

Great Start Priority: Early Childhood & Community Partners



High quality early learning experiences help prepare young children for a successful future.

Each year too many Michigan children enter kindergarten not ready to learn. Some have previously unidentified health problems. Some have social or emotional problems. Some have developmental or learning problems. For these children, who all too often are from low income and/or minority families, not being ready for school becomes a life-long sentence of poor academic achievement, diminished expectations and limited opportunity.

About Livingston County

- * Home to over 10,000 children under age five.
- * Current capacity for Head Start & GSRP is 387 children vs. estimated number of 1,119 eligible children. (2010-2011 school year)
- * Great Start Readiness Program funding provides comprehensive services to 168, four year olds identified as at-risk for school failure. (LESA December 2011)
- * As of December 1, 2011 there were 403 children ages 0 to 5 receiving special education services. (LESA 2011)
- * 299 children aged 0-5 are in state subsidized child-care, compared to 428 who are eligible.
- * 5.1% of children are born to mothers with less than a high school education in 2008.
- * 35% of kindergarten teachers are either not sure, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement: "The majority of children appear to have had a quality preschool or structured learning experience."
- * The cost of regulated childcare in Livingston County is higher than state averages by 10-22%, depending on the type of care.
- * High school drop out rate increased from 5.7% in 2008 to 6.2% in 2009.

Source: Kids count 2010, Livingston Early Childhood Assessment; Great Start Livingston Kindergarten. Assessment 12/2009, LESA Internal Data Management and Child Accounting Systems—MCIS & Zangle—December 2011



The purpose of Great Start is to assure a coordinated system of community resources and supports to help all Livingston County families provide a Great Start for their children

The research is clear:

- ➔ Children who start behind, stay behind.
- ➔ Children who fail to succeed in school are more likely to drop out.
- ➔ Children who dropout of school are more likely to be involved in criminal behavior.
- ➔ Children with chronic physical & mental health issues that go untreated often result in higher health care and/or special education costs.



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Since its inception in 2009, the Great Start Collaborative (GSC) has worked to strengthen the early childhood system in Livingston County. Our goal is to ensure that every child is safe, healthy, eager and ready to succeed in school and become productive, contributing citizens of Livingston County.

- The Early Childhood & Community Partners Committee recognizes that the children of today are the future neighbors, employees and leaders of our community. We are committed to increasing the number of children who enter school ready to learn.
- Members of our committee include parents, GSC members, teachers, childcare & education professionals, service organizations and other interested community members.



Focus of the Work

- Improve communication & development of shared goals between the 0-5 and K-12 communities and parents.
- Promote the fact that parents and caregivers are the child's first teacher and provide quality early learning experiences outside a formal childcare or preschool environment.
- Improve access to affordable education and networking opportunities for providers including relative aid care.
- Support community efforts to provide quality affordable childcare and preschool.

Accomplishments:

- 2011 Kindergarten Observation Survey - Data collected & analyzed representing 883 kindergarten students across 4 districts. 15 items surveyed in all areas of development. Data consistent with teachers surveys which find the areas most children lack when entering kindergarten are Social & Emotional.
- Kindergarten Readiness Summit - Held on Feb.14, 2012. Curriculum directors, elementary principals, pre-school directors and early childhood professionals in attendance. Results of K Observation Survey shared and Action Items developed to continue work on Kindergarten Readiness.
- Kindergarten Transition Form - Form completed by early childhood providers & sent to receiving districts. Information used to assist placement in classrooms & with teachers that would assure a successful kindergarten experience. Approved for use Feb. 2012 by Curriculum Directors in all five districts.
- Common Kindergarten Enrollment Form - Three questions added to the 2012-13 enrollment forms as the initial phase of adopting a 'county-wide enrollment form'. Approved by all 5 districts.
- 2012/2013 Kindergarten Observation Survey - All five county school districts have agreed to complete the survey for the next school year, which will be completed by the beginning of October. A Professional Development training will be held 8/2012 for K teachers and Early Childhood providers on administration of the survey.



Committee Co-Chairs:

Linda Herbert: Child Connect for Family Success
Jean Garrett: Lansing Community College

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