

Call to Action!

Important Information About The Future of Early Childhood Development Funding in Michigan

In her Fiscal Year 2009 Executive Budget, Governor Granholm has proposed a \$31.5 million increased investment in early childhood development, education and care. This investment would have a profound impact on Michigan's young children, their families and the future well-being of our state.

As you head out to talk with legislators about the importance of investing in early childhood development, keep the information contained in this document in mind.

What We're Asking from You

Legislators need to hear from you about the importance of early childhood development, education and care. Share with them your personal stories and tell them why you support early childhood development.

Background on the Budget

The budget proposal is aimed at increasing early childhood development in Michigan in three important areas:

1. Expanding *Great Start* Statewide. With a reasonable investment of \$5 million, the number of local *Great Start* Collaboratives will increase from 32 to 57 and establish a comprehensive and statewide early childhood system in Michigan for all 650,000 children under the age of five.
2. Funding Important Innovation Grants. The budget also includes \$2.5 million for innovation grants to help develop evidence-based practices that provide children from zero to five with quality early learning environments that promote school readiness.
3. Sending At-Risk Kids to Pre-School. The bulk of the increase, \$24 million, will provide 7,000 more children with access to pre-school as part of the "Great Start Readiness Program."

Talking Points

- Every year children arrive at the schoolhouse door unprepared to learn. The resulting cost to Michigan taxpayers is in the tens of millions of dollars, if not more, every year. We can't afford not to invest in early childhood education.
- We need to invest in early childhood development because our economic future is dependent upon a highly skilled, well-educated and diverse workforce. We need to be certain our children are prepared early in life to succeed in school and on the job.

- 80% of brain development occurs in the first four years of a child's life. During this time normally developing children learn to communicate, develop sophisticated movements, and learn how to get along with their peers. Investing in early childhood development helps ensure that all of Michigan's children are in a safe environment where they can reach their full potential.
- Dollars that are invested in early childhood development today pay off exponentially down the road tomorrow. Every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood development brings up to a \$17 return on that investment.
- Studies (like the Perry Pre-School Project) have shown that investing in early childhood development prepares children to learn in school on day one, leading to higher graduation rates; reduces dollars spent on remedial education; and helps to deter our children from turning to a life of crime later on in life.

Early Childhood Development Enjoys Broad Support

Across the country more and more business leaders, bankers, economists and scientists are coming to the same conclusion – creating the workforce of the 21st century begins in the earliest years of life, and those early investments provide the highest return for individuals, families and communities.

Some prominent early childhood education advocates include:

- Ben Bernanke, Federal Reserve Board Chairman
- Robert G. Lynch, Economist, Washington College
- Art Rolnick, Sr. VP and Director of Research, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
- Michael Chesser, CEO Great Plains Energy
- Robert Dugger, Managing Director of Tudor Investment Corporation

"Early childhood education benefits taxpayers through reduced need for welfare assistance, increased income tax revenue, less burden on the criminal justice system and fewer children needing remedial education services. Children who are school ready by the age of five are more likely to be productive in the workplace, a key to growth for the economy going forward."

~ Art Rolnick, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis