

MANISTEE FAMILY CHILD CARE NETWORK

Wednesday, October 28, 2026 · 6:00 p.m. · West Shore Community College Outreach Building, 401 River Street, Manistee



TWO MINUTES TO GET OUT

Evacuating a home daycare when most of the children can't evacuate themselves

Fred R. LaPoint

Fire Chief / Paramedic · Stonach Township Fire Department

BEFORE WE START

TWO ROOMS. SAME SIZE. SAME KIND OF FURNITURE.

One difference: what the furniture is made of. Watch how long each room takes, not the flames.



UL Fire Safety Research Institute: natural vs. synthetic furnishings, side by side

fsri.org/research/new-comparison-natural-and-synthetic-home-furnishings

WHAT YOU JUST WATCHED

UNDER FIVE MINUTES. EVERY TIME.

3:20–4:50

Synthetic room to flashover, across four trials

29:30+

Natural room to flashover, across the same four trials

Flashover is the moment everything in the room catches fire at once. Most of our homes today are furnished like the synthetic room.

Source: UL Fire Safety Research Institute, “New Comparison of Natural and Synthetic Home Furnishings” (2020)

2:00

As little as two minutes to get out, from the moment the smoke alarm sounds.

Everything else tonight is about fitting your daycare inside that window.

PART 1 · THEIR REAL PROBLEM

MOST OF THE CHILDREN IN YOUR CARE CAN'T GET THEMSELVES OUT.

Michigan's rules say it in plainer words: your written emergency plan has to spell out how infants and toddlers, children with a disability, and children with chronic medical conditions will be handled in every kind of emergency.

COUNT THE ARMS

ONE ADULT. UP TO FOUR CHILDREN UNDER TWO.

4

children under 24 months
allowed per adult

2

of those four can be infants
under 12 months

2

arms

Walking isn't evacuating. A two-year-old who toddles across the kitchen won't follow you through smoke on her own.

NAP TIME

THE SMOKE ALARM WON'T WAKE THEM

78%

of children 5 to 15 slept through a 30-second smoke alarm in their own homes

87%

of the 5-to 10-year-olds slept through it

Researchers tested school-age children, not toddlers, and nobody has shown the little ones do better. Plan as if no sleeping child wakes or walks: lights low, shoes off, the slowest moment of your day.

Bruck & Thomas, "Community-based research on the effectiveness of the home smoke alarm in waking up children," Fire and Materials (2011)

INFANTS

INFANTS LEAVE IN YOUR ARMS OR ON WHEELS

MEASURE

Count what you can carry down your own stairs, fast, in the dark. Then plan for less.

EQUIP

An evacuation crib on wheels or an evacuation apron. Measure your doorways before you buy.

ASSIGN

Every infant has a named adult. Safe-sleep cribs are bare, so there's nothing to grab but the baby.

The crib you already own is not an evacuation tool unless it rolls through your door.

THE TODDLER WHO HIDES

SCARED CHILDREN HIDE

Closets and under the bed feel safe to a frightened child. They're also the last places anyone looks.

BEFORE

Know each child's favorite spots. A firefighter visit in full gear teaches kids we're helpers, not monsters.

DURING

Check the known spots only if they're on your way out. The children you have go out first.

AFTER

Missing at the head count? Tell the first firefighter: name, age, where last seen, where they hide. Then stay out.

THE CHILD IN THE BATHROOM

THE ONE YOU CAN'T SEE WHEN THE ALARM GOES OFF

Michigan requires staff to know where every child is at all times, and requires interior doors that open from outside in an emergency, even when locked.

PUT IT ON THE ROUTE

The bathroom door is the first one the sweep checks.

KEY ON THE FRAME

The little pin key for the lock lives above the door, not in a drawer.

DRILL IT

Send a child to the bathroom right before your next drill.

UPSTAIRS AND BASEMENT PLAY AREAS

EVERY FLOOR CHILDREN USE NEEDS TWO WAYS OUT

THE RULE

Two exits, far apart, on every floor children use, and one of them straight out to the ground. A window counts as the second exit only if children and adults can reach it, it’s clearly marked, it opens easily, and everyone fits through it.

BASEMENT ESCAPE WINDOW

Measurement	Requirement
Opening width	20 inches or more
Opening height	24 inches or more
Open area	5 square feet or more
Sill above the floor	44 inches or less

For basements approved for child use after Jan. 1, 2006

The real test: can you open it with one hand while holding a toddler, and who is outside to take her?

PART 2 · THE PLAN

A PLAN YOU'VE NEVER RUN IS A GUESS.

Two ways out. One meeting place. Who carries whom. The sheet and the phone. The count, then the call. And a drill that proves it.

TWO WAYS OUT

TWO WAYS OUT OF EVERY ROOM CHILDREN USE

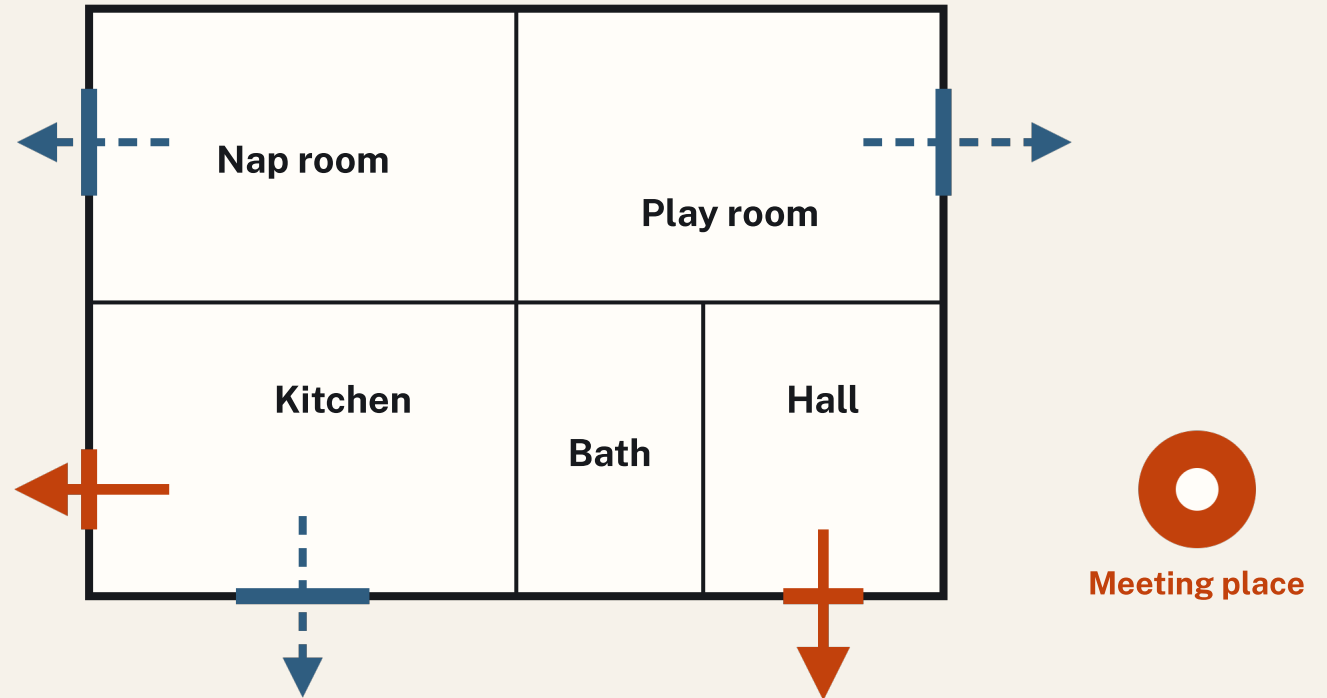
WAY 1 - SOLID ORANGE

The door you use every day.

WAY 2 - DASHED BLUE

A different door, or a window that meets the rule.

When smoke is in Way 1, you take Way 2 without stopping to decide. That only happens if you've practiced it.



THE MEETING PLACE

ONE MEETING PLACE. EVERYONE KNOWS IT.



FIXED, AND FAR ENOUGH

Something that doesn't move: a tree, a light pole, a mailbox, a safe distance from the house. Not the driveway. That's where the fire engine needs to be.



WARM IN FEBRUARY

A napping child in socks can't wait in a snowbank. Ask a neighbor now if their house can be your relocation site.



PARENTS KNOW IT

Your plan has to say how you'll reach parents and reunite families. Tell them where you'll be before they need to know.

WHO CARRIES WHOM

EVERY CHILD HAS A NAME NEXT TO IT

Who	Takes	Route	At the meeting place
Provider	Infants, in the evacuation crib; walkers follow	Front door; nap room window if blocked	Counts against the sheet
Assistant	Toddlers; checks the bathroom on the way	Back door	Calls 9-1-1
Alone	Everyone, together, in one trip	Nearest safe way	Counts, then calls

If your plan needs two trips, it isn't a plan yet. Fix it with equipment, staffing, or where the youngest nap.

Sample assignments for a two-adult home. Write yours on the take-home worksheet.

ON THE WAY OUT

TWO THINGS LEAVE WITH YOU: THE SHEET AND THE PHONE



THE ATTENDANCE SHEET

Every child's name and arrival time. It's how you'll know who's out. Michigan already requires you to keep it.



THE PHONE

You need it outside to call 9-1-1 and the parents. Michigan requires one you can reach immediately.

Hang them together at your main exit, with the child information cards. Grab them only if they're on your way. Never go back for them.

AT THE MEETING PLACE

COUNT FIRST. THEN CALL 9-1-1 FROM OUTSIDE.

1 · COUNT

Against the sheet, out loud, by name. Not from memory, and not by counting heads.

2 · CALL

From the meeting place, never from inside. Tell dispatch: your address, “home daycare,” how many children, and all out or who is missing.

Meet the first firefighter with your count. “Everyone’s out” changes everything we do next.

NFPA escape planning guidance. After a real evacuation, Michigan requires a report to child care licensing within 24 hours (R 400.1941).

DRILLS

TEST THE PLAN, NOT THE BOX

Michigan’s minimum: a fire drill at least every three months while children are in care, the smoke detector as the alarm, logged with date, time and evacuation time.

Checks the box	Tests the plan
10 a.m., everyone awake	During nap time
Everyone uses the front door	“This door is on fire.” Take Way 2
Every child in sight	One child in the bathroom, a doll hidden as the missing child
Nobody times it	Stopwatch: alarm, out, counted, called
Phone and sheet stay inside	Phone and sheet come out, every time
“Good job, everybody”	Write down what broke, fix it, run it again

YOUR NUMBER

FIRST BEEP TO LAST NAME ON THE SHEET

2:00

Time every drill. If everyone isn't out and counted inside two minutes, your plan is telling you something. Listen to it.

BEFORE YOUR NEXT DRILL

THREE THINGS THIS WEEK

1

Walk every room a child uses and name its second way out. Open the window and check.

2

Hang the attendance sheet, the child cards and the phone at your main exit.

3

Run your next drill at nap time, with a stopwatch. Write down what broke.



Fred R. LaPoint · Fire Chief / Paramedic

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QUESTIONS?

The take-home worksheet has room to draw your floor plan, assign your children and log your drills.

SOURCES

1. UL Fire Safety Research Institute, “New Comparison of Natural and Synthetic Home Furnishings,” Sept. 30, 2020. [fsri.org](https://www.fsri.org)
2. National Fire Protection Association, home escape planning guidance: as little as two minutes to escape after the alarm; two ways out of every room; an outside meeting place; call 9-1-1 from outside. [nfpa.org](https://www.nfpa.org)
3. Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential, Licensing Rules for Family and Group Child Care Homes, filed April 27, 2026: R 400.1907, 1910, 1911, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1939, 1941, 1947, 1948.
4. D. Bruck and I. Thomas, “Community-based research on the effectiveness of the home smoke alarm in waking up children,” *Fire and Materials*, 2011.
5. Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Center for Injury Research and Policy, “Fire Safety for Children.”