

Parish & Community Sample Survey about Early Childhood Development

The first 1,000 days of every child's life are crucial for laying the foundation for future learning, behavior and health. We here at _____ (*community, school or organization name*) are considering a plan to incorporate Early Childhood Development into our _____ (*top priorities/mission statement/goals*) in the upcoming _____ (*budget/season/cycle/program year*).

Partnering with Episcopal Relief & Development, we hope to both support the successful work they are doing across the globe and to discern how we might become engaged in this work, making lasting changes in Early Childhood Development in our own communities.

Please take a moment to let us know which areas of engagement you are personally interested in supporting. This will help ensure that any work we pursue in this area will reflect our community's interest and passion. Thank you

WORSHIP:

I want _____ (*insert community, school or organization name*) to help us, as a community, focus on early childhood development.

I would support (*check those that interest you*):

☐ Attending the annual Episcopal Relief & Development service, typically held on the first Sunday of Lent, highlighting through our prayers proven solutions and hope for Early Childhood Development.

☐ Observing the Children's Sabbath on the third Sunday of October.

☐ Being in conversations about making our prayer and worship gatherings more supportive and welcoming for children aged 0-3 and their caregivers.

☐ Teaching about baptism in our neighborhoods and on social media and welcoming families who are not currently a part of it to celebrate this sacrament with us.

☐ Adding collects, litanies and other prayers to our weekly worship service reminding us to be stewards of the very youngest children in the world and those who care for them.

HOSPITALITY AND FORMATION:

I want _____ (*community*) to teach me more about how we can be more directly involved in (check those that interest you):

___ Understanding the current status of children aged 0-3 in our community and where _____ (*our community*) can make a difference.

___ Being in conversations about making our nursery and early Christian formation more intentionally supportive and welcoming of children aged 0-3 and their caregivers.

___ Creating welcome baskets for newborns with prayers for the parents, information about baptism and practical supplies, gifts, books and other information for children aged 0-3.

___ Learning about the work Episcopal Relief & Development is doing to make lasting change through *Moments that Matter*®, how it is improving the lives of children and those who care for them around the world and what we can learn from their research to help our neighbors.

___ Participating in a book group or Bible study exploring the issues of early childhood development so I can understand the situation more deeply and direct my prayers and other resources toward improving the lives of those most affected.

___ Creating and resourcing (hospitality, staff, communications, concurrent nursery care) a caregiver's support group for those with children aged 3 and under in their homes.

ENGAGEMENT:

I am interested in _____ (*community*) making other connections in early childhood development, including (check those that interest you):

___ Making sure that our local food and sundry ministries have sufficient nutrition and supplies, including mental wellness resources for distribution to families caring for children aged 0-3.

___ Providing and promoting a nursery for much-needed recovery groups for persons meeting in our space with infants.

___ Partnering with local early childhood development care providers and non-profits in areas like volunteering and supplying crisis nurseries, parent education, Head Start, programs about financial literacy for teen parents, immigration services and other agencies that serve infants and their caregivers.

___ Beginning/continuing a conversation about hosting an early childhood care center in our space and/or fortifying an existing center or one in our neighborhood.

___ Partnering with Episcopal Relief & Development, helping raise funds for their work and utilizing their resources and connections to aid communities.

___ Partnering with the Episcopal Public Policy Network to learn more about how governmental interventions and legislation can bring about larger institutional changes for early childhood advocacy.

Please use the remaining space to let us know if you have any other ideas or insights about this new ministry. If you would like our team to reach out to you directly, please include your name and contact information. Thank you.

Setting Goals

Okay, I've checked my community for readiness – now what?

Whether you used the survey provided in the toolkit *Joy & Wonder* from Episcopal Relief & Development or simply had a series of conversations with stakeholders around Early Childhood Development, you now have a sense of how interested your community is in pursuing this ministry and at what level.

What if the response was only lukewarm? What are my options?

Observe [Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday](#). It is simple and the website offers a host of resources. You can incorporate prayers and petitions into a worship service and include the brochures available for free in each worship leaflet. Doing so illuminates the work of Episcopal Relief & Development, which may inspire others to be more responsive next time around.

You can also order and distribute our [Gifts for Life](#) catalogs. This is a fun and hope-filled way to engage your community in Episcopal Relief & Development's program priorities, including Early Childhood Development.

What if the response was resounding and people started requesting more staff, space and funding?

You're gonna need a bigger boat. It's time to start setting some goals and getting started!

First, your community will need to develop a plan to create or accelerate your Early Childhood Development ministry. Find a time to gather the people who showed interest, even in different areas, and explore with them the creation of a couple of short- and long-term goals. Prioritize the goals based on the interest shown both by the initial surveys and by those who actually attend the meetings. Once you've developed a few of these goals, explore questions around each goal, including:

1. SHOULD WE ADJUST OR INNOVATE?

- Do we have an existing intentionality around Early Childhood Development in our community?
- Is it effective, reaching those it needs to reach and relevant to what our community has expressed as its interests?
- Can this current program be improved?
- Do we have the resources and capacity to make the necessary adjustments? If not, are there other community programs that offer these services that we can direct our faith community to?

2. WHERE SHOULD WE START TAKING ACTION?

- Contact your closest Ministry Partner from Episcopal Relief & Development and invite them to a meeting. If you need help finding your Diocesan Ministry Partner, contact us at engagement@episcopalrelief.org
- Articulate your goals as a team.
- Prioritize your resources — time, space, prayers, people and money — accordingly.
- Outline action steps, making sure that your program reflects early childhood development best practices and standards.
- Assign roles.
- Set timelines.
- When your team has approved the plan, implement it, then refine and adjust it as needed.
- Consider setting regular benchmarks for additional evaluations and refinements as needed.



A young boy in Ghana while his parents attend a health workshop sponsored by Ghanaian Health Service and the Anglican Diocesan Development and Relief Organization.