

DID YOU KNOW?

Schools in Virginia are required to have written emergency management plans. These plans outline what schools must do before and during an emergency. (Va. Code § 22.1-279.8)

What is inclusive emergency planning?

Inclusive emergency planning means that students, teachers, and schools work together before an emergency happens to make sure all students are safe and supported.

Emergencies and natural disasters include:



That means students with disabilities are involved from the beginning.



Inclusive emergency planning means:

- I can share my strengths, needs, and preferences for how I'm supported during an emergency
- I can share my experiences with past emergencies
- My school helps me teach community helpers about supporting people with disabilities

Why is inclusive emergency planning important?

- Everyone at the school will be better prepared
- Students with disabilities will feel safer knowing that the plans include them
- Students with disabilities can be leaders in their families and communities
- Students with disabilities can prepare to live safely in their own homes, present and future



<https://inclusionproject.partnership.vcu.edu/resources/inclusive-emergency-planning/>



DID YOU KNOW?

A law passed in 2025 says that students' IEPs can include supports they need during an emergency. (VA HB 1806)

How can teachers and schools support Inclusive Emergency Planning?

Youth Leaders suggest starting with these activities:

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Make plans and drills easier to understand

- Use **visuals and social stories** to help students know what to expect
- Practice **emergency drills** so there are no surprises
- If students have objects they need to stay calm during an emergency (**headphones, weighted blankets, etc.**), make sure everyone knows where they are kept
- Talk about emergency plans regularly
- Remember that there might not be electricity in an emergency and practice what will actually happen as much as possible

Objects to Stay Calm:



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Invite first responders to meet with students

- Students can teach first responders about their lives, communication, and what students with disabilities need during an emergency
- First responders can teach students about their jobs and how they help during emergencies

Emergency Planning Club

- Make planning fun! Students with and without disabilities can work together to make sure plans are inclusive
- Activities could include:
 - Making emergency kits
 - Hosting Q&A sessions or panels to learn about emergencies
 - Learning about what causes severe weather

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