



MICHIGAN'S *EARLY ON* COALITION FY2027 Executive Budget Request

What is *Early On*: *Early On* Michigan provides early intervention services to all eligible families with infants and toddlers who have a developmental delay or a medical condition that may result in a delay. *Early On* professionals partner with families and caregivers to teach them skills to support their child's unique developmental needs. While Michigan serves 4.4 percent of children ages birth to three through *Early On*, federal data indicates that 15 percent of all children have a developmental delay or disability that would make them eligible.

The Funding Gap: Increased investment in *Early On* would help Michigan continue to move the needle towards a more adequately funded early intervention system. In 2024, a cost study commissioned by the Michigan Department of Education found that *Early On* is currently funded at a fraction of the cost to implement a high-quality early intervention system. Across the United States, the average per child state investment for Early Intervention services is \$7,289; yet Michigan currently allocates only \$879 per child under section 54d in the School Aid budget. While *Early On* has seen small state budget increases in recent years – though no increase was included in FY26 – these increases have been insufficient to address even inflationary and cost of living increases, let alone the significant underfunding of the *Early On* system. As a result, funding increases have not provided adequate additional services or staffing capacity, despite significant increases in program referrals, evaluations, and service caseloads since the pandemic.

The FY2027 Ask: The *Early On* Coalition appreciates Governor Whitmer's FY2026 budget proposal to increase *Early On* investments by \$4.7 million. **In alignment with her proposal, the *Early On* Coalition is seeking a \$5 million increase to Section 54d in the School Aid budget for Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) to enhance and bolster underfunded *Early On* services they are required to provide to families with eligible infants and toddlers.**

A Key Piece of the Literacy Puzzle: With Michigan's focus on the need to improve early literacy comprehension, increasing supports to *Early On* is a critical component of the early childhood literacy strategy. In Michigan, 60% of children receive *Early On* services due to a communication delay. Because early language skills are foundational to literacy development, ensuring early identification of young children with communication delays and providing adequate early intervention services can support babies and toddlers for future literacy success.

A \$5 million increase for FY27 would allow *Early On* to begin addressing service capacity shortages, support more children with early literacy foundations, and ensure families with eligible babies and toddlers receive the important services they need for optimal development.

Michigan's Early On Coalition – an initiative of the Think Babies Michigan Coalition – works collectively to advance greater equity and inclusion for babies and toddlers by advocating for improved legislation and administrative policy and systems changes. Think Babies Michigan is a collaborative of over 2,600 members – leaders, experts, families, organizations, and providers – working together to improve the lives of babies prenatal to three years old and, therefore, the well-being of our state as a whole.