The three-year Resilient Children/Resilient Communities Initiative (RCRC) will develop a replicable model of child-focused community resilience planning that can be brought to national scale.

Emergency response plans often fail to address the specific needs of children and their families before, during and after disasters. Child care centers, schools, and other programs that serve children are often left out of the equation. These institutions may lack the knowledge, resources, and capacity to ensure the children in their care will be safe until they can be reunited with their families while fully restoring services as quickly as possible. Studies show that when children are unable to return to school or child care quickly, the resulting lack of routine and normalcy can lead to long-term negative impacts. Getting back to these familiar settings can improve children's ability to cope with crises, while allowing parents the opportunity to address other issues of family recovery.

**Why child-focused resilience matters**:  
- 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.
What we’re doing:

The Resilient Children Resilient Communities Initiative supports two pilot communities - one in Washington County, Arkansas, and one in Putnam County, New York as they assess and improve capacities to meet the needs of children in emergencies. Each pilot program has founded a Community Resilience Coalition (CRC) that helps create and strengthen partnerships among the public, private, and non-profit sectors which includes the health department, emergency management, schools, child care providers, after school programs, law enforcement, and first responders. The community-led coalitions meet regularly to discuss communications strategies, emergency planning and training for child-serving agencies, and overall progress and coordination efforts in the county.

To help prioritize its work and measure progress, each community is utilizing results from the Community Preparedness Index (CPI), an evidence-based tool that measures the preparedness of child-serving institutions. In addition, the National Center for Disaster Preparedness conducted a survey to gauge national and local preparedness attitudes and behaviors. The survey illuminated a gap between expectations households have and the reality that America as a whole is not adequately prepared to keep children safe during disasters.

The initiative also includes the establishment of a National Children’s Resilience Leadership Board (NCRLB). Composed of public officials, thought leaders, and innovators from the public, private, and academic sectors, this group aims to provide linkages and visibility to the best practices that build resilience of child-serving institutions at the community level, and the policies that guide and facilitate this work nationally.

This partnership between the National Center for Disaster Preparedness and Save the Children, 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 more information, please visit [http://ncdp.columbia.edu/rcrc](http://ncdp.columbia.edu/rcrc)

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