Shaping Day Home Business Models Through The Ready Network

ChildSavers’ Child Development Services (CDS) team works tirelessly to support early educators. By providing virtual technical assistance, training, and tangible resources throughout this pandemic, the team has helped keep these small businesses open and safe for families who depend on them.

CDS not only supports child care providers but also parents searching for quality early care. "The Ready Network", a partnership between ChildSavers, The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, and Smart Beginnings, connects working parents with family day home providers.

Many essential personnel, including medical staff, warehouse workers, and grocery store employees, work shifts well into the night and early morning. This can make it difficult to find child care. This project links local businesses and hospitals with providers who are available during their employees' shifts - no matter the hour. As spaces are filled in these family day homes, the project offers resources to improve providers' business procedures, marketing, and communication with parents. The combination of new customers and more efficient practices positions providers to grow their small businesses.

Child care provider, Shemik Sellars, joined the Ready Network to grow her family day home business in Chesterfield, VA. One of her favorite Ready Network tools called Parent Report provides families with information about their child’s day including meals, sleeping, and daily activities via the Wonderschool app. The app also allows Mrs. Sellers to share curriculum and learning objectives so parents can work with children at home on learning goals.

The Ready Network is not just a series of business management tools but truly a network. Now Mrs. Sellers is constantly connecting with other child care providers to discuss their successes, challenges, and goals.

The Ready Network is making affordable, quality child care more accessible for working parents in Greater Richmond. All while uplifting and empowering early care providers, many of whom are women of color, on the frontlines of this pandemic.

ChildSavers offers six services for child care providers throughout Central and Southwest Virginia. When you give your best gift to support these services, you’re uplifting small business owners and expanding their capacity to do good. Learn more at childsavers.org/pcs.
School-Based Services Expands to Meet Growing Mental Health Crisis

Since 2017, ChildSavers and Richmond Public Schools have partnered to place licensed therapists in schools. Now, students and their families can build resilience and have access to trauma-informed therapy during and outside of school hours.

In March, your support helped us swiftly pivot to teletherapy and meet the growing needs for mental health and child care. In this time of isolation, stressors on families are intensified. Teletherapy opened new doors, allowing students and guardians to connect online to continue healing and honing resilience.

While our doors have remained open, having virtual options for our mental health and child development services has been critical. In addition to delivering teletherapy, our school-based therapists have also helped teachers identify signs of stress, depression, trauma, and abuse through their computer screens. This is no small task.

Children and teens have expressed feeling isolated and hopeless in addition to coping with their current trauma and life challenges. While this year has been difficult, you’re connecting more children each day to dire mental health services.

70% of our mental health clients are meeting or exceeding their clinical goals and have seen a decrease in the severity of symptoms. To learn more about school-based therapy, visit childsavers.org/sbs.

Meeting Community Mental Health Needs Through RPD RESETs

Community violence takes an enormous toll on children and families. Richmond Police Department conducts RESETs with community allies like ChildSavers' Immediate Response. RESET is an acronym for Rapid Engagement of Support in the Event of Trauma. These RESETs serve as door-to-door touchpoints to check in with residents, rebuild trust and establish a sense of safety, and connect families with community resources.

Immediate Response is available 24/7, 365 days a year to respond to children during traumatic events. Partners like the Richmond Police Department, Richmond Public Schools, and additional allies serve as important referral sources.

To learn more about ChildSavers' Immediate Response mental health services, visit childsavers.org/ir.

Truist created more than 400 Feel Better Bags for our Immediate Response therapists to use on-scene. These items help children de-escalate and self-regulate directly after trauma occurs.

Progress Report: July-December 2020

- 3,235 hours of technical assistance and training conducted with early child care providers.
- 25,767 children enrolled in quality early care and education.
- 112 new child care centers or day homes enrolled in CDS services.
ChildSavers Partners with VCU for Play Therapy Certification Training

Play therapy is a critical component of children’s mental health services, allowing kids to express feelings and personal experiences through the integration of imagination, physical movement, and intense emotions. This year, ChildSavers therapists spent several weekends teaching play therapy courses to professional clinicians who were working towards their Registered Play Therapist (RPT) credentials.

"There continues to be a tremendous shortage of play therapists as evidenced by the length of our waitlist. It takes years to become registered and this is after obtaining your mental health practitioner licensure!" says Jan Williamson, LCSW, RPT-S.

ChildSavers is known in the Richmond community for our expertise in this form of therapy, which allows us to speak the language of childhood.

Immediate Response Therapist Accepted into Flamboyan Fellowship

In addition to balancing her current caseload and studying for the LCSW exam, Immediate Response Therapist, LaDesha Batten, MSW, has been accepted into the Flamboyan Family Engagement Fellowship. This prestigious honor is given to community leaders and advocates throughout the country.

Together, the fellows spend 22 months designing a family engagement strategic plan to implement in their local school communities. This connection allows ChildSavers to work more closely with Richmond Public Schools and influence school-based mental health initiatives on a national level.

"Being chosen as a Flamboyan fellow has been a highlight of 2020," says LaDesha. "Being a fellow will allow me to gain valuable knowledge from experts in the field, network with other fellows, and develop new skillsets to better invest in the families and communities I currently serve."

- 481 children received mental health services.
- 91% of Immediate Response clients discharged to non-crisis therapy.
- 5,556 therapy sessions conducted.
- 1,424 adults received Trauma & Resilience Training.

- more children served in CDS
Each year, ChildSavers hosts a party for our clients with the intention of creating a safe space for families and child care providers to celebrate the holidays. Because of the pandemic, we pivoted and created a Party-To-Go. In addition to receiving warm boxed meals, children took home healthy recipes, art kits, hygiene items, and a new toy.

Thank you to our financial sponsors and donors who allowed us to adapt and create a safe, festive experience for our families:

COVID-19 brought on not one but two Giving Tuesday opportunities in 2020. On May 5, a global day of fundraising called Giving Tuesday Now was called to offer support to nonprofits. More than 100 donors raised $34,555 to support mental health and child development programs. Months later on Giving Tuesday, December 1, you smashed our $10,000 goal and raised $32,370 in 24-hours. Your collective support has helped guide our community’s children through one of the most trying years of their lives and encouraged our staff beyond words. Thank you.

Resilience to life’s most critical moments can be built anywhere - even a garden. ChildSavers’ therapy garden engages clients’ senses in therapy. Children can smell fresh rosemary, touch soft petals, and enjoy the sights of the city as they process their emotions.

This fall, members of our Community Board and staff planted new items to enhance the healing experience for clients in need of in-person therapy during this pandemic.