

2023 Early Childhood Capitol Day

Legislative Talking Points for FY24

Main Message: The early childhood system must be funded at the true cost of care, while adequately addressing workforce shortages and compensation.

1. Create an Early Childhood fund with a dedicated revenue source to fully fund the system at the true cost of care while adequately compensating early childhood professionals and supporting the local community infrastructure to ensure families' access to services.

- **The Governor's budget proposes:**
 - An increase of \$7.5 million for the Great Start Collaboratives plus \$2 million for home visiting programs through increases to the Great Start Early Childhood Block Grants.
- **Parents' Story:**
 - Share how low investment in early childhood programs have impacted your family. Can you think of how this impacts the availability of services for your family, and the impact that it had on your family? What challenges have you experienced when trying to access early childhood services?
- **Professionals' Story:**
 - Share how persistent underinvestment in the early childhood system has impacted your ability to remain in the field of early childhood. How has inequitable funding at the local level affected the number of families you are able to serve?
- **Informational Resources:**
 - [Michigan PN-3 Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis](#) (March 2023).
 - [Child Care Financing Reform](#) (March 2021).
- **Ask:** We support the Governor's budget recommendations to expand funding for the Great Start Collaboratives. Additionally, the creation of an Early Childhood Fund with a dedicated revenue source would provide a mechanism for sustainable funding across the system in alignment with the true cost of care.

2. Establish cross-sector wage scales in alignment with compensation research and create an early childhood career lattice to improve professional development and pathways.

- **The Governor's budget proposes:**
 - \$50 million to assess the needs of the early childhood workforce, update and promote career pathways, pilot training and credentialing programs, and to increase recruitment efforts.
 - \$24 million to create a refundable Child Care Educators Income Tax Credit up to \$1,000-\$3,000 to incentivize and increase the number of early childhood educators.
- **Parents' Story:**
 - Share how early childhood workforce shortages have impacted your family. Did a trusted home visitor for your family leave the field due to low wages and sustaining their own family? Have you sought out early childhood services in your community only to find out that they are not accepting new families?
- **Professionals' Story:**
 - Share how workforce shortages and low wages have impacted your desire and financial ability to remain in the field of early childhood. How has the workforce crisis impacted you and your work? Have you had difficulty retaining and recruiting staff? How many

professionals do you know who live in poverty or utilize public assistance for their own family due to low wages and/or poor benefits?

- **Fact Sheet:** [TBMI: Early Childhood Workforce Fact Sheet](#) (March 2023).
- **Infographic:** [Michigan Wage Profile](#) (October 2021).
- **Informational Resources:**
 - [Child Care Stabilization Grants Expanded the Early Care Workforce](#) (November 2022).
 - [TBMI Cross-Sector Workforce Workgroup Report](#) (March 2023).
- **Ask:** We support the Governor’s budget recommendations to create a Child Care Educators Income Tax Credit. Advocates would support expanding the proposal by tripling the credit amount and ensuring that it is disbursed on a monthly basis rather than annually when filing a tax return.

3. Sustain and expand investments toward affordable and accessible child care and expand funding for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation.

- **The Governor’s budget proposes:**
 - \$73.5 million for child care (federal funds) to maintain expansions set to expire, including:
 - Maintaining the income eligibility for the subsidy program at 200% of the federal poverty level (\$55,500 for a family of four);
 - Continuing to pay child care providers based on enrollment rather than attendance; and,
 - \$3 million continued funding for the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program.
- **Parents’ Story:**
 - Share how increased eligibility for the Child Care Subsidy program has enabled you to access child care and what that means for your family. Have you heard from other families who benefitted from this increase? How has support for your infant or toddler’s mental health helped them in child care or another early childhood setting?
- **Professionals’ Story:**
 - Share how increased child care subsidy reimbursement rates have impacted your child care practice and ability to support families in your community. Why does prospective reimbursement and payment based on child enrollment rather than attendance impact your ability to support families using child care subsidies. How does funding impact the quality of care you or your facility are able to provide? How has access to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health consultants helped you keep young children in your program?
- **Fact Sheet:** [TBMI: Child Care Subsidy Fact Sheet](#) (March 2023).
- **Infographic:** [Child Care Keeps Michigan Working](#) (August 2018).
- **Ask:** We support the Governor’s budget recommendations. Advocates would support additional funding for the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program to allow services to expand statewide. Additionally, under the proposed expansion of 4-year-old preschool, advocates want to ensure that there is no negative impact on the private child care market providing early care and education to children 0-5 and after school programming to children up to age 12.

4. Provide inflationary increases and improve access to home visiting programs, while also ensuring all available dollars are invested and provide system supports.

- **The Governor’s Budget proposes:**
 - \$2 million increase for home visiting programs through increases to the Great Start Early Childhood Block Grants. Otherwise, continued flat funding for other home visiting programs.
- **Parents’ Story:**

- Share how participation in home visiting programs has impacted your family. Were you able to locate and access available home visiting services when you needed them?
- **Professionals' Story:**
 - Share the benefits of fully funded home visiting in your community. Are you able to serve all families in need of services? What challenges are you facing with service delivery? Have you been able to access desired professional development within home visiting? How have home visitor staffing shortages impacted you?
- **Fact Sheet:** [TBMI: Home Visiting Fact Sheet](#) (March 2023).
- **Ask:** We support the Governor's budget recommendation and would also encourage support for inflationary increases in all parts of the K-12 and DHHS budgets that support home visiting with those increases focused on workforce wages and retention.

5. Extend continuous eligibility for Medicaid up to age 6, remove the 5-year waiting period for pregnant people and children who are immigrants, and support Medicaid reimbursement for the full continuum of perinatal care.

- **The Governor's Budget includes:**
 - \$68.3 million to expand Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies, which includes expanded access to Medicaid maternal and family planning services by waiving the five-year waiting period for pregnant people and children who are immigrants to access Medicaid.
- **Parents' Story:**
 - Share how access to health care and health insurance through Medicaid or MICHild has impacted your family. What would multi-year continuous eligibility for your child up to age 6 mean for your family? If you or someone you know is a newly arrived immigrant, how would the removal of the 5-year waiting period have positively impacted you/them? Was your preferred perinatal or prenatal care limited due to Medicaid restrictions? How would these proposed changes have helped you and your family?
- **Professionals' Story:**
 - Share how Medicaid restrictions have impacted the families you have worked with. Have you had families utilizing Medicaid seek your services? Were they able to financially access support?
- **Fact Sheets:**
 - [Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies](#) (March 2023).
 - [Continuous Medicaid Eligibility](#) (March 2023).
- **Ask:** We support the Governor's budget recommendations to expand access to maternal and infant systems and care including group prenatal and incentives to make hospitals safer, as well as waiving the 5-year waiting period for pregnant people and children who are immigrants to access Medicaid coverage. Advocates also support continuous eligibility up to age 6 for children participating in Medicaid.

6. Support *Early On* to ensure early identification and intervention to enhance child development.

- **The Governor's budget includes:**
- \$1 million increase for *Early On*, bringing the total to \$22.3 million.
- **Parents' Story:**
 - Share about the impact that *Early On* has had on your family. How has it supported you and your child(ren)?
- **Professionals' Story:**

- Share how the state's increased investment made a positive impact. How did the increased funding help support you as a professional?
- **Fact Sheet:** [TBMI: *Early On* Fact Sheet](#) (March 2023).
- **Ask:** We support the Governor's budget recommendations to continue to increase state funding for *Early On*. However, to fund at levels closer to the true cost of care and to serve all families \$21 million is needed (total \$42 million).

Additional Resources:

- [Kids Count Data Book](#) (2022)
- [Child Care Financing Reform: A Critical Next Step](#) (March 2021)
- [State of Babies Yearbook 2022: Michigan](#)
- [Early Childhood Workforce Index 2020: Michigan](#)
- [Home Visiting Legislative Report](#) (Fiscal Year 2021)

Advocacy: Key Legislative Committees

Early childhood educators understand the importance of building strong, consistent and supportive relationships in their work with children and families. When it comes to being an advocate, building those relationships with policymakers is equally as important.

Where should you begin? Start with the officials you elect - you are their constituents, and they value hearing from the people who live in their districts and vote them into or out of office. But who else is responsible for advancing early childhood education at the state level? Where do the decisions about policy, financing and oversight get made? Much of this work happens in committees.

What is a Committee?

A committee, in the context of the Michigan Senate or the House of Representatives, is a subgroup of elected officials who take on specific tasks for a certain area of policy or governance. They, along with their sub-committees, consider bills, programs and activities within their specified area or jurisdiction. Leadership, members, and staff of the following committees should be considered priority members related to all early childhood advocacy efforts:

Key Senate Committees:

[Appropriations Committee](#)

Regularly scheduled meeting is Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. in the Harry T. Gast Appropriations Room on the 3rd Floor of the Capital Building in Lansing.

Sarah Anthony (D), Committee Chair, 21st District

Scott Jones, Committee Clerk | 517-373-5307

[Education Committee](#)

Regularly scheduled meeting is Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. in room 1100 of the Binsfield Office Building in Lansing

Dayna Polehanki (D) Committee Chair, 5th District

Mike Sitkauskas, Committee Clerk | 517-373-5314

[Health Policy Committee](#)

Regularly scheduled meeting is Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. in room 1100 of the Binsfield Office Building in Lansing

Kevin Hertel (D) Committee Chair, 12th District

Heather Dorbeck, Committee Clerk | 517-373-5323

[Housing and Human Services Committee](#)

Regularly scheduled meeting is Tuesdays at 12:00 p.m. in the Senate Hearing Room on the Ground Floor of Boji Tower.

Jeff Irwin (D) Committee Chair, 15th District

Heather Dorbeck, Committee Clerk | 517-373-5323

Appropriations Subcommittees

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

Senators Santana (C), McDonald Rivet (VC), Irwin, Cavanagh, Cherry, Camilleri, Bayer, Outman (MVC), Theis, Huizenga, Hauck

Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)/Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS)

Senators Cavanagh (C), Santana (VC), Theis (MVC)

Michigan Department of Education (MDE)

Senators Bayer (C), Klinefelt (VC), Singh, Albert (MVC)

PreK-12

Senators Camilleri (C), Polehanki (VC), Hertel, Klinefelt, Cavanagh, Theis (MVC), Albert

Key House Committees:

Appropriations Committee

Regularly scheduled meeting is Wednesdays at 9 a.m. in the Harry T. Gast Appropriations Room on the 3rd Floor of the Capital Building in Lansing.

Angela Witwer (D) Committee Chair, 76th District

Dakota Soda, Committee Clerk | 517-373-0350

Education Committee

Regularly scheduled meeting is Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. in room 521 of the House Office Building in Lansing.

Matt Koleszar (D) Committee Chair, 22nd District

Legan Rose, Committee Clerk | 517-373-2115

Families, Children, and Seniors

Regularly scheduled meeting is Tuesdays at 12:00 p.m. in room 326 of the House Office Building in Lansing.

Stephanie Young (D) Committee Chair, 16th District

Elaine Kupiec, Committee Clerk | 517-373-1260

Health Policy

Regularly scheduled meeting is Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. in room 519 of the House Office Building in Lansing.

Julie Rogers (D) Committee Chair, 41st District

Melissa Sweet, Committee Clerk | 517-373-5176

Appropriations Subcommittees

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

Senators Morse (C), Martus (VC), Green (MVC), Hood, Brabec, O’Neal, Puri, Farhat, Price, Skaggs, Snyder, Bollin, Meerman, Kuhn, Steele

Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)/Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS)

Senators Skaggs (C), Brixie (VC), Schuette (MVC), Morse, Martus, McKinney, Borton, DeBoer

School Aid and Education

Senators Weiss (C), Morgan (VC), DeBoer (MVC), Koleszar, Steckloff, Price, Skaggs, Wilson, Green, Meerman, Cavitt