



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Commission on Children



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Is Connecticut Prepared to Protect Its Children in Times of Disaster?

The Commission on Children will seek answers at its Sept. 14 meeting

Amid the anniversaries of the September 11 terror attacks and Hurricane Katrina, the Connecticut Commission on Children will hear from a variety of experts Tuesday on the readiness of our state to protect children and families from disaster.

While Connecticut hasn't been struck by anything of the magnitude of Katrina, it nevertheless has seen its share of natural and unnatural disasters in the past year, including a tornado in Fairfield County, a power plant explosion in Middletown, and a workplace massacre in Manchester. The lessons that can be taken away from these incidents will be addressed by the experts.

The scheduled speakers include: Bruce A. Lockwood, a Connecticut resident who sits on the National Commission on Children and Disasters; Jeanne-Aimée De Marrais, Director of the Domestic Emergencies Unit at Save the Children, Peter Boynton, Commissioner of the state Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS); Margaret Freidenfelt, Child Care Licensing Supervisor for the state Department of Public Health; and Peter Palermino, Program Manager for the state Department of Social Services (DSS).

Senator Andrea L. Stillman, Co-Chair of the legislature's Public Safety Committee, and Senator Jonathan A. Harris, Co-Chair of the Public Health Committee, will deliver opening remarks. To commemorate 9/11 and Katrina, there will be a brief multi-media presentation centering on some of the artwork and writing that schoolchildren from across Connecticut submitted to the Commission in recent years, after the Commission asked them to express their thoughts and feelings on not only those two disasters, but their overall safety.

"In the wake of 9/11, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to require that all of its disaster planning incorporate care for children and families," said Commission on Children Executive Director Elaine Zimmerman. "This meeting will help us keep the focus on them, and to help ensure that we're prepared for any disaster, whether natural or unnatural."

The meeting will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. on Tuesday, September 14, in Room 1-E of the Legislative Office Building, at 300 Capitol Avenue in Hartford.