

**T**housands of children and adolescents are rushed to emergency departments each year following serious injury or illness. Children with special health care needs have medical conditions that could place them at greater risk during a medical emergency. In addition, some children that are disabled following their injury or illness may need rehabilitation and other services that require special coordination of resources.

The Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) is a federally-funded initiative designed to reduce child and youth disability and death due to severe illness or injury. The Program is jointly administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Georgia is fortunate to be included within the 50 states, the District of Columbia and four United States territories which received funding through the EMSC Program.

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**DPH 01.19H**  
**Department of Human Resources**  
**Division of Public Health**

For additional information on developing a written emergency care plan for children with special health care needs or to learn more about the EMSC Program, please call:

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# S.T.A.R. Kids



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**Special and/or Technology  
Assisted Resources  
for Children with  
Special Health Care Needs**

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*A Program of the  
Georgia Emergency Medical  
Services for Children*

*Improving the way in which children and adolescents receive care—from injury prevention through acute care, rehabilitation, and return to the community.*

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## Emergency Care Plans for Children with Special Health Care Needs Are Important

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The **S.T.A.R. Kids Program** of the Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) encourages parents/guardians and caregivers of children with special health care needs to develop a written emergency care plan for their child. It is important that everyone involved, including parents, teachers, bystanders, EMS personnel, nurses, physicians and specialists are aware of a child's special needs, both in preparing for and surviving a medical emergency.

Developing an emergency care plan is an important step in caring for a child with special health care needs. It can provide parents and caregivers peace of mind to know their child will be well cared for during a medical emergency.

A written emergency care plan should be easily accessible to everyone involved in the child's care and include the following:

- Information about the child's medical condition
- Current and emergency medications
- Proper care in case of a medical emergency.

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## Emergency Care Plans Provide Peace of Mind

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It is important for parents and caregivers to schedule a pre-planning session with local EMS personnel to introduce themselves, their child and his or her special needs.

The pre-planning session should be tailored to the specific needs of the child. Any concerns or issues regarding the care or transport of the child in an emergency should be discussed during this time with the EMS provider.

In addition, the following details should be discussed during the pre-planning session:

- Location of the child in the home
- Entrance and exit points for access with emergency equipment/personnel
- Barriers in or around the home which may delay or impede access or emergency care
- Training/in-service on any specialized medical equipment in the home
- Transportability of any specialized equipment or supplies for the child
- How and when to update any new or additional medical information
- Language spoken by primary care providers and parents

A successful pre-planning session will help everyone learn more about the child's special needs, and feel more confident and secure in the event of an emergency.

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## Developing an Emergency Care Plan is Easy

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Parents and caregivers should work with their child's primary care physician and specialist to develop a written emergency care plan that includes the following key information:

- **Allergies**
- **Medications and related contraindications** (*for example, specific medications the child should not receive*)
- **Baseline findings** (*age, pulse, blood pressure, respirations, orientation, etc.*)
- **Emergency intervention strategies** (*emergency procedures that best address the child's unique needs*)
- **Parent/Guardian information** (*full names, contact telephone numbers, addresses, etc.*)
- **Name and telephone number of the child's primary care physician and specialist**

The emergency care plan needs to be verified and signed by the child's parents and primary or specialty care physician. Copies of the emergency care plan should be placed in several easily accessible locations, for example near the kitchen telephone, in the child's bedroom and at the parents' place of employment.

It is also important that parents and caregivers work with their child's school nurses and the local EMS personnel to ensure that this emergency care plan is easily accessible at the child's school, daycare and recreation programs.