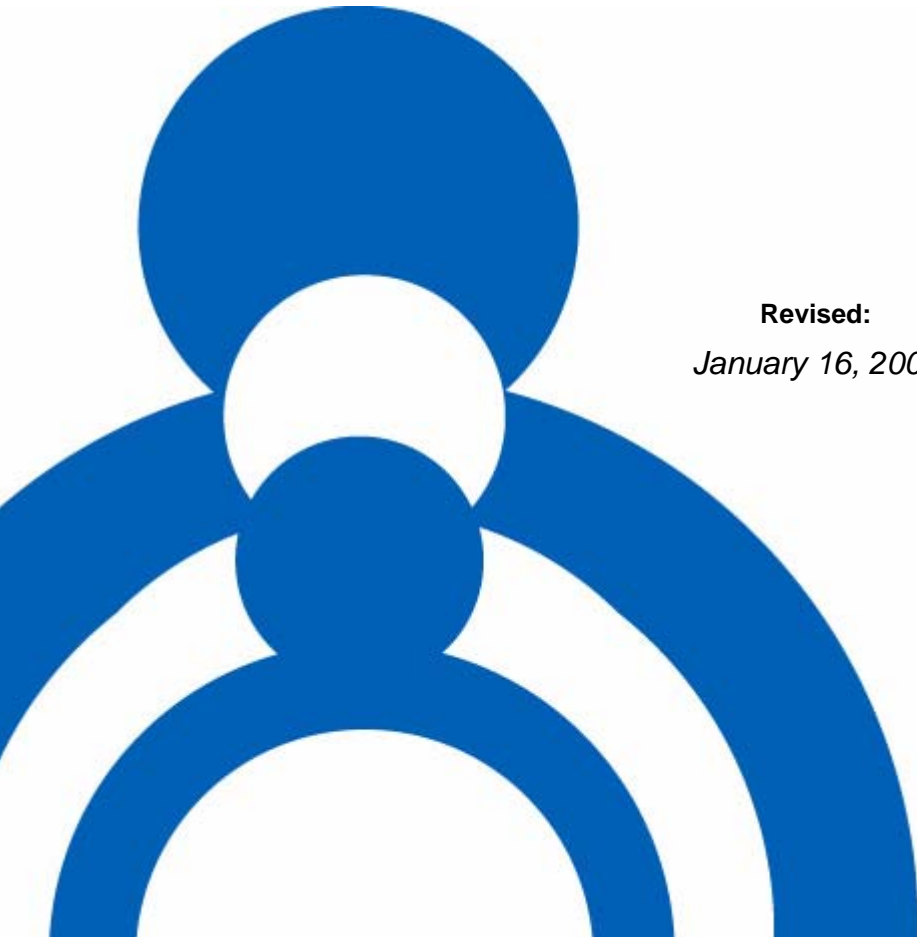


# United for Families

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

**Revised:**

*January 16, 2008*



## INTRODUCTION

The following contains the written Emergency Management Plan (EMP) and disaster preparedness procedures for United for Families. This document is intended to address provisions for dealing with fires, natural disasters, workplace threats, violence and hazardous materials. This plan was revised to meet the criteria established in the *Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006* which states that child welfare programs must establish a plan to address the following:

- a) Identify, locate, and continue availability of services for children under State care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster;
- b) Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases;
- c) Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster;
- d) Preserve essential program records; and
- e) Coordinate services and share information with other States.

Some emergencies, such as fire or chemical spills come without warning. With others, such as tornadoes or hurricanes, there may be several hours or several days notice. Although hurricanes are the primary emergency for which we can plan ahead, the basic principles contained in this plan apply to other emergencies as well.

This plan is to be used in conjunction with the Department of Children and Families Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Plan for Circuit 19.

This plan is specifically designed to:

- a) Ensure that United for Families is prepared to respond to emergencies, recover from them, and continue to deliver services in the affected areas;
- b) Ensure that United for Families and its providers are prepared to provide critical services in an environment that is threatened, diminished, or incapacitated; and
- c) Coordinate response efforts with other states, if applicable.

## CHAIN OF COMMAND

The United for Families Administrative Office serves as the **Command Center** during a disaster. The Command Center will remain open until a disaster/emergency is determined to be at the level which would preclude staff from being located there. Should this site not be usable due to damage, United for Families will work with the

Department of Children and Families District Administration Office to secure another location.

**United for Families**  
**10570 S Fed Hwy**  
**Suite 300**  
**Port St. Lucie, FL 34952**  
**772.398.2920**  
**772.398.2925 (fax)**

Official notices regarding a disaster/emergency situation will emanate from the Command Center. Notification to close and re-open the service centers will come from the Command Center, not from the individual case management agencies located at the Service Center sites. Each service center's Program Director or designee will remain in constant contact with the Disaster Coordinator (see below) during an emergency.

In an emergency, the following people would become responsible for serving as "Disaster Coordinator" and are responsible for making decisions affecting the overall agency and for delegating duties and responsibilities to the other staff members (Refer to Exhibit A – *Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Protocol Checklist*):

- 1. Chief Executive Officer**
- 2. Chief Operating Officer**
- 3. Chief Financial Officer**
- 4. Chief Legal Counsel**
- 5. Director 1 – IT/Facilities**
- 6. Director 2 – Quality/Data Services**
- 7. Director 3 – Program Services**
- 8. Director 4 – Community Development**
- 9. Director 5 – Permanency**

The **Chief Executive Officer** will be in charge of overseeing the entire agency and evacuation if necessary. The **Chief Operating Officer** and **Chief Legal Counsel** will assist the Chief Executive Officer in coordinating the response effort.

**Director #1** will be in charge of ensuring that all Service Centers are following the EMP. In addition, Director #1 will coordinate the securing and preparing of all computer systems, equipment and related technology.

**Directors #2 and #3** will be in charge of overseeing the contracted providers to ensure they are following the EMP.

**Director #4** will be responsible for interfacing with media on the emergency's impact upon United for Families. Additionally Director #4 will be responsible for coordinating relief efforts, such as obtaining emergency supplies.

The **Chief Financial Officer** will be responsible for ensuring that all financial issues, such as the early processing of contractor payments and agency payroll, are completed prior to the emergency.

The United for Families Disaster Coordinator will work with the Case Management Agency **Program Directors** to prepare and secure the service centers.

The **United for Families Executive Assistant** will be in charge of disseminating the United for Families Emergency/Disaster Call Tree, as well as emergency contact information provided by the case management agencies and service providers.

Members of United for Families Senior Management Team, as well as senior managers from the case management agencies and other providers, shall serve on the District's Emergency Operations Committee (EOC). The purpose of the committee is to provide a forum for open communication and planning in the event of a natural disaster and/or emergency that is expected to disrupt regular day-to-day operations and services. The committee meets in person or via teleconference both before and after natural disasters and/or emergencies.

## **COMMUNICATION SERVICES**

United for Families utilizes specialized services to aid in communication during disasters and/or emergencies. The following are two types of these services:

### Emergency Messaging System

- Toll-free "hotline" set up to be used as the single point of providing updates on the emergency, service center closures/openings, and information on post-emergency relief efforts.
- The system provides recorded updates to callers and takes messages. The messages are then electronically sent as audio files to the Disaster Coordinator. The Disaster Coordinator reviews the messages and routes them to the appropriate party.

### Voice Message Broadcasting

- An emergency communication tool used to deliver hundreds or thousands of recorded messages in minutes to all staff, foster parents and caregivers.
- Call lists are uploaded and maintained via the Web and stored in servers which are located in redundant sites outside of Florida.
- Emergency notifications are broadcast to all home, office, and cellular telephones of staff, foster parents and caregivers notifying them that the Emergency Hotline has been set up and will be providing updated information before, during and after the disaster/emergency.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DOCUMENTS**

Emergency management documentation will be maintained on the United for Families Intranet. The documentation will include the following: *Emergency Management Plan, Hurricane Shelter information, Hurricane Evacuation Routes, etc.*

## PRIORITIES

1. Assure the safety and well being of children in United for Families foster homes, emergency shelters, residential group care facilities and any other contracted providers responsible for the care and custody of children;
2. Provide assistance as needed to families and clients served by in-home services;
3. Assure the safety and well being of staff and their families;
4. Safeguard agency records, equipment, and building; and
5. Cooperate with other agencies to provide assistance to the community at large.

## PERSONNEL POLICIES

The Chief Executive Officer will determine all personnel policies during a disaster and/or emergency. This pertains to leave, holidays, payroll, etc.

In the event of any disaster and/or emergency, holiday observances and vacation will be cancelled. The Chief Executive Officer and other key personnel are expected to return to the area if they are on vacation. If an emergency occurs on the weekend, designated staff members are expected to come to the site to adequately assess and handle the situation.

United for Families is committed to providing the time necessary for employees to secure their families and property. The Disaster Coordinator will dismiss staff in order for them to prepare their own property and families. Staff will be expected to report to work as soon as possible after the disaster/emergency has abated and it is safe to travel.

## GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- The Chief Executive Officer and the Disaster Coordinator will assure the agency's emergency plan is reviewed and updated.
- The Chief Executive Officer and Disaster Coordinator will have satellite phones as well as a portable weather radios to monitor storm activity and emergency broadcasts.
- All staff, in the event of weather emergencies, will monitor the appropriate radio/TV channels to determine when the "all clear" signal is given. The following radio/TV stations are recommended for monitoring storm activity:

<i>Indian River County</i>	<i>Martin County</i>	<i>Okeechobee County</i>	<i>St. Lucie County</i>
WQCS-88.9 FM	WZZR-93.7 FM	WOKC-1570 AM	WPSL-1590 AM
WSCF-91.9 FM	WSTU-1450 AM	WWFR-91.7 FM	WQCS-88.9 FM
WZZR-92.7 FM	WPTV-CH5	WPTV-CH5	WPTV- CH5
WGYL-93.7 FM	WPEC-CH12	WPBF-CH25	
WQOL-103.7 FM	WPBF-CH25	Local-CH32	
WTTB-1490 AM			
Cable TV: CH13 TIS South County			
Cable TV: CH35 FALCON North County			

## **HURRICANE**

Hurricane season is from June 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>.

There are two (2) types of official warnings:

- A hurricane **watch** means a hurricane **MAY** strike an area within 24-48 hours.
- A hurricane **warning** means it is **EXPECTED** to strike within 24 hours or less.

All employees are expected to come to work during a hurricane watch. During a hurricane warning, the Chief Executive Officer will provide direction as to work schedules.

The following plan defines activities to be carried out during a hurricane watch or warning period, during a hurricane itself, and after the storm has passed.

### **Hurricane Watch/Warning**

When a Hurricane "Watch" affecting the counties in Circuit 19 is declared, the Command Center will open and will be the central point for information exchange and dissemination. The following tasks should be taken into account.

- Assure that client and agency records are stored in such a way to protect them from theft, fire, and flood.
- Disconnect all computers and telephones, place on top of the desk, and cover with plastic sheeting.
- Move all furniture away from windows
- Alert police about evacuation, if necessary.
- Secure petty cash for emergency use.
- Ensure availability of emergency tools and flashlights.

### **All Programs:**

Prior to any hurricane, as part of case management activities, all case management staff should discuss with all clients their plans should a hurricane strike this area. Assessment should be made as to the vulnerability of clients and their residences. The case management staff should encourage evacuation for those clients and families in low lying areas, persons with medical conditions or frailty, families with housing that might be unsafe and any others that are felt to be "at risk". The evacuation plan for the clients should be noted in the case file. Clients who are evacuating need to inform their case manager immediately upon their return.

### **Adoption/Foster Care:**

In order to assure the safety of any children within the agency's foster homes, advance plans need to be in place. Prior to any hurricane threat, as part of general preparation, United for Families Program Services staff will discuss with all foster families the essential preparations necessary in case of a hurricane (such as stocking up of supplies, food, water, etc.)

When a hurricane watch is posted, United for Families Program Services staff will contact all foster homes to assure awareness and advance preparation for the possible storm. At the time of a hurricane warning, United for Families Program Services staff will contact foster families to review their preparations for their families and the children in their care. This should include the site to which they plan to evacuate if they are not remaining in their homes.

## **IF A HURRICANE DOES STRIKE**

### **Emergency Alternative Location**

If after a hurricane strikes communications are disabled, the Chief Executive Officer will identify an emergency alternative meeting location where lead individuals will meet to discuss on-going plans. The alternative emergency location will be decided on at the District Emergency Operations Committee meeting.

## **POST-HURRICANE**

The Disaster Coordinator will issue the “all clear” at which time service centers will re-open. The Chief Executive Officer must be notified as soon as possible regarding the well being of the children, staff and facilities of United for Families. If there is damage to a service center or facility, the EOC will provide the re-open date and time. If there is damage to the United for Families Administrative Office, the Chief Executive Officer will provide the re-open date and time. Staff should contact the hotline and/or call their direct supervisor if they are unsure about when or how to report for duty. It is the responsibility of each staff member to repeatedly attempt to check the hotline and/or check in with their direct supervisor to determine when to report for work.

### **Facilities:**

The service centers must be assessed for damage. The United for Families Disaster Coordinator will work with the identified service center staff to conduct this assessment. Employees returning for service center damage assessment are to exercise caution and care, utilizing the following guidelines:

- Do not proceed through floods.
- Avoid downed power lines, or life threatening situations.
- Do not proceed into the service center without first looking for downed lines that may be touching the building.
- Check for visible damage that may make the service center dangerous to enter.
- Do not confront looters.
- Cooperate with law enforcement or fire department staff that may be operating in the area.

The following procedures should be used during damage assessment:

- Examine the building for any visible damage.
- List each item of damage, noting what will be needed to repair the damage.
- Prioritize damage into immediate need verses what can wait.
- Take pictures of damage at the Service Center, if a camera is available.
- To the extent that you are able with available resources, make any repairs you can of an immediate need (for instance, a FPL truck is in the neighborhood and you can talk them into getting the electricity running or a window broken out that you can put something over to stop further water damage).
- Notify the Command Center of your situation and needs as soon as communications can be established.
- After notification of the Command Center, United for Families should make contact as soon as communications exist with the building leaser and provide a situation report.

#### All Programs:

After the “All Clear” signal, case management staff will contact their active caseload by telephone to assess the client’s situation and need for assistance. This will be done within 72 hours if possible. United for Families will be notified at the end of this 72 hour period as to the well-being of the clients. This will be provided in roster form by e-mail or fax and United for Families will then notify the Department of Children and Families. Clients will be encouraged to check in with their case manager as soon as possible, to apprise the case manager of their situation.

#### Adoptions/Foster Care:

After the “All Clear” signal, case managers or the foster care agency will attempt to contact foster families. Foster families should also attempt to reach case managers to notify the agency of their status. If telephones are working, the initial contacts will be made by telephone. If telephones are not working, a physical visit to the foster families that have not been reached will be done as soon as it is safe to travel the roads.

### **IF A HURRICANE DOESN'T STRIKE**

If a hurricane doesn't strike, United for Families and the Service Centers will reopen at by 8:00 A.M. the day following the “All Clear” signal. All staff should report to duty according to their regular schedule.

### **FLOOD**

The most likely time for flooding in South Florida is during or after a hurricane or tropical storm. In any case, the United for Families hurricane procedures will be implemented to ensure the safety of children, clients and staff.

In the event of a flood evacuation order, staff will follow these procedures:

- Continuously listen to the Emergency Management Systems (EMS) broadcasts for updates.
- Elevate file cabinets, electronic and/or electrical equipment (computers, appliances, television, VCR, etc), furniture and stored food. If possible, arrange to obtain sand and bags to try and prevent water from entering the facility.

## **TORNADO**

If there is any warning prior to a tornado strike:

- Staff will move all children to interior rooms without windows (bathrooms) until the “All clear” signal is given. One staff member will tour the facility, shut off the gas, turn off the circuit breakers and get a flashlight and the battery powered radio.
- If injuries occur, staff will follow emergency medical procedures.

If a tornado strikes **without** warning, assessment and treatment of injury and/or damage become the priority. In this case, staff actions will follow the same procedures as outlined in the **Hurricane** section of this document.

## **OTHER EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS**

In the event of other extreme weather conditions, such as a heat or cold wave, agency staff will ensure that clients with whom they work have the necessary supplies to safely survive the extreme condition. Staff will contact families, following the procedures contained in the **Hurricane** section of this plan.

## **FIRE**

### **Fire Drills**

- Fire Drills will be held at least monthly and will be random at different times of the day.
- A map of evacuation routes will be posted in conspicuous places on each floor of each United for Families facility and will be reviewed with staff, volunteers and residents on a regular basis.
- Staff will ensure that they and all volunteers, visitors and residents leave by the nearest exit and proceed to the designated meeting places. Staff will point out the posted floor plans and exits to all new employees, volunteers and residents.
- Supervisors will assign specific staff to assure that all occupants have exited the building.
- Smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, fire safety, and lighting systems will be checked each time a fire drill is conducted.
- A record will be kept of each fire drill and review of equipment/systems.

- The individual conducting each fire drill will be responsible for completing the accompanying fire drill report.
- In the event of an “unscheduled” fire drill, as in a false alarm, the supervisor on that shift will complete a fire drill report.

## **Fire**

- When a fire occurs, staff will immediately evacuate the building and call **911** to summon the fire department (if not automated).
- Staff will, as assigned, check the United for Families leased space to ensure that all occupants have exited.
- If the fire is small and can possibly be contained, staff will use the fire extinguishers that are mounted throughout the building.
- Staff will use care when entering smoke-filled areas, as visibility is poor and smoke inhalation is a high risk.
- Staff will, if it is safe to do so, close all windows and interior doors in order to contain and block the spread of fire.
- Department of Children and Families will be notified within 24 hours of the occurrence of fire, explosion, and/or major damage to any United for Families facility, particularly if the health and safety of Department of Children and Families clients has been threatened.
- A United for Families Incident/Accident Report will be completed and routed to the appropriate parties after any occupancy of fire or explosion.

## **CHEMICAL SPILLS/NUCLEAR INCIDENTS**

In the event of an evacuation ordered due to a chemical spill or a nuclear power plant incident in the area, staff will follow the procedures outlined in the above hurricane plan:

## **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

The safety of staff and clients in our care is a primary priority. It is the policy of United for Families to maintain a safe environment and to follow operating practice that will assure optimal safety in the workplace. A **Safety Committee**, consisting of a member from the United for Families Administrative offices and a member from each Service Center, will meet regularly to review incident/accident reports and any potentially hazardous conditions that may exist, including hazardous material on-site. The objective of the Safety Committee is to monitor and reduce workplace hazards.

Staff is required to cooperate in following United for Families safety rules and to report any hazards that might cause injury to themselves, co-workers, volunteers, visitors or clients. Direct and constructive participation of all staff is most important in assuring a safe environment.

Supervisors are responsible for enforcing all safety and health practices, and for ensuring that all job duties are performed and materials are handled with regard for the safety of United for Families employees, clients, volunteers and visitors.

The following rules are the minimum guidelines for working safely:

- Report any unsafe conditions, practices or materials that might cause an accident or injury. Reports can be made to any supervisor or member of the United for Families safety committee.
- Use tools, equipment and potentially hazardous material only when authorized and trained to operate/use safely and properly. Use the proper tool, equipment or material for the job being performed. Wear appropriate protective equipment, such as goggles, gloves, etc. and ensure that this equipment is in good working condition.
- Always maintain good housekeeping in working areas. Store tools and material in the proper places and place waste material in dumpsters.
- Obey all United for Families safety rules, instruction and signs. Comply with all governmental safety regulations. If you are not familiar with the rules and regulations for a specific job or material, ask a supervisor for instruction.
- In the presence of hazardous conditions or materials, secure the area as quickly as possible. Ensure that co-workers, volunteers, visitors and clients leave the area. If appropriate, apply first aid for any injury and call **911** for medical assistance.

## **BOMB THREATS/ TELEPHONE THREATS**

A bomb threat should **not** be ignored. The building should be evacuated and procedures should be followed as outlined in the **Fire** section of this plan.

In the event that a telephone threat is received, the employee should do the following:

- Keep calm, keep talking and don't hang up
- If possible, signal a co-worker to listen and place the call on speaker
- Ask the caller to repeat the message and write it down
- For a bomb threat, ask where the bomb is and when it is set to go off
- Listen for background noises, write down a description
- Note if it is a man's or woman's voice, notice pitch of voice, accent, and anything else you hear
- Signal a co-worker to immediately call 911
- After the call as ended, immediately notify supervisor

## **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

Violence can strike from the outside or from within. The perpetrator can be a stranger or someone known to all. It can be the result of a robbery, jealous spouse or over a disgruntled employee or angry client. The policy at United for Families, Inc. is one of zero tolerance toward violence. Because of this, all acts or threats of violence will be taken seriously.

UFF defines a threat or act of violence as follows:

- Including, but not limited to, any act or gesture intended to harass or intimidate another person.
- Any act or gesture likely to damage company property.
- Any act or gesture likely to leave another person injured or fearing injury.
- All employees are responsible for helping to maintain a violence free workplace.

To that end, each employee is asked to report the act or threat to his or her immediate supervisor and/or a member of the Administrative Management Team. An incident/accident report form should be utilized for this purpose. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously if the employee feels the need. Each act or threat of violence will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken. Any such act or threat by an employee may lead to discipline, up to and including termination.

### **Precautions**

There are certain precautions that employees can use to help protect themselves from danger.

#### **Protection in parking areas/outside buildings:**

- Park within the designated parking areas, especially when working after dark.
- Do not leave purses, briefcases, or other valuables in sight, as thieves can easily smash a window and steal these items in seconds.
- Be aware of surroundings at all times.
- When leaving the building, especially in late evening, attempt to leave with another staff.

### **Visitors**

Visitors should check in with the receptionist and should be escorted while in the building and not allowed to wander freely.

### **ID Badges or cards**

Employees should carry their United for Families issued identification card and present it when requested by the receptionist.

### **Recognizing Warning Signs**

There are always warning signs and signals that, when observed and understood, assist in preventing disruptions or physical violence in the workplace.

## **Stages/levels of violence**

### **Stage 1/level 1** (Early potential for violence)

- Dehumanizing other people, name calling, racial insults or sexual harassment, other verbal abuse.
- Challenging authority, insubordination, refuses to cooperate with immediate supervisor.
- Regularly being argumentative, alienating client or co-workers, consistently argues with co-workers or management.
- Spreads rumors or gossip.

### **Stage 2/Level 2** (Escalated potential for violence)

- Ignoring or refusing to obey company policies and procedures
- Stealing from the agency or co-workers, sabotaging equipment, client files or agency property
- Making threats verbally, in writing, by E-mail or voice mail
- Blaming others for all problems, sees self as victimized by management

### **Stage 3/Level 3** (Potential for violence is realized)

- Displaying or brandishing a weapon (knife, gun, etc.)
- Physical fights, punching, kicking, slapping
- Committing assault, arson, murder, suicide

## **Hostage Situation**

- A hostage situation involving clients and/or staff will be reported immediately to **911**.
- Clients and Staff not involved in the situation will be removed to safety.
- Anyone creating hostage situations will be prosecuted to the fullest extent provided by law.
- The Chief Executive Officer must be notified immediately of any hostage situation.

## **COPING WITH AN ANGRY OR HOSTILE CLIENT OR CO-WORKER**

- Stay calm and listen attentively
- Maintain eye contact
- Be courteous and patient
- Keep the situation in your control

## **For a person shouting, swearing and threatening**

- Signal a co-worker or supervisor that you need help
- Do not make any telephone calls yourself (this could be perceived as threatening and escalate the situation.)

### **For someone threatening you with a gun, knife or other weapon**

- Stay calm, quietly signal for help, press panic button if available
- Stall for time
- Maintain eye contact
- Keep talking, but follow instructions of the person with the weapon
- Don't risk yourself or others
- Never try to grab a weapon
- Watch for a safe chance to escape to a safe area

### **Domestic Violence**

United for Families recognizes the sensitive nature of family/domestic violence, and wants to protect its employees from the possibility of violence in the workplace. In order to protect the employee from harm, it is important for United for Families to know when there is the possibility of violence. The employee should inform their supervisor when there is a risk of harm by a spouse, partner, etc., as indicated by threats or actual acts. The supervisor will relay the information immediately through their respective chain of command. United for Families will then assist the employee with developing a safety plan to prevent an incident from occurring.

## EXHIBIT A

### Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Protocol Checklist

- United for Families Chief Executive Officer communicates to providers and management team on action to take.
- United for Families Executive Director is in continuous communication with Department of Children and Families.
- United for Families Directors communicate with CMA Program Directors and with Hibiscus Lead Team Leader to follow safety plan.
- CMA provider staff contact caregivers including cases under their supervision placed elsewhere.
- CMA provider staff use FSFN generated list to document contacts. CMA providers will coordinate this between each other. If children must go to Emergency Shelters case managers must stay with them.
- Hibiscus safety team leader contacts foster care families.
- Hibiscus safety team staff use generated check list of foster care parents provided by Eligibility Determination Unit to document contacts.
- United for Families Placement Unit will contact all residential and therapeutic programs; in district & out of district.
- Contact information communicated to United for Families Safety Team Directors/Coordinators every two hours providing updated information.
- If center(s) close(s) Director #1 or designee handle shut down of server and communicate equipment protection requirements.
- Case records should all be returned to record room.
- After the Disaster/Emergency has subsided United for Families Executive Director communicates all clear.
- After the all clear, another check must then take place with all cases for follow-up.