

## P3 Policy Priorities &amp; Action Team Toolkit: Infant-Toddler Child Care

Can Michigan really help 41,750 more families with infants and toddlers get the early childhood services they need? With your voice, we can!

Thank you for taking action!

As an early childhood expert and a member of the Pritzker-funded Michigan Prenatal-to-Three Collaborative, you know that the first three years of a child's life are critical — a formative period that can lay the groundwork for the best possible outcomes throughout a child's life.

Across Michigan, tens of thousands of families with infants and toddlers are not able to access the high-quality programs, services and opportunities they need to raise healthy and thriving children. You can make a difference.

This **P3 Policy Priorities & Action Team Toolkit** will facilitate conversations on five infant-toddler policy priority areas. Together, we'll gather input, insight and ideas from as many parents, caregivers, providers, teachers, health care professionals, administrators, community leaders, advocates and agency directors as possible.

If you have questions or additional needs during this important and powerful process, please contact us: [ta@ecic4kids.org](mailto:ta@ecic4kids.org) | 855.790.4900. Additional resources and information can be found at [ecic4kids.org/p3action](http://ecic4kids.org/p3action).

Thank you for helping craft Michigan's Prenatal-to-Three policy agenda. Let's make Michigan the top state to have a baby and raise a child!

## Taking action is as easy as 1, 2, 3 ...

**Step 1:** Host a discussion using the sample agendas and discussion questions in this toolkit, either in existing meetings or at a new gathering.

**Step 2:** Take notes on your group's ideas and submit them online at [ecic4kids.org/p3action](http://ecic4kids.org/p3action).

**Step 3:** Save the date for Jan. 23, 2020, when we release the final policy report. See how your voice made a difference and learn about steps you can take in 2020 to help Michigan achieve our collective goals.

## Suggested Agendas

**If you have 30 minutes:**

- Review **Michigan by the Numbers** data.
- Facilitate three to five **Discussion Questions** with parents and/or providers.
- Take notes and report at [www.ecic4kids.org/p3action](http://www.ecic4kids.org/p3action).

**If you have 60 minutes:**

- Review **Michigan by the Numbers** data.
- Facilitate three to five **Discussion Questions** with parents and/or providers.
- Select three to five **Potential Policy Solutions** for reflection.
- Take notes and report at [www.ecic4kids.org/p3action](http://www.ecic4kids.org/p3action).

**If you have 90 minutes:**

- Review **Michigan by the Numbers** data.
- Facilitate five to eight **Discussion Questions** with parents and/or providers.
- Facilitate reflection on all **Potential Policy Solutions**.
- Take notes and report at [www.ecic4kids.org/p3action](http://www.ecic4kids.org/p3action).

## Michigan by the Numbers: Infant-Toddler Child Care

In Michigan, there are currently

# 167,000 infants and toddlers

in families who live at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

## 17,000

infants and toddlers in qualifying families currently in high-quality child care settings.

## 100,200

total infants and toddlers in families that currently qualify and potentially need high-quality child care.

(Source: Estimate from licensed capacity, 2017 CDC and LARA, State of Michigan, and Head Start)

### THE GAP

# 83,200

infants and toddlers in families potentially not currently receiving high-quality child care.

### What Challenges do Parents Face Finding High Quality Infant Toddler Care?

Research shows that 83 percent of parents with children younger than age 6 stated that finding quality affordable child care is a problem in their area. This percentage is even greater for the parents of infants and toddlers. Providing high-quality child care is expensive — especially for infants and toddlers — making it difficult for the child care market to respond to the needs of parents who cannot afford high prices. Safe and age-appropriate care for the youngest children requires low staff ratios and small group sizes, which are costly to deliver. The average cost of providing infant care in the United States is estimated at nearly \$15,000 per year.<sup>1</sup>

In Michigan, more than 4 of every 10 people live in “child care deserts,” defined as any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no licensed child care providers or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots. There are also wide differences in the availability of child care for families needing evening or weekend care, or child care for infants and toddlers. Ten Michigan counties do not have any licensed slots at child care centers that serve children younger than 30 months.<sup>2</sup>

Parents and community leaders have raised concerns that child care is increasingly hard to find in their communities, including a reduction in the number of home-based child care providers and license-exempt providers many of whom have traditionally cared for infants and toddlers. When parents are looking for child care, they want and need high quality options that are convenient, open when they need it and within their budget. However, infant and toddler care throughout Michigan is in high demand and challenging for parents to find, due to a lack of high-quality options, leaving parents desperate for care options that work for their family.

What does the shortage of infant toddler child care mean for families in Michigan?

(Sources: <sup>1</sup><https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/10/31/460128/understanding-infant-toddler-child-care-deserts/>

<sup>2</sup><https://mipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/bb-2020-baby-steps.pdf>

The following questions are intended to be asked directly of parents and providers.

**Submit your input at [www.ecic4kids.org/p3action](http://www.ecic4kids.org/p3action).**

### Questions for Parents:

1. If you're working full or part time or are in school, who cares for your children while you're away?
  - a. How do you pay for care?
2. Have you ever been placed on a waiting list for a child care program or Early Head Start?
  - a. What was your experience?
3. Have you tried to find infant-toddler child care?
  - a. If so, what was your experience?
4. When choosing child care, what are the top factors that influence your choice?
5. What barriers, if any, made it difficult for you to find child care for your infant or toddler?
6. If you have used child care services, did you feel that the service providers who worked with you were knowledgeable and respectful of your family culture?
7. What would help you find child care more easily?
8. From your perspective, what's working well in your community regarding child care?

### Questions for Providers:

1. What's working well for you when it comes to providing high-quality child care?
2. What are your challenges with providing high-quality child care?
3. What would be helpful to you in your efforts to provide higher quality care?
4. Has your community or care program developed solutions, such as doing things to work around the system, funding to help families who need high-quality child care?
  - a. What are those?
5. What are your program's facility needs?
6. Are you experiencing any challenges related to being in the child care workforce?
7. Do you think child care teachers are paid fairly?
8. Do you feel child care providers change jobs frequently?
  - a. If so, what do you think would help child care providers stay at the same job for a longer time?

The following questions are intended to spark a discussion with your groups.

These **Potential Policy Solutions** are the result of Michigan's Prenatal-to-Three Collaborative working sessions and need your expert experiences to make them as actionable and realistic as possible.

### **Things to think about and record:**

- What are your reactions to these **Potential Policy Solutions**?
- How do each of these solutions make you feel?
- Would these address your challenges?
- If you had to prioritize the solutions, what order would you place them in?
- What holes would you poke in these potential solutions?
- What aren't we asking or thinking about?

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#### **Solution One**

Expand the number of high-quality child care slots by providing incentives to providers offering infant-toddler care.

#### **Solution Two**

Increase the number of high-quality licensed and license-exempt child care options by providing additional supports and resources to providers to increase quality.

#### **Solution Three**

Collect and report self-identified child care enrollment by age, location and race/ethnicity to support data-informed decisions about investments in child care.

#### **Solution Four**

Increase earnings for the infant-toddler early childhood workforce.

#### **Solution Five**

Examine geographic and racial/ethnic disparities and cultural concerns that may deter or prevent families from enrolling in high-quality child care.

#### **Solution Six**

Tell us your ideas! What policy solutions would you suggest?

**Facilitators: Interested in more policy ideas and information?**

Visit <https://www.ecic4kids.org/toolkits/>.

Contact Us: [ta@ecic4kids.org](mailto:ta@ecic4kids.org) | 855.790.4900

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