



Westside Baby Diaper Drive Tip Sheet

Diaper Drives Are a Big Help to Low Income Families

The Issue

Diapers are expensive and low-income families are unable to purchase enough diapers to adequately meet their children's health care needs. One of the most important things Westside Baby provides is infant diapers for low-income families in the communities we serve. Why? Because a child who sits in the same diaper all day is vulnerable to diaper rash, infections, even abuse. Think about it... a wet, poopy baby cries long and hard until getting changed.

Why not cloth diapers?

Most daycare centers require the use of disposable diapers for children, and most clinical settings, like crisis shelters, use disposable diapers for a combination of ease and sanitation. If parents can't afford the diapers that a daycare center requires, they may not be able to take the very job that may help the family move out of crisis or poverty. Washing cloth diapers can be a burden on low income families who have to travel to the Laundromat after work, often with children in tow.

Facts and Figures

Take-home pay for a family in Washington State with one full-time wage-earner at minimum wage (\$7.63) is \$1,033 per month. Average rent for a 1-bedroom apartment in south Seattle in low-income housing is \$600-\$800 per month. The cost of diapers is at minimum 20¢ per diaper or approximately \$70-\$100 per month. Neither food stamps nor WIC benefits covers any portion of the cost of diapers.

Food banks and other social service organizations do not have the resources to provide more than a handful of "emergency" diapers at a time.

Diaper manufacturers do not donate diapers, not even to crisis nurseries and shelters.

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We all agree on the importance of helping families feed their children. The need for diapers is just as important—it's just "the other end of the process."

Hot Tips for a Successful Diaper Drive House Party

Hostess responsibilities

As the hostess, along with providing the food, you will want to introduce your guests to Westside Baby's work and your reasons for choosing to host a diaper drive. A staff person or a board member will be present at the party to provide the facts, figures and real-life stories that demonstrate the need for our services, as well as answer any questions that come up.

Preparing the guest list

Invite as many people as you feel comfortable entertaining. Think about including friends, family, people at church, social clubs, long-lost sisters, new kids on the block, firemen, dentists, hair stylists, insurance and real estate agents. Just let us know, so we can have the right number of staff available to support your efforts.

Designing the invitation

It does not have to be fancy. Use our invitations or choose your own words and make sure to include the date, time, place, and an RSVP card and envelope. The remit envelope is very important: it provides a way for people to contribute without coming to the party. Do ask for RSVPs so that you will know how many people are coming. Give people clear directions and a map if necessary.

Have a fun party

A diaper drive is basically a gathering place to meet people, see old friends, eat good food and have fun. Other than that, make sure to have a guest book or sign in sheet (we don't share our donor lists) so you can follow up with thank you notes. The program should be short but meaningful. All inquiries can be either answered or recorded for future response.

Evaluate and follow-up

Make sure to thank guests by mail (either the hostess or staff can do the notes). Use our thank you cards or create your own. Evaluation of the event is critical to planning future house parties, so we provide a simple one-page form that covers the details and is easy to complete. All that's left is to choose from a selection of hostess thank you gifts and **voila!** your mission is accomplished.

Hot Tips for a Successful Diaper Drive at Your School

Here are some fun, upbeat, and goofy ways to raise diapers...

collect pennies or dimes

Some schools collect all kinds of change, but sometimes it's fun to restrict the collection. Many schools collect diapers (or pennies) all year long.

sell stuff

Some student councils sell silly things like pickles. Others use their lessons in entrepreneurship to create a "store" that donates its proceeds, teaching the kids as they go.

have events

Some schools opt out of collecting diapers, but opt in for having a dance or other event with proceeds going to the Diaper Bank.

have a contest or challenge

Challenge another class, grade, or even another school to collect diapers. Have the teachers or your principal challenge students to meet a diaper goal. Contests and challenges work between classes, between grades, and from faculty to students. Have each class collect one size of diapers. First graders collect newborn sizes, fourth graders size 4, and so on. This insures Westside Baby gets diapers in all the sizes needed in our community.

teach

Holding a diaper drive is a great project for students to learn goal setting, organization, and marketing skills.

discuss

Use the concepts of poverty and philanthropy in lesson plans. Discuss the cost of raising a family, minimum wage, the cost of diapers and other necessities as part of a family budget.

demonstrate

Help children see that their efforts can make a difference in the lives of others.

promote

Decorate a central collection area with baby items to keep the drive in everyone's mind. A playpen, crib, or large box covered in baby gift wrap works great.

advertise

Make sure your Diaper Drive is mentioned in school newsletters and daily bulletins.

collaborate

Your PTA could run a drive. Ask them for support organizing and conducting your diaper drive.

celebrate

Throw a fudgesicle or tootsie roll party for the class that raises the most diapers.