



Family Preparedness Plan Facilitator's Guide

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Electronic version of the Family Preparedness Plan and the Facilitator's Guide can be obtained from Boston Medical Center for free.

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There should never be a charge – however minimal – for the Family Preparedness Plan nor the Facilitator's Guide. The Family Preparedness Plan and the Facilitator's Guide are, and must always be, absolutely free.

Note to Providers

The Family Preparedness Plan is meant to be filled out by the parent/caregiver with the help or assistance of you or your staff. Due to the nature of this document we encourage you to use these materials in a sensitive way. A **Passport Guide** has been created to accompany the Family Preparedness Plan and the Facilitator's Guide, and these documents can be found at www.bmc.org/programs/center-family-navigation-and-community-health-promotion/resources

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What is a Family Preparedness Plan or FPP?

A Family Preparedness Plan is a collection of medical information, contact information, documents, and other necessary forms used in the case of a family emergency or separation, such as in the case of a detention or deportation. Our FPP provides information to parents on how to plan and prepare if they have to be away from their children and also provide meaningful information to prospective caregivers on how to provide care of the child. The FPP contains specific information about services and needs of children with disabilities. The FPP aims to reduce the stress of all parties involved and make transitions easier for children, especially those with disabilities.

Why is it important?

Every family should have a FPP, regardless of immigration status, to reduce the stress of the unexpected. In case of an emergency this plan will allow a trusted designated caregiver to care of a child to whom they might know nothing about. This plan will also have the necessary information for family reunification if that is a feasible and safe possibility.

Supporting Families & Completing the FPP

While the plan has explicit directions on how to complete each section, families may need help contacting their primary care doctors, understanding the need of certain documents, writing in the details of their child's care, obtaining information about IEPs, early intervention, or special education services, or completing any other sections.

Be aware this may be a very difficult document for a parent to go through. Be prepared to sit down with these families to work through their plans. Some parents may need more time to complete it or emotional support, be mindful of individual needs. Greet families with an attitude of openness, curiosity, and compassion to foster engagement and make the process more bearable.

Advice & Recommendations

- Take the time to understand all the risk undocumented and mixed status families face and how they are treated differently in the legal system.
- Assure families that they have rights in this country whether or not they are undocumented.
- When working with families, learn whether children are citizens or have a potential of being separated from their primary caregivers.
- Make sure families understand that they need a plan per child.
- FPP are meant to be for parents and potential caregivers. It is NOT meant to be part of the medical record. Do NOT keep a copy in your files.

Taking care of yourself

While supporting our families is our utmost priority, having these conversations could be triggering and overwhelming. Try to:

- Pace yourself – How many times a day can you have these conversation?
- If feeling stressed - Focus your attention on your breathing. Notice your breath as you inhale and as you exhale.
- Have body awareness - Notice whether your body is tense or relaxed. If any parts are tight or constricted, observe the tension and then see if you can soften it or gently let it go.
- If you run into any roadblock, ask for help.
- Find a supportive network where you can share your feelings and experiences and find resources.
- Pay attention to self-care: eat, exercise and sleep regularly.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why I cannot keep a copy of the FPP on my file?

The FPP includes personal information that is extremely sensitive. Despite HIPAA and privacy laws, patient information could be disclosed with a court order. In order to provide peace of mind to our patients, we prefer to keep this non-medical information out of our records and files.

2. Where can I find resources for families who need supports beyond what I can offer?

You can find online resources at www.mass211.com and www.helpsteps.com

3. Can I mail or give the FPP to a parent?

The FPP could be an invaluable resource or a stressful and unsurmountable task. We encourage you to go through the document with the parent explaining every part of it and reminding them to fill only those parts that are relevant to their child. This document is meant to be a way for the parent to keep some control while going through difficult times, provide a caregiver with enough information about a child, especially if the child has a disability, and try to as much as possible to ease the stress of the child.

4. If a parent wants to send their child back to their own country, what is the process?

- Parent should get a passport for their child, see “Applying for a Passport for Children under 16 Years Old Guide”.
- Unfortunately airlines have different rules and charges regarding unaccompanied minors, a check with individual airlines may be needed.
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) strongly recommends that unless the child is accompanied by both parents, the adult have a note from the child's other parent (or, in the case of a child traveling with grandparents, uncles or aunts, sisters or brothers, friends, or in groups*, a note signed by both parents)

stating "I acknowledge that my wife/husband/etc. is traveling out of the country with my son/daughter/group. He/She/They has/have my permission."

5. Can a minor under 18 years of age travel to another country without their parents?

Minors may be able to travel to another country without either one of their parents. They may however require a notarized written consent letter from both parents. Minors interested in traveling without their parents should contact the embassy to address admissibility questions. A list of embassies and entry requirements can be obtained at the Department of State website (www.usembassy.gov), or call the particular embassy by phone.