

fact sheet



The *Child-Friendly Spaces Program*, Save the Children's key emergency response program in the United States and around the world, is a new Common Standard of Mass Care in domestic disaster response to ensure children are safe and protected in shelters and other locations where families congregate during disasters.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Child-Friendly Spaces Program* is a critical component in providing support to children and families in temporary locations following a disaster.

A Child-Friendly Space is a special area where children can play, socialize, and begin to recover during emergencies. The goal of a Child-Friendly Space is to protect children from harm and provide a sense of normalcy and community when their lives are disrupted by disasters. At the same time, Child-Friendly Spaces enable parents to have time to register for emergency assistance and start to re-establish their lives.

Child-Friendly Spaces are Important for Children

Emergency evacuation shelters usually place children and their families in cramped quarters with strangers and lack learning materials, toys, safe places to play and activities for children. Caregivers who must stand in lengthy lines to apply for emergency assistance too often have no choice but to have their children wait in line with them.

The structured, supervised activities offered in a Child-Friendly Space can be comforting to children who are used to daily routines, can strengthen children's resilience and can help them begin to process what has happened. Child-Friendly Spaces can also provide a forum for sharing important safety information with children and parents, as well as information about the impact of crisis on children.

The *Child-Friendly Spaces Program*

The *Child-Friendly Spaces Program* provides children with a safe, designated area where they can play, socialize, and express themselves under the supervision of caring, trained adults. The program is designed to help children interact with peers, build self-esteem, and begin the recovery process by working through their emotions and enhancing their resilience (ability to "bounce back"). At the same time, Child-Friendly Spaces enable parents to have time to register for emergency assistance and start to re-establish their lives.

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In partnership with the American Red Cross, Save the Children has pre-positioned Child-Friendly Spaces Kits in high-risk areas across the United States to support the *Child-Friendly Spaces Program*. Child-Friendly Space Kit materials include age-appropriate, fun activities items such as: jump ropes, books, toys, art and craft supplies, and board games.

Child-Friendly Spaces Program Training

Training in the *Child-Friendly Spaces Program* supports emergency preparedness and response leaders, organizations and communities in meeting the needs of children in disasters.

The *Child-Friendly Spaces Program* training includes information on understanding and supporting children in disasters, best practices on site selection, organization and set-up of the space, and guidance that address children's unique needs and promotes child safety and well-being while in temporary locations. The *Child-Friendly Spaces Program*, also referred to as Temporary Respite Care for Children, provides a jump-start in meeting the Common Standards of Mass Care in Domestic Emergency Response.

Save the Children Federation, Inc.

Save the Children is the leading independent organization creating lasting change for children in need in the United States and around the world. For more than 75 years, Save the Children has been helping children survive and thrive by improving their health, education and economic opportunities and, in times of acute crisis, mobilizing rapid life-saving assistance to help children recover from the effects of war, conflict and natural disasters. For more information, visit savethechildren.org.

Save the Children USA is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance, a global network of 28 independent Save the Children organizations working to ensure the well-being and protection of children in more than 120 countries.