Shelter-in Place

Some disasters may make it unsafe for you and your children to leave your child day care center and you must make the decision to shelter-in-place. You will need to decide where the safest location is inside your center. Things to consider when selecting a location are:

- Select a location on a lower level (preferably the first floor) near the center of your building.
- Avoid being near windows, exterior walls and doors (use rest rooms, interior halls or safe rooms).
- Determine if the location(s) is large enough for the number of children and staff.

Procedures for Shelter-in-Place

- Take evacuation pack from each room or maintain the pack(s) in the designated location(s) for sheltering-in-place.
- Quickly and safely direct children to designated area.
- Talk to the children and remain calm.
- If local authorities consider the outside air contaminated, seal out the outside air:
  - Close and lock all the doors and windows to the outside (windows often seal better when locked.)
  - Turn off all heating/cooling systems and exhaust fans in all rooms.
  - Turn off all air conditioners and switch intakes to the closed position.
  - Seal any gaps around window-type air conditioners.
  - Close any fireplace dampers.
  - Close as many internal doors as possible
  - Seal any obvious gaps around external windows and doors with pre-measured and pre-cut plastic sheeting and duct tape.
  - Close the drapes, curtains or shades for additional protection.
  - Do not leave your building until you receive official notification that the danger has passed

Other tips:

- Include familiar books, toys and activities in the evacuation pack
- Diagram the facility and indicate which areas are to be used as shelters and indicate the quickest way to get there.
- Display a copy of the shelter plan in the director’s office.
- Display in each room in the facility a copy of the floor plan which indicates the location of the shelter to be used by the children in that room.
- Provide a copy of this information to local emergency services.

Adapted from Y.I.K.E.S Planning Guide for Emergency Response Planning in Child Care; Department of Health and Human Services, State of Maine

This material is based on work supported by the Technology-Based Child Care Training Grant funded by the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for Children and Families. Use of this material is governed by U.S. Copyright laws.