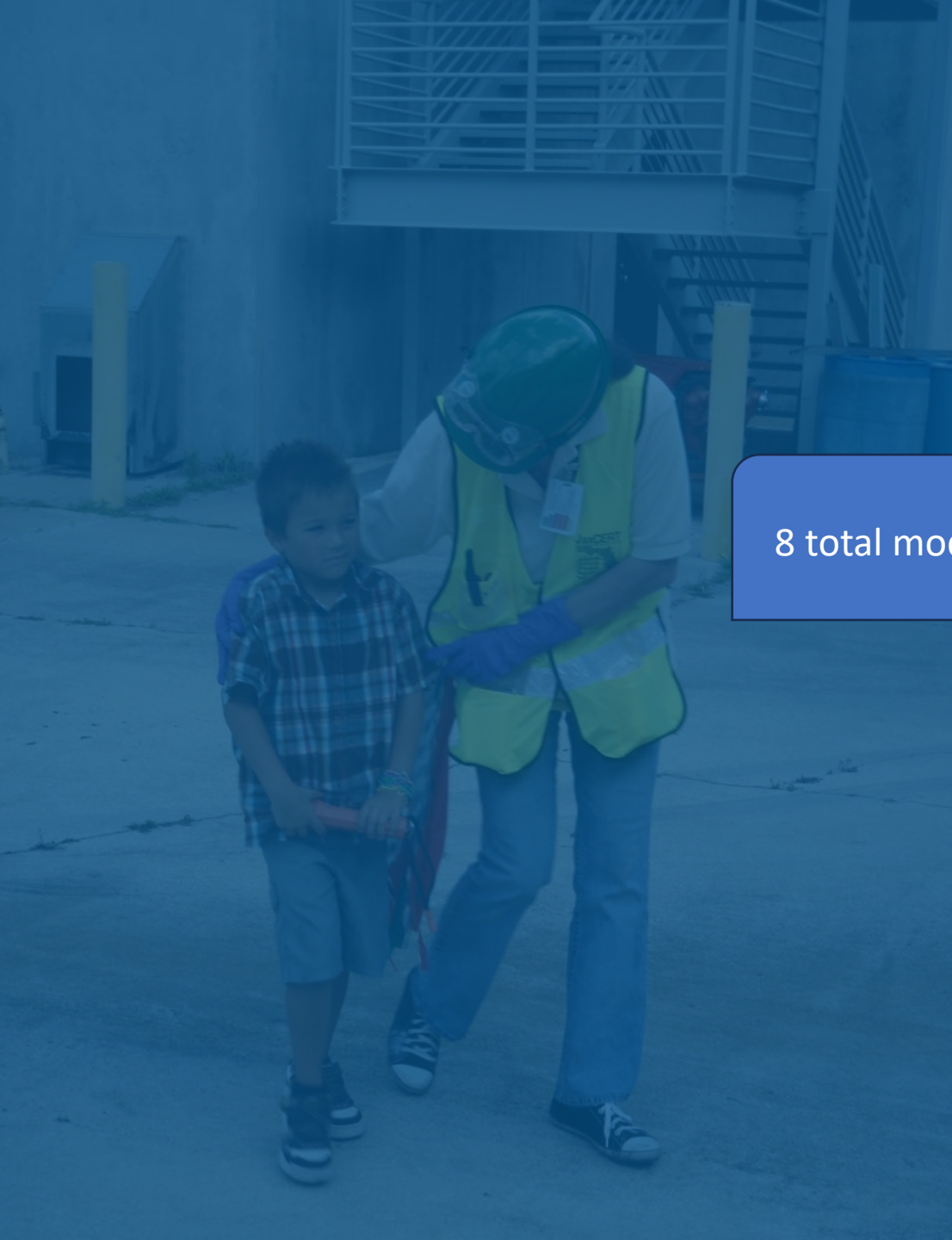


Community Preparedness: Integrating the Needs of Children

Community Workshop



FEMA

A person wearing a hard hat and a high-visibility safety vest is assisting a young child. The person is holding the child's hand and appears to be guiding them. The background shows a building with a staircase.

Workshop Goal

The goals of this course are to:

8 total modules

- Help communities fully integrate the needs of children during disasters into their broader emergency management program
- 2. Strengthen the working relationships among key members of the community who play a role in ensuring the safety and security of children in an emergency

Objectives

At the conclusion of this workshop participants will be able to:

1. Understand the importance of and reasons for integrating child-specific concerns throughout their community's emergency management program;
2. Identify who are the necessary stakeholders to include in planning efforts;
3. Examine policy and program planning requirements that should be assessed for child-specific needs; and
4. Describe the importance of embedding child safeguarding principles throughout a community's emergency management program.

Child Safeguarding

Policies, procedures, and practices organizations use to ensure the safety of children.



FEMA

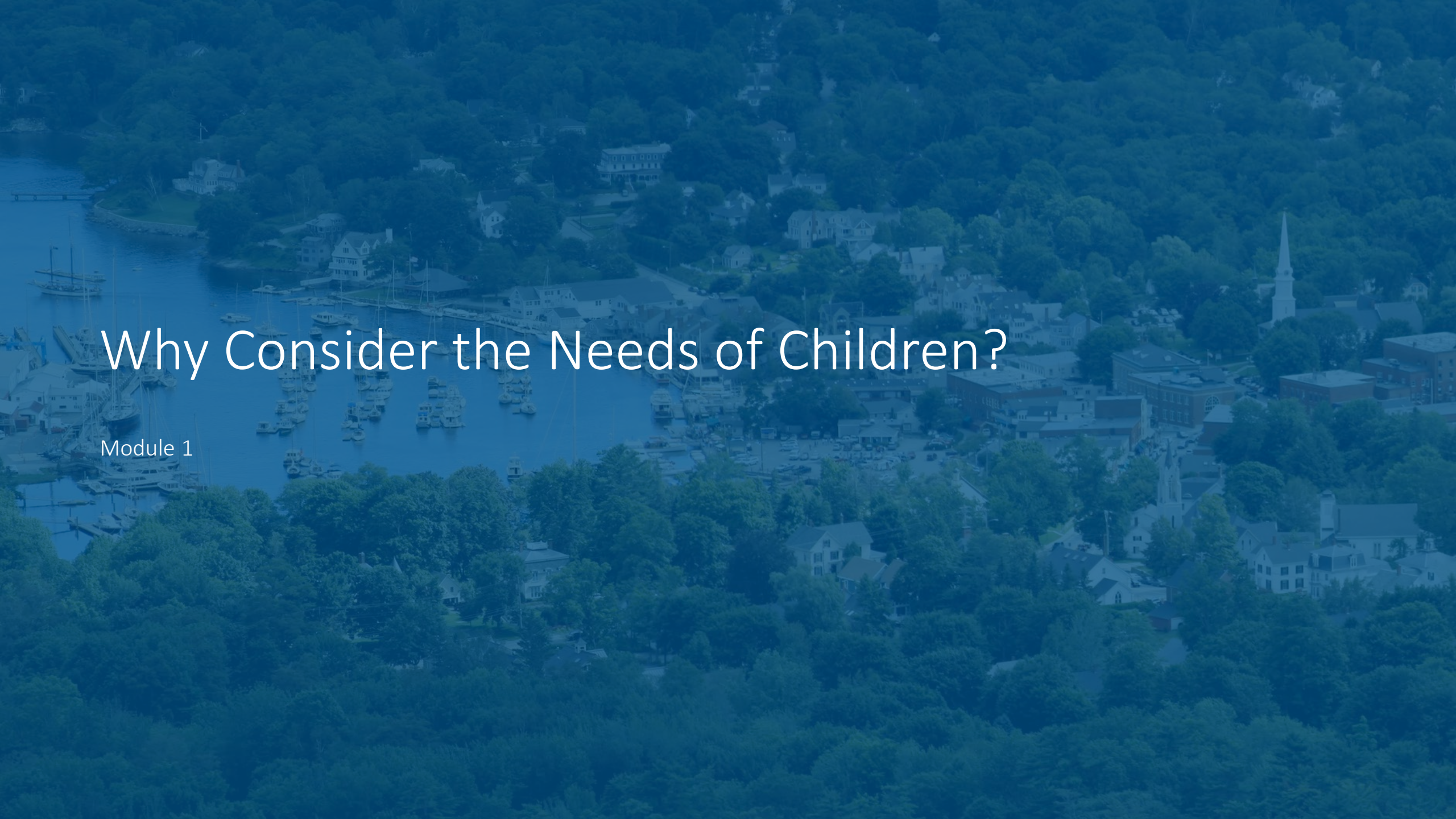
Child Safeguarding Best Practices

- Always have at least two adults supervising a group of children. Consider two adults for every 10 – 15 children.
- Share critical elements of the emergency plan with parents, such as evacuation and reunification procedures, and integrate children and their parents in preparedness exercises. Ensure any necessary written consent is acquired in advance.
- Protect child data.
- Ensure plans are inclusive for a diversity of backgrounds, needs, and abilities.
- Prioritize emotional and developmental needs of children.



Modules moving forward

- Module 1: Why Consider the Needs of Children? 30 Minutes
- Module 2: People and Structure 120 Minutes
- Module 3: What Do You Need? 50 Minutes
- Module 4: Integrating Community Lifelines 50 Minutes
- Module 5: Integration Across Mission Areas 30 Minutes
- Module 6: Integrating During a Disaster (Optional) 30 Minutes
- Module 7: Child-Centric Events (Optional) 65 Minutes
- Module 8: Wrap-Up 25 Minutes

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely in New England, featuring a harbor filled with numerous sailboats and a dense forest of green trees surrounding the built-up areas. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

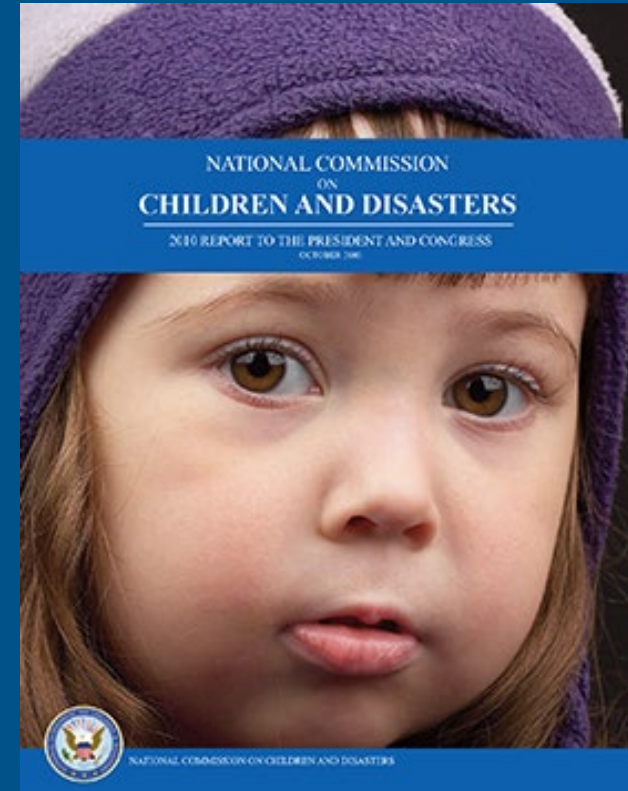
Why Consider the Needs of Children?

Module 1

National Commission on Children and Disasters

In 2010 the Commission made several recommendations to the President and Congress, including:

“The unique needs of children must be more thoroughly integrated into planning and made a clear and distinct priority in all disaster management activities.”



Children are NOT Small Adults



Physiologic Differences

- Head is proportionately larger
- Bones are more flexible
- More susceptible to dehydration and electrolyte imbalances
- Children look fine, then decompensate rapidly



Emotional Differences

- Express feelings differently, such as by crying or stomping their feet
- Still developing social and emotional skills
- Demonstrate high levels of empathy
- Less used to applying higher level reasoning under stress



Cognitive Differences

- Process information differently, which changes with the age of the child
- Impressionable and trusting
- More “present time” oriented
- Curious and still learning about world perspectives



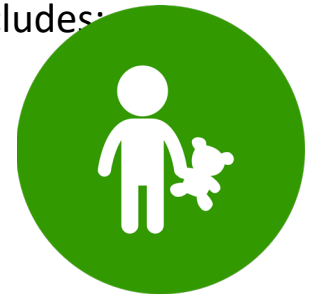
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Children in the Community

- Children are our legacy; they preserve the memories and culture of our communities, which is evident in everyday life.

Think about the youth in your local community who are involved in:

- Youth clubs and afterschool programs
 - Community development projects
 - Civic engagement
 - Emergency preparedness
- Children increase the real and perceived value of our communities; improvements made to support children in turn.
- “Family friendly” is a key indicator of neighborhood safety, security, and value in real estate terms. This includes:
 - Nearby parks and playgrounds
 - Good schools
 - Multiple families
 - Sidewalks and low traffic



Children's Needs are Important to Emergency Management

- Children are part of the community and have specific needs.
- Surprises always happen; planning for children will avoid some surprises.
- The expertise is in the community. Organizations that work with children know what they need, and you can plan to determine how to meet those needs.
- There are always limitations to what can be done, especially where children are concerned, as they are harder to predict and require more resources to properly for their needs. However, planning to anticipate their needs can help set expectations during emergencies and identify alternative approaches should they be necessary.



Consequences of NOT Considering Children

- Children may suffer physical or emotional harm if a community is ill-prepared to address their specific needs.
- Mishandling pediatric medical and mental health issues could lead to long-term damage, injury, or death.
- Families can be separated, and reunification delayed.
- Legal issues could create complications or liability.



Module 1 Review

In this module we discussed:

- Why it's important to plan for children in disasters.
- Some of the differences between adults and children.
- The consequences of not planning.
- Why it's important to emergency management.

