**“Early Childhood Zones”**

**Westside Elementary and Sugar Creek Elementary Schools**

**Goal**

Expand home visitation services to families of children 0 to 4 in the Westside Elementary School in Sun Prairie and the Sugar Creek Elementary School in Verona attendance areas to support the stability of target families and ensure their children are developmentally ready for school.

**Background**

1. **County Executive Parisi and the United Way Board have jointly prioritized early childhood** as the area in which we must begin our approach to eliminating the achievement gap (Conversations initiated May, 2012). The United Way’s Born Learning Delegation – co-chaired by the County Executive – has been exploring this issue over the past year.
2. **This approach coordinates three successful early childhood models** that teach parents how to nurture their children to achieve age appropriate milestones so they arrive at school ready to learn and live in working families that have the stability and resources necessary to support their path to successful adulthood. It targets families in an elementary school service attendance area to link them with their home school.
3. **Boosting enrollment in four-year-old kindergarten:** Four-year-old kindergarten has proven to be an effective tool that helps children keep up with their peers, and establishes a strong educational foundation children can carry with them for a lifetime.
4. **Student attendance issues:** This approach includes an emphasis on effective parenting, family stability, educational training and employment. It promotes behavioral values and a family regimen that results in consistent and regular school attendance by their children all providing a springboard for school success including graduation.
5. **Student mobility issues:** High mobility in families with school-age children increases the achievement gap. Children who experience frequent household instability or homelessness have higher rates of truancy and lower academic achievement than their peers who do not encounter these barriers to successful learning.

**Target Population**: Families residing in the Westside Elementary and Sugar Creek Elementary school attendance areas with priority given to underserved families of color.

**Evaluation Tools**: Ages and Stages, 4K and Kindergarten assessments, survey of program participants and stakeholders

**Targeted Outcomes:**

* Families stable in housing, healthy, workforce ready and employed
* Children ready to learn at kindergarten entry
* Families enroll their children in 4K with consistent attendance for the year

**Core Partners**:

Dane County

United Way of Dane County

Sun Prairie and Verona School Districts

Madison - Dane County Public Health

Forward Service Corporation

Center for Families

Children’s Service Society of Wisconsin

Early Headstart, Dane County Parent Council Inc.

**Program Strategies and Activities**

1. Expand capacity of home visitation in target area through two different programs, the Dane County Early Childhood Initiative, and Parent-Child Home—serving approximately 39 new families.
2. Match appropriate home visitation program with the early childhood needs of each family.
3. Connect families to the United Way’s Play and Learn resource in the area.
4. Provide accessible, ongoing home visitation services and develop family expectations for consistent and regular attendance in school.
5. Stabilize families with pre-eviction and housing services to minimize or eliminate household instability and negative family mobility.
6. Utilize an Economic Support Specialist to help families access and maintain safety net benefits.
7. Assist parents to access adult education skill building opportunities and employment.
8. Collaborate with the local Joining Forces For Families office near Westside elementary and in the Verona community to access other resources as necessary.
9. Connect families to 4K through early parent and family engagement.

**Timeline**

Begins early 2014

**Financial Commitments - new**

**Dane County** – Total Investment $165,000

$113,018 (2 FTE ECI Family Support Specialists)

$ 51,982 (.75 FTE ECI Employment and Education Specialist).

**United Way** – Total Investment up to $185,000

Parent Child Home Visitation $90,000

Home Visitation Manager - $50,000

Play and Learn in Verona - $15,000

**ECI/JFF Site Costs for Dane County - total**

ECI Verona - $79,779

JFF Verona - $47,329 (.5 FTE JFF worker)

Total - $127,108

ECI Sun Prairie – $252,644

JFF Sun Prairie - $ 98,258 (1 FTE JFF worker, plus rent)

Total - $350,902