



Background on *Great Start* Initiative

Each year too many Michigan (MI) children enter kindergarten with previously unidentified health, social-emotional, 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. Thankfully, the negative impact of the majority of these health, developmental, and learning difficulties can be minimized or even eliminated with early identification and intervention.

While state programs exist to address health, social-emotional, developmental and learning concerns of young children and their parents – local availability, access, capacity and quality varies tremendously. Each state agency approaches financing, policy development, program development and accountability differently. Past efforts to coordinate state government early childhood programs and build partnerships with the private sector have been difficult to sustain and have achieved limited success. Local communities have been somewhat more successful, particularly in rural areas with limited populations and few options for services. The general public is becoming increasingly aware of the unprecedented growth and development that occurs during the first five years of life, and the importance of those years to future school success, but public will to support a tax increase, for example, to increase early childhood investment, remains untested.

Michigan has been fortunate over the past several years to have a cadre of state leaders, including the Kellogg Foundation, at the table with an unwavering determination to improve the school readiness of our youngest citizens. The current state Administration has held fast to this commitment in spite of the enormous economic challenges that Michigan has faced and continues to face today.

In 2002, Governor Granholm charged her Children's Cabinet (Directors of the Departments of Labor and Economic Development, Community Health, and Human Services, as well as the Superintendent of Public Instruction) to deliver a strategic plan for a community-based, comprehensive system of early childhood programs, services and supports.

In her 2004 State of the State address, Governor Granholm launched her *Great Start* initiative which she defined as a movement to create public understanding that learning begins at birth and that investment in early childhood health, development and learning is crucial to the state's economic future.

Early Childhood Investment Corporation

In 2005, the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) was founded to lead *Great Start*. The Governor appointed 15 influential leaders from state government, business, philanthropy and communities to serve as the Executive Committee for the ECIC. The Executive Committee has charged the ECIC to achieve seven focus areas:

- Supporting the local Great Start System infrastructure (GSCs and Parent Coalitions);
- Advancing Great Start System results;
- Increasing knowledge through early childhood research;
- Developing innovative early childhood policy;
- Advancing public education and public will;
- Increasing private and public investment; and
- Continuously incorporating evaluation findings.

Great Start Collaboratives

During 2006-07, the first 21 Great Start Collaboratives were funded. Eleven more GSCs were funded in April of 2008. Currently 55% of the young children in Michigan live in a county where a Great Start Collaborative (GSCs) is hard at work. The GSCs are composed of community leaders from health and mental health, education, child welfare, child care, philanthropy, and business, as well as parents. The mission of each GSC is to oversee the planning, implementation and ongoing improvement of the local Great Start system. Over the last year the GSCs have made tremendous strides in engaging a broad spectrum of their communities, creating a broad-based web of public support for early childhood policy change at the State level.

Each GSC also convenes a local Great Start Parent Coalition. The membership of the Great Start Parent Coalition is open to anyone serving in the parenting role for a child under the age of 12 years, who is interested in helping to assure that all children enter kindergarten safe, healthy and ready to succeed in school and in life. ECIC provides funding to support a parent or parents to serve as staff for the Parent Coalition on a part-time basis. The purpose of the Great Start Parent Coalition is to:

- Serve as a referent and constituency group for parents on the Great Start Collaborative, giving them a means to better understand the desires and needs of parents in the community;
- Assist in building public support and will for early childhood investment through advocacy and education activities at the local and state level;
- Support and engage in the work of the Great Start Collaborative;
- Strengthen the civic engagement of parents in the community, on behalf of young children;
- Educate policy-makers on the importance of investing in the first five years of life and the essential role that parents and families play in the lives of young children.

Great Start Vision

A Great Start for every child in Michigan: safe, healthy and eager to succeed in school and in life.

Great Start Mission

The purpose of *Great Start* is to assure a coordinated system of community resources and supports to assist all Michigan families in providing a great start for their children from birth through age five.

Great Start System

A single, interconnected and intertwined network, of public and private services and supports, working together in a community to accomplish better results for young children and families.

Great Start Results

- Infants, young children and their families are physically healthy.
- Infants, young children and their families are socially and emotionally healthy.
- Families support and guide the early learning of their infants and toddlers.
- Families have access to high quality early care and education.
- Children are ready to succeed in school and in life.
- Families of infants and young children are economically stable.
- Infants and young children live in safe families.

Great Start Blueprint – The Strategic Plan

ECIC is working with leaders from state government, universities, hospitals, health systems, advocacy organizations, tribes, Head Start, associations, and communities to refine and implement the *Great Start Blueprint* – Michigan’s strategic plan for the many policy and programmatic changes necessary to realize a comprehensive, community-based system of early childhood services.

Great Start System – Components

Pediatric and Family Health

Definition: Comprehensive physical health and child development services – including screening, assessment, and intervention, as well as timely and appropriate referral for specialized developmental, behavioral and social-emotional assessments and interventions.

Social and Emotional Health

Definition: Specialized screening, assessment and intervention services designed to promote the social-emotional well-being of all infants and young children, including infants and young children at-risk of developing emotional disturbances and infants and young children with diagnosed emotional disturbances.

Child Care and Early Education

Definition: Early care (child care) and education services that support the early learning, health and social-emotional well-being of infants and young children.

Parenting Leadership

Definition: Families support and guide the early learning of their infants and young children.

Family Support

Definition of Family Support: Services and supports that address the stressors impairing the ability of families to nurture the well-being, safety and overall healthy development of their infants and young children.

Organizational Infrastructure

- Collaborative Governance
- Accountability, Results and Standards
- Data and Information Systems
- Professional Development and Technical Assistance
- Parental and Community Engagement
- Communication and Public Will Building
- Policy-Maker Education
- Service System Integration
- Financing and Fund Development

Great Starts Here!

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GREAT START SYSTEM Strategic Priorities Overview, Pathway to Ready Kids 2020

Strategic Priorities	Results	Ready Kids 2020
Pediatric & Family Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Every child 0-5 has a regular medical home.¹ ○ Reduce infant mortality. ○ Improve maternal and infant mental health. 	Infants, young children and their families are physically healthy.	
Early Childhood Social & <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A state-wide early childhood mental health system of care: Promotes social and emotional health; Prevents emotional disturbance; Provides early intervention. ○ All early childhood practitioners and settings support healthy social and emotional development. 	Infants, young children and their families are socially and emotionally healthy.	
Early Care & Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Every child has access to affordable, high quality child care. ○ Every three and four year old has access to affordable, high quality preschool, beginning with those at most risk. ○ Children 0-5 with developmental delays or disabilities receive interventions they need to develop to highest potential. 	-Children are ready to succeed in school and in life. -Families have access to high quality early care and education.	
Family Support & Parenting Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Every parent utilizes parenting practices and accesses resources that assure his/her child is safe, healthy and ready for school. ○ Every parent of a child 0-5 has access to information and learning opportunities about child development. ○ The Great Start System is family centered at all levels: Child and Family; Program; Policy with inclusion of parents in leadership roles at all levels. 	Families support and guide the early learning of their infants and toddlers.	

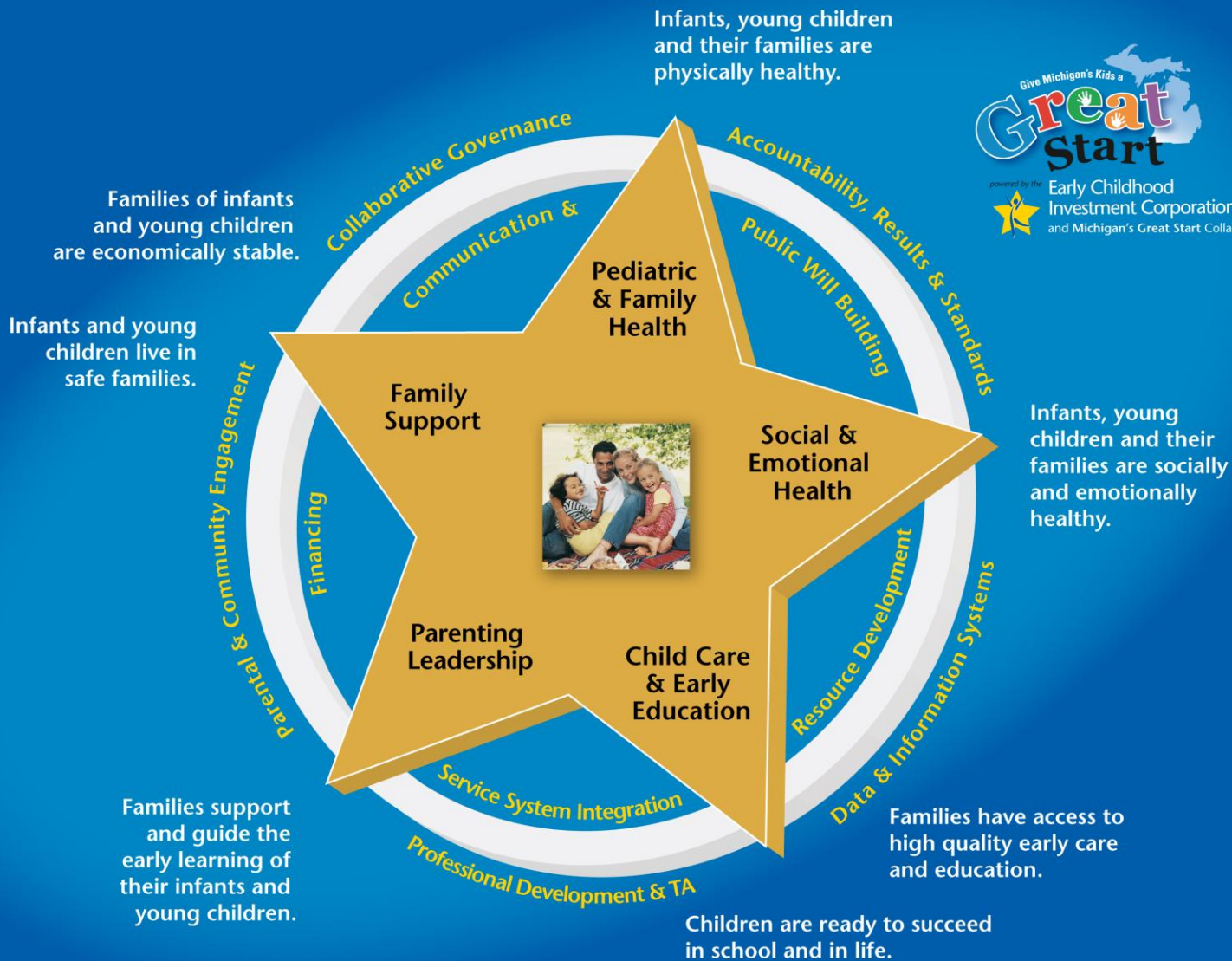
A Great Start for every child in Michigan: safe, healthy and eager to succeed in school and in life.

As of August 27, 2008

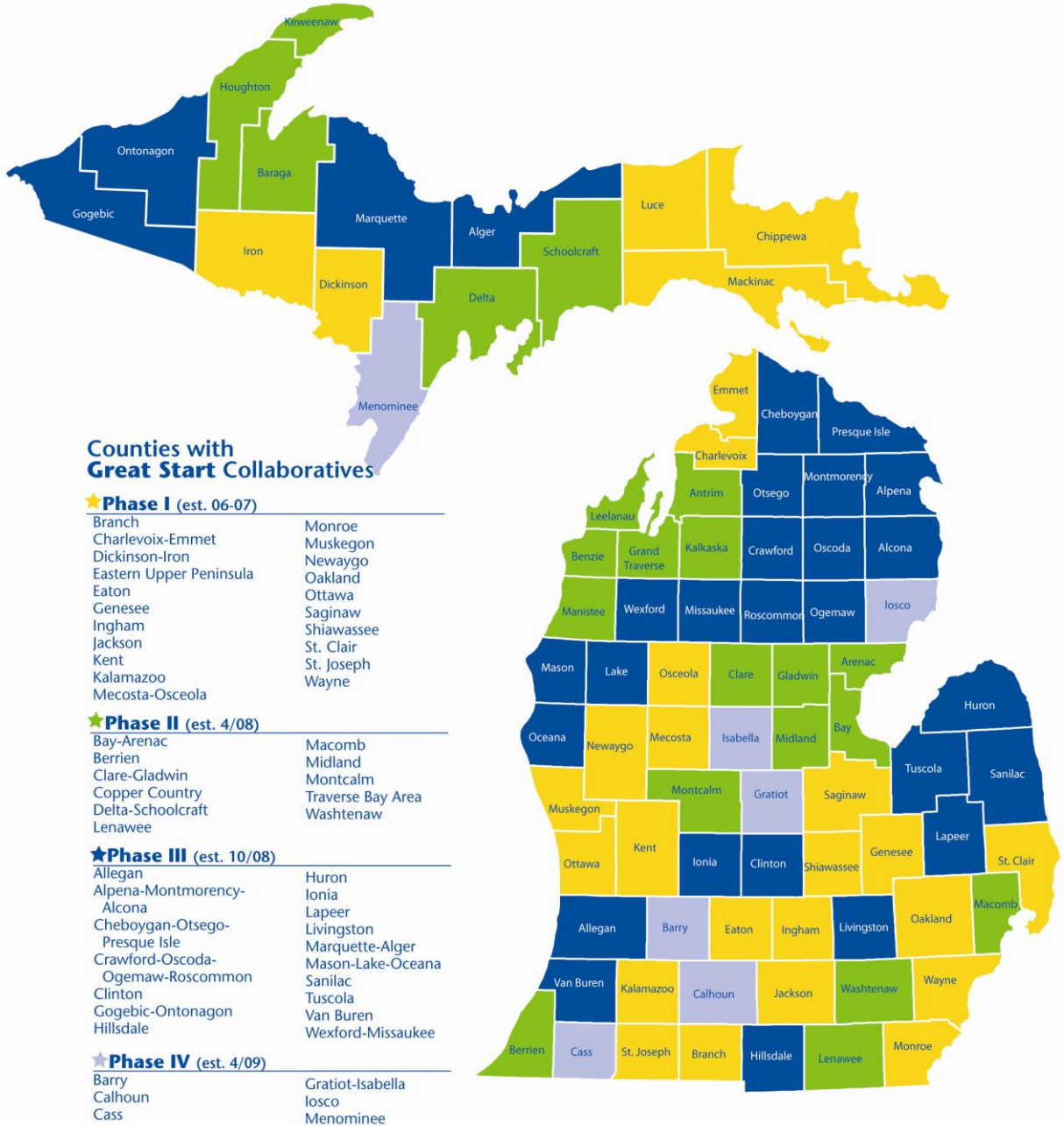
¹ Numbers in parenthesis correspond to ranking of the same/or similar policies at MI Early Childhood Challenge.

Michigan's Great Start Initiative

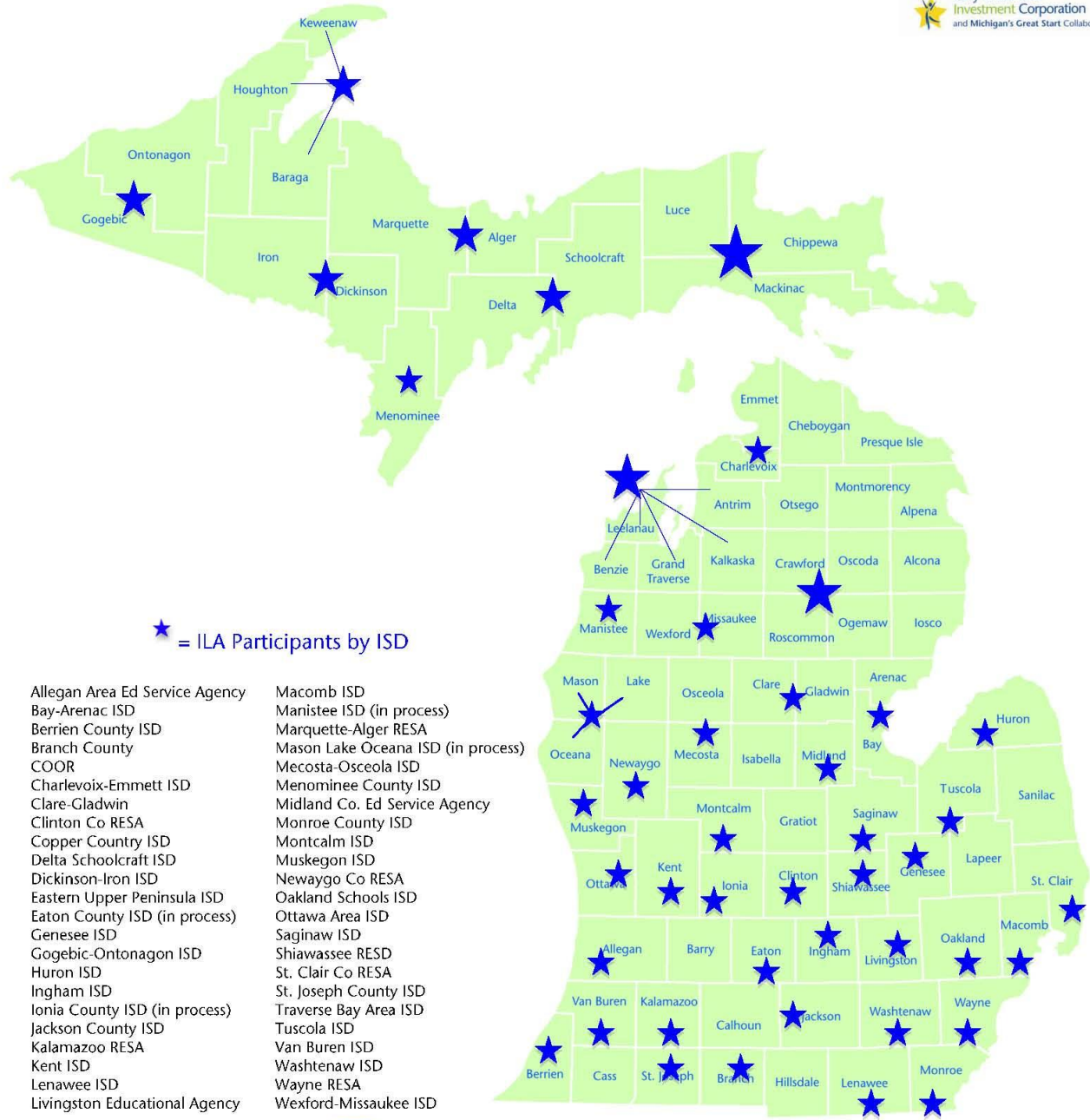
Vision: A Great Start to make every child in Michigan safe, healthy, and eager to succeed in school and in life.



Great Start Network



ILA Participants



May 13, 2009