



Your child's school/daycare is holding a diaper drive to benefit DC Diaper Bank!

Below is some information about the Diaper Bank's work and some ideas for talking with your children about poverty.

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### ***Why a Diaper Bank?***

DC Diaper Bank, founded October 2010, works to provide a reliable and adequate supply of free diapers to families in need living in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Though it may seem a small thing, by making available a consistent supply of clean diapers, DC Diaper Bank instantly improves the life of a family in a very tangible way.

- 44% of children under age three in DC live in low-income families (<200% Federal Poverty Level); children under age three in Maryland (33%) and Virginia (36%) share this reality.
- The cost of living in the DC metro area is the 8<sup>th</sup> highest in the United States.
- One in three mothers has reported running out of diapers for their child; mothers living in poverty report this at a higher rate (36%) and on a regular basis (monthly).
- Families who are not able to afford an adequate supply of clean diapers often must leave their babies in a single diaper all day or re-use disposables, which can result in diaper rash, infection, and other detrimental health issues.
- Excessive crying, which is often the result of diaper rash or discomfort, is the number one cause of child abuse.
- The early experiences of infants lay the foundation for their social and emotional relationships, and infants whose mothers experience prolonged stress and depression suffer long-term physical, mental, and social consequences.

DC Diaper Bank provides diapers to 15 social service agencies working closely with families in DC, Maryland, and Virginia. ***To date, the Bank has donated more than 275,000 diapers to families in need.***

### ***Why Diapers Make Sense for Young Children***

We at DC Diaper Bank have found that young children, ages 2-8 in particular, connect with the idea of collecting diapers for babies for a couple of key reasons:

- Most kids this age either remember being in diapers themselves or have babies in their lives (siblings, cousins, friends' siblings) who are still in diapers.
- Diapers are a very tangible item that young children know babies need.
- Children this age often care for babies as part of their imaginative play.

## Tips & Ideas for Talking About Need

Below are some ideas for talking to your child about those in need and the diaper drive. Many of these can be mixed and matched – you know what will work best with your child.

- **Talk about what babies need.** Because young children often have babies in their lives they know what babies need. If you don't want to focus on the need aspect you can talk about simply getting presents for babies.
  - o *"Just like your baby cousin needs diapers and wipes we're going to get some of these things for other babies who need them."*
- **Focus on the idea of how you help your child.** Your child likely needs help with some tasks, whether it's tying shoelaces or putting on certain pieces of clothing. Use this as an entry point to talk about helping others.
  - o *"You know how you sometimes need help putting on your jacket? There are babies who need some help making sure they have enough diapers."*
- **Children are natural helpers themselves.** The same way that you help your child do things, your child "helps" you as well by doing small things around the house. This is another way to talk about helping others.
  - o *"You know how you help set the table every night? Well, I really like it when you help in that way. This is another way that we can help together."*
- **Explain your actions and feelings.** If this cause, or another cause, is something you care about, explain to your child why it matters to you and why you take the actions you do.
  - o *"I think it's very important to help babies who need our help. It makes me sad to think that some babies don't have what they need. Here's a way we can help."*
- **Address differences in family situations.** A common question for young children is *Why don't their mommies get them diapers? Or Why don't they go to the store and get some more?* Young children are looking for tangible and specific answers.
  - o *"Their mommies want to give them diapers but they aren't able to right now. So they are asking if we can help."*
  - o *"Not everyone has enough money to go to the store and get more diapers and we have a little extra that we can share."*



## Questions?

DC Diaper Bank staff are excited to work with you and your learning community to help families in need in our region. We are happy to answer and all questions have and can be contacted at the phone number and email address below.