

Great Start Priority: Parents & Families



Strong families help build strong, successful children

Great Start Collaborative of Livingston County recognizes that parenting young children can be challenging and stressful at times. Our committee is passionate about partnering with parents to connect them with community resources and family supports. By achieving our goal, families of infants and young children will be economically stable and infants and young children will live in safe families.

The research is clear:

- ➔ Financial insecurity is associated with greater rates of child abuse and neglect.
- ➔ Parents who have access to essential resources such as food, clothing, housing, transportation, child care and health care are more able to ensure the health and well-being for their children.
- ➔ Parents who are emotionally resilient are better able to handle stressful situations and are less likely to direct anger and frustrations at their children.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Strengthening Families & Communities Resource Guide.



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 from birth to age five.



About Livingston County

- * Children ages 0-5 receiving food through the Food Assistance Program (Bridge Card) has increased 43% in the last two years.
- * 25.5% children received WIC in 2010.
- * 31% children ages 0-5 are covered under Medicaid as of March, 2012. This represents over 3100 children!
- * 1,202 children ages 0-4 in lived in poverty in 2009
- * The economic stress index, which encompasses unemployment, bankruptcy and foreclosure rates, more than doubled between 2007 and 2009, from 7.22 to 16.78.
- * In February 2011, Livingston County had an unemployment rate of 10.2% compared to the national rate of 9.5%.
- * Confirmed victims of abuse and/or neglect in children ages 0-5 more than doubled between 2008 and 2009.

Source: Kids Count 2010; Kids Count Data Book 2010; MI Dept. of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth, Bureau of Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives, DHS Trend Report #24

Robin Schutz, Great Start Coordinator
517-540-6829
RobinSchutz@LivingstonESA.org

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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 Parents & Families Committee recognizes that the children of today are the future neighbors, employees and leaders of our community. Members of our committee include parents, GSC members, teachers, childcare & education professionals, service organizations and other interested community members.



Focus of the Work

- Improve awareness and access to existing family support services for basic needs and well-being (through 211, community guides, websites, etc.)
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the impact on children and family when basic needs are not met.
- Partner with other agencies to ensure timely, relevant, local data collection and analysis related to basic needs services such as transportation, etc.



Accomplishments:

- New Mom's Packet-
 - New Mom's Check List - This checklist is being distributed to pregnant women through OB/GYN offices throughout Livingston County. This simple, but comprehensive document includes necessities to complete before a new mom leaves the hospital (i.e. add newborn to insurance) and after leaving.
 - Resource Magnets- Magnets with a picture frame are being distributed to new moms. These have resource phone numbers along with the Great Start website.
- 2011 Survey- The committee conducted a survey at the Community Connect on 1/29/11, along with surveys at WIC and The Family Resource Center in February. Of 78 responses, the top 2 concerns for newborn needs were 'help with diapers & baby clothes' and 'breastfeeding help'. The top 2 places people access information are through 'family & friends' and 'through the internet.'
- 2012 Survey - 47 Residents surveyed at Community Connect on 1/28/12, representing 87 children. Top 3 concerns in Livingston County regarding children: Finding low cost/free family activities, help with diapers & baby clothes, and Kindergarten Readiness.

Committee Co-Chairs :

Jaclyn Cronin: Parent Representative

Patricia Murphy: Livingston County Community Mental Health, Parent Infant Program



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