

reach



DANE

COVID-19 Response & Programming Updates

April 2020



Dear All,

There are tremendous efforts underway at Reach Dane to support the children that are without the security of classrooms and their families missing the support of direct home visits. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic is especially devastating for the vulnerable population we serve and the challenges that come from living in poverty are now exacerbated. Our family service staff already report that many parents are laid off from work and faced with the challenge of supplying food, diapers, housing and many basic needs. One-third of the families Reach Dane serves are experiencing homelessness and staying in temporary motel rooms provided by local shelters to increase isolation. The 'Stay-at-Home' order will keep parents and children in these tight quarters for several weeks under already heightened stress. Moreover, without stable housing it becomes more difficult to follow the standard recommendations surrounding hand-washing, sanitization, and social distancing.

In these first few weeks, we've been able to provide families with immediate groceries and supplies, thanks to generous community donations like yours. Our administrative team is developing a plan alongside a non-profit, community-focused restaurant to deliver healthy meals to our Dane and Green County families as often as possible. Second to food, the key need is diapers. We have the support of the Dane County Diaper Bank that offer a monthly supply of diapers to some of our Early Head Start families. However, Dane County Diaper Bank's inventory is experiencing the same nationwide shortage. Our goal is to purchase enough diapers to provide every enrolled diapered child with a monthly supply, through May. Our program already provides regular meals and diapers, but we are now uniquely positioned to help our families pay rent, bills, and utilities. A large portion of our donations are used to secure housing and livelihood for families during this crisis.

The family Service team is delivering diapers and other critical supplies regularly using safety protocol. This team is staying in good touch with families to meet as many of their basic and emotional needs as possible during distancing. Our education team continues to develop creative curriculum and tools for parents who are now full-time teachers. Our teachers and family advocates are reaching out to families very frequently to offer ideas for what they could be doing together at home. Kits were sent to every enrolled child that include a variety of toys and activities. We hope to offer virtual home visits to families that have the technology/devices very soon. These shifts inadvertently support our Head Start philosophy that parents are the best teachers and emphasize the child-parent interaction. However, this pressure is another cascading stressor for parents during this crisis. Our mental health team are staying in close contact with parents who are working through mental health issues, many of which have a child with an IEP or behavior plan. The mental health team is providing ongoing tools to support their children's special needs whether it be behavioral or developmental. They offer a therapeutic ear in a time of unprecedented stress.

The needs and barriers for Reach Dane families has increased tremendously during the COVID-19 pandemic. This requires the support of the community, especially financially, now more than ever. 100% of proceeds during this pandemic will provide immediate support to the most vulnerable families impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak.



We have deep gratitude for your interest in our organization and the work we do. To learn more about how you can support our work and donate to our organization, visit www.reachdane.org