



## Think Babies MI (TBMI) Policy Priorities

### **Early Childhood Funding & Coordination**

- **Sustainable Funding Structure**: Create a dedicated and sustainable fund for the early childhood system, maximize existing funding sources, use the true cost of services to inform future investments and invest in coordination of services and systems to ensure equitable access to quality services statewide.
- **Local Infrastructure**: Rebuild and sustain a regional, collaborative early childhood system infrastructure aligned with other state early childhood system building strategies, and with family leadership and voice embedded as a core component.

### **Child Care**

- **Maximize Investments**: Sustain and expand the historic federal investment in child care:
  - Maintain family eligibility for child care scholarships at 200% of the federal poverty level and fund an information campaign to reach and enroll all eligible families;
  - Ensure providers are prospectively reimbursed based on the true cost of care analysis;
  - Provide funding to support the implementation of an infant-toddler contract model.
  - Automatic eligibility of early care and education providers into the Child Development and Care scholarship program for their own children to attend child care; and,
  - Increase funding to intermediaries, including Child Care Resource & Referral, Early Childhood Support Networks, and other institutions of trust for child care providers.

### **Home Visiting**

- **Equity**: Make home visiting available and accessible to all families who want to enroll with outreach efforts that share all options and honor family choice and voice.
- **Maintain & Expand**: Seek inflationary increases for current programs to retain and attract a highly qualified workforce and support expansions where there is unmet demand.
- **Maximize with Flexibility**: Ensure every available dollar for home visiting, including state and federal resources, is utilized while adequately investing in necessary system supports such as professional development across all models and programs.

### **Cross-Sector Workforce Strategies**

- **Provide Adequate Compensation**: Establish and implement cross-sector wage scales that are aligned with the compensation research done by Prenatal-to-Five Fiscal Strategies at the state-level and in Detroit.
- **Strengthen Pathways, Professional Development & Collaboration**: In collaboration and alignment with intermediate school districts (ISDs) and higher education institutions, create a cross-sector career lattice to improve professional development, pathways, and other supports, while ensuring it is designed with adequate support and resources, including the integration of the Michigan Association of Infant Mental Health's Endorsement, to move through and across.
- **Improve Public Perception**: Conduct a public awareness campaign to lift the value of the early childhood workforce and to support recruitment efforts, with a focus on high school and undergraduate students.

- Implement Implicit Bias Training: Build on the state government efforts that require implicit bias training for licensed health care workers through implementation of this requirement for the licensed early childhood workforce and provide ongoing resources, such as reflective supervision/consultation, to support changes in policy and practice.

### **Medicaid**

- Extend Continuous Eligibility: Implement multi-year continuous eligibility for children enrolled in Medicaid birth through age six and consider broadening this policy to include other public health insurance programs that Michigan residents' access.
- Responsive models of care: Support Medicaid reimbursement for the full continuum of perinatal care to address social determinants of health including perinatal mental health screening and treatment, infant and early childhood mental health care, doulas, birthing centers, group-based prenatal care, care received at birthing centers, and lactation support.

### **Maternal & Infant Mental Health**

- Provide Support through Social Emotional Consultation: Expand funding for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation for early educators, home visitors and families.

### **Early Intervention**

- Expand: Continue to expand state investment in *Early On* to fund at the true cost of delivering services and adequately invest in system supports by expanding MiLEAP's capacity to support ISDs.

### **Family Supports**

- Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML): Establish a statewide PFML policy that includes at least 12 weeks of paid leave for parents with a new baby or child in their family, or for workers to address their own serious health concerns that prevent them from working or care for a family member with a serious health condition.

### **Prevention of Child Maltreatment**

- Support: Expand and fund additional Baby Courts, a specialized treatment court designed to support infants, toddlers, young children under 3, and their families who are being served by child welfare.

### **Invest in Complete, Equitable Data Systems**

- Improved Data: Invest in state systems to provide easier, streamlined access to services that Michiganders need and to which they are entitled and to increase the capacity to collect and publish data that is disaggregated by race, ethnicity, zip code, and income to evaluate, understand and improve outcomes for kids and families.