

## Northside Ready Set Go! (NRSG)

An employment and training program – named by the community and open to Northside adults – that focuses on communication skills, goal setting, confidence building and conflict resolution – those pre-employment skills everyone needs to succeed.

RSG takes a holistic approach to overcoming barriers to getting and keeping employment by helping participants build and hone the soft skills needed for employment. The program primarily serves parents, so child care is available on site, along with a hot meal for the whole family. RSG is a multi-week training program connected to the NECZ and our partner, Lakeview Lutheran, provides us the space.

The program is facilitated by Diana Shinall, an education and employment specialist with more than 25 years of experience from Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. Diana shares some of her own story with program participants to create a safe space for all.

For those interested in more information about RSG, call (608-218-0891) or email (dshinall@chw.org) Ms. Shinall.



## NECZ Partner Agencies and Funders

RISE, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Reach Dane, Forward Service Corporation, Madison Dane County Public Health, and Community Action of South Central Wisconsin (CAC), Dane County (Human Services), City of Madison, United Way of Dane County, Anesis Center for Marriage and Family Therapy and the Rennebohm Foundation.



2830 Dryden Dr, Madison, WI 53704

For more information, please call  
Northside Early Childhood Zone Coordinator  
Leslie McAllister at 608-467-3004.

## ZONA PRIMERA INFANCIA DE NORTHSIDE



## Northside Early Childhood Zone

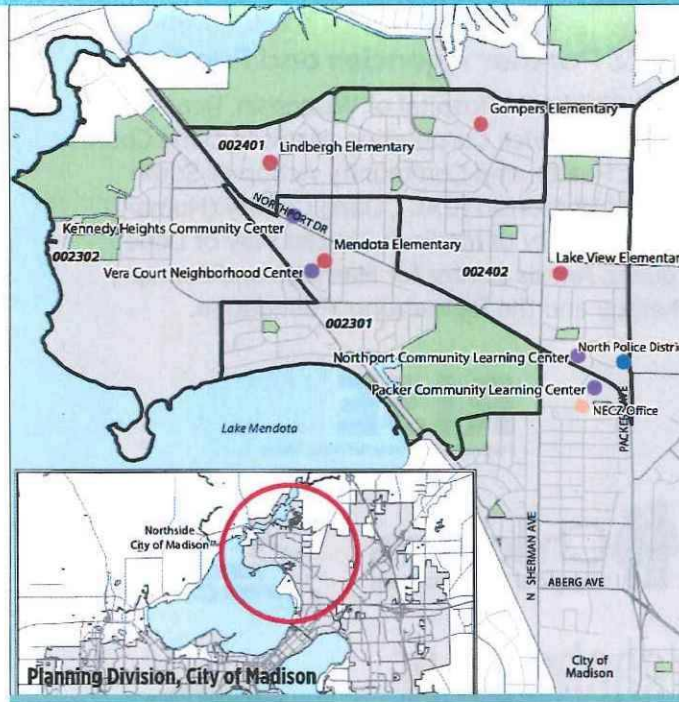
The Northside Early Childhood Zone (NECZ) serves pregnant people and children ages birth to four. To be eligible, your family must have a child born in 2017 or be currently expecting and live in the Mendota, Gompers, Lake View or Lindbergh Elementary School attendance areas.

Home visiting is at the core of the Northside Early Childhood Zone, and those services are generally provided weekly or every other week for expectant parents and parents of infants and toddlers in their homes or wherever they feel the most comfortable.

The NECZ offers home visiting services provided by highly trained professionals, which include:

- support for and education about having a healthy pregnancy
- promoting positive parent-child relationships
- understanding how children develop
- connecting to other useful community resources

In addition to those core home visiting services, NECZ participants are offered assistance around securing and maintaining stable housing, as well as working toward their education and employment goals.



## Programs

We are fortunate to have multiple home visiting programs working together on the Northside for this initiative:

- RISE Early Childhood Initiative
- RISE Welcome Baby & Beyond Programs
- Reach Dane Early Head Start Program
- Madison Dane County Public Health Nurse Family Partnership

Services that enhance the home visiting core programs, include:

- housing stabilization services through Community Action Coalition
- education and employment supports through Children's Hospital Community Services Division and Forward Services Corporation
- in-home mental health supports through RISE

## NECZ Enhancement Services

**Employment support:** Employment support staff assist NECZ parents/caregivers in reaching their education and employment goals such as: looking for and applying to jobs, getting to job interviews, job interview practice, getting a driver's license, signing up for benefits, obtaining a GED/HSED, signing up for classes and trainings.

**Housing:** The NECZ housing case worker supports families work toward their goals to maintain stable housing. Some of the things the caseworker can help with include: assisting with finding appropriate housing, helping fill out applications for low-income or public housing, helping renters better understand their rights and responsibilities, and working with renters to have successful relationships with landlords/management companies.

**In-home mental health support:** Families may be able to access tailored in-home support to address mental health concerns through RISE and Anesis Center for Marriage and Family Therapy staff that work closely with the home visiting team.





## Early Childhood Zones

In Leopold Elementary School, Sugar Creek Elementary in Verona, Sun Prairie and Madison's Northside/Blackhawk School attendance area.

It is a partnership between Dane County and United Way of Dane County and the Rennebohm Foundation.

**Goal:** Expand home visitation services to families of children 0-4/5 years in elementary school areas with high percentages of poverty and large numbers of young children to link parents to employment self sufficiency services and their local school and ensure their children are developmentally ready for school.

## Targeted Outcomes

1. Families stable in housing, workforce ready and employed
2. Children ready to learn at Kindergarten entry and families enroll their children in 4K with consistent attendance for the year
3. Maximize use of appropriate services in each Zone through collaboration and monitoring.

## Program Strategies and Activities

- Expand capacity of home visitation services through Dane County Early Childhood Initiative and Parent-Child Home Program
- Match appropriate home visitation program with needs of family
- Seamless support of children 0-5 years of age
- Support families in getting kids to school
- Stabilize families with pre-eviction and housing services to minimize instability and mobility
- Utilize Economic Support Specialist to help families access and maintain safety net benefits
- Assist adults in education, job preparation and employment opportunities
- Collaborate with local JFF team
- Connect families to 4K

## Background

- Established in 2013 in Leopold, and May 2014 for Verona and Sun Prairie.
- Create a two-generation approach which coordinates 3 successful early childhood home visitation programs with employment, housing and other programs that develop self sufficiency for parents.
- County Exec Parisi, United Way and MMSD and VSD have jointly prioritized early childhood as an area to help eliminate the achievement gap

- This approach seeks to have impact on MMSD's and VSD's parent engagement, student attendance and student mobility issues

For more information or to help link families with home visiting services please contact Claire Ackerman, Leopold Zone Connector at [Claire.ackerman@cssw.org](mailto:Claire.ackerman@cssw.org)

## Dane County Early Childhood Initiative

ECI is an innovative home visitation and employment program started in July 2004 under the leadership of County Executive Kathleen Falk. Its expansion has continued under the leadership of County Executive Joe Parisi. ECI is designed to improve life outcomes of our most vulnerable families with a special emphasis on economic self-sufficiency, positive infant and child development, and maternal and infant mental health. Initially, ECI targeted services and resources to residents of Allied Drive, then the poorest neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Currently, ECI serves 5 primary Dane County locations: 1) Allied Drive 2) Southwest Madison (with up to 6 slots for families living in the Sugar Creek attendance area, Verona School District) 3) Leopold (located in Madison/Fitchburg and 4) Sun Prairie (with up to 4 slots available to Marshall, WI) 5) Madison's Northside. ECI's purpose is to ensure that our youngest children achieve age-appropriate, developmental outcomes and live in families that are nurturing and self-sufficient, with income from sustainable employment. In the long term, these children will 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. Caregivers are eligible for ECI if they are pregnant, or the primary caregiver of a child 0-12 months of age and live in one of the designated ECI communities. They remain eligible for ECI services until that child turns 3/4 years old if they remain engaged and compliant with program requirements or successfully complete the program.

ECI strives to increase families' access to an array of services and resources including:

- prenatal care;
- parenting education and family support;
- immunizations and other preventative health care;
- developmental, mental health and post partum depression screening and assessment;
- benefit and basic needs resources and housing; and
- employment and training services.

By design, ECI has located in Dane County's most challenged community areas based upon a variety of indicators including chronic poverty and number of cases open with the human services system. Staffing at each of the sites entail: **Family Support Specialists** (FSS) delivering comprehensive home visitation services; an **Employment and Training Specialist** helping parents, caregivers, and other family members to obtain work and keep them successfully employed; an **Economic Support Worker** ensuring that families have quick access to and effectively maintain benefits related to medical assistance, childcare, food, and economic assistance, to keep households stable; a **Lead Site Worker** overseeing day-to-day operations and supervising FSS staff; and a **Coordinator** ensuring that services are appropriately integrated and the project achieves its outcomes. Beginning in 2018, ECI families will have access to in-home mental health services to support parents and children that are not able to have their needs met through the typical array of services. In many ways ECI embodies the state-of-the-art in cross system, human services integration.

ECI serves a racially and ethnically diverse clientele. In 2018, ECI's caseload was 34% non-Hispanic black, 37% Hispanic, 17% non-Hispanic white, 2% Bi-racial; 4% African and 2% Asian. The average age of the parents who participate in ECI is approximately 31 years, although their ages range from 16 to over 40 years of age with the vast majority falling between 20-34 years of age. In 2018, there were 6 teen parents as focal caretakers in an overall average case load of 133. On average, 34% of ECI focal caretakers are single parents. All are low income. In 2018, there were 128 focal children and 181 non-focal children that received services from ECI.

**Partnerships, Funding and Accolades:** A partnership representing Dane County Human Services, Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, RISE, the Oscar Rennebohm Foundation and Forward Services Corporation comprises the initiative. Dr. Slack and Dr. Tally Moses, Associate Professor at the University of Madison School of Social Work, are Principal Investigators on an Innovations Grant evaluation is assessing ECI as a potential promising best practice model for home visitation over a three year period. ECI's annual budget is approximately \$1,339,918; cost per family is approximately \$8,644 based on serving 155 families annually. ECI manages an average caseload of approximately 122 families spread across 14 Family Support Specialists. Acknowledged as an innovative home visitation and employment initiative, ECI's success has been validated by its designation as a National Governor's Association site for service integration by the State of Wisconsin. ECI has also received a Madison Dane County Public Health Prevention Award recognizing their effective work with Dane County's most vulnerable families.

***Current Status and Other Outcomes:*** 2018 data reveals that 25 families completed the program successfully. 108 ECI families have completed the program in the last 5 years. At any given point in time 80% of ECI clients are in general compliance with their family plans as specified by our targeted outcomes. Through December 2018, 814 jobs have been acquired for ECI clients over a twelve year period. In that same period, 196 ECI clients have completed education and training programs (e.g. GED, Certified Nursing Assistant).

On key outcome objectives ECI continued to achieve success in 2018. 100% of families that need prenatal care education received it, 92% of families received nutrition education, 98% of families had a medical home, 84% of families were in housing, 86% of families received in-home mental health support or education, 89% of focal children were up-to-date on immunizations and 89% of focal parents received education and support about health attachment.

ECI efforts in 2019 will focus on getting ECI validated as a promising approach through funds received from an Innovations Grant from the Wisconsin Children's Trust Fund. ECI will continue to support Early Childhood Zones (ECZ) as a way to coordinate several home visitation programs in three targeted geographic areas – Leopold (Madison), Sun Prairie, Verona and on Madison's Northside (NECZ). Early Childhood Zones offer a housing, employment and training response to all of our home visitation partners. Its intent is to create a continuum of services that provides a pathway to 4K whereby focal children arrive at school age appropriately developed and ready to learn.

NECZ is a public/private partnership with the City of Madison, Dane County, United Way, and the Oscar Rennebohm Foundation focused on the Northside of Madison. It represents a two generation strategy intended to break the cycle of poverty and prevent formal system involvement (e.g. shelter, child protective services, criminal justice). It provides resource enhancements for target families in the areas of childcare, transportation, and emotional well being. Resident Navigators will conduct outreach to recruit families and help assess the effectiveness of program efforts. Additionally, the NECZ staff team will be co-located and facilitated by a Zone Coordinator. A rigorous evaluation component will be developed for this initiative. Once fully operational, the NECZ will provide home visitation services to hundreds of families.

Taken together, ECI clearly holds promise for becoming a best practice model for home visitation targeted at highly challenged, low income families. Other commonly implemented models of home visiting have not heavily emphasized economic self-sufficiency through employment and training or maternal and infant mental health. We are aware of no other home visitation approach in the U.S. that places such an emphasis on employment and training outcomes for the entire focal family. These targeted elements of the ECI and the development of Early Childhood Zones represent exciting innovations in the home visitation field.

*(ECI Backgrounder, Feb 2019))*