



We cannot prevent disasters,
but we can take action
so that when they do strike,
we will be ready and
children will be safe.

**PREPARED
PUTNAM,
RESILIENT
PUTNAM.**

**COMMUNITY RESILIENCE COALITION
PROGRESS REPORT: AUGUST 2017**

intro

The Resilient Children/Resilient Communities Initiative was launched in September 2015.

Putnam County, New York, was one of two communities in the country selected to participate in this pilot initiative.

This initiative is lead by the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University's Earth Institute and Save the Children, and is funded by a grant from GSK, the biopharmaceutical and healthcare company.

The goal is to develop a replicable model of child-focused community resilience that can be brought to other communities across the nation.

This report highlights the progress made to date.

background

Research shows that a community's ability to recover quickly from a crisis can be measured by its capacity to care for its children, who are among the most vulnerable.

In Putnam County, numerous groups came together to form the Community Resilience Coalition (CRC) and lay the groundwork with support from emergency management, the health department, schools, child care centers, after-school programs, foster care, first responders and community-based organizations.

The CRC's purpose is to help create and strengthen partnerships among all of these child-serving institutions and address gaps in preparedness in a holistic manner. The coalition provides these organizations the opportunities to come together on a regular basis in a single location to collaborate and coordinate for a unified vision.

partners

Brewster Central School District

Camp Wilbur Herrilich

Carmel Central School District

Child Advocacy Center of Putnam County

Child Care Council of Dutchess & Putnam Inc.

Civil Air Patrol

Community Connection – CRC

Haldane Central School District

Hudson Valley Cerebral Palsy Association

Mahopac Central School District

Mental Health Association in Putnam

Metro-North Railroad

NY State Office of Emergency Management,
Region 2

NY State Police, Office of Emergency Management

NYS Department of Health

Over the Rainbow Learning Center

Putnam ARC (PARC)

Putnam ARC (PARC) Preschool

Putnam CAP/ WestCOP

Putnam County Bureau of Emergency Services

Putnam County Department of Health

Putnam County Department of Social Services
and Mental Health

Putnam County Medical Reserve Corps

Putnam County Office for People with Disabilities

Putnam County Sheriff's Department

Putnam County Youth Bureau

Putnam Family & Community Services

Putnam Head Start

Putnam Hospital Center

Putnam Valley Children's Center

Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES

Town of Carmel

Town of Philipstown

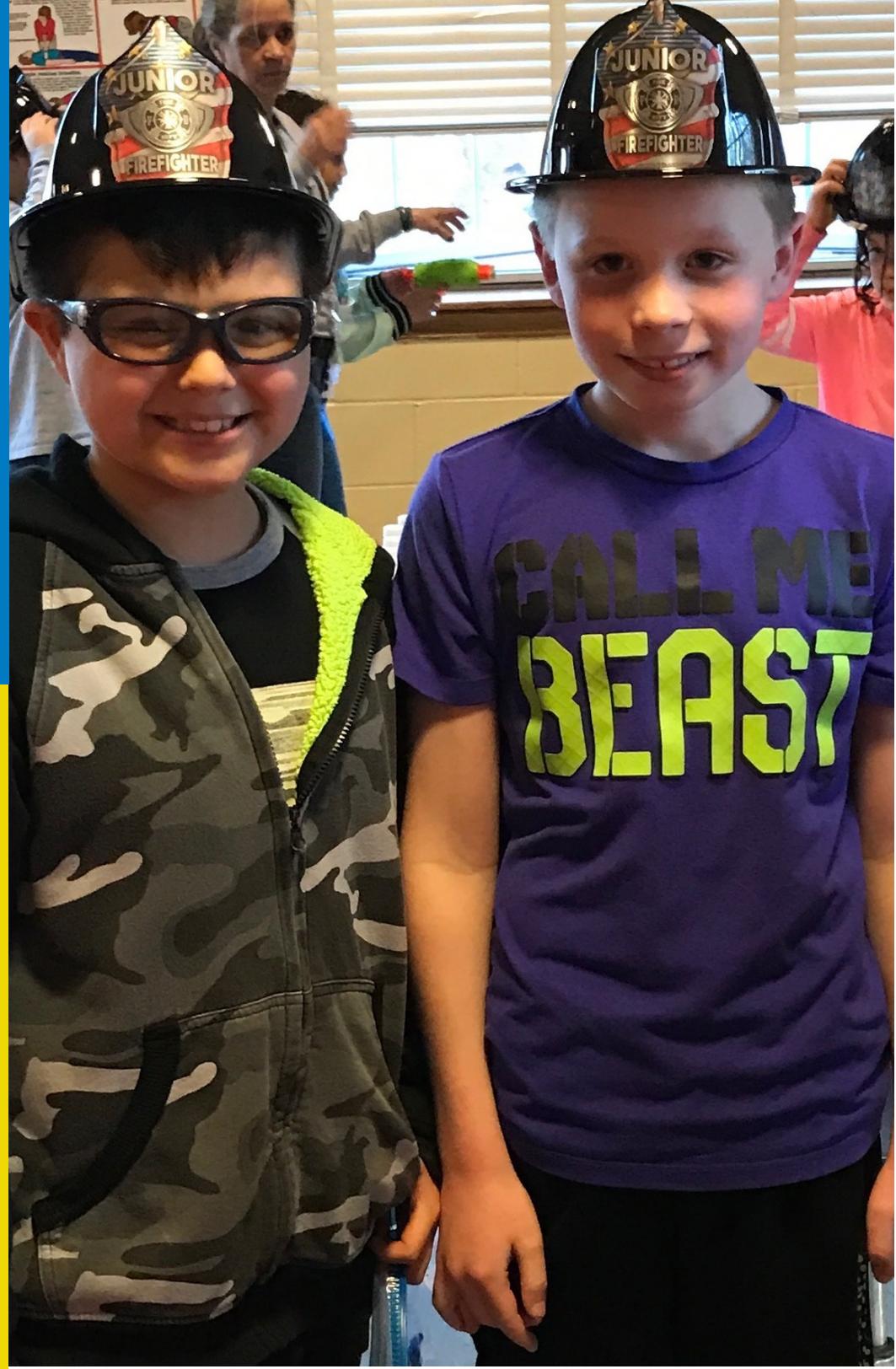
Westchester Community Opportunity Program
(Westcop)

vision

We envision a resilient community in which all our children are able to quickly recover from an emergency or disaster.

mission

We aim to create a sustainable foundation for a resilient community by strengthening the ability of local organizations to collectively protect children before, during, and after an emergency or disaster.



goals

Four goals have been established by the Putnam CRC. **The first, and principal goal, is to strengthen the resilience and preparedness of the community to serve and protect children in times of disaster.**

This overriding goal is further reinforced by enhancing mental health community resources, improving emergency planning networks and coordination, and increasing public awareness, as described in goals 2 through 4.

1

Improve the resilience and preparedness of organizations and institutions that serve children.

2

Strengthen Putnam County's capacity to support the mental health and psychosocial needs of children affected by disasters.

3

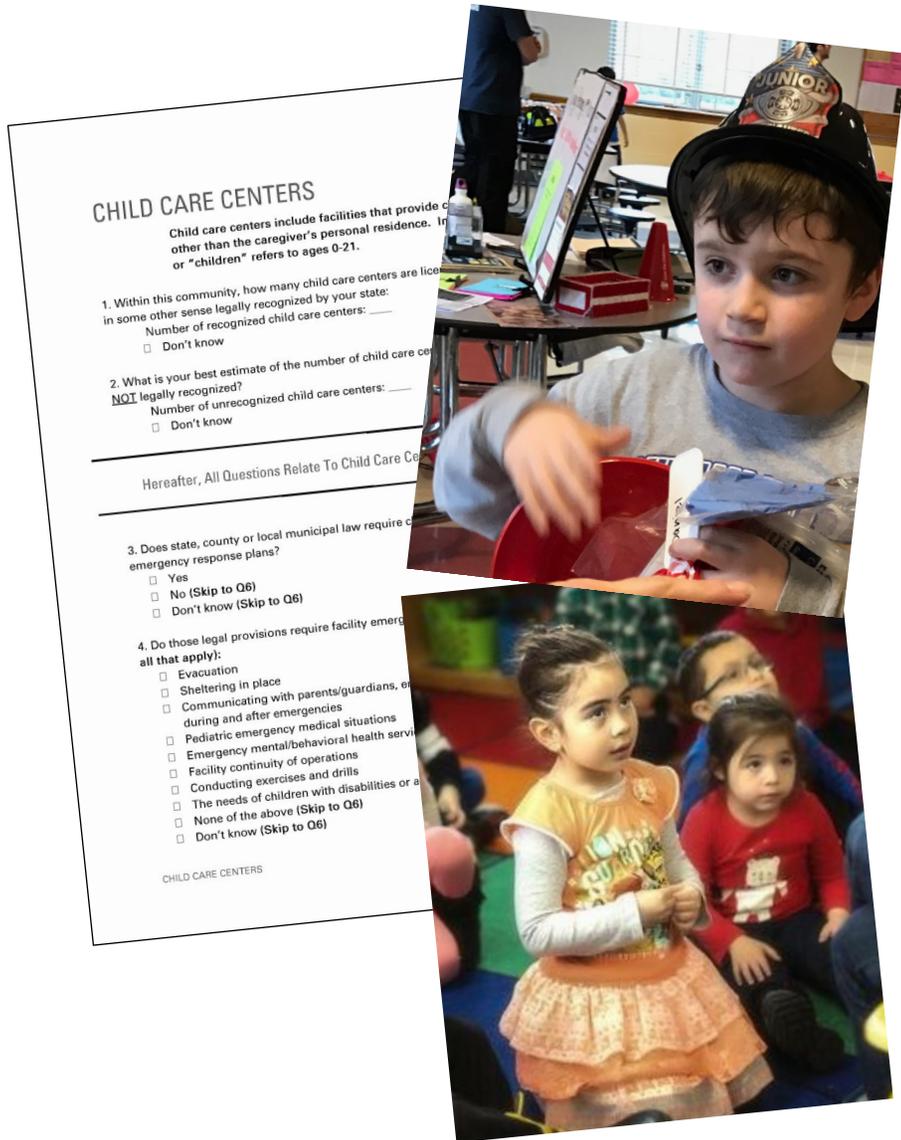
Enhance networks and improve coordination of emergency plans related to children.

4

Increase public awareness about how to protect children before, during and after a disaster.

Goal 1

Improve the resilience and preparedness of organizations and institutions that serve children 0-17 years old, as measured by the Community Preparedness Index.



✓ Completed community assessment

The Community Preparedness Index or CPI is an assessment tool developed by Columbia University and Save the Children. It provides a preparedness score for the various sectors responsible for the well-being of children during and after an emergency which may include schools, child care, foster care, hospitals, emergency shelters, and coordinating agencies such as emergency management.

This comprehensive inventory of the local regulations, guidelines, and best practices in place to meet the unique needs of children in disasters helped identify local strengths and areas for improvement. Based on results, priority improvement areas include stronger continuity of operations planning, the development of child disaster mental health response plans, and improved coordination of county emergency response plans focused on the needs of children.

✓ Strengthening local capacity

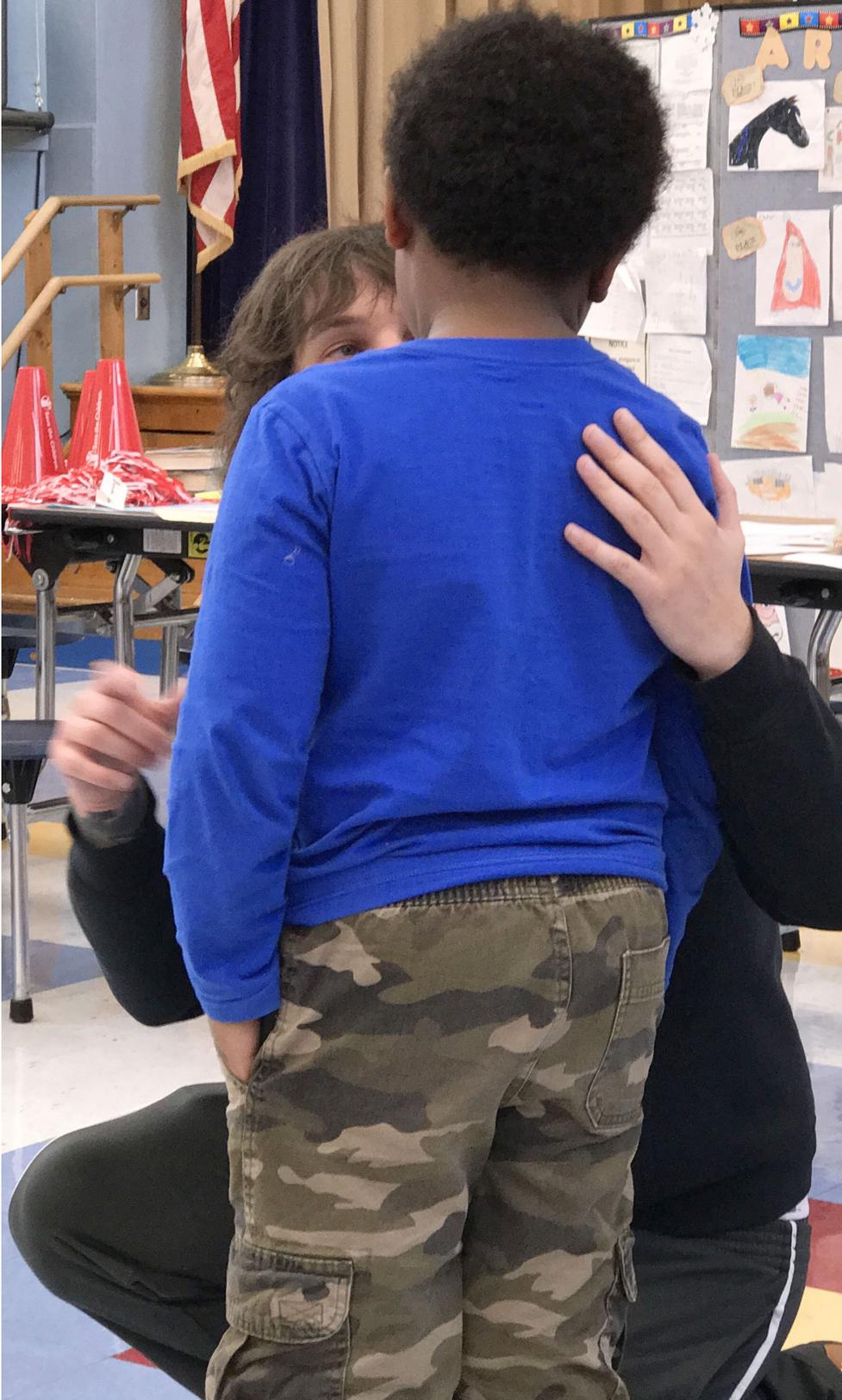
Trainers from key local child-serving agencies, including the Dutchess/Putnam Child Care Council and Camp Herrlich were trained in the Save the Children's emergency preparedness curriculum for child care providers. The training includes best practices for creating robust emergency plans for child care providers as well as the Prep Rally, a play-based program to teach children the basics of staying safe in disasters. A training plan is under development to ensure that these and other project trainings are available to schools and child care providers throughout the county.

✓ Defined preparedness and resilience locally

BOCES and various public schools, as well as child care organizations have brainstormed with the CRC to create a vision for what "prepared" and "resilient" look like for their sectors.

✓ Created "Best-Practice" checklists

Using the framework and results of the CPI, along with input from local experts, the CRC project team created checklists that encapsulate best practices for child care, foster care and emergency shelters. When utilized, these checklists build a foundation of gold-standard preparedness, meeting the unique needs of children, both during and after a disaster.



Goal 2

Strengthen local capacity to meet the mental and emotional health needs of children affected by trauma or disasters.

A key area for improvement identified through the CPI, and anecdotally, is Putnam County's capacity to fully and effectively meet the psychosocial and mental health needs of children and caregivers following a large-scale disaster. Coordination and management of post-disaster mental health services can be extremely complex, slow to get started, and are not often available long enough to reach the most vulnerable community members.

The Regional Crisis Team, led by Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES, serves as an excellent resource for schools during and immediately after a traumatic event. As part of the initiative, a special working group has formed to expand on existing response capabilities specifically for mental health response and recovery aiming to also address pre-disaster needs in the community.



Formed task force to create response and recovery plan for children's mental and emotional needs

The working group is developing a child-specific mental health and recovery plan for the county to add on to the existing adult-focused mental health plan and to coordinate with NYS resources as well as the influx of support from non-profits and volunteers.

Goal 3

Enhance networks and improve the coordination of emergency planning efforts related to children throughout the county.

✓ Created Putnam's Community Resilience Coalition

The CRC was created and then formally established as an official sub-committee of the Bioterrorism and Emergency Preparedness Task Force, meeting since 2001. This move has brought new partners to the table to discuss emergency preparedness.

✓ Coordinated county-wide emergency planning "Table-Top" exercise and after-action report

A full countywide emergency planning exercise and workshop on May 3 drew more than 50 people from over 30 agencies and organizations. Three County Commissioners participated in the event, examining existing plans and assumptions of multiple child-serving agencies, while determining how plan coordination could be improved to better meet the unique needs of children. The event received local coverage from several print and online media.

✓ Enhanced emergency planning for children

Commitment was secured from the Bureau of Emergency Services to include planning for children's unique needs in next revision of the county's emergency operations plan.

✓ Familiarized NYS personnel with CRC initiative

To bring awareness to the model currently being developed in the pilot communities, CRC representatives met in Albany with NYS officials from multiple agencies including the offices of Emergency Services, Children and Family Services, Mental Health, Health, and the NYS Police. The purpose was to familiarize them with the project and to continue learning about the resources the state has available to meet the needs of children after a disaster and to coordinate with local officials.



Goal 4

Increase public awareness about how to protect children before, during and after a disaster.

Engage partners at the Annual Children's Expo & Public Safety Day

Family emergency planning has been promoted by developing and staffing a CRC information booth at the annual children's safety fair.

Develop and distribute messages through traditional and new media outlets

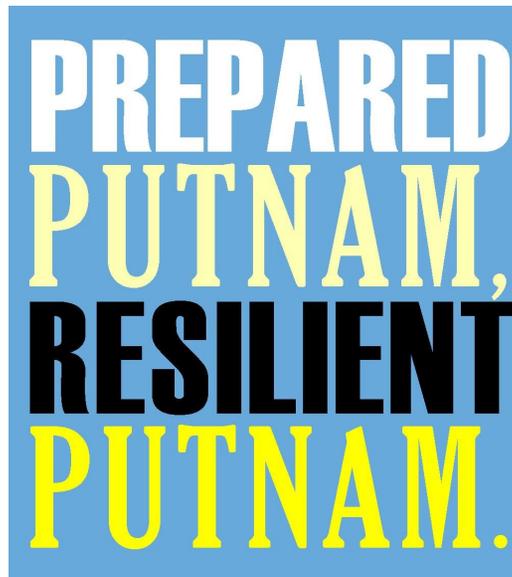
Content has been crafted and disseminated on a variety of child safety and emergency preparedness. Target audiences include the general population of Putnam County as well as key stakeholder and advocacy groups in Washington and Albany.

Delivered preparedness messages directly to children and families

Hundreds of Putnam County children have been engaged in the Save the Children's Prep Rally program through local after-school programs. The Prep Rally was specially designed to teach kids basic tenets about emergency preparedness through games and interactive activities and lessons.

Local volunteers from the Medical Reserve Corps, the Girl Scouts, and the Civil Air Patrol have been trained to use the Prep Rally program and help spread the word and raise awareness of emergency preparedness.





www.putnamcountyny.com/health/community-resilience-coalition