

Early Childhood Development in Michigan

Why Is Investing in Early Childhood Development So Important?

Michigan's economic future is dependent upon a highly skilled, well-educated and diverse workforce. How do we meet this demand? The answer is with a commitment to early childhood development.

More and more business leaders, bankers, economists and scientists from across the country 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. A growing body of research and evidence shows they are right.

How Is Michigan Performing?

Michigan ranks 27th among the 50 states in terms of the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of our children.

What's Being Done to Prepare Our Children for the Future?

Michigan's *Great Start* initiative was formed out of the need to assure that all children enter kindergarten eager and ready for school success. Progress has been made in these areas since the initiative's announcement in 2003.

The Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) and local *Great Start* Collaboratives have leveraged \$11.8 million of private and local funds and resources to help advance the goal to support early childhood development, care and education in Michigan.

Each of the 32 *Great Start* Collaboratives across Michigan oversees the planning, implementation and ongoing improvement of the infrastructure of the local, comprehensive early childhood system.

What More Can Be Done?

The Fiscal Year 2009 Executive Budget proposes a \$31.5 million increased investment in early childhood development, education and care. While the amount of funding will increase, it can be done without new revenue. These dollars would fund three critical efforts in Michigan: build out the *Great Start* system across the entire state; award innovative grants to help develop evidence-based practices that promote school readiness; and provide 7,000 at-risk children with access to pre-school opportunities.