

Creating New or Strengthening Existing Church and School Partnerships During Covid-19

Steps for Creating or Strengthening Partnerships During Covid-19



- **Prayer-** Response to social justice issues is vital; however, response becomes transformational when led by the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray for guidance for ministry, children, and church response. Invite your congregation to pray for schools, students, teachers, staff and administrators.
- **Transformational Response** calls for *our* growth and transformation as we seek *transformational change* in the lives of children and families. Thus, the need for deeper understanding of root causes of poverty and appropriate response. Encourage small group learning in empowerment ministry models, understanding poverty, and racial equity.
- **Develop a C4C church leadership team** with pastoral support and laity leading the planning efforts.
- **Reach out to local school leadership** to ask how your congregation can support them. If you have not already established a trusting relationship with a school, do not be surprised if communication is a challenge. Building partnerships takes time and patience.



- **LISTEN! LISTEN! LISTEN!** Be prepared to share your ideas, but spend more time listening and learning. What are their needs? Who are their current partners? How can your congregation support existing efforts? Seek to identify a staff person designated by the school to be the school contact for the partnership. Schools guidance counselors are a good resource.
- **Relationship building** is foundational to C4C. Response to children and families impacted by poverty will require developing trusting relationships with children, families, the school and with other community partners.
- **Seek collaboration.** Collaboration is critical in seeking transformational response; silo driven ministry and duplication can be avoided when we communicate and respond through missional networks, ecumenically, with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and with others.
- **Develop a plan of engagement.** Do your homework and coordinate with engaged community partners. Start small and build on success.



- **Contextual and organic** church and school partnerships should be the norm; no two churches, schools or communities are the same. interaction of each partnership is based on the assets and needs of its school, church, and community.
- **Planning for summer and fall 2021.** For churches that are not able to provide Remote Learning Centers during the pandemic, now is the time to begin post Covid-19 planning. Now is the time to initiate contemplative prayer teams to seek God's directive for a post Covid-19 response.

Examples of Covid-19 Responses:

- **Relief Efforts:** Many responses during Covid-19 have included emergency relief: school supplies, support with meals, earbuds, emergency response for families' needs.
- **The Digital Divide** is one of the biggest challenges: Where is Wi-Fi needed? What churches or organizations are offering drive up Wi-Fi, opening facilities for parents and children, or providing staffed or volunteer led Remote Learning Centers?
- **Staff Support:** Support the staff through prayers and support as appropriate for your context.
- **Planning Now Transformational Response:** Where might God be leading the church in response? Consider and pray about the possibilities for summer literacy camps, remote learning centers, reading buddy programs, after-school programs, and childcare.