

Why collect diapers?



For social workers trained to look for signs of parental neglect, a child in dirty diapers day after day would certainly raise a red flag. But the reason for that sad sight—and for the real neglect—may lie in the difficulty families have in obtaining sufficient diapers.

It can cost \$100 or more per month to keep a baby in diapers. Currently, no safety-net program at the federal or state level helps with buying diapers. Poor families can get help for food through various programs, and specially targeted funds support programs for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), but WIC and food assistance programs cannot be used for diapers.



This gap in the safety net has broad implications. When babies' diapers are changed infrequently because caregivers are trying to conserve, children are at increased risk of urinary tract and skin infections, viral meningitis, dysentery, and diarrhea. Babies crying from spending hours in soiled diapers are also at increased risk of abuse.

There is also a connection between having money for diapers and sending your child to school and going to work yourself. Most daycare centers, including free and subsidized facilities, will not admit a child who arrives without a day's supply of diapers. If you don't have the diapers to take your child to childcare, then you may not be able to go to work or to a training course. If you have federal aid, you could lose it, as many programs, such as Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), have work or training requirements.

Eastside Baby Corner is working to help with diaper need in King and south Snohomish County. We supply eleven local food banks and hundreds of individual children with diapers throughout the year – about 860,000 diapers are distributed, free of charge, through hospitals, schools and social service agencies like Hopelink and Imagine Housing – but it's only a fraction of the diapers needed in a state where more than 19% of children live below the federal poverty line.

By participating in Diaper Derby, you are helping EBC meet this growing need for diapers. Thank you!