

# fact sheet

## RESILIENT CHILDREN / RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

*The Resilient Children/Resilient Communities Initiative (RCRC) builds on a model of child-focused community resilience planning that can be brought to national scale.*

Emergency response plans often fail to address the unique and specific needs of children and their families before, during, and after disasters. Children's institutions such as childcare centers and schools are often left out of the equation, and may not have the resources or capacity to provide safe, non-traumatic sheltering and displacement management services which include family re-unification planning. Studies show that barriers which prevent children from returning to a regular routine quickly after a disaster can delay the return to normalcy that kids need, and the long-term impact can be devastating. Quickly returning to a routine, even if it's a new one, can improve a child's recovery and simultaneously allow the family unit to address other issues of recovery.

The Resilient Children/Resilient Communities Initiative, funded by a grant from the global healthcare company, GSK, aims to integrate lessons learned from research in post-disaster recovery, into building child-focused community resilience. To do this, the project developed a child-focused disaster preparedness model that could be replicated at a national scale to prepare the institutions that serve children to respond to children's unique needs during and after disasters. The compilation of tools curated and developed during the phase I of this project are available for public use by visiting the RCRC Toolbox website at: <https://rcrctoolbox.org>.

### Why child-focused resilience matters<sup>1</sup>:

- 69 million children are separated from their parents each work day as they go to school or child care.
- 37% of American households are not confident in their community's ability to meet the needs of children during disasters.
- Over half (54%) of Americans believe they will be reunited with their children within several hours of a disaster. It took almost 7 months to reunite the last child with her family after Katrina.
- Of every \$10 spent in Federal Agency Preparedness Grants, less than one penny goes to activities targeting children's safety.
- More than half of US families have been affected by a disaster.



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### What we're doing:

During its Pilot Phase (2015-2018) the Resilient Children/ Resilient Communities (RCRC) Initiative developed a model of child-focused community resilience which included enhanced disaster planning, education, and awareness-building. This was accomplished by developing two pilot programs centered on the development of Community Resilience Coalitions (CRCs) - one in Washington County, AR and one in Putnam County, NY. In partnership with leaders in these communities the initiative analyzed, recommended and implemented procedures, training and guidance to help communities protect children in disasters.

Phase II (2019-2020) of the initiative expands the model to new communities recovering from disasters in order to build back stronger. The original model and measures are being applied in communities affected by hurricane Florence in New Hanover and Robeson Counties, NC, and by hurricane Maria in locations throughout Puerto Rico. The primary measure of success of this initiative at the community level are the implementation of a baseline and end-of-project Community Preparedness Index (CPI), an evidence-based measure of community preparedness previously developed by Save the Children in collaboration with the National Center for Disaster Preparedness, as well as the identification of critical policy levers to promote systematic change.

The initiative also aims to build national resilience through policy advocacy and development, and dissemination of the community-based resilience model and resources. This work is supported by the National Children's Resilience Leadership Board (NCRLB), composed of public officials, thought leaders, and innovators from the public and private sectors. This group provides linkages and visibility to the work of increasing the resilience of children at the community level, and the policies that guide and facilitate this work nationally.

The RCRC Toolbox of resources was developed and disseminated to support other communities looking to build child-focused community resilience in their own communities. In Phase II, the initiative aims to develop new and adapt existing tools for the post-disaster recovery context, translate those tools into the Spanish language, and establish a Peer Assistance Network (PAN) to mentor communities seeking to increase their ability to meet the needs of children in disasters. This initiative, funded by a grant from GSK, will bring new perspectives and resources into the area of preparedness and child-focused community-based resilience building.

For the RCRC Toolbox, please visit <http://rcrctoolbox.org>

For more information on the RCRC Initiative, please visit <http://ncdp.columbia.edu/rcrc>

<sup>1</sup>Sources: [Save the Children Disaster Report Card 2014](#) & [Children in Disasters: Do Americans Feel Prepared? A National Survey](#), National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University's Earth Institute

