the Emergency Preparedness Guidelines flipchart for Child Care Providers has been distributed to over 5200 licensed child care providers and local health departments by the Department of Public Health. This flip chart continues to be given to all newly licensed providers in the state. The flip chart is available in both English and Spanish and can be accessed on the DPH web site at:

[http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3141&q=387160&dphNav=|&dphNav\\_GID=1823](http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3141&q=387160&dphNav=|&dphNav_GID=1823).

The DEMHS Radiological Emergency Preparedness Unit has also focused on emergency planning regarding children during a radiological emergency. If an incident at Millstone Power Station occurs while school is in session, local public safety and school officials in the nine towns in the Millstone Emergency Planning zone (EPZ) have plans in place to provide for the safety of their school populations. This may include an early dismissal or a precautionary school transfer to their town's host community. These plans are reviewed regularly during radiological emergency response program drills and exercises.

Licensed child care centers, group child care homes and family child care homes in the EPZ are required to develop emergency response plans. Child care providers have been encouraged to work with their local public safety officials in developing these plans. Plans include procedures for sheltering, relocating, evacuating children and staff and reuniting families. In September 2012, DPH, FEMA and DEMHS made visits to 7 child care centers in the EPZ to discuss their emergency plans. This was a continuation of the visits to 40 programs in 2006 and 2007. All the programs visited this year were licensed after the initial visits.

## **Training – School Community**

### Emergency Planning for Schools Workshops:

Since 2005, DEMHS has offered Emergency Planning for Schools Workshops statewide to support schools in creating and refining their emergency plans. The workshops include Incident Command System (ICS) training, in order to educate school officials regarding the National Incident Management System (NIMS), which is the standard emergency management system used in Connecticut and across the country. This training makes it easier for school officials to participate effectively in the management of an emergency that affects their communities. In 2012, the State Department of Education and DEMHS held two, two-day workshops on Emergency Planning for Schools (in Norwalk on April 2 and 9 and in Hartford on April 3 and 10). The workshop was designed for:

- school administrators
- principals
- facility managers (custodial)
- special educators
- nurses
- mental health staff
- school board members
- emergency managers
- police & School Resource Officers
- firefighters

Workshop content:

- Described emergency response operations, roles and duties.
- Explained the application of the Incident Command System to the school environment during planning, emergencies and planned events.
- Covered potential hazards that may impact schools.
- Explained how to develop and test an Emergency Response Plan.
- Gave the participants the opportunity to collect information between the two days of training that can be used to develop a strategy for implementation.

In October 2012, two DEMHS trainers took the FEMA the Train-the-Trainer, Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools course held at the Emergency Management Institute. This was the first step in creating a local cadre of trainers to be able to provide emergency planning for schools in addition to the workshop training that was described above.

#### Student Tools for Emergency Planning (STEP):

DEMHS is continuing to work in collaboration with FEMA on the Student Tools for Emergency Planning (STEP) program, an educational preparedness and planning tool for fourth graders and their teachers. The program, offered to fourth grade students, includes a training DVD; written instructions for teachers; and “go bags” for children to develop their own family preparedness kits. Since the program began in 2009, the program has been delivered to approximately 8000 schools students across the state. This year, it is estimated that approximately 2100 students were trained in 7 school districts statewide.

#### **Save the Children National Report Card 2012**

For the second straight year, the Save the Children National Report Card on Protecting Children During Disasters shows Connecticut meeting all four basic preparedness standards (evacuation planning for kids in child care, family reunification, children with special needs and evacuation plans for schools). For a copy of the report go to:

<http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/STC%20DISASTER%20REPORT12%20FINAL.PDF>

#### **Hurricane Sandy**

CT Department of Public Health (DPH) and 211 Child Care worked together to provide information to childcare providers before, during and after the storm. Child care providers were asked to report information on damaged and/or closed facilities. At one time point during the emergency, there were over 170 child care facilities closed. Three were reported as damaged, displacing almost 300 children. 211 Child Care and DPH worked with those providers and families on alternate care facilities.



Following Hurricane Sandy, CT DPH participated in national conference calls with the Administration for Children & Families (ACF), a division of the federal Department of Health and Human Services. ACF promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals and communities.

### **Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting**

In response to the fatal shooting of 20 students and 6 educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School, Governor Malloy activated the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) on the afternoon of December 14, 2012. The SEOC was staffed by DEMHS, Connecticut State Police, Department of Public Health, Department of Social Services, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Department of Children and Families, United Way 2-1-1 Infoline, and American Red Cross. At various times, the state Department of Education, Department of Correction, Commission of Fire Prevention and Control, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency also provided staff to the SEOC. The SEOC remained partially activated until COB Friday, December 21, when it returned to monitoring mode.

The Governor's modified Unified Command met at the SEOC/ by conference call twice daily starting in the afternoon of December 14 through the morning of December 20. Unified Command calls continue to be held regularly, including December 28.

A critical purpose of the SEOC activation was to coordinate the provision of mutual aid, including crisis counseling, donations management, and planning, in support of the families and children of Newtown and across the state.

### **CONCLUSION:**

DESPP, DEMHS and the Child Emergency Preparedness Committee are committed to the continuation of coordinated planning specifically related to children in disasters, and to providing every resource requested to support the Governor's Sandy Hook Advisory Commission