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## **IEMA Encourages Parents to Include Emergency Preparedness in Back-to-School Plans**

### *August is School Preparedness Month in Illinois*

SPRINGFIELD – School bells soon will be ringing as students across the state begin the new school year. The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) is joining with local emergency management agencies throughout Illinois during August to encourage families to include emergency preparedness in their back-to-school plans.

“No one likes to think about the possibility of an emergency happening while children are in school or at daycare,” said IEMA Director Jonathon Monken. “But as we saw with the May 2013 tornadoes in Moore, Oklahoma and other incidents, it can happen. A few minutes of your time now can help you and your child deal with emergencies that may occur during the school day.”

Monken offered several back-to-school planning tips for parents of school-aged children, including:

- Know your child’s school or day care emergency plan.
- Find out where children will be taken in the event of an evacuation during school hours.
- Ensure your emergency contact information is up-to-date at your child’s school.
- Pre-authorize a friend or relative to pick up your children in an emergency and make sure the school knows who that designated person is.
- Have a family communications plan and review the plan periodically with your child. The plan should include contact information for an out-of-area family member or friend, since local telephone networks may not work during a major disaster.

Many college campuses offer email and text messages to alert students of potential dangers, such as severe weather and other threats. Encourage your college student to sign-up for such alerts. Some colleges also provide alert messages for parents so they also are aware of potential dangers at their child’s school.

Additional preparedness information is available on the Ready Illinois website at [www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov).