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**USA:**  
35 Thasha Lane, A8  
Essex Jct, VT 05452  
607-216-4697 ph  
815-550-1727 fax

[www.dominicandream.org](http://www.dominicandream.org)  
[info@dominicandream.org](mailto:info@dominicandream.org)

[facebook.com/thedreamproject](https://facebook.com/thedreamproject)  
[twitter.com/thedreamproject](https://twitter.com/thedreamproject)

**Dominican Republic:**  
Plaza El Patio, Calle Principal  
Cabarete, POP  
809-571-0497 ph  
809-571-9551 fax



# DREAM project

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC EDUCATION AND MENTORING



## Annual Report 2011-2012

Written by  
Catherine  
DeLaura and  
Jonathan  
Wunderlich.

Edited and  
designed  
by Emily  
MacDowell.

Photos by  
Lauren  
Bowcutt,  
Mike  
Gussack,  
Emily  
MacDowell  
and others.



## WE BELIEVE...

That quality, early and continuing education is the most effective way to break the cycle of poverty and change destinies. Our mission is to run inclusive, sustainable education programs for children and youth in the Dominican Republic that can be replicated throughout impoverished global communities.



### From the Honorary Chairman and Chairwoman

*"Despite what we have been told countless times it is not that young people are the future; it is that if our young people are not given access to a quality education there will be no future. This is as true in Santo Domingo as any place on the planet. The Dominican Republic is where the New World began; it is fitting that the New World that we are imagining, one where all young people are in quality schools, begins here as well."*

*- Junot Díaz  
Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author*



*"The tireless effort and commitment put forth by the DREAM Project in the Dominican Republic has allowed my country's children and their families to live life knowing there is hope and that dreams do come true. I support DREAM's mission and celebrate the team's hard work."*

*- Celinés Toribio  
Actress and TV Personality*



## Early Childhood Education The DREAM Model Montessori Preschool Program

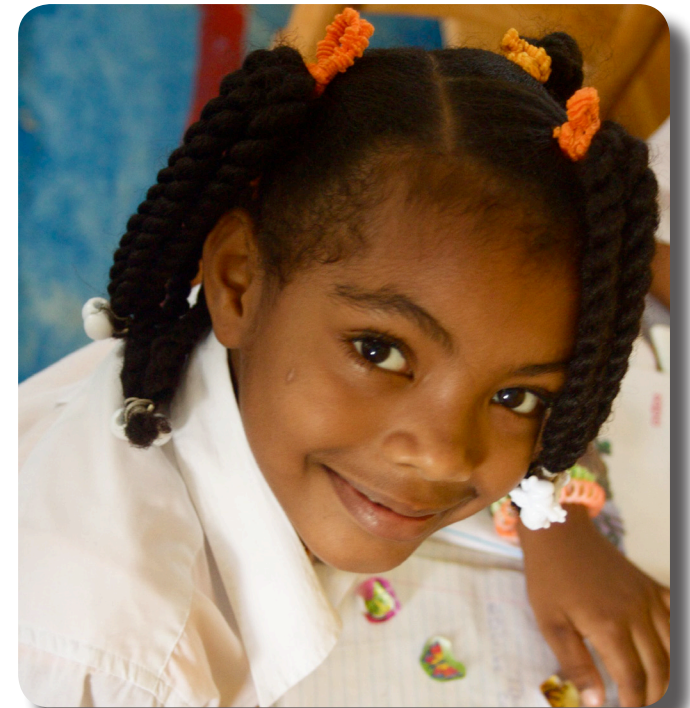
How do you start to fix a broken education system?

In any discussion of how to fix the current education crisis in the Dominican Republic, one question inevitably emerges; where does one begin when so many aspects of the system are not working? There are many areas in need of help, from elementary schools to high schools, lack of infrastructure to poor teacher training, all of which are equally deserving of assistance. After careful analysis, years of research and educational expertise, DREAM has concluded that the most effective way to end this cycle of low quality education is to start at the beginning.



Early childhood is the developmental stage of life where the individual forms his or her personality, values, autonomy and self-confidence. It is also the time when we can provide the most impact in leveraging young children's high capacity to learn.

The DREAM Project educates over 450 Montessori preschool students in four different communities every school day of the 2011-12 academic year. This highly successful program is run by more than 25 local staff and 500 volunteer family members. Our long-term goal is the country-wide expansion of this replicable model. We recently entered into an accord with the Secretary of Education, which is the first step toward this goal.



**In the Dominican Republic, there are no specific policies concerning the integral development of children under 5 years of age. In addition, it is estimated that for this population, only 16% of children from the poorest sectors are receiving preschool education.**

*- UNICEF 2011*



## The DREAM Center Montessori Preschool

The DREAM Center Montessori Program has continued to expand, allowing every child in the Colonia Nueva community of Cabarete the opportunity to get a head start on their path to a quality education. This flagship early childhood education program offers morning and afternoon classes to over 200 students and is run by eight full-time, extensively trained, local Montessori teachers. Now in its fourth year, the success of this program has spread, inspiring private local initiatives and serving as the springboard for DREAM's continuing education programs. Parents and family members are active participants in their children's education, contributing as volunteers for two weeks each year and gaining a new appreciation for this community resource. The DREAM Center Montessori Preschool, held in the Doña Flora and Benjamin Rabinovitch Center, is the centerpiece for our four separate Montessori Programs and serves as a model for training and replication throughout the country.



**DREAM Montessori students**, who had received early childhood education since age 3, **received a 90%** average on the basic skills of recognizing colors, letters, numbers and demonstrating critical thinking, as compared to under **60% average for public school students**, who had only attended school since age 6.  
- Peralta Thesis, UNIBE, 2011

## The Playa Grande DREAM Montessori Classroom

The Playa Grande Foundation and Golf Course has continued to prioritize education in the community of Abreu and serve as a model for responsible businesses throughout the country. As an Ambassador of DREAM since 2006, Playa Grande shares the belief that laying the foundation of quality early childhood education is the most effective way to ensure positive growth throughout the community. In a partnership with the Secretary of Education, the Cabrera District of Education 1402 and the Máximo Acosta Elementary School, DREAM and Playa Grande have created a model Montessori classroom for more than 40 students. In addition, three local teachers have been trained in the Montessori methodology and work with local parents and family members to offer the community of Abreu a holistic approach to quality education.

*"This program has helped children learn to study, read, write, to behave well, all from early childhood. I love The DREAM Project!"*  
- Griselda Polanco (Mother of a Montessori student)



## The DREAM Libertad Montessori Preschool

One of the main objectives of DREAM is to form local partnerships that empower communities to help themselves and ensure future sustainability. The DREAM Libertad Montessori Preschool is a perfect example of this vision, combining the generosity Paulina Tremblay, owner of the land underlying the DREAM-built school, the commitment of the local community and DREAM's model Montessori Preschool Program. This partnership now offers morning and afternoon classes to over 100 students and is run by four full-time local Montessori trained teachers.

*"I was at a furniture store the other day and suddenly a young salesman approached me and thanked me for the education our school had provided him. Looking at this young, respectful and clearly successful man, I realized that was the ultimate reason for building the school."*

- Paulina Tremblay, Owner of the land underlying La Libertad Montessori Preschool and Los Brazos Community Center



## The DREAM Caraballo Montessori Preschool

Batey Caraballo is made up of Dominican, Haitian Dominican and Haitian residents living in the most difficult conditions of poverty imaginable. Like many batey communities throughout the country, the local sugar industry has shut down and left Caraballo with few sustainable resources. Without sufficient services and the employment opportunities necessary to alleviate this impoverished environment, the need for quality education and alternative solutions has never been greater. The program currently serves 100 three to five year old students annually and provides the essential educational base needed to help lift them out of the cycle of poverty.

**Children in 1/3 of the bateys lack access to education and 1/3 of batey inhabitants do not know how to read or write.** - The United Nations Development Programme 2010





# Continuing Education Programs

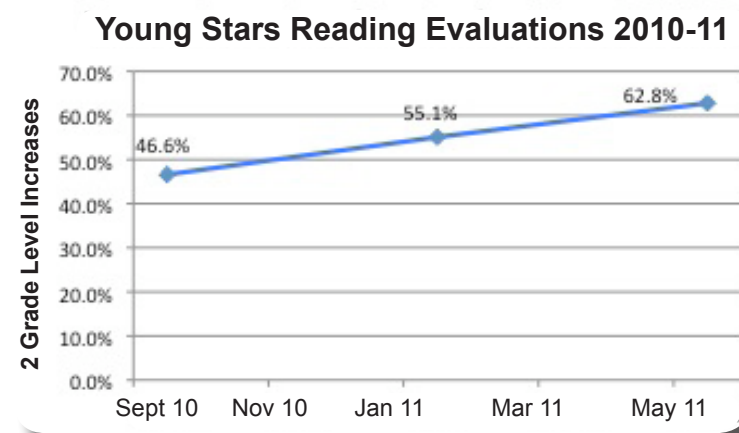
## The DREAM Young Stars At-Risk Youth Program

How do we protect our At-Risk Youth?

Young Stars (“Estrellas Jovenes”) is an extracurricular, after-school program for at-risk youth that provides innovative coursework in literacy, math, science, English, computers, sexual health and responsible decision-making. This innovative program reinforces and supplements the instruction students are receiving in the public schools. This program also focuses on personal leadership skills that prepare students for making healthy decisions and tools for becoming productive members of the community. The Young Stars program has over 200 youth participating in three different communities (Caraballo, Cabarete and Abreu) for the 2011-12 academic year. Students receive 10 hours of extra-curricular classes per week, Monday through Friday, which equals over 250 hours for the academic school year. Year-long and local volunteers engage these students through a dynamic and interactive teaching model, involving games, creative projects and discussions. The classes are capped at fifteen students, creating an intimate setting that allows teachers to give students individual attention and go beyond the lecture-heavy teaching model of larger classrooms. All programs have a social-emotional component to help students develop healthy decision-making, punctuality, respect, teamwork and conflict management skills, while emphasizing tolerance, diversity and community service.



**“When Eduard Pequeño started at DREAM in 2009, he did not know most of the alphabet. In less than two years, he advanced from a level 0 to a level 30, equivalent to a 5th grade reading level.” - Lindsey Parr, DREAM Volunteer**



## Deportes Para la Vida (“Sports for Life”)

Deportes Para la Vida (DPV), part of the Grassroot Soccer Network, is an HIV/AIDS prevention education and youth leadership program. The decisions these youth make during their critical developmental ages of 10 to 18 not only impact their ability to complete a quality education, but also protect them from a life of crime, drug use, early pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.

Deportes Para la Vida uses the power of sports, game-based activities and peer mentoring to provide youth with the knowledge, self-esteem, critical thinking, and communication skills needed to live healthier lives. The DPV program consists of camps and courses for youth, public school programs, training of regional trainers and local leaders, as well as workshops for community-based peer educators and local NGO staff. To expand the effect of the program, DREAM is training Peace Corps volunteers and youth leaders nation-wide as DPV Facilitators. DREAM has trained over 100 facilitators, who are delivering successful courses to over 1,000 students annually in the Dominican Republic.

**In DPV classes in the 2010 Guzmán Ariza Summer School & Camp, on average students increased knowledge from 50% correct in pre-testing to 87% correct in post-testing. - Newman Thesis, UVM, 2011**



## A Ganar (“Let’s Win”)

A Ganar is a youth workforce development program wrapped up in a soccer ball. By utilizing sports to develop teamwork, work habits, communication and vocational skills, youth ages 16-24 can find jobs, learn entrepreneurial skills or re-enter the formal education system. A Ganar, a program developed by Partners of the Americas and funded by USAID and IDB, has trained over 4,000 youth throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. In the community of Cabarete in 2011, DREAM led an A Ganar Bartender/Waiter Course in conjunction with INFOTEP, and an Eco-Tourism Guide Course sponsored by the Minister of Environment. More than 60 youth participated, led by over 15 teachers, DREAM staff and volunteers. DREAM plans on repeating the course yearly with different career focuses that fit the needs of the communities in which we work.





# The DREAM Public Library Program

The DREAM Public Library and its Caraballo Mini Library provide the people of Cabarete and Caraballo with one of the most valuable resources any community could ask for: literacy through free access to books. Unfortunately, the majority of poor Dominicans are not functionally literate and this is partially due to the lack of books, bookstores and libraries in rural areas. Literacy is the first step toward a quality education and without resources available to teach students how to read, there is little hope of them escaping the cycle of poverty.

DREAM libraries create a safe space and offer age-appropriate books that let students develop a love of reading. Our growing inventory includes more than 3,000 books. The expansion of the DREAM Public Library Program is an essential tool in combating poverty.



The Dominican Republic was ranked 102 out of 179 countries in terms of literacy. - UNESCO 2009

*“As you look around the world, you see that all great nations have great library systems. On the other hand, poor nations tend to lack a library system. So there is a correlation between economic and social development and the existence of a library system that will enable a population to read and see reading as a tool for personal growth and for national development.”* - Dominican Republic President Leonel Fernandez



# DREAM Summer Schools and Camps

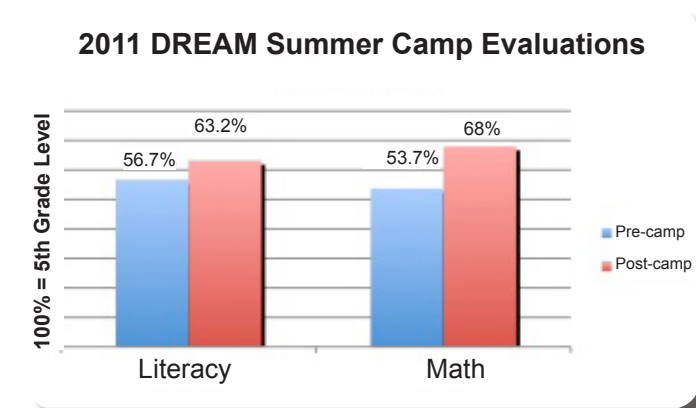
The academic and practical skills needed to escape poverty and be productive members of society are lacking in the youth of the Dominican Republic. In increasing numbers, Dominican youth are succumbing to the pressures of the world outside the classroom and dropping out of school far too early. These same youth are not given the tools necessary to overcome the risks of early pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, drugs, crime and the many other pitfalls that surround them. Our solution? DREAM Summer Schools and Camps that offer these youth a summer filled with all the fun of a traditional summer camp, but veil the true nature of the program; education, participation and healthy life choices.

The objectives of the DREAM Summer School and Camp were developed with the purpose of creating a model support program that offers structure, guidance and academic enrichment to help keep children in school, create life and job skills, and most importantly, instill the confidence and self-esteem they need to develop to their full potential and make good life-long decisions. In July 2011, over 400 students participated in four separate DREAM Summer Schools and Camps, led by more than 185 local and international volunteers, Dominican teachers, staff and directors. This four-week program consists of core academics: math, reading, and writing; as well as courses in art, music and dance, sports, and swimming. By offering education on socially prevalent issues such as racism, HIV/AIDS and basic health, adolescents are exposed to global issues that also affect their local community and daily life.

The vision of this progressive program is to work with and empower at-risk youth in the Dominican Republic and to create a sustainable model that can be replicated in additional impoverished communities. To date, more than 2,000 children have participated in the DREAM Summer Schools and Camps.



*“My favorite class was Math, because I learned to add and subtract. Before, I didn't know what the minus sign was.”* - Alondra, Venus group, 2011 Summer Camp





## The DREAM Computer Literacy Program

Impoverished youth in the Dominican Republic are in desperate need of inventive educational solutions to catch up to their counterparts on a global level. At the core of this problem lies an antiquated system of learning, primarily focused on traditional teacher-centric, rote methods that have been proven to be ineffective in a modern education system. The Computer Literacy Program injects a modern tool that literally skips a generation of outdated methodology and starts to bring Dominican children up to speed with their global counterparts. This is done with an educated staff, first-rate resources, modern educational software, access to the Internet and a realistic approach to teaching children how to use this technology.

***“DREAM Project is the best school in the world. For me, it’s the best because I didn’t know English, and now I do. I didn’t know science and now I do. I didn’t know computers and now I do. Thank you DREAM Project!” - Yennifer Bonilla, Young Stars, age 10, grade 5.***



## The DREAM Music Program

The new DREAM Music Program centers around inspiring young children and at-risk youth through music. The Dominican Republic is one of the world’s most musical cultures, yet very few organized music programs are available. This program exposes impoverished youth ages 3-18 to a structured music program that coincides with their focus on quality education. Children that participate in band and ensemble music programs are seven times more likely to graduate from high school. In addition, developing the skill of playing a musical instrument instills confidence and a sense of responsibility in a most unique way.



## The DREAM Volunteer Program

### STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING TRIPS

A hands-on service experience, side by side with our local community members, can change lives forever. The DREAM Project has hosted over 45 private groups, non-profit organizations, high school and college service learning trips since 2004. The reach and experience of DREAM in the Dominican Republic has provided thousands of volunteer hours and thousands of dollars of infrastructure. If you are interested in a service trip for your school, club or church, please visit <http://dominicandream.org/volunteer/studenttrips>.



### DREAM VOLUNTEERS

DREAM volunteers have the possibility to teach in the Young Stars After-School Program or be counselors in DREAM’s Summer Schools & Camps, lead youth groups, operate libraries and computer labs, teach English, organize community committees, teach preschool children, offer adult education classes and train local teachers. By acting as role models for children, sharing new techniques with teachers, and acting as community liaisons, volunteers help provide new opportunities to the children and the community. Volunteers commit to spending either a semester or an academic year (from late August to late May) or 5 weeks in the summer. Part-time volunteering is encouraged for our community residents. Learn more: <http://dominicandream.org/volunteer>.

### APPLY TO VOLUNTEER

#### Requirements:

Teaching or mentoring experience with children; Intermediate to advanced Spanish skills; Must be at least 18 for the summer, 21 for the year. Fellowships are available to help cover costs.

Download an application at: [dominicandream.org/volunteer/application](http://dominicandream.org/volunteer/application)



***“As I taught swimming classes in summer camp, I helped the kids gain confidence in the water by teaching them how to kick straight, use a kick board to cross the water, and float on their backs. Several of the students were openly fearful of not having support in the water, but after providing personal attention and guidance, they were able to feel more comfortable - even within one class! At the end of camp the students thanked me for teaching them swimming. I am so grateful to have seen real growth in the students that pays off in the end by making an impact in the lives of individual campers.” - Molly Hamm, DREAM Volunteer***



# Community Support

## BIRTH CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Birth registration for poor Dominicans and Dominicans of Haitian descent is a serious issue in the Dominican Republic. Without birth certificates, students cannot attend high school in the Dominican Republic and young adults cannot apply for the identity card (cedula) needed to work. Complicated rules and new legislation has made the problem more difficult in recent years. In Spring 2011, DREAM partnered with Columbia University's School for International and Public Affairs (SIPA) to help better define and target DREAM's new Birth Certificate Project through a Community Census and Report titled *A Dream Deferred: Birth Registration and Access to Education in the Dominican Republic*.

Using the SIPA report as our blueprint, DREAM continues to work on this issue in all of our communities by training local community members in the birth certificate process so they can assist other members of the community. We work with local government and government-run initiatives to provide easier access to Birth Certificates. In addition, DREAM hosts community workshops run by organizations like Centro Bono, which is recognized as a nation-wide leader in this Human Rights issue.



*"The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that 20% of children under five years old living in the DR are not registered with a birth certificate. This number rises to around 30% for children in rural areas."*-ADREAM Deferred: Birth Registration and Access to Education in the Dominican Republic

## TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM

Any solution to the Dominican education crisis must confront the simple fact that the majority of teachers are in desperate need of more resources and professional development. DREAM has created a network of partners throughout the public school system so that these educators receive the support necessary to teach more effectively. DREAM has used its experience with model classrooms in Cabarete's three public schools and in DREAM Summer Schools and Camps to introduce new instructional strategies to local teachers.



## PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPPORT

DREAM's vision of all children having the opportunity to receive a quality education can only be realized through direct collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Over the last eight years, DREAM has built over 25 structures, including new classrooms, libraries, bathrooms, computer labs, replaced roofs and completely renovated two public elementary schools: Puerto Cabarete and Colonia Nueva. In addition to this support through better infrastructure, DREAM continues to support the public schools through the Teacher Training Program, Summer Schools and Camps, Young Stars and full access to DREAM sports facilities, computer labs and libraries. With our renewed agreement with the Minister of Education, DREAM is recognized as a leader in social responsibility in the Dominican Republic.



## PARENTAL & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

When a parent is actively involved in their child's education, that student has a significant advantage over those without guidance from home. Parental involvement is designed to strengthen and support the families and communities in which DREAM works. Parent and family member education is a key component of all of DREAM's programs. They participate through volunteering in our Montessori schools, after-school programs and Summer Schools and Camps. DREAM also provides, monthly training in literacy, child development and health workshops to support their children's education at home.



## SUCCESS STORIES

As DREAM continues to reach more children, more at-risk youth and more communities in need, our success stories continue to grow as well. One such story is that of Flavia Vidal and the community of Islabón. Flavia's school, CADIN, is a private Pre-K-12 institution that has taken 10 years of DREAM support and turned it into a self-sufficient provider of quality education for over 450 children. DREAM has constructed the majority of the infrastructure, two buildings, in addition to the new high school building and adjoining computer lab at CADIN. In collaboration with a group of visionary donors, DREAM directly funnels support to this sustainable model and is proud to partner with CADIN and the local community.





# 2010-2011 Donor Directory

The following have donated between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011

A profound thanks to all of our DREAM-ers and contributors. You make this dream a reality!

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 The Butterfly Effect  
 Cabarete Beach Houses  
 Carib Wind Center  
 City Market  
 Coastal  
 Coral Bay Real Estate  
 Gran Cabana Hotel and Spa  
 Guido Perdomo Law Offices  
 Home Key Management  
 Hotel Villa Taina  
 Johann Design  
 Juan Perdomo Century 21  
 Kiteboarding for Kids (KB4K)  
 L'Agence  
 Menzies Aviation  
 Natura Cabanas  
 Neurauter and Associates  
 Ocean World  
 Sandro's Restaurant  
 San Souci Resorts  
 Tours, Trips, Treks and Travel  
 Vela Windsurfing

## STUDENT GROUP PARTNERS

Centennial College  
 Fenway High School  
 International Student Volunteers (ISV)  
 Millwoods Christian School  
 Teacher's College (Columbia University)  
 SIPA (Columbia University)

# Financial Statement

Year Ended June 30, 2010 with Comparative Totals for 2009

	Program Services	Supporting Services		2010	2009*
		Management and General	Fundraising	Total Expenses	Total Expenses
Montessori Preschool Programs	\$141,202	-	-	\$141,202	186,024
Public Libraries	20,463	-	-	20,463	42,312
Community Programs	40,782	-	-	40,782	38,881
Computer Literacy	31,434	-	-	31,434	25,555
Summer Camps	235,256	-	-	235,256	378,581
Teacher Training	22,676	-	-	22,676	-
Year-long Youth Programs (Young Stars)	157,380	-	-	157,380	122,664
Public School Support	4,834	-	-	4,834	7,092
Fund Development	14,658	-	34,201	48,859	96,393
US Office Expenses	21,476	35,794	14,318	71,588	84,619
DR Office Expenses	7,684	12,808	5,123	25,616	41,092
Shared Admin Costs	50,968	10,922	10,922	72,811	151,404
Depreciation	19,521	5,577	2,789	27,887	19,677
<b>Total Expenses, 2010</b>	<b>\$762,752</b>	<b>\$70,678</b>	<b>\$60,352</b>	<b>\$900,788</b>	
<b>Total Expenses, 2009</b>	<b>\$953,045</b>	<b>\$135,592</b>	<b>\$105,657</b>		<b>\$1,194,294</b>

In Kind and Pro Bono Work: \$358,109      \$504,817  
 Amount dispersed through the above programs. Non-cash expense equal to the pro bono value of the contributions.

**Note:** Between FY 08-09 and FY 09-10, DREAM changed its chart of accounts and so certain amounts have been reclassified for comparative purposes. E-mail info@dominicandream.org to view further details, or receive the independent auditors' report, which uses a different organizational structure.

**During the 2009-2010 period, due to a focus on cost efficiency and educational expertise, DREAM was able to offer more quality programs to an increased number of children, while reducing costs by more than 40% per child.**

