

# DMARC DIAPER CENTRAL

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**While safety-net programs such as SNAP (food stamps) and WIC (women, infants, and children) assist with the cost of formula and baby food, neither program covers necessities such as diapers and wipes.**

Many of the young families receiving food assistance through the DMARC Emergency Food Pantry cannot cover their basic needs for diapers, baby wipes, and infant formula. Because inadequate access to diapers is often a symptom of a larger issue of poverty or crisis, DMARC is responding to this extraordinary and urgent community need by serving as a centralized warehouse and emergency distribution network for baby diapers and hygiene items.

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## **Community Need**

- In just one of DMARC's nine pantry distribution sites, there are more than 1,300 infants and babies age 24 months and younger registered to receive diapers.
- A healthy infant uses 10-12 diapers in 24 hours, and a healthy toddler 6-8 per day. In limited-income households, a baby may remain in a single soiled diaper all day, or sometimes days at a time, increasing health risks.
- Unhappy babies are crying babies. Regrettably, a baby crying non-stop from being in a soiled diaper for a long time is at higher risk to be abused.
- Diapers are expensive. A healthy change of disposable diapers for one child costs \$100 a month or more . for all ages.
- Cloth is often not an option. Licensed childcare centers require parents to leave disposable diapers for their child(ren). Low-income families have limited access to personal washing machines and limited resources to use the machines, even when available. Many laundromats do not allow washing of cloth diapers.
- Parents who cannot afford to leave disposables with child care providers often leave the workforce or quit school until their children are out of diapers.

When money is tight, having to choose between buying food, paying rent or having an adequate supply of clean diapers for your baby are difficult options . yet this occurs far too often among low-income families. Having a sufficient supply of affordable and clean diapers has a significant, direct, and positive impact on the lives of struggling working families, single moms in crisis and young children who would otherwise have to sit in soiled diapers because their parents cannot afford clean ones.

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**How You Can Help** . By partnering with DMARC to provide support for something as basic as diapers through the Diaper Central project, businesses, congregations, individuals and other groups can make a real and immediate difference in the lives of low-income families and their young children. To learn how you can sponsor a diaper drive, donate diapers or make a cash contribution to DMARC Diaper Central, contact DMARC. See over for diaper drive guidelines.

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## How to Host a Diaper Drive

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Thank you for considering a Diaper Central diaper drive to help DMARC increase support for the most vulnerable children in the Greater Des Moines area. By hosting a diaper drive, you will help many low-income families provide diapers for their babies and toddlers.

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### How to Host a Diaper Drive

**Getting started:** Let us know. Call the Des Moines Area Religious Council at 515-227-6969 to indicate your interest in planning a diaper drive. This way we can announce the information on our website and social networking sites and help you get the word out.

**Planning:** Create a committee to plan, organize, advertise and manage the event. Set the start and end dates (normally a 1-2 week drive works the best). Establish a location (school, business, place of worship) as well as pick-up and/or drop-off sites. A central collection area decorated with baby items is a great way to keep the drive in everyone's mind. A playpen, crib, or large box covered in baby gift-wrap works well. Provide a contact name, phone number and/or e-mail address to answer questions that may arise.

**Get the word out:** Once you have set the dates and location of your diaper drive, advertise your event. Depending on the location you can help spread the word through a church or office bulletin, newsletter or e-newsletter, flier, e-list, Facebook or Twitter, posters, etc. Be creative!

### **Make it fun!**

- Make your diaper drive competitive! - Have contests between offices, work units, congregation members, families, or individuals to see which team can raise the most diapers with a prize for the best raiser.
- Get creative! - There are many opportunities to hold a diaper drive such as a baby shower, birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day, family reunions, etc.
- Hold a fun kickoff event
- Publicize your success when you complete your diaper drive!

**Donating cash:** Cash donations are welcome. Your dollars go further when combined with other cash donations. If you choose to donate monetarily, please indicate on your donation that it is intended for diapers.

**Last step:** After completing your diaper drive count the number of diapers and arrange for drop off at the Emergency Food Pantry warehouse (3816 36<sup>th</sup> Street in Des Moines) or contact DMARC at 515-277-6969 for pick-up assistance. Office hours: M-F, 8:00 . 4:30, except major holidays.

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**THANK YOU!** By partnering with DMARC to provide support for something as basic as diapers through the Diaper Central project, you and your group can make a real and immediate difference in the lives of low-income families and their young children.