

Appendix C: Identifying Gaps and Existing Elements in Child Reunification

This worksheet supports the review of existing local, regional, or state reunification plans with a focus on considerations for children. It provides a structured method to assess the maturity of child-specific elements and identify actionable next steps to improve reunification planning.

Scoring Key:

0 – Not addressed

1 – Mentioned, not detailed or child-specific

2 – Addressed, partially child-inclusive

3 – Fully developed and child-specific

Multi-select questions: Maximum score of 1, regardless of the number of options selected.

Topic	Prompt	Existing Score (0-3)	Gaps or Areas for Improvement
Coordination and Preparedness			
Activation & Triggers for Reunification of Children	Are there clear triggers and criteria for when pediatric reunification operations begin?		
Integration of Child-Focused SMEs in ICS	Does the plan include child-focused subject matter experts in the incident command structure?		
Child Focused MOUs and Data Sharing Agreements	Does your plan include community partner agreements related to children's services/needs? Which of the following are included in your community partner agreements related to children's services/needs? Select all that apply. 1. Interagency coordination 2. Resource sharing 3. Data exchange 4. Reunification support 5. Caregiver coordination 6. Child resource availability		

Community Partner Coordination	Are community partners actively included in planning and exercises? Which community partners are included in planning and exercises? Select all that apply. 1. Schools 2. Child protective services/Department of Family and Children's Services 3. Non-governmental organizations (e.g., American Red Cross, etc.) 4. Tribal entities 5. Other, please specify		
Legal and Privacy Readiness			
Legal and Privacy Considerations	Does your plan include legal considerations for children? Which legal considerations are included in your plan? Select all that apply. 1. Custody 2. Consent 3. Data privacy laws for children 4. Other, please specify		
Guardian Registration Process	Is there a process and form for registering guardians at reunification sites to verify custody and facilitate tracking?		
Staff Vetting Procedures	Are protocols in place to ensure background checks for all staff working with children?		
Staffing and Training			
Child-Focused Staffing & Volunteer Roles	Do you have child-specific roles defined in your plan?		
Staff: Child Ratios	Are there defined procedures and standards for appropriate staff-to-child ratios in reunification settings?		
Staff and Volunteer Training	Do all staff receive training on child-specific operations?		

Staff Training for Child Interaction	Is guidance provided to staff on how to talk with and support children who are separated from their families?		
Communications Planning			
Family Notification and Communications	Does the plan outline multilingual communication methods to reach families?		
Family Communication Procedures	Does the plan provide families with clear guidance about the reunification process?		
Public Messaging Protocols	Are communication channels outlined for informing the public about reunification operations for unaccompanied minors?		
Media Management for Child Incidents	Does the plan include media coordination guidance specific to at least one of the following, child reunification, privacy, and protection? Which guidance is outlined in your plan? Select all that apply. 1. Child reunification 2. Child privacy 3. Child protection		
Tracking and Responding to Misinformation	Does the plan include processes to monitor false information impacting reunification efforts? Does the plan include processes to correct false information impacting reunification efforts?		
Operations			
Tracking & Identification for Children	Is there a tracking process outlined in your plan for children? What identification tools are used to track children? Select all that apply. 1. Spreadsheet 2. Wristbands		

	3. Tags 4. Photographs 5. Other, please specify Which of the following does your system have a process for updating? Select all that apply. 1. Location 2. Status (unmatched, matched, reunified) 3. Other, please specify		
Unaccompanied Minor Protocols	Does the plan include protocols for unaccompanied minors? Which protocols are included? Select all that apply. 1. Intake for children, including non-verbal or very young minors 2. Reunification process (matching) 3. Custody verification 4. Interagency coordination		
Protocols for Incapacitated Guardians	Does the plan outline actions if a guardian is present but unable to verify identity or provide care?		
Protocols for Deceased Minors or Guardians	Are there sensitive, respectful procedures to manage reunification in the event of a fatality?		
Facility Setup & Movement Control			
Unaccompanied Minor Safe Area Setup	Are there designated spaces for child-specific reunification needs? For which of the following is there a designated space: Select all that apply. 1. Child safe area for children awaiting reunification 2. Reunification area (where children are reunified with verified guardians)		

	3. Family registration area for loved ones seeking children (separate from the child safe area and reunification area)		
Safety & Security of Reunification Sites	Are protocols established for vetted access to child-safe spaces?		
Direct Services			
Medical and Behavioral Health Support for Children	Does the plan address medical/behavioral health support for children? Which of the following does your plan address? Select all that apply. 1. First aid for children 2. Medication administration 3. Accommodation for children with functional and access needs (mobility aids, communication tools, technology/electricity dependence) 4. Provision of trauma-informed care 5. Behavioral health services 6. Triage for pediatric mental health services 7. Other, please specify		
Recovery			
Long-Term Recovery for Children and their Families	Do you include recovery in your plan? Which of the following does your recovery plan address? Select all that apply. 1. Care of remaining unaccompanied minors after demobilization of the Reunification Center or Family Assistance Center 2. School reintegration 3. Referrals to mental or behavioral health services 4. Anticipatory guidance on post-reunification care for families		
Total Score (Max 85)			