

Great Start Collaboratives and Family Coalitions

Building Strong, Local Early Childhood Systems across Michigan

Great Start Collaboratives (GSCs) work to ensure that families with young children receive the services they need where they are – through local home visiting, parent education, playgroups, connections to community resources, and supports that strengthen families from pregnancy through early childhood. With 54 local Collaboratives across Michigan, they work in communities by serving as the local early childhood system-building body to advance four shared outcomes:

1. Children are born healthy
2. Children are healthy, thriving, and developmentally on track from birth to third grade
3. Children are developmentally ready to succeed in school at the time of school entry
4. Children are prepared to succeed in fourth grade and beyond by reading proficiently by the end of third grade

Great Start Collaboratives bring together parents and caregivers, early childhood providers, school district leaders, health providers, faith leaders, local business leaders, and others invested in the early childhood system. They explore the supports and/or barriers families with young children face so that all children in their community can thrive. To ensure GSCs are informed and responsive to the needs of families, Great Start Family Coalitions (GSFCs) work alongside GSCs to ensure parent and family perspectives and voice are integrated into local system planning and decision-making. This partnership ensures that families aren't just served by the system but help lead and shape it.

For nearly two decades, Michigan has recognized the importance and value of local decision-making to support early childhood systems through the Collaboratives. Dedicated state funding for local GSCs and GSFCs empowers them to leverage community data and family voice to develop and implement a strategic plan that addresses local priorities. Together, GSCs and GSFCs design and coordinate early childhood programs that respond to each community's unique circumstances. They also identify and reduce duplicative efforts, leverage private and philanthropic investments in locally designed solutions, and ensure resources are efficiently distributed based on family needs. Ultimately, state funding for GSCs and GSFCs helps close gaps in kindergarten readiness, increases efficiencies, and supports families' health and well-being across the entire state.

[Find your local Great Start Collaborative and Family Coalition.](#)

Great Start Collaboratives are supported by Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP) and funded by section 32p in the School Aid Act.