

PLANNING FOR A SOLAR ECLIPSE



CHILD CARE

State Capacity Building Center

What Is a Solar Eclipse?

A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon partially or totally blocks the face of the Sun as it passes between the Sun and Earth. On April 8, 2024, a total solar eclipse will cross North America, placing areas in the [path of totality](#) in darkness. Child care programs in or near these areas may see a disruption to their day-to-day operations.

Planning to ensure child care programs and staff are prepared to respond during an eclipse in a manner that protects the safety of children and staff is important. This brief highlights some ideas and resources for Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies and child care programs that may be affected by the 2024 total solar eclipse.

Lead Agencies

CCDF Lead Agencies and Tribal Lead Agencies can promote the safety and well-being of children in child care settings by supporting providers to ensure children have a memorable and safe experience during the 2024 total solar eclipse. Providing resources and educational information, including health and safety tips, for child care programs and their staff is one way Lead Agencies can help.

Tribal Lead Agencies may consider the viewing of a solar eclipses as a sacred event that holds multifaceted meanings, encompassing spiritual, cultural, and communal dimensions. These interpretations vary among different Tribes and serve to deepen their cultural identity and connection to their ancestral heritage. Tribal Lead Agencies may play an active role in providing a better understanding for child care programs.

Lead Agencies can support child care programs by taking the following steps:

- Provide solar eclipse safety tips.
- Encourage active supervision of children.
- Collaborate with local organizations and community partners such as Tribal Lead Agencies or sponsors for resources on safe viewing.

SAFETY TIPS FOR VIEWING A SOLAR ECLIPSE



Use proper eye protection.



Supervise children.



Provide alternative viewing methods.



Be mindful of surroundings.



Educate staff about eclipse safety



Monitor viewing time.



- Provide culturally relevant education.

The following resource can help child care programs foster curiosity and learning in a protected environment:

- [What to expect: A solar eclipse guide](#) (2024), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Child Care Providers

A total solar eclipse is a rare occurrence and understanding [whether the eclipse will affect your program](#) can help you plan accordingly. Your state's Emergency Management Agency (EMA) may provide more information about your area's risks. To find contact information for your EMA, visit FEMA's [Search Your Location](#) tool.

While child care programs are unlikely to have information specifically designed for a total eclipse, they should be aware of the child care health and safety (licensing) requirements in their state, Tribe or territory. States, Tribes, and territories have emergency planning and preparedness training to help programs meet the requirements in their jurisdiction. [Licensing regulations for child care settings](#) are available from the National Database of Child Care Licensing Regulations.

Child care programs can take the following steps to support their staff and children:

- Implement a plan for communicating with families.
- Train staff on safety tips for viewing a solar eclipse, including guidance on proper eye protection, active supervision of children, alternative viewing methods, and monitoring time spent viewing.
- Ensure staff are trained to meet the unique needs of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with health conditions.

Preservice and orientation training are required to ensure staff and volunteers are prepared to handle different situations that might arise in a child care setting. The state licensing agency may provide information for staff on trainings in emergency preparedness and response. Child care programs can collaborate with community partners and use public libraries, schools, cultural centers, science centers, or other supports to obtain resources and tools for safely viewing the eclipse.

NASA, the American Astronomical Society (AAS), the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), Safe Kids Worldwide, Prevent Blindness, and Exploratorium provide information about how to prepare for the 2024 total solar eclipse, including guidance on safe viewing. For example, [My NASA Data](#) website offers a variety of opportunities to explore phenomena using [interactive lessons on solar eclipses](#) for teachers and families. Below are links to additional websites with more information:

- [Different ways to safely view a solar eclipse](#) [video] (2024), NASA.
- [Here's what you can do, watch a total eclipse of the Sun](#) (n.d.), Safe Kids Worldwide.
- [How to safely view a solar eclipse](#) (n.d.), Exploratorium.
- [How to safely watch a solar eclipse](#) [video] (2023), AAS.
- [Solar eclipse eye safety](#) (2023), AAO.
- [Your eyes and the eclipse](#) [lesson plan] and [Between the Sun and the Earth](#) [book] (n.d.), Prevent Blindness.



More Support

If you would like more resources or other technical assistance to support emergency response in child care, please contact your Office of Child Care Regional Office, Child Care State Capacity Building Center State Systems Specialist, or Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response and Recovery Team Technical Specialist.

The State Capacity Building Center (SCBC) works with state and territory leaders and their partners to create innovative early childhood systems and programs that improve results for children and families. The SCBC is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care.

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