

# Respond to Family Crises

## Why is it important?

All families need support, and some families need more support than others – especially during a time of crisis. Asking for help and knowing where to turn for help is an obstacle for many families. Positioning yourself as a caring resource can make all the difference. Your ability to collaborate with parents to ensure they have the needed resources enables parents to meet the needs of their family. In addition, as a parent feels supported, he or she will be more likely to ask for help. You can reduce further stress on families by providing emotional support, problem solving, and sharing information about local resources.

**Fill out the self-assessment below based on your interactions with families**

		I do this	I don't do this	I'd like to try this
1.	I develop personal relationships with parents by taking time to get to know them individually – listening and learning about their interests, families, current activities, and hopes and expectations for their children.			
2.	The message that parents can turn to me in the event of a crisis is conveyed informally in interactions I have with parents – by listening, showing concern, and sharing their own personal challenges or desires.			
3.	I have access to resource and referral links to such crisis services as:			
	a. Food Pantries			
	b. Domestic Violence services			
	c. Shelters and housing needs			
	d. Respite care for children			
	e. Alcohol and Substance abuse services			
	f. Mental health services			
	g. Economic supports			
	h. Legal assistance			
4.	If parents bring up issues that I feel are beyond my ability to solve, I can refer them to a supervisor.			
5.	I proactively respond to signs of parent or family distress by:			
	a. Expressing my concern and offering help.			
	b. Offering to connect families to resources.			
	c. Being sensitive and responsive to the impact of family stress on children.			
6.	I know how to respond appropriately to family crises. I received training on:			
	a. Resolving conflicts			
	b. Talking to families about difficult issues			
	c. Understanding the impact of family crises and/or loss on a family member, especially children, and how to respond appropriately.			
	d. Talking to parents about helping children in times of crises.			

Based on your answers how do you respond to family crisis? \_\_\_\_\_

What item do you feel would be difficult? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**In the table below, create a plan for an activity or practice for responding to family crisis.**  
(Note that the self-assessment you completed may give you an idea. Refer to the Sample Action Plan at the end of this section.)

<b>PROPOSED ACTIVITY/PRACTICE:</b>			
<b>Steps</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Owner(s)</b>	<b>Supplies needed</b>
<b>OUTCOMES:</b> (What were your results? Number of parents attended, engagement level of parents, did parents interact with each other, etc.)	<b>SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:</b>		

## SAMPLE ACTION PLAN

<b>PROPOSED ACTIVITY/PRACTICE:</b> Cultures in our Classroom			
<b>Steps</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Owner(s)</b>	<b>Supplies needed</b>
Notify the administrator and set the date of the event.	July 12 <sup>th</sup>	Lead- Angie Assistant-Bob Administrator - Candy	cups plates plastic silverware napkins tablecloths arts and craft supplies Drinks Snacks Decorations
Inform parents/encourage parents to share cultural customs.	July 14 <sup>th</sup>	Lead-Angie	
Create a sign-up sheet.	July 17 <sup>th</sup>	Assistant-Bob	
Plan activities.	July 21 <sup>st</sup>	Lead-Angie	
Purchase supplies (refreshments).	July 26 <sup>th</sup>	Administrator- Candy	
Host event.	July 28 <sup>th</sup>	Lead- Angie Assistant-Bob Administrator- Candy	
<b>OUTCOMES:</b> <i>(What were your results? Number of parents attended, engagement level of parents, did parents interact with each other, etc.)</i>  Parents talked to one another and found similarities with cultural customs.  4 families shared their cultural foods.  7 families attended with 11 children in total.  2 families scheduled play dates with their children.		<b>SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:</b>  Include other leads and their participation in the event.  Personally call all families to invite them to the event and bring something to represent their culture.  Send out reminder calls the day before.  Plan icebreaker activity.	