

THE SECOND YEAR  
Michigan Ready to Succeed  
Dialogue with Michigan

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*Preliminary Report to the Legislature*  
October 2000

PREPARED FOR  
House and Senate Appropriations Committees  
Michigan Legislature

PREPARED ON BEHALF OF  
Michigan Child Care Task Force

PREPARED BY  
Public Sector Consultants, Inc.



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This report is preliminary because the community forums have not yet all been held. The remaining forums will take place in November, and their summaries will be added to the final report.



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## Introduction

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Section 641 of Michigan Public Act 135 of 1999 (the Family Independence Agency budget bill) provided \$100,000 to leverage and match additional funds for the purpose of following up on the “Ready to Learn” leadership summits held in 1999 (during year one of the project) to explore the development of a child-care and early-education system that meets the needs of every child prior to kindergarten. The legislation requires that a report on the business conducted and the recommendations made during the Ready to Learn Dialogue to be submitted to the House and Senate appropriations committees in fall 2000. The text of section 641 of P.A. 135 may be found in Appendix A of this report, and this document is the preliminary report. The final report will be submitted after the remaining community forums (see Part 4 of this report) have been held.

One outcome from the second 1999 leadership summit was to change the focus of the Dialogue project from “Ready to Learn” to “Ready to Succeed” (RTS). The Michigan leaders participating in that summit recommended the change to reflect their belief that children are *born* ready to learn, but they need to reach school ready to *succeed*.

The overall outcome of the work to date of the Ready to Succeed Dialogue is that Michigan has a growing commitment to a vision of universal and high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC), as evidenced by

- an increasing number of Michigan leaders, from many sectors, who have established early childhood education and care as a priority;
- the growing number of Michigan communities that are mobilizing to define local issues and strategies and to make early childhood a community-wide priority; and
- the enactment of new legislation that supports local efforts toward achieving universal and high-quality early education and care.

This report describes the Dialogue project’s specific accomplishments in

- examining how Michigan can develop a system that assures that every child in Michigan has a good opportunity to enter kindergarten ready to succeed;
- conducting a third summit, held on September 21–22, 2000 (see Appendix B), reconvening the leaders who attended the Ready to Learn leadership summits in year one (FY 1998–99);
- holding community forums across the state to address and stimulate community concern and activity on behalf of early childhood education and care;
- consulting with leaders in business, education, faith, health, labor, media, politics, philanthropy, and other sectors; and

- examining outstanding early childhood education and care practices implemented in and outside of Michigan and recommending key actions (see Part 3 of this report).

During this second year, the Dialogue project has benefited by substantial in-kind contributions by summit leaders and experts in early childhood education and care. Considerable funding—totaling more than \$150,000—plus donated time, facilities, and staff support are making progress toward the vision possible. Supporters of the Dialogue project are the Frey Foundation, McGregor Fund, C.S. Mott Foundation, Skillman Foundation, W.K.Kellogg Foundation, Office of Families and Communities Together (FACT), and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan. At this time, financial support for implementing key actions toward achieving the ECEC vision is being considered by several funders.



PART 1  
*Vision of Universal and High-Quality  
Early Childhood Education and Care*

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The following vision statement was adopted February 11, 2000, by the Ready to Succeed Coordinating Council.

**READY TO SUCCEED DIALOGUE WITH MICHIGAN**  
***Vision for Michigan Early Childhood Education and Care***

All children deserve the same start in life. Every Michigan child will enter school engaged in learning, with the capacity for success in school and in life. Every Michigan family will be able to access parent education and support and high-quality early childhood education and care through a system that respects the diversity of all families with regard to factors such as race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, philosophy, disabilities, and income.

To achieve this vision, all parents must have the knowledge and supports they need as their children's most important teachers and caregivers. The following conditions also are necessary:

- Every child always is in the care of or closely supervised by a competent, informed, and caring adult.
- Communities are organized to provide safe havens for children to grow, learn, and play. Within communities, families must have access to affordable health care, with an emphasis on prevention.
- Businesses provide leadership in communities by supporting family life in the structure of the work environment.

Achievement of this vision will be assessed through global measures to be determined. These measures could include assessing child readiness at school entry and also measures related to each of the following priorities for immediate action:

- Parent education and support
- Professional development of nonparent adult caregivers
- Multimedia public awareness campaign
- State and local public/private partnerships

## PART 2

### *Michigan Ready to Succeed Coordinating Council*

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As follow-up to the second 1999 leadership summit, a group of summit attendees met to discuss the Ready to Succeed Dialogue for 2000. The group formed the Coordinating Council, which held its first meeting on February 11, 2000.

The Coordinating Council has representatives from the following groups (members are listed in Appendix C):

- Michigan Legislature
- Major funders
- Priority action team leadership
- Leadership of the Legislative Children's Caucus
- Four Michigan organizations advocating for early childhood education and care and having expert resources
  - Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children
  - Michigan's Children
  - Michigan Head Start Association
  - Michigan 4C Association

The overall role of the Coordinating Council is to acquaint the public with the Michigan vision for early childhood education and care. The council also coordinated the work of the priority action teams (see Part 3), which now have concluded their work, and the Legislative Children's Caucus (see Part 5), building synergy among the groups and ensuring that work necessary to achieve the RTS vision proceeded in a coherent fashion.

The body has four main responsibilities:

1. *Guiding the Dialogue project's work*

Coordinating the work by (a) assuring communication among and between the priority action teams and the Legislative Children's Caucus and (b) maintaining clarity and focus in the interdependent work occurring in the several aspects of the Ready to Succeed Dialogue

2. *Communicating, informing, and educating*

Assuring that the activities and accomplishments of the RTS Dialogue are broadly communicated to participants and others pursuing similar goals and also supporting educational activities on best practices and research. The council (a) communicates the progress of the Dialogue project to participants and to external groups and (b) disseminated

research and information among the priority action teams to assist them in developing recommendations.

3. *Hosting events*

(a) Convening at least one summit, as directed by the legislation, that is open to all interested parties, and preparing a report on progress made toward achieving the vision and (b) sponsoring other major events that advance the vision of the Ready to Succeed effort, e.g., a session for community-forum coordinators

4. *Raising money*

Creating conditions that attract funding. This includes (a) establishing a financial and human resources plan for facilitation and logistical support for priority action teams and the legislative caucus and (b) coordinating regular communication and activities among the action teams and the legislative caucus.

“Year 2000 Milestones” of the RTS Dialogue (see the following exhibit) presents the major activities of the Coordinating Council and its role in support of priority action teams that developed plans for reaching the vision. For a review of major events occurring during the year two Dialogue, see Appendix D for the meeting log.

To garner broad support, the Coordinating Council supported several efforts in which leaders from many sectors of the state were consulted. Ready to Succeed leaders successfully championed the inclusion of a “hot-issue” breakfast on the RTS effort at the Detroit Regional Chamber’s Leadership Policy Conference on Mackinac Island (June 3, 2000). Presenters at the breakfast included Jane Abraham, Rich Homberg, Joan Lessen-Firestone, and Michael Flanagan, and Michigan’s R.E.A.D.Y. (Read, Educate, and Develop Youth) kits were distributed to the 50 attendees, among whom were three of the four legislative leaders.

Appendix E comprises communications materials, including the Coordinating Council’s efforts to communicate broadly the vision and activities of the RTS Dialogue. A major product is the brochure, “Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan: A Statewide Initiative to Ensure that all Michigan Children Enter Kindergarten Ready to Succeed.”

# Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan

## Year 2000 Milestones

**October 1**

**February 11**

**May 15**

**August 7**

**September 21 & 22**

**November 10**

*Priority action teams*

Parent Education & Support

Professional Development

Public Awareness Campaign

Partnerships

*Coordinating Council*

Review & support  
Priority team goals

- Review & support draft action plans (strategies, steps, indicators)
- Broad communication on RTS
- Education session
- Review budget

- Review & support for final action plans (funding strategies)
- Broad communication on RTS
- Education session

Launch action plans  
2001

*Michigan Summit*

*Legislative Children's Caucus*

Ongoing programs & activities

## PART 3

### *Best Practices and Recommendations*

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#### **RECOMMENDATIONS (PRIORITY ACTION PLANS)**

The Coordinating Council supported four priority action teams as a way to address the priorities that emerged from the 1999 leadership summits and community forums. The teams, which have completed their work, each addressed one of the following four critical subject areas:

- Parent education and support
- Professional development of other [nonparent] caregivers
- State and local public/private partnerships
- Multi-media public awareness campaign

Membership of the teams is found in Appendix F. Each team was charged with developing an action plan with goals, strategies, key actions, financing proposals, and indicators of progress. Each team examined best practices in the scope of its subject area. Key actions recommended by the teams on parenting education and support, professional development of other caregivers, and state and local public/private partnerships are presented below; the complete action plans may be found in Appendix G. The public awareness campaign is not addressed here because the plan still is under development; it could not be developed fully until the other three teams had completed their plans and recommendations .

#### **Parent Education and Support**

1. Launch a statewide media message for parents of newborns on
  - (a) how early brain development affects lifelong learning and behavior,
  - (b) how parents can stimulate that development, and
  - (c) the importance of reading to children, from infancy, at least one-half hour a day.
2. Create a speakers' bureau and "stump speech" on early childhood for use at meetings of civic clubs, religious organizations, parent groups, and other such community gatherings.
3. Develop and begin providing technical assistance to
  - (a) help communities who are trying to assure that every mother of a newborn receives home visits appropriate to her needs,
  - (b) create models and guidance to help community consortia to organize education and activities for all newborns,

- (c) create model(s) for a community inventory of sources of help for all families in accessing programs that meet the developmentally appropriate needs of their children, and
- (d) provide Michigan communities with knowledge, best-practice information, and the technical expertise they need to design and create community-based systems of care and provide integrated parent education and support.

(The priority action team on public/private partnerships recommends that a state-level structure organize and provide this support to communities.)

4. Create a tool for use statewide that families may employ to assess the quality and appropriateness of child-care arrangements and disseminate this tool to all families of newborns. (The priority action team on professional development of other caregivers recommends that the tool developed by the Kent 4C Association should be used for this purpose.)
5. Provide parents of all newborns with a R.E.A.D.Y. kit.
6. Add age-specific videotapes are added to the R.E.A.D.Y. kits.
7. Assure that parents of all newborns receive a letter from the local school superintendent introducing the school system to the parent.
8. Launch new and continuing messages of reinforcement to parents through the media campaign and develop and give communities local-campaign models that they may customize.
9. Consider including the following in guidelines for communities to follow when matching local resources to public and private investments to create a local ECEC system.
  - Start programs, using the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile, that help parents to understand developmentally appropriate skill levels of their children
  - Encourage language, music, and creative learning activities
  - Promote and support reading
  - Increase parents' access to books
  - Encourage family resource centers in elementary schools
  - Create a model of community mentorship and assure the availability of a full continuum of help (this could be accomplished in part through technical assistance)
10. Make resources available to assure that every mother of a newborn receives home visits appropriate to her needs.

11. Continue providing technical assistance to Michigan communities.
12. Identify a civic leader to lead the design and creation of the community's ECEC system.

### **Professional Development of Other Caregivers**

1. Through a state-level partnership, develop a collaborative funding approach to (a) support the cost of scholarships and (b) increase provider compensation based on training.
2. Use the statewide media campaign to deliver messages to parents on quality ECEC. (This should occur in conjunction with disseminating the tool for families.)
3. Make affordable training more available.
4. Establish a rating system, with standardized information about quality, and begin to explore reimbursement that rewards quality improvement.
5. Provide financial incentives for training for family members and in-home aides, helping to increase the availability of high-quality, affordable providers.
6. Provide technical assistance for programs seeking accreditation.
7. Through the media campaign, launch new and continuing messages for parents that will reinforce and increase awareness of high-quality ECEC, particularly as the rating system emerges.

### **Partnerships**

1. Establish a state-level partnership structure to leverage public and private interests and resources to mobilize community action (the statewide forum described below is an example of such an effort) and promote policies and programs as described in the steps above for parent education and support and professional development of other caregivers.
2. Monitor and report on progress in June 2001, January 2002, and December 2002.

### **STATEWIDE COMMUNITY FORUM, MAY 2, 2000**

On May 2, 2000, more than 60 community representatives participated in a statewide forum, sponsored by the priority action team on State and Local Public/Private Partnerships, to examine best practices and to share ideas among communities across the state. The purpose was to foster and connect community work on early childhood education and care, both across communities and between the local and state levels. A survey conducted prior to the forum helped to shape the agenda and the contents of a notebook prepared for participants. Briefings on each responding community were generated from the survey results and disseminated, to support networking. A community panel addressed common themes that emerged from the survey, including the following:

- Political leadership
- Business leadership
- State models of early childhood public/private partnerships
- Ready to Succeed in a broad children’s initiative
- Cross-county partnerships
- Media engagement

Information on best practices in each category was compiled and included in the participant notebook and discussed in breakout sessions, and a research update on brain science was presented. The participant evaluations of the state forum were very positive, with most people saying that the brain-science presentation and the best-practice information in the notebook were extremely helpful.

## **NEW LEGISLATION**

The Legislative Children’s Caucus implemented an ambitious series of education sessions for legislators. During year two, major legislative action resulted in significant public funding for the 0–5 population and their families. The opportune timing of a state budget surplus, committed and informed state legislative leadership, and intensified public awareness of the importance of the early years led to several initiatives.

In the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) school aid, Family Independence Agency (FIA), and Department of Community Health budgets for FY 2000–01, a portion of the funding supports new and expanded programs to serve the needs of Michigan families with young children.

### **School Aid Budget: P.A. 297 of 2000**

#### ***All Students Achieve Program—Parent Involvement and Education (ASAP-PIE)***

Forty-five million dollars annually for three years (FYs 2000–01, 2001–02, and 2002–03) has been set aside to ensure that children aged 0–5 receive the support they need to ensure school readiness and participation in early-intervention programs.

To qualify for funding, a program must meet several criteria:

- Provide all of the following services to all families with children aged five or younger residing in the intermediate district/district and choosing to participate:
  - Home visits by parent educators trained in child development, to help parents understand appropriate expectations for each stage of their child’s development, encourage learning opportunities, and promote strong parent-child relationships
  - Group meetings of participating families



- Periodic developmental screening of the child’s overall development, health, hearing, and vision
  - A community-resource network that provides referrals to other state, local, and private agencies as appropriate, to assist parents in preparing their children for academic success and foster the maintenance of stable families
  - Connection with quality preschool programs
- Be a collaborative community effort that includes at least the intermediate school district, local multipurpose collaborative bodies, local health and welfare agencies, and private nonprofit agencies involved in programs and services for preschool children and their parents

The MDE shall make available to intermediate and local school districts grant-application instructions and forms no later than October 15, 2000.

Grant applications must be submitted to the state superintendent of public instruction by December 1, 2000, and include the following:

- A plan for delivery of the program components (implementing department-approved data-collection methods and evaluation or assessment tools to measure the impact of the proposed program)
- Demonstration of the involvement of an adequate collaboration of local entities involved in providing programs and services for preschool children and their parents
- Evidence of review and approval of the program plan by the local multipurpose collaborative body
- A projected program budget; the intermediate district shall provide at least a 20 percent local match from local public or private resources for the funds received. Not more than half of this matching requirement, up to 10 percent of the total project budget, may be satisfied through in-kind services provided by participating providers of programs or services. In addition, not more than 10 percent of the grant may be used for program administration.

The state superintendent shall approve/disapprove applications for grants and notify applicants of the decision by February 1, 2001. Priority in awarding grants shall be given to programs that focus on reducing the percentage of children needing special education programs and services when they enter school. The superintendent shall ensure that the intermediate districts/districts receiving grants under this section are geographically and economically diverse and not more than 10 percent of the total allocation is paid to any one particular intermediate district/district.

The MDE shall ensure that all funded programs utilize the most current validated research-based methods and curriculum for providing the program components.

An intermediate district/district receiving funds shall use the funds only for the designated program. Grants awarded by February 1, 2001, may be used for the following school year.

### ***Full-Day School Readiness***

Full-Day School Readiness will receive \$20 million in FY 2000–01, \$25 million in FY 2001–02, and \$30 million in FY 2002–03. The purpose of the funding is to operate new or expanded full-day school-readiness or Head Start programs. Funds will be allocated through a competitive grant process, determined by the MDE, to eligible (1) districts, (2) public or nonprofit entities or agencies that receive funding for school readiness programs under the MDE appropriations act, or (3) Head Start–funded programs. The MDE may accept available federal funds from the Family Independence Agency (FIA) to support the program. A district, entity, or agency receiving funding that offers Head Start or school-readiness programs may use the funds to expand the program to operate a full day and shall contribute a local match, which may consist of local, private, or federal funds or in-kind services totaling at least 50 percent of the allocation.

The MDE shall provide grant applications to districts by December 15 of the school year. The application shall include a program budget that sets out all sources of funding to be used for the program. Applications shall be submitted to the MDE by February 1 of the school year. The MDE shall approve/disapprove the application and notify the applying district, entity, or agency of that decision by April 1 of the school year. Funds allocated for the current fiscal year may be expended through the end of the following fiscal year.

Full-day programs—those offering supplementary day care and therefore offering full-day school-readiness programming of at least ten hours/day as part of their school-readiness program—may retain for administrative services an amount equal to not more than 5 percent of the grant amount. Up to 10 percent of the grant funding may be used for start-up, equipment, or other costs not directly related to the costs of the program. This does not prohibit any applicant from receiving other state assistance available for these purposes.

### ***Reading and Literacy Programs***

#### ***School Reading Readiness***

Funding for reading and literacy grants is approximately \$72.6 million annually for FYs 2000–01, 2001–02, and 2002–03. The purpose of the school-readiness grants is to enable eligible districts to develop or expand, in conjunction with available federal funds, programs to improve the reading readiness (and the subsequent ability to develop reading skills) of educationally disadvantaged children who (1) meet MDE’s definition of disadvantaged, (2) are aged four as of December 1 of the school year in which the programs are offered, and (3) show evidence of two or more risk factors, as defined in the State Board of Education report, *Children at Risk* (1988).

#### ***School-Age Literacy Programs***

Another reading and literacy program provides up to \$50 million annually for FYs 2000–01, 2001–02, and 2002–03. Competitive grants will be awarded to eligible districts, intermediate districts, and public school academies located within eligible districts for the following programs:

- Reading improvement for K–4 pupils

- Reading disorders and reading methods
- Mentoring
- Language and literacy outreach
- Cognitive development

A grantee's program must meet the following criteria to qualify for funding:

- Include assessment of reading skills of pupils in grades K–4, to identify pupils needing special reading assistance
- Be a research-based, validated, structured reading program
- Include continuous assessment of pupils and individualized education plans for pupils
- Align learning resources to state standards
- Serve at least 25 percent of the pupils in each school building who are identified as at-risk, as determined by the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile or reading failure; the amount of the grant shall not exceed \$85,000 per school building annually.

***Secondary Prevention Grants for High-Risk Families***

The school aid budget allocates \$2 million annually for FYs 2000–01, 2001–02, and 2002–03 for secondary prevention grants for high-risk families.

Funds will be distributed through a joint request-for-proposal (RFP) process established by the MDE in conjunction with the Children's Trust Fund and the state's Interagency Systems Reform Workgroup.

Funded projects must meet the following criteria:

- Be secondary prevention initiatives and voluntary to consumers; this appropriation is not intended to serve the needs of children for whom, and families in which, neglect or abuse has been substantiated
- Demonstrate that the planned services are part of a community's integrated, comprehensive family-support strategy endorsed by the local multipurpose collaborative body
- Provide a 25 percent local match

The FIA budget also allocates \$4 million to secondary prevention programs to fund community-based, collaborative prevention services. In addition, the Department of Community Health budget will contribute \$700,000 to the program. Each budget stipulates the same criteria.

### **Family Independence Agency Budget: P.A. 294**

#### ***Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan***

The FIA has been appropriated \$100,000 to support the continuation of the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan. The program will continue the exploration and development of a system of early-childhood education, care, and support in this state that meets the needs of every child. The funds shall be used to leverage other private and public funding and bring together leaders from state and local government, corporate and small business, the faith community, law enforcement, and education, as well as parents, experts in early-childhood development, current providers, and others, to continue the development of a voluntary system of universal access to early-childhood education, care, and support that respects the diversity of Michigan families.

An RTS coordinating committee will provide organizational leadership for planning and conducting RTS with Michigan. The committee will be composed of representatives from C.S. Mott Foundation, Frey Foundation, McGregor Fund, Skillman Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, FIA, MDE, union organizations, and ECEC organizations; in addition, six legislators from the Legislative Children's Caucus and leaders from priority action teams will be members. The Coordinating Committee shall name a fiduciary agent and authorize the expenditure of funds and hiring of personnel to accomplish its work. The committee must also provide the FIA with a full accounting of its revenues and expenditures for the period covered by this appropriation.

#### ***Increased Eligibility for Day Care***

The FIA shall expend up to \$16,740,000 to provide a rate increase based on the levels recommended in the market rate survey conducted in the FY ending September 30, 1999, to child daycare providers servicing children aged 0–2½. This funding is a one-time-only appropriation.

#### ***Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH)***

The legislature passed section 639 of the FIA budget, which would have required the FIA to implement a Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH) program to increase the education and compensation of day care providers. The governor vetoed the section, saying “The department is already implementing the program with existing funding, so new authorization is not necessary.” According to FIA, the TEACH program or a TEACH-like program may be implemented in FY 2001.

## PART 4

### *Community Forums*

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The purpose of the 25 community forums supported by the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan is to

- extend the dialogue throughout the state on how to develop a system that assures every child a good opportunity to enter kindergarten ready to succeed;
- present the brain science research and its implications; and
- consider how to address four priority action areas that emerged from the 1999 community forums and leadership summits:
  - Parent education and support
  - Professional development of other [nonparent] caregivers
  - Public awareness
  - State and local public/private partnerships

Participants are asked to consider how they are addressing, or will address, each of the four priority action areas and what will help their communities to move forward. A Community Forum Guide was developed and is provided to each local forum-planning group (see Appendix C). In addition, two RTS Dialogue liaisons are assisting the communities in planning and conducting their forums.

The 25 community forums—the majority of which are being held in geographic areas not covered in year one—began in August (nine occurred before the September 21–22 statewide summit) and most will have been concluded in November. In some, e.g., Kent County’s Children Ready to Succeed Summit, the participants reviewed a formal assessment that has been conducted of ECEC service gaps and opportunities to move closer to a universal ECEC system.

A list of the community forum sites follows. Up-to-date information on the time, location, and local coordinator of each forum may be found on [www.pscinc.com](http://www.pscinc.com), under “Ready to Succeed.” Summaries of the results of each forum that occurred prior to the submittal of this preliminary report may be found in Appendix H. The final report to the legislature will include the summaries of the remaining community forums and the overall themes from the findings.

## 2000 COMMUNITY FORUMS

### **Allegan/Van Buren counties**

October 25  
8:00–11:00 A.M.  
Lawrence Education Center  
Lawrence

### **Bay County**

September 13, 2000  
7:30–10:30 A.M.  
Planetarium & Learning Center  
100 Center  
Bay City

### **Hillsdale County**

November 1, 2000  
Time and site to be announced

### **Houghton/Baraga/Keweenaw counties**

October 2, 2000  
5:00–8:00 P.M.,  
Houghton Elementary School  
203 West Jacker Avenue  
Houghton

### **Iron/Dickinson counties**

October 4, 2000  
8:30–11:30 A.M.  
Premiere Center  
Iron Mountain

### **Isabella County**

September 19, 2000  
7:30–10:30 A.M.  
Winding Brook Conference Center  
Shepherd

### **Jackson County**

November 8, 2000  
Time and site to be announced

### **Kent County**

September 11, 2000  
8:00 A.M.–12:00 P.M.,  
Heart of West Michigan United Way  
118 Commerce SW  
Grand Rapids

### **Lenawee County**

September 26, 2000  
1:00–4:00 P.M.  
Herrick Hospital, Basement Conference  
Room  
500 E. Pottawatamie  
Tecumseh

### **Macomb County**

March 2001  
Date, time, and site to be announced

### **Mecosta/Osceola counties**

August 24, 2000  
12:30–4:00 P.M.  
Holiday Inn  
Big Rapids

### **Monroe County**

Date, time, and site to be announced

### **Newaygo County**

August 24, 2000  
8:30–11:30 A.M.  
Newaygo County Community Services  
Building  
4 West Oak  
Fremont

### **Novi**

November 14 OR November 16, 2000  
Time and site to be announced

**Otsego County**

October 18, 2000  
1:00–4:00 P.M.  
Holiday Inn  
Gaylord

**Pontiac**

October 21 OR October 28, 2000  
Time and site to be announced

**Schoolcraft County**

September 29, 2000  
8:30–11:30 A.M.  
Comfort Inn

**St. Joseph/Cass counties**

November 13, 2000  
Time and site to be announced

**Wayne County**

*Dearborn*  
September 13, 2000  
7:30 a.m.  
Davenport University  
4801 Oakman Blvd.  
Dearborn

*Detroit—Eastside/Suburbs*

August 23, 2000  
9:30 A.M.–1:00 P.M.  
Detroit/Riverview Hospital  
E. Jefferson  
Detroit

*Detroit—North Central/Highland Park*

August 22, 2000  
4:00–7:00 P.M.  
The Family Place  
8726 Woodward  
Detroit

*Detroit—Southwest*

September 18, 2000  
5:00–7:00 P.M.  
Cesar Chavez Academy  
8126 West Vernor  
Detroit

*Downriver—Ecorse/River Rouge*

Date, time, and site to be announced

*Livonia/Northwest Wayne County*

August 30, 2000  
8:00 A.M.–12:00 P.M.  
Dickenson School  
18000 Newburg  
Livonia

**Wexford/Missaukee counties**

August 16, 2000  
8:00–11:30 A.M.  
Wexford Missaukee ISD  
Lake Superior Room, 9905 East 13th Street  
Cadillac

## PART 5

### *Legislative Children's Caucus*

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Legislators formed a bipartisan, bicameral, legislative children's caucus as an offshoot of 1999's Ready to Succeed summit. During the 1999–2000 session, legislators and their staff members heard presentations on early childhood from Carl Ill, Craig Ramey, Robin Karr-Morse, Joan Lessen-Firestone, and Malcolm Gladwell. Close to two-thirds of all state legislators personally attended one or more of these events.



## PART 6

### *Year Two Leadership Summit*

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Two-hundred and fifty leaders from many of Michigan's public and private sectors attended the statewide Ready to Succeed Summit, "The Fall Dialogue," on September 21 and 22, 2000. The goals of the summit were to

- celebrate the successes of the year 2000 Dialogue and begin the work necessary to participate in the new state grant program (ASAP-PIE; see below and "New Legislation" in Part 3, above) to foster parent education and involvement;
- highlight and consider best ECEC practices in Michigan and in other states;
- launch a call to implement key actions; and
- encourage and support community action and innovation.

In addition to presentations on best practices, the summit planning committee structured the format of the event to give optimum time to community-level planning for the Michigan Department of Education's new grant program: All Students Achieve Program—Parent Involvement and Education (ASAP-PIE). The department presented an overview of the grant program and disseminated application guidance and related information. Breakout sessions, organized by geographic area, gave counties and regions the opportunity to (1) discuss the grant program and how it advances the vision of universal and high-quality early education and care and (2) begin the application process.

Ninety-six percent of responding participants rated the summit very good (58 percent) or excellent (38 percent). The most frequently mentioned as appreciated and useful were:

- Presentations by Joan Lessen-Firestone (brain science) and Doug Price (Colorado Educare)
- The time dedicated to community planning (noted by one respondent as "unprecedented")
- Information (presentations and materials) about the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan and the ASAP-PIE grant program
- The diversity of the participants and the opportunity for networking

Appendix B is the synopsis of the summit proceedings.



APPENDIX A  
Public Act 135 of 1999

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*Ready to Learn Dialogue With Michigan*  
Michigan Family Independence Agency Budget, Fiscal Year 2000  
Public Act 135 of 1999, Section 641

Sec. 641 (1) From the funds appropriated in part 1, \$100,000.00 shall be used to leverage and match additional funds for the purpose of following up on the "Ready to Learn" leadership summit that was conducted in 1999 utilizing funding appropriated to the department in the 1998-1999 fiscal year. This follow-up shall be known as the "Ready to Learn Dialogue with Michigan." The Ready to Learn Dialogue with Michigan, consistent with findings and calls to action provided at the 1999 "Ready to Learn" leadership summit, shall continue to explore the development of an early childhood education and care system that meets the needs of every child prior to kindergarten entry. The Ready to Learn Dialogue with Michigan shall bring together leaders from Michigan's legislature, the governor and leaders in the administration, leaders from Michigan's large business corporations and from small businesses, economists, parents and faith-based entities, experts in early childhood education and care, legal scholars, law enforcement officials, leaders from Michigan universities and others selected by the planning committee established under subsection (4).

(2) The Ready to Learn Dialogue with Michigan shall examine how Michigan can develop a system that assures that every child in Michigan has a good opportunity to enter kindergarten ready to learn. The Ready to Learn Dialogue with Michigan shall address at least the following topics:

- (a) Helping parents obtain high quality early childhood education and care.
- (b) Protecting children by assuring that early childhood education and care occurs in safe and healthy places.
- (c) Helping parents obtain early childhood education and care when they work nontraditional hours or have special needs because their children have disabilities or are sick.
- (d) Developing an early childhood education and care system that recognizes the diversity of Michigan's parents with respect to ethnic, religious, income, and philosophical differences.
- (e) Taking the next steps toward a comprehensive early childhood education and care system.

(3) The Ready to Learn Dialogue with Michigan shall do at least the following:

- (a) Conduct at least 1 post-summit meeting that brings together leaders who attended the Ready to Learn leadership summit in the 1998-1999 fiscal year, representatives from diverse parts of the early childhood education and care field, and other parties as appropriate to plan ways of implementing the calls to action produced at the 1999 summit.
- (b) Examine outstanding early childhood education and care practices implemented in places within and outside of Michigan for purposes of bringing to the legislature and governor early childhood education and care proposals for their consideration.
- (c) Hold community forums across the state to bring the Ready to Learn Dialogue with Michigan to a broad cross-section of the people and to report to the legislature and governor the range of community concerns about early childhood education and care.
- (d) Consult with leaders in the sectors of business, education, faith, health, labor, media, politics, philanthropy and other sectors as appropriate to garner their support in helping all children enter kindergarten ready to learn and informing the legislature and governor about early childhood education and care policies they might consider

(4) Organizational leadership for planning and conducting the Ready to Learn Dialogue with Michigan shall rest with a planning committee composed of people from the Michigan child care task force operating under the direction of the task force's legislative sponsors. This committee shall consult with the governor's office, the Michigan senate and house, business leaders, and Michigan foundations in planning and conducting the Ready to Learn Dialogue with Michigan. The planning committee may expend funds to consult with and hire people and organizations considered necessary for implementing this section. The committee shall provide the house and senate appropriations committees a full accounting of its expenditures incurred under this section.

(5) The Ready to Learn Dialogue with Michigan shall conduct the activities set out in subsection (3) no later than August 31, 2000, and the planning committee shall submit a report on the business conducted and recommendations made during the Ready to Learn Dialogue with Michigan to the house and senate appropriations committees no later than September 30, 2000.



APPENDIX B  
Fall 2000 RTS Summit Synopsis

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Synopsis  
Ready to Succeed Statewide Summit:  
Fall Dialogue

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*September 21–22, 2000*

THE SECOND YEAR  
Michigan Ready to Succeed  
Dialogue with Michigan

SPONSORED BY  
The Ready to Succeed Coordinating Council  
*and*  
The Michigan Child Care Task Force

PREPARED BY  
Public Sector Consultants, Inc.





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# Meeting Report

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## **SUMMIT FORMAT**

The format of the fall 2000 two-day summit was designed to enable participants to examine best practices in early education and child care (ECEC), foster community planning for parent education and involvement programs, and review the accomplishments of the year 2000 Ready to Succeed (RTS) Dialogue.

The summit was attended by 250 Michigan leaders from many public and private sectors and from 37 counties. A participant list is available upon request from Public Sector Consultants (517/484-4954).

On day one, September 21, summit attendees heard an in-depth refresher by Joan Lessen-Firestone on brain science research and a keynote address from Doug Price, Colorado Educare. Following the addresses, time was set aside for informal participant interaction.

On day two, September 22, RTS accomplishments were reviewed, best practices examined, and community planning occurred. A special effort was made by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to provide an overview, guidance for application, and technical assistance information for the new All Students Achieve Program—Parent Involvement in Education (ASAP-PIE) grant program, which will make funds available to enable local and intermediate school districts for programs to ensure that children aged 0–5 receive the support they need to be ready to succeed in school. To this end, participants met in seven, geographical breakout sessions (Genesee County, Ingham County, Kent County, Northern Michigan, Southeast Michigan, Wayne County, and West Central Michigan) to begin community planning for the purpose of applying for the ASAP-PIE grants. The summaries of the work of the seven groups are appended to this report.

## **SUMMIT EVALUATION**

Ninety-six percent of responding participants rated the summit very good (58 percent) or excellent (38 percent). The most frequently mentioned as appreciated and useful were the following:

- Presentations by Joan Lessen-Firestone (brain science) and Doug Price (Colorado Educare)
- The time dedicated to community planning (noted by one respondent as “unprecedented”)
- Information (presentations and materials) about the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan and the ASAP-PIE grant program
- The diversity of the participants and the opportunity for networking

The most frequently mentioned negative comments about the summit were the following:

- Logistics were not good (food, lighting, sound, room set-up)
- There was not enough participation from the business sector

Suggestions for improving the summit include the following:

- Provide more information about what is happening in other communities and states
- Narrow the breakout sessions; that is, set them all up on a county basis (some were multi-county)
- Include more parents in the summit
- Join forces with a business group, e.g., Rotary, Kiwanis, or a state association

APPENDIX 1  
**GENESEE COUNTY BREAKOUT SUMMARY**  
*September 22, 2000*

**—Morning Session—**

**Challenges**

- Build stronger collaborative—Add ISDs, school districts
- Genesee County did not have a community forum
- Build a *system* around many collaboratives in Genesee
- Connect early childhood community with school system

**Strategies**

- Focus groups/forums with parents, other stakeholders (needs assessment)
- Collect individual programs' needs assessments; county's focus is now stronger on young parents (See Community Forum 1999 and legislative breakfasts, which identified resources in the county; Passport also has a vision, list of resources)
- Capitalize on opportunity to serve all families
- Awareness campaign
- Multi-tiered approach based on family need (continuum of need)
- Expand existing programs in Genesee County to target more families
- Equalize availability of services and support to all families—Operationalize services and programs through the workplace, Work First
- Build on work of faith-based organizations and neighborhood groups (health care, workforce development, early education)
- Partner with hospitals, health care organizations—Parents should get information the day baby is born
- Involve higher education (e.g., U-M Flint nursing program)
- Use the media more effectively

**—Afternoon Session**

**Existing Groups for a Collaborative**

(The first eight agencies listed were in attendance)

- FIA
- Mott Children's Hospital
- Priority Children
- Bendle Carmen-Ainsworth School District
- Greater Flint and Thumb Area 4C
- Greater Flint AEYC
- UAW/GM Child Development
- Junior League

- Genesee ISD
- Passport
- Universities
- Community colleges
- United Way
- GCCAA
- Urban League
- Church/faith groups
- School districts (21)
- Charter schools
- Disability network
- Early-On
- Community Mental Health
- City of Flint
- MPCB
- National Community Education Center
- MSU Extension
- Genesee County government
- CC association
- Family Coordinating Council (Strong Families/Safe Children)
- Genesee County Health Department
- YWCA/YMCA
- Libraries
- Focus Council
- GM
- UAW
- Media
- Neighborhood groups/neighborhood roundtable (FACED)
- Mott Foundation
- Community Foundation
- Greater Flint Area Health Coalition
- Hospitals
- Asthma task force
- Greater Flint/Thumb Consortium of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Family court
- Genesee County Medical Society
- Foster Care Parents Association
- Service clubs

## **Vision**

- Still need a vision around children aged 0–5—Should consider the vision from today’s conference
- How has this changed in past year?

- Passport vision—including many organizations
- Passport preschool survey
- More dialogue with families
- October 6—dialogue on ASAP-PIE application—invitation letter signed by Jerry Johnson and Gloria B. (GISD)

### **Needs/Opportunities**

- Expansion of Parents As Teachers
- Don't ignore the forgotten kids—those in working families, etc.—All appears to be good, but it's not; expand services more equitably
- How can allocation of resources foster collaboration incentives
- Embrace grandparents
- Immunization network, foster care networks
- Before and after school hours affect 0–5 too
- Cultural and recreational resources
- Parent/child field trips
- How get programs and services to people?

### **Indicators of Success**

Short term—process indicators

Longer term—outcomes indicators

- Pre- and post testing surveys of parents
- Parents reading to young kids
- Fewer children repeating kindergarten
- Home visits
- Decrease numbers referred to special education
- Compare literacy rates/profiles across school district (Michigan Literacy Profile)
- Parents' know of child development
- Immunization rates
- Child abuse incidence
- Parental participation in activities (at centers, conferences)
- PTO involvement
- Pamphlets distributed



APPENDIX 2  
**INGHAM COUNTY BREAKOUT SUMMARY**  
*September 22, 2000*

**Who Should be Involved in Planning and Implementation?**

- ISD
- Parents
- Existing programs (both ECEC and home visiting programs)
- Local school districts
- Health care providers (contact at the infancy stage)
- 4Cs and other ECE care programs
- Local union representatives
- FIA
- CMH
- Public health
- Public and private child welfare agencies
- United Way
- Michigan State University programs involved in ECE and child development
- Michigan State University Extension
- Other higher education institutions
- Local community foundations
- Employers (local)
- Faith and community groups
- Media
- Area hospitals (Sparrow, Ingham Regional)
- Elected officials
- Cultural and recreational groups (Michigan State University Museum)
- Libraries

**Demographics/Key Indicators**

- Michigan State University has demographics
  - College of Education
- Ingham County Health Department
  - Number of births
  - Risk factors
  - Teen parents
  - Economic status
- Capital Area United Way

- Retrospective/prospective
- Kids Count data book
- FIA
  - (Statistical data on out-of-home care and abuse and neglect)
- 4C
  - Needs assessment
  - All kids in poverty (at different age levels) with comparison of child care capacity

### **Quality-of-Life Issues (Parks, Transportation)**

- National Playground Safety Administration
- CATA map
- Mapping exercise—where is the service, where are the families?
- Are environments set up for children from birth to five (Think about this in relation to a community plan)?
- Indicators of school success (refer to work of Lansing Ready to Succeed Committee)

### **Plan for Additional Data Collection**

- Expand on work of Lansing Ready to Succeed and others; identify gaps
- Meeting of superintendents
  - Share information with all school districts that will be involved
  - ISD, Mayor Hollister, Lansing School District meeting October 9 to discuss

### **MPCB**

- Consider the possibility of a birth-to-five workgroup to focus on this issues
- Key indicators (data collection) have been identified in the document, *Developing a Comprehensive Community Plan for Children 0–5 and Their Families*
- Ensure the inclusivity of all parts of the City of Lansing; include Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton counties

### **Visioning Process**

- The work of Mayor Hollister’s Blue Ribbon Committee is a good starting point!
- Vision will be planned more formally at the first meeting of this group
- 1999 Lansing Forum—Ready to Succeed Summary
- *Ready to Succeed—Components of a Quality System* (Public Sector Consultants has copies of this report)
- Local schools

- Look at outside resources for visioning process
  - Educare
  - Smart Start
- United Way planned vision
- Health care providers
- Original vision statement of the Jump Start Program

### **Community Plans**

- Strong Families, Safe Children
- CPCP (Child Protection Community Partners)
- Children's Trust Fund
- Mayor Hollister's report
- Information and referral (a resource for what current programs exist)

### **Identify a Vision: Focus on School Readiness; Identify a Community Plan**

- What do we value for children birth to five?
  - What do we want for our community?
  - Lessons learned—how to get consumers to the table—who will bring them?
  - Accommodating all of those people who will be involved
1. Home visits
  2. Parent education
  3. Group meetings
  4. Community resource network
  5. Connection with quality programs

APPENDIX 3  
**KENT COUNTY: BREAKOUT SUMMARY**  
*September 22, 2000*

**—Morning Session—**

**Community Mobilization for New State Funds: Challenges/Obstacles and Opportunities**

- Collaboration of school superintendents will take the lead, with ISD staff preparing the community plan and application
- Kent County Family and Children’s Coordinating Council—represented on the Ready to Succeed (RTS) Summit Planning Committee and will review the plan and application
- The RTS Summit Planning Committee (includes ISD, MPCB, members) will have a communications role

**A Key Challenge Is Stakeholder Engagement: Stakeholders and Populations Needing Deeper Involvement**

- Business community
- Parents and/or family members
- Faith community (parochial school superintendents already involved)
- Hispanic population
- Local school districts
- FIA, Kent County Health Department, Community Mental Health, major health systems
- Higher education

**Ideas for Stakeholder Engagement**

- Employers: Each superintendent could recruit a business person with an interest in education
- Build on existing networks to communicate and identify interested parties
  - County employee/employer group
  - Workforce development
  - Business advisory group for the Kent Skill Center
- Higher education—Work with faculty on early childhood education and care curriculum
- Early childhood education and care providers—Leaders are at the table, but we need to inform and involve service providers

## **Ideas on Communication**

- Little time now for broad communication of the RTS effort, but at the point of implementation, community-wide communication about Ready to Succeed needs to be started
- Work with existing press relations staff in collaborating organizations to inform the community

Another challenge is preparing the ASAP-PIE community plan and application at the same time that we must engage stakeholders. The strategy for addressing this challenge is through the Summit Planning Committee, with their focus on communication to support increasing collaboration.

### ***—Afternoon Session—***

Kent County participants spent the afternoon breakout time reviewing the community plan and identifying sources of needed information. Many components of the community plan are described in the recent gap analysis prepared for the September 11 Kent County Children Ready to Succeed Summit. However, the required community profile is ambitious and requires more detailed information in several areas. For example, service providers have been documented, but funding sources for all programs have not been described. Setting a timeline for completing the plan and application is seen as the most critical next step.

APPENDIX 4  
**NORTHERN MICHIGAN BREAKOUT SUMMARY**  
*September 22, 2000*

**Challenges**

Define communities—need consensus on definition of community between the ISD and school districts

**Existing Resources**

- Early Head Start
- Day One
- PIE
- Local hospitals
- Healthy Futures
- Libraries
- Community publications
- Joining Forces Project
- 4Cs
- Local churches
- Education foundations
- Community child-care providers
- Resource library
- Women's shelters
- United Way
- MSU Extension
- Early On
- Universities
- Standard multi-purpose collaborative bodies

**How Can We Bring Groups Together?**

- Full representation may not be possible with time frame
- Invite communities—Who convenes?
- Groups who cannot attend first round can input second

**Coverage: ALL**

**Anticipated Outcomes**

- Early education normal outcome
- Parent comfortable with being first teacher of child
- Increased parental comfort with school
- Increased use of services

- Children moving forward in optimal development
- Support families in health care
- Overall community awareness (goal)
  - Survey
  - Work site distributions
- Community systems (strategy)
  - Run smoothly together
- Where the community is—where you want it to be
  - Total accessibility to information
- Every child is ready for school
  - Parent education benefits all (not bad)
- Schools will be ready for kids
  - Educating the educator
  - Early involvement
- Child-care providers
  - Increase quality
  - See themselves as professionals
- Open lines of communication between parents and caregivers

APPENDIX 5  
**SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN BREAKOUT SUMMARY**  
*September 22, 2000*

### **Challenges**

1. Plan to engage families/parents
2. Eliminating turf issues
3. Defining the issue/do public education (tension between depth and breadth and what's enough to be effective)
4. Risk factors, e.g., substance abuse
5. Leveraging other money—prioritizing MDE money
6. Civic organizations—Junior League, Kiwanis
7. Understanding resources
  - Engaging business
  - School boards/superintendents—0–5 vs. K–12
  - Fully engaging minority community—cultural parenting
  - Engaging local government

### **Strategies**

- Match money
- ISD and local school district collaboration
- MPCB partnership
- To engage families and parents, consider incentives, a statewide advertising campaign, and building expectations at birth, with the health system
- To eliminate turf issues, identify self-interests and benefits of collaboration; create shared vision/values



APPENDIX 6  
**WAYNE COUNTY BREAKOUT SUMMARY**  
*September 22, 2000*

**—Morning Session—**

**Challenges and Strategies for Mobilizing the Community and Applying for the State Grant**

- Constitutionally, money goes to school districts
- School districts must collaborate
- ALL children must be considered
- Must be evaluation
- Must describe in detail the community profile, resources
- \$13.5 million is available for Wayne county: \$4.5 million Detroit + \$4.5 million out-Wayne = \$9.0–27 million over three years

(Address questions to Renee Demars-Johnson at 517.373.8483, or email [Demars@state.mi.us](mailto:Demars@state.mi.us))

**Discussion**

***Challenges***

1. Getting school districts to focus on infants–toddlers, birth–3

***Strategies***

- 1a. Tool to identify parents who have 0–5 children and their situation
  - School district implement
    - Develop tools
    - Use existing databases
      - 0–3
      - Census data
      - Vital statistics
      - RESA 0–12 months, 0–5 years
      - Mailing lists (hospitals generate)
- 1b. ISD/SD develop programs/review existing programs outcomes
  - Make schools ready to deal with 0–5 children
  - Refocus
  - “Ownership” before kindergarten
  - Community resources
  - Link/support CC program, KITH/KIN
- 1c. Publicize for parent
- 1d. Educate school districts regarding 0–5 year olds/conference with all groups—superintendents, principals, special education
- 1e. DPS/RESA working together—coordinate applications (2)

## **Challenges**

2. How affects non-public schools?
3. Bringing various areas together (13 municipalities)
4. Common language terminology
5. Priority determination
6. Identify key players (0–3 spread; 38 organizations at TA)
7. Size of county—positive impact
8. Diversity
9. Describe existing services/resources
10. Amount of money—\$4.5 Detroit, \$4.5 out-Wayne

## **Strategies**

- 1f. Recognize related role of CC programs and school district—coordinate with school districts; school district—T.A. to child care system, resources (money, training) to child care system to enhance quality
- 1g. Gaps in cc system—start up investment needed re infrastructure
- 1h. Other systems v/v education—comprehensive, support network
  - Health
  - Housing
  - Social services
  - Faith-based(38 organizations identified for 0–3 secondary prevention T.A.)
- 1i. Bring everyone to table—collaboration to prevent fragmentation, charter schools/pool money, focus on children not school districts

## **—Afternoon Session—**

### **Innovative Things that Should Occur in Detroit and Wayne County through a Collaborative Network**

- Improve quality—include child care providers in training offered by school districts, i.e., treat child care providers like teachers
  - Develop dialogue with structure—consensus direction
  - School Aid Fund—birth to 12th grade
  - Decategorization of funding—eliminate eligibility criteria for pre-birth–5 years
  - Collaborative effort by school district with review/endorsement by Wayne County HSCB
- Collaborative “wrapped around” ISD/SD/PSA
  - “Sham collaboration”/explicit definition of “collaborative”—partner sign-off
  - Subcontracting for services

- Linking health care and education
  - School-based health clinic model
  - The Family Road
  - Strengthen health services on-site at child care
  - Mobile service delivery
  - Reach into existing health organizations—education into health clinics, etc., screening, help parents
  
- Early childhood/family development support center—The Family Place
- Downriver central information access point of entry for information, training for parents, provider
- Bring people together to hear about programs, ideas
- Being born is a risk factor—Understand that every child needs comprehensive services
- All 57 ISDs take 5–10 percent for public awareness campaign statewide—\$2.25–4.5 million
- Two additional years political promise—2002, 2003 (year-to-year funding)—continue 3-year rollover January 2001
- Doctors offices, HMOs
- Maternal support services
- Paternal support services
- Find “newly pregnant”
  - Pregnancy-test sales shelves
  - Ob-Gyn
  - Public awareness campaign
  - One phone call—963-MOMS
  - One-stop shop
  - Create support network
  
- Bridge disconnects
  - Funding support/little organization/target population
  - R.E.A.D.Y. Kit opened doors for education—200 entities—health, Kmart, CTF, 0–3 secondary prevention
  
- Mass transportation in Wayne County that works
- Incorporate local communities—what do best, take services to family—two way passport, cultural services
- Superintendent of schools send congratulations letter to parent of newborn, collaborative partners—follow-up, parent education
- Building principals (teachers) make home visits—300–400 elementary—600 buildings entire county/leadership group
- Diapers, baby food, Gerber’s ad, McDonald’s place mats, books exchange
- Ready-to-read literacy issue—special education

- Ready, Set, Grow—Grand Rapids School District—professional home visitors, volunteers
- Business/employer policies—work/family
- Galvanize leadership—put parent in charge, leadership training, advocacy training, get key leaders to the table
- Spread dollars effectively—estimate \$16 per child under 5 and other money being spent in Wayne County
  - Every kid, 1-800 phone number
  - Every kid, take to scale every Kmart information
- Prioritize/target funding
  - Database single repository for 0–5 age groups—demographics, dollars already targeting this population
- Gaps in child care delivery system
  - Sick child care needed
  - Nontraditional hours
  - Infant toddler
  - No child care in some areas
  - Special needs children
  - Transportation
- Support to family day care, KITH/KIN
- Engage more businesses, power players, labor, faith; use focus groups
- Research how to engage businesses, labor, faith-based
  - Fears—Ask them for money, employee concerns
  - Screen savers—technology
  - Focus groups—Go to them—messenger, message, meeting site
- Schools give parents computers
- Regional chamber—business roundtable
- Editorial boards

## **RESA Next Step**

- Read, state contacts, model

APPENDIX 7  
**WEST AND CENTRAL MICHIGAN BREAKOUT SUMMARY**  
*September 22, 2000*

**Challenge of Involving Stakeholders**

Include

- Head Start
- Junior League
- Kiwanis
- K–12 superintendents
- ISD

- Calhoun
- Hillsdale
- VanBuren
- Ottawa
- Gratiot-Isabella
- Macomb
- Ionia
- Jackson
- St. Joseph
- Allegan
- Shiawassee
- Saginaw
- Bay

- Health Care
- Hospitals—ID births
- MPCBs
- Parents as Teachers (PAT)

**A–Z**

- Education
  - Health
  - Welfare
- 501(c)3  
Public  
Private

**Barriers**

- Identifying who/where kids are
- Mental health
- Universality
- Build on 0–3 grants

■ 4Cs

- Data on poverty by zip codes
- All kids count data

■ Public school academies—their current students' younger siblings

■ MPCB—sign-off more than one plan

**Comment**

The community plan for ASAP-PIE is important.

**Strategy**

Reassess who is coming to the table now and send out more invites.



APPENDIX C  
Community Forum Planning Guide

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## MEMORANDUM

May 15, 2000

**TO:** Community Forum Planners

**FROM:** The Ready to Succeed Coordinating Council

We are pleased that you are planning a community forum supported by the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan. This guide is designed to assist you in organizing and hosting a community forum.

The Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan encourages communities to explore what can be done to pursue the vision of making sure every Michigan child enters kindergarten engaged in learning, with the capacity for success in school and life. During a statewide summit at the close of 2000, we will unveil a call to action for making this vision a reality.

The purpose of Ready to Succeed community forums is twofold:

- ◆ To extend throughout Michigan the dialogue on how to develop a system that assures that every child has a good opportunity to enter kindergarten ready to succeed
- ◆ To consider how we should address four priority action areas that emerged from the 1999 Michigan Ready to Learn Leadership Summits

The following are the four priority action areas:

- ◆ Parent education and support
- ◆ Professional development of other (nonparent) caregivers
- ◆ Public awareness
- ◆ State and local public and private partnerships

We are hoping that the group you convene in your community, as you define it, will explore ways to address these priorities. We also encourage you to engage broad participation, including people from business, education, faith, government, law enforcement, health, labor, media, and philanthropy as well as parents/consumers. Feel free to add others who you think would have an interest in joining your community dialogue on early childhood education and care.

Last year's community forums typically ran two to three hours. While the forum is a one-time event, a group may opt to organize and continue to work on issues or ideas identified during the Dialogue project. You may also wish to use the forum as a way to mobilize your community to work on an existing early childhood agenda. The state-level Ready to Succeed Dialogue will assist you by providing this guide, making available a Dialogue project liaison who will consult and assist with forum planning, and offering a small stipend to help defray expenses such as refreshments and facility costs.

Your interest in organizing and holding a community forum is very much appreciated. We look forward to including the results of your event in the recommendations that will be presented in the fall of 2000 to the state legislature, the governor, and the citizens of Michigan.

**READY TO SUCCEED DIALOGUE WITH MICHIGAN**  
*Coordinating Council Membership*

**Marianne Udow (Chair)**  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

**Steve Manchester (Vice-Chair)**  
Michigan Association for the Education of  
Young Children

**Mrs. Jane Abraham**

**Susan Broman**  
Steelcase Foundation

**David Campbell**  
McGregor Fund

**Deb Dingell**  
General Motors Foundation

**Mike Flanagan**  
Wayne RESA

**Rep. Pan Godchaux**  
Michigan House of Representatives

**Sen. Beverly Hammerstrom**  
Michigan Senate

**Rich Homberg**  
WWJ Radio

**Douglas Howard**  
Michigan Family Independence Agency

**Rep. Edward LaForge**  
Michigan House of Representatives

**Rep. Lynne Martinez**  
Michigan House of Representatives

**Kristen McDonald-Stone**  
Michigan Head Start Association

**Erin McGovern**  
Michigan 4C Association

**Marvin McKinney**  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

**Heath Meriwether**  
Detroit Free Press

**Ron Palmer**  
Horizon Enterprises Group

**Sharon Peters**  
Michigan's Children

**Phil Power**  
HomeTown Communications Network

**Rep. Hubert Price**  
Michigan House of Representatives

**Milton Rohwer**  
Frey Foundation

**Kari Schlactenhaufen**  
Skillman Foundation

**Sen. Alma Wheeler Smith**  
Michigan Senate

**Maureen Smyth**  
C.S. Mott Foundation

**Mark Sullivan**  
Michigan 4C Association

# Community Forum Planning Guide for the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan

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May 2000

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Guidelines for Planning a Community Forum  
Planning Task List  
Sample Invitation

# GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING A COMMUNITY FORUM

## FORUM DESCRIPTION

A community forum brings together representatives from sectors that are influential in the lives of young children and their families such as business, health, education, government, labor, media, religion, philanthropy, parents/consumers, and law enforcement. A forum is intended to support community dialogue about how to assure that every Michigan child enters kindergarten engaged in learning, with the capacity for success in school and life. Four priorities are used as a guide for dialogue: parent education and support, professional development, public awareness, and state/local public/private partnerships.

Forum participants are asked to (1) brainstorm ways to reach the goals in each priority area and (2) identify what would help their community move forward. The results of this dialogue will be shared with the state-level Ready to Succeed Coordinating Council to help them prepare a call to action for release at a statewide summit on September 21st and 22nd, 2000.

## SUPPORT

Dialogue liaisons provided by Public Sector Consultants, Inc., staff to the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan, will assist your community in the forum-planning process, offering materials, arranging financial assistance to help with forum expenses, and assisting with the forum event and report.

Dialogue liaisons

Jeralyn Delisi Lowe  
517.374.1264

Cynthia Maritato  
248.547.9521

## FORUM AGENDA

A standard agenda for a forum includes the following items:

5 minutes	Opening remarks
10 minutes	Overview
40–45 minutes	Presentation: Early Childhood Brain Development
5 minutes	Review: Michigan's Ready to Succeed Vision and Priorities
	Breakout sessions
	◆ Parent education and support
	◆ Caregiver professional development
	◆ Public awareness and community involvement
	◆ State/local public/private partnerships
30 minutes	Reconvene as a whole and review key breakout group discussion points
30 minutes	Define your community's next steps

After the forum, the dialogue liaisons will receive your forum results and a copy of the participant sign-in sheet.

## MATERIALS TO SUPPORT YOUR FORUM

The following materials and forms are provided to assist you with your forum:

- ◆ Planning task list
- ◆ Sample letter of invitation
- ◆ Media relations guide
- ◆ Question guides for breakout sessions: These lists can be used to stimulate and prompt discussion, if needed. The main question is, "What can be done in our community to reach the goals for each priority area?"
- ◆ Form for documenting breakout session discussion points
- ◆ Sign-in sheet

## PLANNING TASK LIST

### *1. Set location, date, and time*

- ◆ Plan set up for main sessions that will include all attendees as well as breakout sessions. The site should preferably have rooms set aside for the smaller breakout groups or a large enough meeting room to allow groups to separate and hold productive discussions.
- ◆ Determine and order audiovisual and recording equipment (flipcharts, marker boards), and materials

### *2. Arrange expert presentation on brain development and early learning*

- ◆ The Ready to Succeed Dialogue Liaisons can assist you in identifying potential speakers.
- ◆ Make sure the speaker is secure for the date and time. Have an emergency back up plan just in case of a last minute snafu.

### *3. Ensure handouts and materials are ready, available in sufficient quantity, and properly packaged*

### *4. Arrange for refreshments*

### *5. Identify appropriate local participant sectors*

- ◆ Business
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Government
- ◆ Health
- ◆ Labor
- ◆ Media
- ◆ Religion
- ◆ Parents/consumers
- ◆ Philanthropy
- ◆ Law enforcement

### *6. Mail invitations*

- ◆ Include date response is due and to whom
- ◆ Provide your phone, fax, and e-mail information for participants to RSVP

### *7. Designate facilitators for breakout sessions and instruct them in duties, especially responsibility for the documentation of key points from the breakout sessions.*

### *8. Assign on-site forum support functions*

- ◆ Registration/sign-in
- ◆ Check room set up, equipment, and refreshments
- ◆ Hand out materials
- ◆ Late registration (on-site) name tags
- ◆ Collection and return of materials to the office

### *9. Before the due date, follow up on no-response invitees*

### *10. Use your Ready to Succeed Dialogue liaison as a resource*

## SAMPLE INVITATION

(YOUR LETTERHEAD)

Dear Colleague:

The Michigan Legislature has appropriated funds to support a Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan. The thrust of this initiative is to explore the development of a universal, high-quality early childhood education and care system that maximizes children's potential to be "ready to succeed" when they enter kindergarten. As a community leader, you know that an investment in learning readiness is an investment in our future workforce and economic health. You also recognize the effect that child care and health issues can have on employee productivity.

The Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan sponsors activities both at state and local community levels. The purpose is to explore how to assure that every Michigan child enters school ready to succeed and to make recommendations to the legislature and governor by September 30, 2000.

We will be hosting a community forum that brings together a cross section of our local leaders. We are seeking participation from business, health, law enforcement, education, government, media, labor, faith, and philanthropic organizations as well as parents/consumers. We wish to discuss how we might mesh our knowledge, ideas, and energies to boost our investment in quality early childhood education and care.

Please plan to participate in our community's forum. The ideas and recommendations from this event will be taken forward to a fall statewide summit. We hope that this forum will strengthen our local public/private partnerships and further mobilize community efforts on behalf of young children and their families.

The forum will be about three hours long. It will include a presentation on brain development, an update on current initiatives, and roundtable opportunities for dialogue among participants on what will make a difference locally and at the state level. Details on our forum are enclosed.

Please plan to attend. You are also welcome to bring others from your organization to contribute ideas. We will contact you in the next few weeks to answer any questions you have about the forum and the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan.

Your energy and ideas are vital to our community's efforts on behalf of children and families. We hope you will be able to attend the forum.

Sincerely,

Name

# Media Relations Guide for the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan

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May 2000

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  - & “Key Concepts of Brain Research”



# SUCCESSFUL MEDIA RELATIONS

## INTRODUCTION

Media relations can be an intensely frustrating matter for advocates of a particular cause or organization. They feel that the cause to which they dedicate so much time and energy is worthy of much more publicity than it currently receives, and they don't understand why journalists seem so reluctant to cover it. Furthermore, advocates often view the media as a mysterious and intimidating institution. They believe that media relations should be conducted by public relations professionals, and they are reluctant to take even a hesitant first step toward developing and implementing an effective media program.

This media relations guide is based on three premises:

- 1. The ability of advocacy organizations to promote their cause among the media ranges from very high to very low. Success in media relations, however, is not related to the size of an organization's media budget or the number of media consultants on retainer, but rather to its foresight in planning a media strategy and diligence in implementing the plan.*
- 2. Most media relations programs fail for one or more of the following reasons: (a) lack of a strategy about what message is to be conveyed to what audience, (b) failure to find effective ways to convey the message, and (c) simple lack of effort.*
- 3. With a minimum of training, a bit of common sense, and a great deal of persistence, you can greatly increase the publicity received by your cause or organization. Indeed, a well thought out media relations program implemented by amateurs is likely to achieve the same or even better results than a slick program put together by public relations professionals.*

## RULES FOR MEDIA RELATIONS

There are four steps to developing and implementing a media relations program:

- ◆ Determining the audience that the program is primarily directed toward (e.g. policymakers, parents, or the general public)
- ◆ Determining the message to be conveyed (e.g. "More public resources must be devoted to early childhood education," or "Parents must take a more active role in their child's early education")
- ◆ Inventing effective ways to convey the message (e.g. using celebrities, creating awards, or using anniversaries of well-known events)
- ◆ Persistently working with local journalists to deliver the message

The following rules are designed to help you carry out these four steps.

### *Know your goal*

Too often, advocates start their media programs with the vague goal of "getting good coverage." Instead, an effective media program begins with the question, "What action do we want people to take as a result of the coverage we receive?" Obviously, a campaign designed to encourage community members to become more aware of the importance of early childhood education and care (ECEC) will be much different than a campaign to encourage policymakers to devote more public

resources to ECEC programs. The goal to be pursued will affect all aspects of the media program—which story angles to pursue, which journalists to work with, and so on.

### *Know your audience*

It is important to direct your media program to a particular audience. A message directed equally at all segments of the population will necessarily lose focus and effectiveness. Knowing your target audience will help you decide the following:

- ◆ **Which media outlets to target.** Different groups of people read different publications. For example, the *Gongwer News Service*, with a circulation of just a few thousand, reaches every legislator and executive branch official in Lansing and is therefore an important outlet for those seeking to influence state policy. On the other hand, *Parenting* magazine is probably a better place to reach parents than *Gongwer*.
- ◆ **How to frame the issue.** Obviously, you would speak differently about ECEC if you were talking to lawmakers in charge of the state budget than you would to a group of ECEC providers. In the same way, you should tailor the way you talk through the media based on the audience you are trying to persuade. Always remember that you are not talking to a reporter; you are talking to your target audience through the reporter.

### *Know your journalist*

In order to implement your media program effectively, you must become a student of the media. You must pay attention to your local TV, radio, and newspapers to find out what types of stories they report. You should find out which journalists cover the issue that you are trying to promote (by tracking the bylines of similar stories, or simply by calling the newspaper and asking) and what types of stories they usually write.

Calling a newspaper and introducing yourself to a journalist that covers a particular issue shouldn't be an intimidating task. Most reporters are very happy to have a brief conversation to get to know anyone who might feed them interesting stories later on. Once you have made the introduction, it becomes much easier to call periodically with story ideas. The only caveat is that you must never waste a journalist's time; once the initial introduction is made, you should call only when you have a particular story to pitch or to share important background information.

### *Focus on people, not numbers*

Since people are always more interesting than statistics, you should always try to find real people or real situations to illustrate your stories. For example, readers are likely to skip over a dry story giving statistics that every dollar spent on ECEC results in many dollars saved in special education, welfare, criminal justice, and so on. But they may be very interested in a story showing how the lives of two people—one who had the opportunity of a quality ECEC experience and one who had not—turned out quite differently.

### *Find the best person to tell the story*

Major companies are willing to pay Michael Jordan millions of dollars to pitch their products because they know that the messenger is often the most important part of the message. Likewise, you must find the most effective messenger for your stories. Sometimes the best messenger is a celebrity or a politician who has supported the issue, but often it's a local person with a compelling story to tell.

It is easy and therefore tempting always to rely on one person—perhaps the president or chair of your advocacy organization—to speak about ECEC. This is a mistake, because journalists know that their audience will become bored with “the same old person” saying “the same old thing.” It is important to be creative and bring to the fore fresh faces who can give a new angle to the story.

#### *Find the local angle*

Journalists are keenly aware of the scope of their audience. A TV network reporter looks for stories of national interest; a reporter for the *Detroit News* or *Detroit Free Press* is interested in stories about Michigan; and a local journalist focuses on his or her own community. Don’t pitch a national story to a local journalist. He or she would rather take the story off the wire service than reinvent the wheel. For example, a local reporter would not write a story about a multi-billion dollar federal highway program, but he or she would write about local road projects that are part of the program. Likewise, when trying to publicize a story about a state or national event (for example, the release of a national study) it is important to find a local angle to pitch to the journalist. For example, is there a local family that illustrates the findings of the study? Is the local community doing relatively better or worse than average in the national study?

#### *Choose the best time to tell the story*

In implementing your media plan, you must think about time in two ways—reactively and proactively. Reactive thinking requires that you try to place stories when there is relatively little competition for attention. This is inherently difficult to do—after all, no one knows when the next earthquake will hit—but you should at least think about the general news landscape as you decide when to pitch your story. Proactive thinking is the use of anniversaries and other dates as a “hook” by which to sell your story. For example, gun control advocates this year successfully used the one-year anniversary of the Columbine shootings to highlight their issue.

#### *Let pictures tell the story*

Numerous studies confirm that visual information is much more powerful than verbal information. Always think about what pictures could best illustrate your story and make those pictures accessible to journalists—especially TV journalists. For example, don’t hold a press conference about overcrowded ECEC facilities in your organization’s headquarters; hold it in an overcrowded ECEC facility.

### OBJECTIVES OF MEDIA CONTACTS

While keeping in mind your broad goal for your media relations program (i.e. the actions you want your target audience to take), it is important to know what the objective of each media contact is. These objectives may include the following:

- ◆ **Event publicity.** If your organization is holding a specific event (e.g. a Ready to Succeed community forum), the media can help you publicize the event in advance by several means. They may write a story about the issue in general, using the event as a hook. They may agree to do a public service announcement (PSA) or include your event on a community calendar.
- ◆ **Event coverage.** Additionally, the media may attend your event and write a story about it after the fact.
- ◆ **Issue coverage.** The media may write about your issue in the absence of an event you may have organized. Usually, issue coverage requires a hook, something to make the story newsworthy

(e.g. the release of new information, the anniversary of a well-known event, a trip to the area by a celebrity, etc.), and the hook must have a local angle.

- ◆ **Editorial coverage.** Your issue may appear in the media as opinion, not issue or event coverage. In some cases, the newspaper itself may write an editorial, while in others it may print an op-ed piece from an outside writer. A simple letter to the editor may be considered editorial coverage of your issue.

## TOOLS FOR MEDIA RELATIONS

In order to achieve the specific objectives listed above, you must select the proper way to contact the media. Below are several “tools of the trade” used to implement a media program.

- ◆ **Press advisory.** A press advisory is used to let the media know of an upcoming event so that they can (1) attend themselves and (2) publicize the event to their audience. A press advisory should be very short, giving the “Who, What, Where, When, and Why” of the event. Contact information should be displayed prominently at the top in case any reporter has questions. It should be faxed out three to seven days before the event and should be followed up with a phone call to make sure it doesn’t get lost in the jumble of papers on the reporter’s desk. See page 10 of this media relations guide for a sample press advisory for your community forum.
- ◆ **Press release.** A press release is used to announce something new, either the release of new information or an upcoming event. A press release is more detailed than a press advisory and includes quotes from relevant leaders or spokespeople. Ideally, a press release should read very much like a news story; this makes it easier for reporters to use the release and makes it more likely that their final story will include the ideas that you want. Like a news story, the press release should feature the important facts in the first paragraph, the reasons why those facts are important in the second paragraph, and background information in the following paragraphs. A press release should be between one and two pages long and, like the press advisory, should include contact information displayed prominently at the top. A press release should also be followed up with a phone call to answer any questions a reporter may have about it. See page 12 of this media relations guide for a sample press release for your community forum.
- ◆ **Press conference.** A press conference is used to call attention to a very significant news event. Since journalists are very busy people, you should always ask yourself when scheduling a press conference, “What can a press conference achieve that a press release and phone call cannot?” Generally, the answer that justifies a press conference is some visual information that requires the journalists’ presence to convey, for example, a celebrity coming to town.
- ◆ **Letter to the editor.** A letter to the editor should be a brief (50–100 word) statement of opinion to be published on the paper’s op-ed page. While often in response to a news story or another editorial, it doesn’t have to be. Particularly in local newspapers, letters to the editor may be used to publicize upcoming events. It is important that letters to the editor appear to be genuine expressions of opinion from “average readers.” Letters that appear to be orchestrated by an organization tend not to get published. See page 14 of this media relations guide for a sample letter to the editor about your community forum.
- ◆ **Op-ed piece.** An op-ed piece is simply a longer (500–700 word) statement of opinion destined for the op-ed page. Op-ed pieces must be very well reasoned and well written in order to be considered for publication. They tend to be submitted either by well-known people (e.g. politicians) or by “experts” in a given field. Often, however, a person with a cogent experience about an issue may successfully submit an op-ed piece.

- ◆ **Editorial board meeting.** An editorial board meeting is used to convince a newspaper to cover a particular issue and/or to publish an editorial about it. In order to get an editorial board meeting, you must convince the newspaper’s leadership that the issue is important to their readership and that you can provide significant information about it, generally by bringing to the meeting an “expert” (often jokingly defined as someone from at least 100 mile away).

## RESOURCES FOR MEDIA RELATIONS

In order to implement your media relations program effectively, you must develop, at a minimum, the following resources:

- ◆ **Press list.** You should keep a list of all newspapers, television stations, and radio stations in your area. The list should include the telephone number, fax number, name of the editor or news director, and the name of the journalist covering your issue. Remember, journalists change jobs frequently, so you must work to keep your press list up to date.
- ◆ **Press kit.** You should keep a press kit for distribution to reporters at your events. The press kit should include (1) your most recent press release, including contacts’ names and phone numbers, (2) fact sheets, including sources for all facts and figures, (3) informational fliers or brochures, (4) copies of articles that have been written about your issue, including op-ed pieces you had published, (5) background information on your organization, and (6) bios of your organization’s leaders. See the last two pages of this media relations guide for helpful fact sheets for community forums entitled, “Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan” and “Key Concepts of Brain
- ◆ **News archive.** You should keep every article that is printed about your organization or your issue. This archive will help you determine which types of stories are likely to be printed, which journalists are likely to write favorable stories, and what represents news, not rehashed information, to journalists.
- ◆ **Resource people.** Journalists like to talk to a broad variety of people about any issue they are covering. You should help them by steering them to experts, local advocates, supportive politicians, and regular people who illustrate the problems you are trying to solve (e.g. an ECEC provider facing barriers to getting more training, or a parent unable to find an ECEC provider near his or her home).

## ATTACHMENTS AND RESOURCE MATERIALS

*The materials included in the media relations guide will help you develop your message and carry out your media relations activities. With kind permission from Sage Publications, Inc., we have reproduced materials from News for a Change that present the format for writing a press release, a press advisory, a checklist for media event planning, a checklist for making your story newsworthy, and tips for calling a journalist. We have also written sample Ready to Succeed Community Forum materials (a press release, press advisor, and letter to the editor) in the News for Change-recommended style for you to use.*

## CHECKLIST: MEDIA EVENT PLANNING TIME LINE

### *One month in advance*

- ◆ Decide on objective and key message of the event
- ◆ Decide on a newsworthy “hook” for the event
- ◆ Find a site for the event
- ◆ Brainstorm some interesting visual elements that will reinforce the key messages of the event: charts, ads, demonstrators with signs, and so on
- ◆ Arrange for speakers
- ◆ Update media list, if necessary
- ◆ Begin planning media kit materials

### *Two weeks in advance*

- ◆ Draft media advisory and news release
- ◆ Draft fact sheets, speakers’ bios, and other media kit materials
- ◆ Assign roles for people at the event (media greeter, emcee, speakers, etc.)
- ◆ With speakers, draft talking points

### *One week to three days before*

- ◆ Fax media advisory (including directions to the event site) and news release
- ◆ Follow up by calling journalists to pitch the story to them
- ◆ Compile media kits
- ◆ Conduct speakers’ training
- ◆ Create sign-in sheet for attending journalists
- ◆ Create table tents, name tags, or other means of identifying speakers

### *The day before*

- ◆ Make follow-up calls; re-fax the advisory and news release to key media contacts
- ◆ Make sure media kits and all other conference materials are ready
- ◆ Deliver media kits to any journalists who has requested materials in advance
- ◆ Make sure journalists have directions to the site
- ◆ Rehearse the event with speakers, if possible; ask every question that could possibly be important and prepare for every possible problem

### *At the event*

- ◆ Introduce each speaker; keep comments to three minutes, maximum
- ◆ Leave time for questions after all speakers have presented
- ◆ After the formal presentation, help reporters connect with individual speakers for one-on-one interviews

### *After the event*

- ◆ Send media kits to any journalists who didn’t attend
- ◆ Call journalists who attended, offering to answer further questions
- ◆ Track and evaluate coverage to see how you can improve next time

This information is reprinted from *News for a Change*, by Lawrence Wallack, Katie Woodruff, Lori Dorfman, and Iris Diaz. Sage Publications, Inc., 1999.

## CHECKLIST: WHAT MAKES YOUR STORY NEWSWORTHY?

The more newsworthy elements your story contains and the broader the audience it interests, the more likely it will show up on the evening news or in the newspaper.

Controversy/conflict	Are there adversaries or other tensions in the story?
Broad interest	Does this story affect a lot of people, or does it relate to groups of special concern such as children?
Injustice	Are there basic inequalities or unfair circumstances?
Irony	What is ironic or unusual about this story? Is there hypocrisy to reveal?
Local peg	Why is this story important or meaningful to local residents?
Personal angle	Is there a person with direct experience with the issue who can provide an authentic voice in the story? (Make sure such people are trained advocates as well as traditional “victims.”)
Breakthrough	Does this story mark an important historical “first” or other event?
Anniversary peg	Can this story be linked to the anniversary of a local, national, or topical historical milestone?
Seasonal peg	Can this story be attached to a holiday or seasonal event?
Celebrity	Is there a celebrity already involved with or willing to lend his or her name to the issue?
Visuals	What interesting visuals can you create or take advantage of to give journalists something interesting to shoot?

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## TIPS FOR CALLING A JOURNALIST

1. *Always start by asking if this is a good time to talk. If the reporter is working on deadline, offer to call back later.*
2. *Pitch to reporters you know (and get to know lots of reporters). Remember the basics of developing relationships; journalists depend on sources they can trust for good information.*
3. *Incorporate the elements of newsworthiness in your pitch. Emphasize conflict, controversy, significance, and timeliness.*
4. *Give reasons why the story is timely now.*
5. *Broaden the base of the story. Think of why it might be important to people who drive, people concerned about their health, people with children—the broadest possible audience. The more people potentially affected, the better your story’s prospects.*
6. *Pitch specific stories, not general issues. For example, don’t talk about the problem of poverty but about specific policies that make the problem better or worse and specific people suffering or benefiting from those policies. Explain why these people’s experience is representative.*
7. *Try to link your issue to some other issue in the news.*
8. *Don’t over-prepare. Don’t read your pitch from a script.*
9. *Remember that the person you pitch may have to turn around and pitch it to his or her editor. Keep it simple and clear. Emphasize key points like the following one:*

*“More than 150 people will be rallying tomorrow to protest the reduced transit schedule. The transit authority cuts mean that all the people on the East Side will no longer have bus service on weekends. People will not be able to get to work and will lose their jobs.”*
10. *Don’t be discouraged if the person is not interested in your story. You may have to pitch it to several different people.*

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## FORMAT FOR WRITING A PRESS ADVISORY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

(Today's date)

**CONTACT: (Name)**

(Phone Number)

**MEDIA ADVISORY HEADLINE: KEEP IT SHORT, ALL CAPITAL LETTERS**

**WHAT:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Two to three sentences on what is happening)

**WHEN:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Date and time)

**WHERE:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Address)

**WHO:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Names of people or organizations involved)

**WHY:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Two or three sentences that highlight why this event is important and newsworthy)

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## SAMPLE PRESS ADVISORY

# READY TO SUCCEED DIALOGUE WITH MICHIGAN

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
(Today's date)

**CONTACT: (Name)**  
(Phone Number)

[ORGANIZATION NAME] TO HOST EARLY CHILDHOOD FORUM

**WHAT:** \_\_\_\_\_ [ORGANIZATION NAME] will host a community forum on early childhood education and care. Expected to attend are local leaders from the fields of business, health, education, labor, media, religion, law enforcement, philanthropy, and government as well as parents/consumers. Parents are invited to share their views and experiences regarding child care and education.

**WHEN:** \_\_\_\_\_ Monday, May 15th, from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon

**WHERE:** \_\_\_\_\_ Civic Center, 100 Maple Street, Smallville, in the main ballroom

**WHO:** \_\_\_\_\_ [ORGANIZATION] in conjunction with [OTHER ORGANIZATIONS]

**WHY:** \_\_\_\_\_ There is a growing consensus among a broad spectrum of Michigan leaders that ensuring that all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed should be one of the state's top priorities. The purpose of this community forum, one of many being held across the state, is to ensure that citizens from every area of the state and from every walk of life participate in a dialogue about how to develop a high-quality, universal system of early childhood education and care.

## FORMAT FOR WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

(Today's date)

**CONTACT: (Name)**

(Phone Number)

**HEADLINE: KEEP IT SHORT, ALL CAPITAL LETTERS**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Paragraph:           What is happening, who is involved, where and when (briefly)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph:           Why this event is significant and newsworthy
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph:           Quote from an expert involved that emphasizes how significant this event is
- 4<sup>th</sup> Paragraph:           More details on where and when the event is happening
- 5<sup>th</sup>+ Paragraphs:       Other pertinent details, including: (1) speakers' names and affiliations, (2) description of any photo opportunities, and (3) further quotes from other spokespeople
- Final Paragraph:       One-sentence "boiler plate" description of the organization(s) involved in the event

MORE (if release goes to a second page, or)

# # # (to indicate end)

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SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

**READY TO SUCCEED  
DIALOGUE WITH MICHIGAN**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
(Today's date)

**CONTACT: (Name)**  
(Phone Number)

[ORGANIZATION NAME] TO HOST EARLY CHILDHOOD FORUM

[COUNTY] has chosen to host one of 20 community forums for the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan. The purpose of the forum, scheduled for [DATE] at [PLACE], is to support dialogue in [COUNTY] about high-quality, universal early childhood education and care. The forums are intended to help communities mobilize the involvement of all sectors in achieving this vision. Michigan policymakers will use information that emerges from community forums to strengthen approaches to ensure that every Michigan child enters kindergarten ready to succeed.

An increasing volume of data supports the belief that high-quality, universal early childhood education and care is an investment that pays off throughout a child's life. A child who enters kindergarten ready to succeed is less likely to require special education, drop out of school, go on welfare, or spend time in the criminal justice system. Conversely, he or she is more likely to earn more income and contribute more to society. Yet it is becoming increasingly difficult for parents to find high-quality child care and education programs—or to afford them if they do.

“This issue affects every Michigan family,” said [SPOKESPERSON]. “Even if you don't have children, you have a stake in Michigan's ability to develop the well-educated workforce it needs to compete in tomorrow's economy. All the data show that helping kids enter kindergarten ready to succeed is the most important step in ensuring that they enter the workforce ready to compete.”

Families here in [COUNTY] are finding the child care conundrum difficult to solve. “It's been a nightmare,” said [NAME], a [CITY] mother of two. “We were on a waiting list for six months before getting our kids into a program we felt comfortable with, and now we're spending almost \$200 a week—almost a quarter of our take-home pay.”

Expected to attend the forum are local leaders from the fields of business, health, education, labor, media, religion, law enforcement, philanthropy, and government as well as parents/consumers. Community members are invited to share their views and experiences regarding child care and education. During the forum, participants will be asked to consider four priority action areas:

- ◆ Parent education and support
- ◆ Professional development of other (nonparent) caregivers
- ◆ Public awareness
- ◆ State and local public/private partnerships

\*\*\*MORE\*\*\*

The Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan was established by P.A. 135 of 1999 to examine how Michigan can develop a system that assures that every child has a good opportunity to enter kindergarten ready to succeed. In addition to holding 20 community forums across the state, the dialogue has three components:

- ◆ Conducting a state summit in 2000 that brings together leaders who attended the 1999 Ready to Learn Leadership Summit
- ◆ Examining outstanding early childhood education and care practices implemented in Michigan and elsewhere for the purpose of presenting proposals for consideration by the governor and legislature
- ◆ Consulting with parents as well as leaders in business, education, faith, health, labor, law enforcement, media, politics, philanthropy, and other sectors to garner their support in helping all children enter school ready to succeed

[ORGANIZATION], which is hosting the community forum in [COUNTY], is [BRIEF DESCRIPTION].

###

## SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

As president of the [COUNTY] Chamber of Commerce, I am concerned with not only the success of local business, but with making [COUNTY] a great place to live, work, and raise children. This is why I have agreed to host [OR CO-HOST] the Ready to Succeed community forum on early childhood education and care in [COUNTY] on [DATE], which will give our community a chance to voice our concerns and share our experiences and ideas. The results of the forum will be used to help Michigan develop a high-quality, universal system of early childhood education and care available to all families.

Research shows that if we want to create a skilled workforce, we've got to start with children from the day they are born to get them engaged in learning by the time they reach kindergarten. And we've all got a role to play in making this happen—including the business community. I invite my fellow citizens to join in the dialogue to examine how we can all work together on this most important issue.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

President, [COUNTY] Chamber of Commerce

## *PRESS FACT SHEET ON THE* **READY TO SUCCEED DIALOGUE WITH MICHIGAN**

P.A. 135 of 1999 established the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan to examine how Michigan can develop a system that assures that every child has a good opportunity to enter kindergarten ready to learn. The dialogue has four major components:

- ◆ Conducting at least one summit in 2000 that brings together leaders who attended the 1999 Ready to Learn Leadership Summit
- ◆ Examining outstanding early childhood education and care practices implemented in Michigan and elsewhere for the purpose of presenting proposals for consideration by the governor and legislature
- ◆ Holding community forums across the state to enable the dialogue to report to the legislature and governor the full range of community concerns about early childhood education and care
- ◆ Consulting with parents as well as leaders in business, education, religion, health, labor, media, law enforcement, government, philanthropy, and other sectors to garner their support in helping all children enter school ready to succeed

In 1999, 20 communities throughout the state held forums prior to a leadership summit on June 11. The purpose of the forums was to carry out a dialogue in Michigan communities on the essential components of a quality early childhood education and care system. An effort was made in each community to engage a cross-section of leaders from the different sectors. Results of the forums were considered at the June summit.

The most significant outcome of the June leadership summit has been the successful mobilization of Michigan opinion leaders to

- ◆ create widespread recognition of the importance of quality early childhood education and care for all children in the state and
- ◆ translate this knowledge into action to assure that all children have the opportunity to succeed.

Four priority action teams are now designing strategies to achieve the vision of all children, ready to succeed.

A goal of the 2000 dialogue is to support 20 new community forums as a way to extend the dialogue throughout Michigan. During the year 2000 forums, communities will be asked to consider four priority action areas:

- ◆ Parent education and support
- ◆ Professional development of other (nonparent) caregivers
- ◆ Public awareness
- ◆ State and local public/private partnerships

Results from the forums will be highlighted during a fall leadership summit and contribute to the recommendations presented to the governor, legislature, and citizens of Michigan.

## *PRESS FACT SHEET ON THE* **KEY CONCEPTS OF BRAIN RESEARCH**

A 1996 national conference on early brain research (Brain Development in Young Children: New Frontiers for Research, Policy, and Practice) has caused people to reexamine the nature and importance of basic human interactions with babies and to recognize that early nurturing will help children become better at

- ◆ regulating their emotions;
- ◆ forming attachments to and developing empathy for other people; and
- ◆ developing the logical reasoning and problem-solving skills necessary for school and work.

Conversely, people are beginning to understand the extent that negative experiences early in life, such as abuse or neglect, may cause the brain to respond more violently to stressful situations in later life.

The conference thus focused national attention on (1) the importance of healthy brain development in young children and (2) the implications of early brain development for our nation's future well being.

Dr. Harry Chugani, pediatric neurologist at Children's Hospital of Michigan, contributed to the body of research that inspired the conference. His findings suggest that how a child is nurtured in the first three years plays a significant role in how the brain chooses to "wire" itself for life. Dr. Chugani's research led to a series of significant conclusions.

- ◆ The emotional and social parts of the brain develop as a result of human relationships during the child's first two years.
- ◆ There are "critical periods" or "windows of opportunity" for learning and growth in intellectual, social, and emotional domains.
- ◆ Sensory stimulation (seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting) enables the brain to create or modify neural pathways.
- ◆ The brain operates according to a "use it or lose it" principle and begins to "prune" those pathways that have not been "fired" in response to early experiences.

As a result, public attention is now concentrated on how human interaction and response affects children's development in a multitude of ways. We now recognize that

- ◆ human development depends on the interplay of (or "dance" between) nature and nurture;
- ◆ early care and nurturing will have a decisive and lasting impact on a child's future development, learning, and capacity to regulate emotions;
- ◆ the human brain is resilient, but there are "critical periods" when negative experiences or the absence of appropriate stimulation can have a more serious and sustained effect; and
- ◆ research points to the effectiveness of prevention and early intervention on behalf of children at risk for abuse or neglect.

Some information drawn from *Rethinking the Brain, New Insights into Early Development*, by Rima Shore. Families and Work Institute, 1997.



# Handouts for Use in Community Forums for the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan

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May 2000

## CONTENTS

Question Guides for Breakout Sessions  
Form for Documenting Breakout Session Discussion Points  
Community Forum Sign-in Sheet

# QUESTION GUIDE FOR BREAKOUT SESSIONS

## *Parent Education and Support*

### GOALS

#### *Long-term*

All Michigan parents and parenting adults (who may not be a child's biological parent) will have the knowledge and support they need as their children's most important nurturers and teachers. All Michigan communities will have a family-centered birthing and early childhood system that provides this knowledge and support through integrated efforts that include community-based organizations, health care, child care, education, social work, public health, and mental health.

#### *Short-term*

- ◆ All parents and parenting adults to a newborn will be provided with a clear description of how early brain development affects lifelong learning and behavior and how parents can stimulate that development.
- ◆ All parents and parenting adults will have access to programs that meet the literacy and educational needs of both parents and children.
- ◆ All children from infancy will be read to at least one-half hour per day by a parent or other caregiver.
- ◆ All parents will have access to mentors or teachers to help them be better parents.
- ◆ All parents and parenting adults will be provided with information and criteria that they can use to judge the quality and appropriateness of child care arrangements outside the home.
- ◆ Michigan communities will have access to knowledge, technical assistance, and best practice information to develop, fund, and provide integrated parent education and support.

### HELPFUL QUESTIONS

Please address the questions below in your breakout session, plus any others you think are important. Your group's facilitator will record the responses.

#### *Parents*

- ◆ Parents are their children's first and most important teachers. What efforts can be made to help engage and support parents in this responsibility? What are some barriers that parents face in meeting this responsibility?
- ◆ How might state and local initiatives (e.g., media, outreach, programs) encourage parents to read to their children, understand the fundamentals of early brain development, and be involved in the child's out-of-home care and education?
- ◆ What kinds of parent education and support should be available? Can this be family centered and community based?

#### *Workplace*

- ◆ How can employers partner with parents to facilitate the parent's involvement in their young
- ◆ What information would help businesses develop creative solutions to enabling parental involvement?

#### *Child Care*

- ◆ What kinds of care are available and what are not?

- ◆ Does the available care constitute a broad range of quality options for families with diverse schedules and financial situations? What are the barriers to options that are not currently available?

*Community*

- ◆ What is this community actively doing in the areas of parent education and support? Are these efforts successful? If so, why? If not, why not?
- ◆ What are the community's strengths in relation to families with young children?
- ◆ What else is needed?
- ◆ How might an early childhood education and care system support or assist local efforts?

*General*

- ◆ What can be done in our community to reach these goals?
- ◆ What would help our community move forward?

## QUESTION GUIDE FOR BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### *Caregiver Professional Development*

#### GOAL

Increase the availability of qualified adults who care for and educate the children of others.

#### HELPFUL QUESTIONS

Please address the questions below in your breakout session, plus any others you think are important.

Your group's facilitator will record the responses.

#### *Caregivers*

- ◆ What competencies are needed in formal (nonparent) caregivers?
- ◆ Does the current system ensure competencies? If not, what can be done to ensure competencies?

#### *Parents*

- ◆ How can parents be wise consumers of education and care?

#### *Advocacy*

- ◆ How can communities advocate for higher standards for caregivers? In what areas should they seek higher standards?

#### *Community*

- ◆ What is our community doing to assist caregivers in their professional development?
- ◆ What more could be done?
- ◆ How might a statewide partnership approach augment community efforts?

#### *General*

- ◆ What can be done in our community to reach this goal?
- ◆ What would help our community move forward?

# QUESTION GUIDE FOR BREAKOUT SESSIONS

## *Public Awareness*

### GOAL

Increase understanding of early child development, human brain development, the fundamental importance of the early years, and the elements of successful parenting among the following groups: parents, families, other (nonparent) caregivers, the business community, public officials, policymakers, and others.

### HELPFUL QUESTIONS

Please address the questions below in your breakout session, plus any others you think are important.

Your group's facilitator will record the responses.

#### *Community Coordination*

- ◆ What community-based efforts exist which focus on early education and care?
- ◆ Is there a collaborative body for community action in the community? Does this group participate or lead local initiatives on early education and care? Does this group coordinate resources—finances and staff—which address these initiatives?

#### *Advocacy*

- ◆ How can we convey the message that early intervention in education and care is proactive, preventive, and benefits the community as a whole?
- ◆ How can we encourage policymakers to support increased investment in early childhood education and care?
- ◆ How can we help all sectors of the community to be advocates for infant and preschool children to have optimal learning and care opportunities? What are the barriers to this? What outreach might lessen them? What organizations and processes currently work to address this grassroots issue?
- ◆ What community sectors may not see a relationship to early education and care and the importance of investing in a young, developing mind? How can we work to inform and gain their support?

#### *General*

- ◆ What can be done in our community to reach this goal?
- ◆ What would help our community move forward?

## QUESTION GUIDE FOR BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### *Public/Private Partnerships*

#### GOAL

Establish state and local public/private partnerships to (1) mobilize community action to support families with young children and (2) promote health, safety, and education policies and programs that maximize child development.

#### HELPFUL QUESTIONS

Please address the questions below in your breakout session, plus any others you think are important.

Your group's facilitator will record the responses.

#### *Existing Partnerships*

- ◆ Do we have any public/private partnerships that do work in the areas of early education and care? Which priority areas (parent education, caregiver development, or public awareness) do they address? How can these efforts be augmented?
- ◆ What collaboration successes do we have? Can these partnerships expand into early education and care?

#### *Partnership Barriers*

- ◆ What barriers, if any, exist that impede such partnerships? In what areas? By what means can these barriers be overcome?

#### *Dialogue/Support*

- ◆ In what ways can the RTS Dialogue with Michigan support our community's efforts to move forward?

#### *General*

- ◆ What can be done in our community to reach this goal?
- ◆ What would help our community move forward?

COMMUNITY FORUM DOCUMENTATION FORM  
*Summary of Key Discussion Points*

*Circle the priority topic for your session:*

Parent education/support

Public private partnerships

Caregiver professional development

Public awareness

*Please record the most important discussion points of the breakout session using bullet phrases.*

What can be done in our community to reach these goals?

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆

What would help our community move forward?

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆

Other key discussion points

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆

COMMUNITY FORUM SIGN-IN SHEET

*Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan*

**Name**

**Address**

**Phone**

**Fax**

**Email**

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APPENDIX D  
RTS Dialogue with Michigan  
*Meeting Log*

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# Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan

## *Meeting Log*

### *as of July 31, 2000*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Meeting</i>
October 12, 1999	Legislative Children’s Caucus—Presentation by Carl III
October 22, 1999	Discussion of Coordinating Council and Venture Capital Partnership
November 18, 1999	Multi-Media Public Awareness Campaign Priority Team
November 29, 1999	State and local Public/Private Partnerships Priority Team
December 3, 1999	Parent Education and Support Priority Team
December 9, 1999	Professional Development of Other Caregivers Priority Team
January 4, 2000	State and local Public/Private Partnerships Priority Team Funding Subcommittee
January 4, 2000	State and local Public/Private Partnerships Priority Team Grant Program Subcommittee
January 6, 2000	State and local Public/Private Partnerships Priority Team Community Networking Subcommittee
January 14, 2000	Parent Education and Support Priority Team
February 3, 2000	State and local Public/Private Partnerships Priority Team Funding Subcommittee
February 7, 2000	State and local Public/Private Partnerships Priority Team Meeting
February 9, 2000	Professional Development of Other Caregivers Priority Team Meeting
February 9, 2000	Legislative Children’s Caucus—Presentation by Robin Karr-Morse
February 11, 2000	Coordinating Council
March 6, 2000	State and local Public/Private Partnerships Priority Team Community Networking Subcommittee
March 24, 2000	State and local Public/Private Partnerships Priority Team Community Networking Subcommittee
April 5, 2000	Professional Development of Other Caregivers Priority Team

April 10, 2000	State and local Public/Private Partnerships Priority Team Community Networking Subcommittee
April 13, 2000	Multi-Media Public Awareness Campaign
May 2, 2000	State Forum for 1999 Community Forum Coordinators
May 5, 2000	Parent Education and Support Priority Team
May 15, 2000	Coordinating Council
May 16, 2000	Legislative Children’s Caucus—Presentation by Joan Lessen-Firestone
May 23, 2000	Professional Development of Other Caregivers Priority Team Meeting
July 26, 2000	State and local Public/Private Partnerships Priority Team
August 7, 2000	Coordinating Council
September 21–22	Statewide Summit: Fall Dialogue
November 10, 2000	Coordinating Council

APPENDIX E  
Brochure and Press Coverage

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# OPINION

Thursday  
June 8, 2000

## State, city move on childhood issues

Political leaders see wisdom of helping kids in their earliest years

If you ask state Rep. Lynne Martinez, D-Lansing, about the importance of an infant's earliest experiences, her eyes will light up and she'll exude an enthusiasm that is infectious. She will passionately explain the connection between nurturing, positive stimulation, and the "hard wiring" of an infant's brain.

She will knowledgeably describe the science of brain development, and bring you to the unavoidable conclusion what happens in the first years of life helps to determine a child's long term success in the many roles he or she will assume, including student, employee, parent, and taxpayer.

And what does science tell us about the importance of the preschool years?

Research has shown more graphically than ever before that learning ability and emotional stability can be heavily influenced by what occurs in the first hours, months and years of a child's life. When babies' experiences are highly sensory, active, and challenging, neurons branch expansively in their brains in ways that don't happen later in life. That branching thick-



**Sharon Peters**

Voices

ens the cortex of the brain and the thicker the cortex, the greater the intelligence throughout life.

Genetics, of course, still plays a major role, but the thickness of the cortex, which can affect IQ as much as 40 points, is largely environmentally determined. When the positive interactive experiences do not occur, and when children are chronically or highly stressed in their earliest years, the physical architecture of the brain does not develop in this way, and efforts to compensate are much more difficult later in life.

Martinez and a number of her colleagues — on both sides of the political aisle — have been working hard to create a "culture shift," to borrow her phrase, that places a greater value on ensuring that all Michigan babies get the right start in life. Their work has been buttressed by the work of com-

munity groups, child advocates, philanthropic organizations and a number of business leaders in Michigan.

Together, they are having an impact. Most recently, a significant step — spearheaded by House Speaker Chuck Perricone, R-Kalamazoo Township — was taken to ensure young children are ready for school. The House passed legislation that would provide communities with resources to reach out to families with young children, and assist parents as they tackle the tough, but absolutely critical, job of raising Michigan's next generation.

The legislation passed by the House would take a relatively small amount of the state's current large school aid surplus and invest it in early childhood interventions that are known to pay off in reduced special education, acute health care, child welfare and juvenile justice costs.

If the Michigan Senate and Gov. John Engler agree, and I believe they should, Michigan will move one big step closer to providing successful community-based early childhood programming, an important goal already achieved in states like North Carolina and Florida. Michigan can and should strive to achieve a national reputation for its commitment to young children.

Solutions being formulating at the state level are only one part of the pic-

ture, though. Lansing is particularly well poised to begin to fully support families of young children. With the encouragement of the Lansing School District, Mayor David Hollister had the foresight last fall to create a broad-based panel to address early childhood development. To ensure community buys in, the mayor reached out to a wide range of area business and human service leaders.

Over the course of the last several months, the commission has worked diligently to develop recommendations for change through recognizing and linking existing resources and creating new ways to inform and assist parents.

In the coming weeks, the commission will finalize its work. It will report to the mayor during the summer so that he can begin to implement recommendations for the new school year. The work of the commission and the steps our city and state are poised to take are exciting and will pay off for years to come.

*Sharon Claytor Peters is president of the advocacy group Michigan's Children and a former member of the Lansing Board of Education. She belongs to the State Journal's Editorial Advisory Board whose members write a column each Thursday. Write her c/o Lansing State Journal, 120 E. Lenawee, Lansing 48919.*

# Every dollar spent on early child development saves \$7

In the old, old days, teachers figured that kids were mature enough to start learning when they were around 5 years old. That's why traditionally children have started kindergarten at age 5.

But over the past 10 years or so, scientists and doctors have learned a lot about how the brains of newborns develop. Their findings would not surprise any observant mother who has noticed how rapidly her baby learns during the first few years of life, but they are profoundly significant to a society that aims to do well by its children.

The science is clear. The brains of babies develop most

rapidly between ages 1 and 3. In effect, the intellectual and emotional circuits of the brain are being hard wired during that time. And this means that children are physiologically best prepared to learn at a very early age, certainly well before they start kindergarten.

That's why for the past year, a group of 50 Michigan leaders has been exploring the implications of these research findings. The group is very broad; it includes legislators, scientists, teachers, child welfare advocates, physicians and hospital officials, media people and leaders in business, labor and philanthropy.

It's called Ready To Succeed, a name taken from the overwhelming consensus that public policy in Michigan should make sure that every baby that is born in our state should be ready to learn and succeed by the time he or she starts going to kindergarten.

Our first conclusion was simple: There is a colossal dis-

## Power Filled

By *Phil Power*



connect between the latest scientific findings — that children learn best when they are very, very young — and the actual way we operate our schools and public agencies.

THIRTEEN  
WILLIAMSTON  
NEWSPAPER

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Your hometown newspaper serving Williamston, Webberville and Eastern Ingham County for 127 years



DETROIT FREE PRESS

HEATH MERIWETHER

## Reach out to kids, early



OCCASIONALLY, through the wonders of e-mail, I feel like I'm hosting a radio talk show with an angry caller letting me know what he thinks.

"Do you really think it's the state's job to get preschool age children ready for school? Spend millions of my (our) tax dollars to do a job that is already the parents' responsibility? What about some state aid for my family with two preschool kids and a wife who chooses to stay home and take care of our own kids? What about the financial sacrifices we make to raise our family this way? I AM SICK OF FUNDING BABY-SITTING PROGRAMS FOR EVERYONE ELSE!!"



This reaction last week was prompted by my recent column about a statewide effort to invest far more money and talent into preparing children from birth to age 5 for success in school and in their lives later on for productive citizenship.

So, just like a radio host, I fired back: "Here's what I think. Brain research in the past decade is quite conclusive on how the brain is stimulated to grow and make connections in the first 33 months of life.

"I think it's great that you and your wife made a decision so that your wife can stay at home and provide the sort of nurture you suggest. But I don't think that's the reality of many people's lives, nor do I think that the lives of millions of youngsters born into impoverished (both financial and emotional) environments should be wasted because we have a policy and a philosophy that says

we're not willing to invest in the lives of these children if their parents can't provide everything they need."

### Some families need more help

As my correspondent suggested, parents are the child's first, and most important, teachers. Yet half of Michigan's children under the age of 5, about 300,000, receive some kind of early childhood education and care from someone other than a parent. That's fueled by the necessity in many families for both parents to work, as well as the rise in single-parent families, particularly in impoverished neighborhoods.

And many if not most parents, including highly educated and affluent parents, don't know how to nurture infants and toddlers. A parent or child care worker who plops a child down in front of a television for hours isn't providing the kind of stimulus that the developing brain needs.

Well before last week's back-and-forth, I've been convinced that a lot of the focus on education these days, as welcome as it might be, is somewhat misplaced. We've built a higher education system that is the envy of the world and a magnet for many of its best students; we spend billions and billions of dollars each year on kindergarten through 12th grade. But a lot of that effort is lost on millions of children who show up for kindergarten so far behind that they'll never catch up.

### A critical time for a child

Why is that? Brain research tells us that the first 1,000 days of life are the most critical in the development of a child's emotional control, social attachment and vocabulary. What we've learned is as complex as scientists measuring the brain's energy with the positron emission tomography scanner and

as simple as reading books aloud and talking a lot to your child.

Fortunately, a lot of politicians, policymakers and businesses are beginning to hear the voices of child advocates and the scientists of the brain.

Both presidential candidates have acknowledged the importance of early childhood education in their platforms, although much of their focus is on Head Start, which still touches only about a million disadvantaged children and starts at age 4.

In Michigan, a statewide coalition of civic leaders, called Ready to Succeed, will hold its second summit next month in Lansing to build momentum on early childhood education and care. This summer, Gov. John Engler signed a bill that authorized up to \$45 million in grants in each of the next three years to local and intermediate school districts that would encourage communities to collaborate in serving preschool children and their families.

It's only a start.

Strangely, in a society where the dangers of smoking and the necessity of seat belts has been imprinted on our collective minds, we still aren't getting the message out on how important these early years are to our children.

It might take some of those precious tax dollars my e-mail correspondent mentioned to me, but it would be the best investment we ever made.

*For more information on the summit, which runs Sept. 21-22 in Lansing, call 517-484-4954 or go online to [www.pscinc.com](http://www.pscinc.com).*

HEATH MERIWETHER is publisher of the Free Press and a member of the Ready to Succeed Coalition. You can reach him by phone at 313-222-5974, by mail at the Detroit Free Press, 600 W. Fort St., Detroit, MI 48226 or via e-mail at [meriwe@freepress.com](mailto:meriwe@freepress.com).

HMM... ..

Mail to... .. full of...

# Why Business Involvement In Early Childhood Education and Care Is A Sound Investment

BY CARL ILL AND DONALD OLENDORF

**M**ichigan business has a long-term interest in learning. Historically, private business has turned to education for answers when faced with challenges and change. In the 19th century, Michigan became the benchmark for learning innovation. Notable examples include the formation of a land grant university and a college of advanced engineering as ways to improve educational prospects and economic benefit.

Now, in the summer of 2000, the future has arrived. In K-12 education we are planning for virtual schooling, parents as teachers, learning on demand, community partnerships and full-service schools. These concepts begin with the understanding that every Michigan child should be prepared to learn; every Michigan child should read competently; and every Michigan parent can experience the excitement of helping his or her child to become a reader. We hope business will, once again, help bring education innovation to our state.

**Social change makes literacy investment a wise choice.** Effective systems of Early Childhood Education and Care can help all families realize untapped potential. Technology creates access to learning that encourages self-reliance, personal freedom and accountability. With current economic abundance driving powerful educational change, there are growing opportunities for the country to promote greater prospects for everyone. State and local governments can combine with private business and compassionate voluntary organizations to build an educational system that makes us competitive in the future. If we fail to invest in Michigan's human capital, we will be at a severe disadvantage against the rest of the world.

**Business can help parents be their children's first and best teacher.** Michigan business can help promote strong Michigan families. The tragedy of children ill-prepared for the new economy is unnecessary. Michigan's children can be healthy, happy and ready to succeed. Many, perhaps most, of your employees are

parents. Employers can build strong families through an interweaving of family, self, and work, using tangible incentives that promote family self-reliance. Some incentives like mentoring, volunteerism and promotion of family values are even free. Outstanding corporate examples in Michigan include DaimlerChrysler; the Mead Corporation, and Johnson Controls, Inc.

**The Governor has proposed a clear plan.** Recently, Governor Engler gave Michigan a bold charge when he announced *The Reading Plan for Michigan*. The reading plan says that every Michigan child

Michigan's private business sector can be an active partner in the early childhood education and care concept by encouraging family-friendly workplaces.

should be a successful reader by the end of 3rd grade. In the plan, the Governor recognizes that parents are the critical first step in this process, which begins at birth. Business should support the Governor's plan.

**Our present system costs too much and needs help.** Senator Leon Stille (R-Spring Lake) recently chaired a Blue Ribbon Committee that looked at the explosive increase of special education costs in our state. *The Stille Report* estimates that over 180 million additional special education dollars are needed due to reading failure. It is startling to consider that over 40 percent of the handicapped children in Michigan are termed as "Learning Disabled." In reality, many of them have simply not learned to read. The report states:

*"With knowledge of updated research, we, as a responsible Legislature, cannot ignore the fact that early literacy intervention works. ...Just as it is the Legislature's and school district's responsibility to help our students realize their full potential in literacy, neither can the ultimate responsibility of parents in this regard be ignored."*

In response to the Governor, a bipartisan coalition of legislators has designed a plan to help children develop literacy skills at an early age. The plan will give substance to *The Reading Plan For Michigan*. Importantly, it will put parents in charge, and help those parents who have lost their way. A comprehensive early education plan will help schools and communities focus on literacy and eventual school achievement; support from business can provide leadership to this process.

**The role of business is significant.** Michigan's private business sector can be an active partner in the early childhood education and care concept by encouraging **family-friendly workplaces**.

#### **Employers could make an immediate difference by:**

1. Understanding that birth to age five is the critical foundation of learning and parenting.
2. Offering quality childcare on-site at the workplace or helping workers secure other quality childcare.
3. Offering scholarships for childcare.
4. Providing learning tools for families on parenting; acting as a learning resource for parents who need help.
5. Adapting their HR department to help worker parents with their families' educational needs.
6. Adjusting work schedules to meet family needs.
7. Encouraging employees to be engaged in learning communities through the mentoring of children or their parents.
8. Giving workers benefit programs that emphasize personal responsibility.
9. Considering match programs for technology purchases and educational savings accounts.
10. Encouraging and rewarding community and civic involvement.

#### **Partnerships with schools can include:**

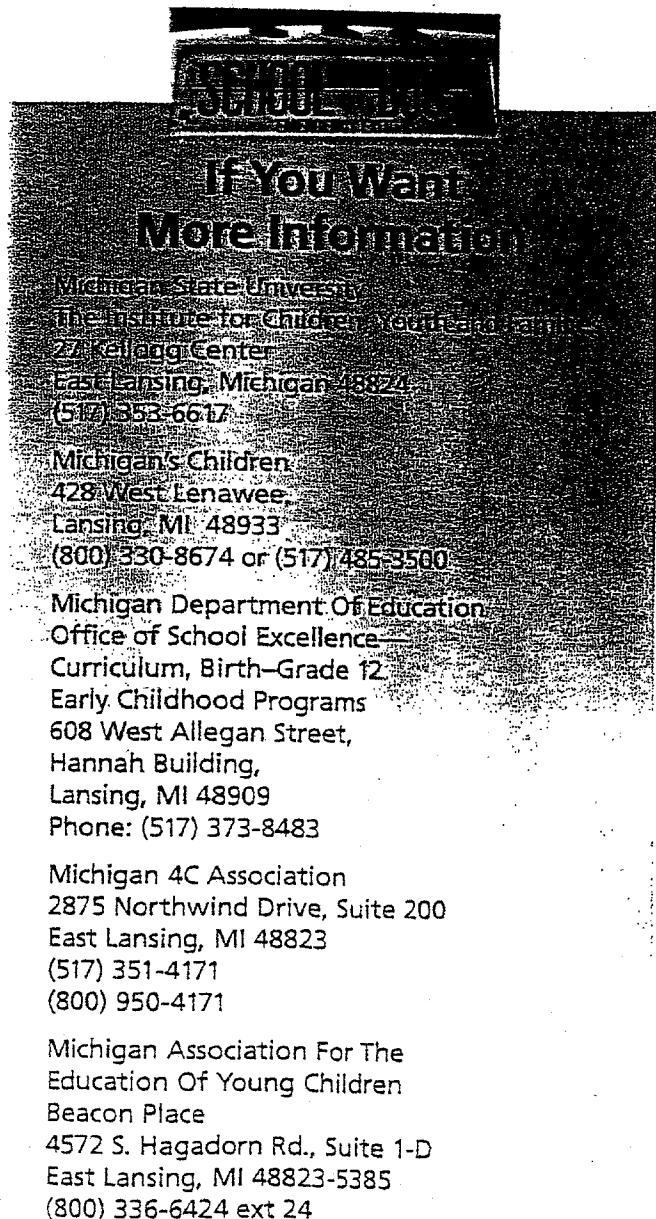
1. Taking leadership in building a master plan that coordinates community services.
2. Making sure your employees' schools address pre-literacy issues.
3. Becoming an important part of your employees' school district reading plan.
4. Helping with health needs in local schools; business and school nurses could form a partnership that is mutually beneficial.
5. Helping communities understand that the mission of public learning is giving our children the gift of literacy in a robust, free, and opportunity-filled America. In the new century, ethical issues will dominate our

national conversation as we mature and sort out economic advancement. Robert Fogel, 1993 Nobel Prize Winner in Economics and recent author of the *Fourth Great Awakening*, & *The Future of Egalitarianism* states:

*"Technology, which once promoted large scale enterprise and separated the workplace from home, is now facilitating the reunification of workplace and home... In 1840, the population of the Northern (Michigan, and states of 'Old Northwest') states had the highest literacy rates (over 90 percent) in the world."*

We can do it again by engaging all of society in the effort. **Are you willing to step into the arena?➔**

*Carl Ill is Director of Early Education Services, Allegan County Intermediate School District. Donald Olendorf is Administrator For Special Projects, Legislative Liaison, Van Buren Intermediate School District.*



**SCHOOL BUS**

**If You Want More Information**

Michigan State University  
The Institute for Children, Youth and Families  
27 Kelllogg Center  
East Lansing, Michigan 48824  
(517) 353-6617

Michigan's Children  
428 West Lenawee  
Lansing, MI 48933  
(800) 330-8674 or (517) 485-3500

Michigan Department Of Education  
Office of School Excellence  
Curriculum, Birth-Grade 12  
Early Childhood Programs  
608 West Allegan Street,  
Hannah Building,  
Lansing, MI 48909  
Phone: (517) 373-8483

Michigan 4C Association  
2875 Northwind Drive, Suite 200  
East Lansing, MI 48823  
(517) 351-4171  
(800) 950-4171

Michigan Association For The  
Education Of Young Children  
Beacon Place  
4572 S. Hagadorn Rd., Suite 1-D  
East Lansing, MI 48823-5385  
(800) 336-6424 ext 24

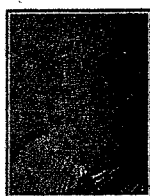
DETROIT FREE PRESS

HEATH MERIWETHER

## Early education sense



*Community program gives all kids chance to succeed*



**MACKINAC ISLAND** — Several years ago, Downriver businessman Ron Palmer began to notice that too many new workers at his manufacturing and real estate firm didn't have the basic

skills to succeed on the job.

So Palmer took a business approach. He looked for root causes. He served on workforce-development boards. He talked about the issue with teachers.

What he learned turned him into one of the state's leading voices for investing in children from birth to age 5.

"By the time a child enters kindergarten, it's really too late," said Palmer, who owns Horizon Enterprises Group of Taylor. "Kindergarten teachers could tell you who was going to succeed."

Palmer's discovery is consistent with increasing scientific evidence that much of the brain's intellectual and emotional wiring has been set before a child enters kindergarten. But his perspective is critical.

Child welfare and education experts contribute much to the early childhood discussion, but they often speak in terms foreign to the business and political leaders who gather on Mackinac every year to forge public policy and promote economic development for our region.

Palmer makes it a simple equation: Every dollar invested in a child's development from birth to age 5 saves \$7 in costs for remedial education, social welfare programs and prisons.

That kind of payoff has begun to capture policymakers' attention, and spurred a yearlong effort by 50 civic leaders representing the broadest possible cross section of the state — legislators, faith leaders, health care executives, nonprofit and philanthropic groups, educators, child welfare advo-



**"By the time a child enters kindergarten, it's really too late.**

**Kindergarten teachers could tell you who was going to succeed."**

**RON PALMER**  
Owner of  
Horizon Enterprises

cates, labor officials, business leaders and media.

Called Ready to Succeed, the coalition has spurred conversations in communities statewide, and got a spot on the program at this weekend's leadership conference. Perhaps more important, Michigan's Legislature has gotten the message about how important such an investment is.

On Wednesday, the House passed an School Aid Bill that would represent a fundamental shift in the way the state has funded early childhood efforts. Backed by Speaker Chuck Perricone, R-Kalamazoo Township, the bill authorizes up to \$45 million in grants in each of the next three years to local and intermediate school districts that would encourage community-wide collaboration to serve our youngest children and strengthen parents and families.

Crucially, it would help make sure that when children enter kindergarten classrooms, they will be ready to learn — and succeed.

"This really changes the culture. Our willingness to put this many dollars in support of kids before they even get to school is a significant shift," said Rep. Pan Godchaux, R-Birmingham, a champion of the measure, along with Reps. Lynne Martinez, D-Lansing, and Hubert Price, D-Pontiac.

In the next few days, backers must

convince the Senate and Gov. John Engler. Bipartisan backing, along with the voices of business leaders such as Palmer, ought to carry weight in Lansing.

What I like best in the legislation is the requirement that any program be a community-based collaborative among all the public and private nonprofit groups that serve preschool children and their families. It is aimed at *all* children, not just the most disadvantaged youngsters. As laudable and necessary as such targeted programs may be, they don't motivate an entire community to invest in all of its children.

The community-wide approach is one Palmer has championed among Downriver's communities, with a group called Vision 21. That group is creating "Everybody Ready," which would allow all the child agencies to look at each child in a comprehensive way.

Much of the groundwork in Downriver has been done by the Downriver Guidance Clinic, an enterprising and highly effective nonprofit agency that long has taken the holistic approach to serving children.

"Kids don't need just one thing, but many things you can only get in a system," said Michael Lott, the clinic's CEO and a recognized leader in the child welfare field.

It sure makes more sense to put money into a system that helps all children become able to succeed in school rather than dole out \$2,500 Michigan Merit college scholarships to high school students, most of them from middle-class and more affluent school districts.

Shifting the money to early childhood education is the kind of basic investment that pays off not just for Ron Palmer but for the entire state.

**HEATH MERIWETHER** is publisher of the *Free Press* and a member of the Ready to Succeed Coalition. You can reach him by phone at 313-222-5974, by mail at the Detroit Free Press, 600 W. Fort St., Detroit, MI 48226 or via e-mail at [meriwe@freepress.com](mailto:meriwe@freepress.com).

# Early childhood is key to learning how to learn

*Businesses can help workers give kids quality time*

BY ROBERT ANKENY  
CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

Business and industry need to help parents, schools and government to give pre-schoolers an early boost toward a good education.

That's critical, according to a group now forming called Ready to Succeed, because by the time children enter kindergarten, much of their intellectual and emotional "brain wiring" has been set by their experiences and treatment up to that time.

The issue was to be aired last Saturday at the **Detroit Regional Chamber's Public Policy Leadership Conference on Mackinac Island**.

A Sept. 21-22 summit meeting also is being planned in Lansing to further the Ready to Succeed concept, said Craig Ruff, president of **Public Sector Consultants Inc.** in Lansing, a nonpartisan public-policy research group.

Ruff said the meetings should be "rally cries to get the public to become serious about investing the time, effort, and money in children ages zero to 5 years old."

Ruff, who helped organize the Mackinac panel, said that recent research on the human brain makes it clear that children have

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*“What has recently been learned points to the need for access to qualified mentors and teachers in the child care area. We need to help parents ... to get the kids kick-started.”*

Craig Ruff, president, **Public Sector Consultants Inc.**

certain windows of opportunity to learn behavior and knowledge.

"They need to be brought up to speed to be ready," he said. "New findings in the field of brain research in the past 10 years, especially magnetic resonance imaging and other scans, shows how brain physiology develops in early years," Ruff said. This affects future success in school, socially acceptable behavior, even worker retention, he said.

"The sense of what has recently been learned points to the need for access to qualified mentors and teachers in the child care arena. We need to help parents acquire books and information to get the kids kick-started."

What role should business have in early childhood training?

"Companies can be sensitive to the fact that parents need time and money to take care of their children," said Ron Palmer, chairman of **Horizon Enterprises Group L.L.C.**, Taylor. "This might mean education as well as flex-time hours or child care loans."

Palmer is a founding member

of **Vision 21**, a nonprofit group that works on quality-of-life issues Downriver. He also serves on the boards of the **Metro Detroit YMCA** and the **Downriver Guidance Clinic**.

Palmer said that a study by **High/Scope Educational Research Foundation** in Ypsilanti reported that each \$1 spent in effective early childhood education could mean a cost saving of \$7 on educational remediation.

Panelists at the Mackinac Conference were to include Jane Abraham, wife of Sen. Spencer Abraham; Mike Flanagan, superintendent of Wayne County Regional Educational Service Area; and Joan Firestone, director of early childhood programs for the Oakland Intermediate Schools. Rich Homberg, general manager of **WWJ 950AM** and **WXYZ 1270AM**, and of CBS Radio Properties in Detroit, was to moderate the panel.

Further information about "Ready to Succeed" is available by calling Ruff at (517) 484-4954.

Robert Ankeny: (313) 446-0404 or at [bankeny@crain.com](mailto:bankeny@crain.com).

# LOCAL & STATE

**Schools**  
Spartan Village Elementary  
expands all-day kindergarten.  
Page 4B

**B**  
★  
**Friday**  
September 15, 2000

## Early-education panel sets plan

'Ready to Succeed' lists ways to prepare Lansing children

By Sally Tato  
Lansing State Journal

Some of the region's most important leaders sat across from 4-year-old Madison Nowlin on Thursday and talked about making Lansing kids smarter, healthier and happier before they start kindergarten.

What did Madison think? "I'm already smart," she said.

Consider her the poster child for Mayor David Hollister's Blue Ribbon Committee "Ready to Succeed."

The 26-person committee — created a year ago to figure out how to make sure children are confident and ready to learn by the time they start school — released its 12-point plan Thursday at Small Folks Development Center in Lansing.

Recommendations tackle

health care, early education, good parenting and recreation. The mayor will put together an implementation team during the next few weeks to make the committee's ideas a reality.

Key community groups — including MSU, Lansing Commu-



Hollister

nity College, the Lansing School District, Ingham County Health Department and General Motors Corp./UAW — were represented on the panel and have already pledged to help.

"We have to focus on these young kids, many of whom are at risk," Hollister told community leaders. "It's our task to make sure they grow up healthy."

Progress will mainly be tracked through the Lansing children entering kindergarten in 2005.

The committee projects that about 60 percent of those students will qualify for free and reduced-fee lunches.

They will be a racially diverse group, and more than 40 languages will be spoken in their homes.

The committee wants to make sure they all have an equal shot at success — from birth.

"What we do zero to five is extremely instrumental in what I do 15 to 25," said Lansing District Court Judge Beverly Net-

ties-Nickerson, who co-chaired the committee with Michigan State University President Peter McPherson.

"Our children are our future."

Teaching parents how to be parents, reading daily to children, taking them to museums and maintaining their health will help prepare kids to learn and look forward to doing it; the committee reported.

"It's not just numbers, colors

Please see **READY, 2B**

Continued **FROM 1B**

and shapes," said Marjorie Kostelnik, a professor at MSU's Department of Family and Child Ecology. "It's really a whole attitude about learning."

Work will start before birth with health coverage for all pregnant women and continue with other efforts until the child gets into kindergarten.

All Lansing babies born at Sparrow Hospital and Ingham Regional Medical Center will be registered in the Ready to Succeed system. Their parents will be sent home with a packet that includes information such as when and why to immunize and what needs to be done to raise a child who'll be ready to learn.

"We've said parents are the first line. Parents have to assume this responsibility," McPherson said.

"Let's think of concrete ways we can support them."

The committee's recommendations are:

■ Carry out a campaign to raise family/public awareness and implement parent and community education on the value and importance of early childhood development and learning.

■ Support the creation and maintenance of safe, stable and emotionally supportive home environments, including appropriate space for physical play and activities for all young children in Lansing.

■ Promote the use of recreational and cultural activities in the community to stimulate young children's learning.

■ Promote daily reading to children by parents and caregivers to enhance children's listening, speaking and early writing and reading

skills.

■ Ensure that pregnant women and children have health coverage and access to appropriate levels of care by linking them to existing resources.

■ Develop a cohesive, graduate system of education and support services for families based on their individual strengths and needs.

■ Establish and maintain a comprehensive directory of child-and-family-focused services and resources available to children, families and early childhood programs in Lansing.

■ Ensure an adequate supply of well-trained, consistent adults to provide high-quality education and care to children from birth to age five in Lansing.

Contact Sally Tato at 377-1066 or stato@lsj.com.



APPENDIX F  
Priority Action Teams  
*Goals*  
*Membership*

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## **Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan Priority Action Teams**

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### **Team One: PARENT EDUCATION AND SUPPORT**

#### **GOALS**

##### **Long Term**

All Michigan communities will have a family-centered birthing and early childhood system that provides this knowledge and support through the integrated efforts of community-based organizations, health care, childcare, social work, public health, and mental health.

##### **Short Term**

1. All parents and parenting adults to a newborn will be provided with a clear description of how early brain development affects lifelong learning and behavior and how parents can stimulate that development.
2. All parents and parenting adults will have access to programs that meet the literacy and educational needs of both parents and children.
3. All children from infancy will be read to at least one-half hour per day by a parent or other caregiver.
4. All parents will have access to mentors or teachers to help them be better parents.
5. All parents and parenting adults will be provided with information and criteria that they can use to judge the quality and appropriateness of childcare arrangements outside the home.
6. Michigan communities will have access to knowledge, technical assistance, and best practice information to develop, fund, and provide integrated parent education and support.

#### **TEAM**

*Leads:* Deb Dingell, Jane Abraham

*Members:* Sue Bellows, Georgene Campbell, Bobbie Davis, Dr. Teresa Holtrop, Rollie Hopgood, Theresa Herzog Mourad, Milton Rohwer

*Resources:* Peter Eckstein, Phoebe Lowell, Sharon Peters, Paul Shaheen, Betty Tableman

*Facilitator:* Craig Ruff

### **Team Two: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER CAREGIVERS**

#### **GOAL**

Increase the availability of qualified adults who care for and educate the children of others.

#### **TEAM**

*Lead:* Dave Campbell

*Members:* Lynnette Ferrell, Dr. Velvie Green, Brian Johnson, Iris Salters, Deb Vander Molen, Kathy Wilbur, Joan Williams, Michael Williamson

*Resources:* Lindy Buch, Steve Manchester, Erin McGovern, Laurie Nickson, Mark Sullivan

*Facilitator:* Suzanne Miel-Uken

### **Team Three: MULTI-MEDIA PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

#### **GOAL**

Increase among the following groups understanding of early child development, human brain development, and the fundamental importance of the early years and the elements of successful parenting: parents, families, other caregivers, business community, public officials, policymakers, and others.

#### **TEAM**

*Leads:* Phil Power, Rich Homberg, Heath Meriwether

*Members:* Dorothy Beardmore, Jan Ellis, Greg Handle, Mary Otto, Leonard Smith

*Resources:* Steve Manchester, Kathi Pioszak, Beany Tomber

*Facilitator:* Craig Ruff

### **Team Four: STATE AND LOCAL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **GOAL**

Establish state and local public/private partnerships to (1) mobilize community action to support families with young children and (2) promote health, safety, and education policies and programs that maximize child development.

#### **TEAM**

*Leads:* Susan Broman, Representative Lynne Martinez, Ron Palmer (Sue Pilon)

*Members:* Barbara Daniels, Debbie Dingell, Mike Flanagan, Representative Pan Godchaux, Senator Beverly Hammerstrom, Doug Howard, Teola Hunter, Scott Jenkins, Patricia Newby, Denise Osgood, Representative Hubert Price, Mary Kay Russell, Jim Sandy, Marsha Smith, Dr. Richard Solomon, Kathleen Straus, Marianne Udow

*Resources:* Peg Barratt, Erin Black, Martha Darling, Susan Miller, Martha Navarro, Susan Safford, Kari Schlactenhaufen, Paul Shaheen, Pat Sorensen, Jackie Wood

*Facilitator:* Suzanne Miel-Uken

## APPENDIX G

### Action Plans

*Key Actions to Carry Out Goals*

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**ACTION PLAN**  
**Priority Action Team 1: PARENT EDUCATION AND SUPPORT**  
*Prepared for the Coordinating Council, August 7, 2000*

**Long-Range Goals**

- All Michigan parents and parenting adults (who may not be a child’s biological parent) will have the knowledge and support they need as their children’s most important nurturers and teachers.
  
- All Michigan communities will have a family-centered birthing and early childhood system that provides knowledge and support through the integrated efforts of community-based organizations, health care, child care, social work, public health, and mental health.

SHORT TERM GOALS	ACTIONS
1. All parents and parenting adults to a newborn will be provided with a clear description of how early brain development affects lifelong learning and behavior and how parents can stimulate that development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Mothers of all newborns will receive a READY Kit, with counties as building blocks for distribution</li> <li>B. Mothers of all newborns will receive a letter emphasizing the importance of early learning from local school superintendent(s), encouraging use of the READY Kit, home visitation, and other opportunities.</li> <li>C. All parents of newborns will be given knowledge about appropriate, regular, and varied ways to stimulate young children.</li> <li>D. Develop age-specific videotapes as part of READY Kit’s ongoing product development.</li> <li>E. Statewide media.</li> </ul>
2. All parents and parenting adults will have access to programs that meet the developmentally appropriate needs of their children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Create model(s) for community inventories of sources of help for families.</li> <li>B. Using the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile and creating new programs, parents will be given help to understand the developmentally appropriate skill levels of their children</li> <li>C. Encourage language, music, and creative learning activities.</li> <li>D. Create speakers’ bureau and “stump speech” on early childhood for use at civic clubs, religious groups, parents’ groups, and other community forums.</li> </ul>
3. All children from infancy will be read to at least one-half hour per day by a parent, adult, and/or older children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Statewide media.</li> <li>B. Promote and support reading efforts.</li> <li>C. Increase the level of parents’ access to books.</li> </ul>
4. All parents and parenting adults will have access to informed mentors or teachers to help them be better parents and connect them to supportive services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Create model(s) of community mentorship that would include classes and education of mentors and self-help options.</li> <li>B. Within such model(s), assure a full continuum of help (pyramid).</li> <li>C. Assure that every mother of a newborn receives home visits appropriate to her needs.</li> <li>D. Encourage family-resource centers in elementary schools.</li> </ul>

<p>5. All parents and parenting adults will be provided with information and criteria that they can use to judge the quality and appropriateness of child care arrangements outside the home.</p>	<p>A. Create statewide tool by which families assess the quality and appropriateness of child care arrangements, including tools to assess the backgrounds and quality of child care providers, and disseminate such information to all families of newborns.</p> <p>B. Implement recommendations of Professional Development Priority Action Team.</p>
<p>6. Michigan communities will design and create a Ready to Succeed community-based system of care and provide integrated parent education and support.</p>	<p>A. Provide Michigan communities with knowledge, technical expertise, and best practice information.</p> <p>B. Create model(s) of community consortia that organize education and activities for all newborns.</p> <p>C. Identify in each county (and in cities over 50,000 population) a civic leader agreeing to convene local partners to analyze, customize, and create a preferred consortium.</p> <p>D. Develop models of local media campaigns for customization and use by communities.</p>

## **ACTION PLAN**

### **Priority Action Team 2: Professional Development of Other (nonparent) Caregivers**

*Prepared for the Coordinating Council, August 7, 2000*

The priority team on professional development of other caregivers offers recommendations in three areas to the Ready to Succeed Coordinating Council:

- An action plan, with a goal, an overall strategy for professional development, key steps to implement the strategy, indicators of progress, and suggested financing strategies
- Indicators of quality early childhood education and care that resonate with parents
- Outcomes of quality early childhood education and care

The recommendations on indicators and outcomes are intended to support the work of the priority team on the multi-media public awareness campaign.

### **Recommendation 1: ENDORSE AND COMMIT TO WORK TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ACTION PLAN**

The action plan proposed by the team includes a goal, an overall strategy, short- and long-term key steps, indicators of progress, and suggested financing strategies.

#### **Goal**

Increase the availability of qualified adults who care for and educate the children of others.

#### **Overall Strategy**

On the supply side, national best practices reveal that the integration of education and compensation results in continued education of teachers and care providers and a reduction in turnover. This can be done by

- increasing scholarship opportunities or training subsidies for providers and raises or bonuses for participants who complete coursework and make a commitment to stay employed in their current positions for an additional period of time;
- tying reimbursement rates to training requirements (i.e., higher reimbursements for higher levels of training); and
- funding through a partnership.

On the demand side, creating public—especially parent—awareness of the nature and value of quality will increase the numbers of providers seeking education and accreditation. This can be done by

- building messages about quality into the multi-media public awareness campaign; and
- creating a transparent system for certifying quality, e.g., a “three-star” or “five-star” ranking system.



## Short-Term Action Steps

1. Make affordable training more widely available by implementing a program that will improve provider education, increase wages, and reduce turnover.

The copyrighted T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood Project should be fully established in Michigan. The Family Independence Agency has recommended that the purchase of the T.E.A.C.H. license should be considered. Building on this recommendation, the full adoption of T.E.A.C.H. should be pursued as a strategy for improving the quality of all programs, including the following components:

- providing scholarship opportunities to allow early childhood professionals to work towards Michigan credentials or an associate's or bachelor's degree in early childhood education;
- encouraging child-care programs to support the continuing education of their staff (participants in the program must be supported by their programs);
- providing increased compensation that is directly related to increased education (participants' wages increase at a rate of more than 10 percent a year);
- reducing staff turnover by supporting the above goals while also requiring from participants a one-year commitment to child care after their scholarship year (turnover rates are less than 10 percent a year);
- providing a sequential professional development path for teachers, directors, and family child care home providers.

A state-level partnership should oversee the implementation of T.E.A.C.H. in Michigan, involving business, philanthropy, the Michigan Early Childhood Professional Development Consortium, and state agencies (Department of Consumer and Industry Services, Department of Education, and Family Independence Agency).

### *Financing Strategy*

We anticipate that the state will support T.E.A.C.H. with about \$1.3 million in funding through the FIA. As the FIA establishes the program, public funds could be matched by private resources to fully implement the program.

### *Indicators of Progress*

- More providers are getting professional development training
  - Provider turnover is reduced
2. Make affordable training more accessible to individual caregivers, e.g., relative or in-home aides (unlicensed providers), through financial incentives.

Michigan has a nationally recognized program of free training to address the significant number of informal care providers, i.e., relatives or aides who provide care in a family's home. Aides and relatives who complete 15 hours of free training and provide child care for three months to Family Independence Agency-funded children are eligible to receive a one-

time bonus of \$150. While this program helps address the growing number of providers with little knowledge of child development and high turnover in these arrangements, this pool of providers needs ongoing training and a link to a credentials and reimbursement system that rewards professional development.

This program should be expanded through increased outreach to informal providers and linked to the implementation of the T.E.A.C.H. program so that compensation accompanies education.

### ***Indicators of Progress***

- Resources are expanded for the existing incentive pool for training informal providers
  - More informal providers are trained routinely
3. Develop a collaborative funding approach through a state-level partnership to support the cost of scholarships and increased provider compensation associated with the implementation of T.E.A.C.H.

The fund should be structured to combine financial support from the Child Care and Development Fund, TANF, foundations, corporations, and individuals.

### ***Financing Strategy***

The cost of developing a collaborative funding approach could be covered by the FY 2000–01 appropriation for the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan, assuming passage.

### ***Indicators of Progress***

- Funding is leveraged for fully implementing T.E.A.C.H., combining public and private resources
  - A state-level partnership, with participation from the sectors noted above, is created to jointly oversee T.E.A.C.H. implementation
  - The state-level partnership creates a mechanism for pooling public and private resources to support T.E.A.C.H.
4. Create a rating system with standardized information about quality, which will allow families to determine the quality of care they are choosing for their children and give providers a way to evaluate the care they deliver.

A simple quality rating system, e.g., stars, should be designed to inform both parents and providers. A tiered structure could be built on licensing and credentialing systems already in place. The rating system should also be linked with reimbursement, including incentives for relative and in-home aides.

### ***Financing Strategy***

The cost of designing a rating system could be covered by the FY 2000–01 appropriation for the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan, assuming passage. A financing proposal for implementation would be part of the design.

### ***Indicators of Progress***

- Collaboration between the FIA and the Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services occurs—within a state-level public and private partnership—to design a tiered, quality-rating system that links professional development, licensing, and reimbursement
  - Everyone providing early childhood education and care is trained
5. Increase the number of accredited early childhood programs by developing a program to interest providers in accreditation and to deliver technical support.

By providing assistance to those pursuing accreditation, growth in the number of accredited programs has been demonstrated in other states.

### ***Indicators of Progress***

- A technical assistance program that includes mentoring and other supports is established
  - Provider awareness of the process and value of accreditation is increased
  - Increase in the number of accredited programs
6. Target information and messages to parents through the multi-media public awareness campaign on the characteristics of high quality early education and care.

To develop the messages on quality for parents, the public awareness campaign should be structured to deliver messages that accompany the implementation of a quality rating system and the other actions described in this plan. For example, once the rating system is defined and ready for implementation, media messages need to be constructed that will inform parents about the system and how to use it.

However, messages to parents about quality need to be designed and delivered immediately. To assist the media team in that task, the following statements about quality might be used to create messages:

- *Accredited programs give your child personal attention*
- *Quality early care puts your child on the path to life-long success*
- *Quality care prepares your child for success*
- *Select quality—build a bright future for you child*
- *Where there's QUALITY, there's CARE*
- *Trained child care providers offer high-quality care*
- *Continuity and quality of child care leads to trusting and secure relationships for your child*

### *Indicators of Progress*

- Public awareness of the value of quality-rated services increases
- Demand for accredited or quality-rated services increases

### **Longer-Term Action Steps**

These steps should be taken long term, under the guidance of the state-level partnership.

7. Charge a state-level partnership with exploration of a reimbursement system that rewards quality improvement among providers and programs.
8. As the public awareness campaign unfolds, continue developing and disseminating messages about the emerging quality rating and reimbursement system.

### **Recommendation 2: ENDORSE AND DISSEMINATE INDICATORS OF QUALITY THAT RESONATE WITH PARENTS**

The team recommends that the RTS Coordinating Council endorse and disseminate as a resource for communities the standards for infant, toddler, and preschool, and before- and after-school child care developed by the Kent County Coordinated Child Care and Kent County Joining Forces partnership. These standards are based on national standards. Additionally, the community standards can be used by the media team to develop messages for parents about quality. Kent County's parent checklist, "Choosing Quality Child Care Using Community Standards," is particularly useful.

### **Recommendation 3: DISSEMINATE AND APPLY THE RESEARCH ABOUT OUTCOMES OF HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION**

The team recommends that the RTS Coordinating Council use the following summary of outcomes to develop measures of progress toward the vision of universal, high-quality early childhood education and care. In addition, the information on outcomes should be useful to the media team in preparing messages about quality and outcomes.

### **Findings: The Abecedarian Project**

The Abecedarian Project, conducted at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, was a carefully controlled study of (1) 57 infants from low-income families who were randomly assigned to receive early intervention in a high-quality child-care setting and (2) 54 infants in a control group that did not receive the treatment. Families in the study had multiple risk factors in addition to poverty, including mothers who had lower IQs, mothers with a low level of formal education, single-parent families, teen mothers, and authoritarian child-rearing attitudes. Children's progress was monitored in follow-up studies at age 12, 15, and 21.

- **Higher IQ, enhanced learning performance, and improved language development**

Young adults who had received intervention had significantly higher cognitive test scores than their untreated peers, effects that lasted from toddlerhood through age 21.

■ **Decreases in grade retention**

Those in intervention had a 30 percent grade-retention rate by age 15; the control group had 56 percent.

■ **Decreased need for special education**

Only 12 percent of those in early-intervention were placed in special education by age 15; the control group had 48 percent.

■ **Higher reading and math achievement scores**

Early intervention resulted in large increases in reading scores and moderate increases in math scores, effects that were sustained over time.

■ **Higher levels of formal education**

Those in the intervention group were more likely to be in school at 21 years of age: 40 percent of the intervention group; the figure was 20 percent for the control group. Approximately 35 percent of the young adults in the intervention group either had graduated from or were attending four-year colleges and universities at the time of assessment; the control group figure was 12 percent.

■ **Delayed parenthood**

On average, those in the intervention group were aged 19.1 when their first child was born; the average age was 17.7 years in the control group.

■ **Higher rates of post-high school education for teen mothers**

Fifteen years after enrollment in the project, more than 80 percent of teen mothers who had received early intervention had engaged in post-high school education; the control group figure was 30 percent.

**Findings: The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Early Child Care Study**

The NICHD Study of Early Child Care (NICHD Study) is the most comprehensive child care study conducted to date to determine how variations in child care are related to children's development. Researchers enrolled more than 1,300 children in the study in 1991 and have followed most of them through the first seven years of their lives. The child-care settings in which children were placed were selected by their family, based on the availability and affordability of child care in their communities. Children were *not* randomly assigned to different types, amounts, or quality of care.

Small-to-moderate gains were noted in the following areas when children participated in higher quality child care:

- Better mother-child relationships
- Lower probability of insecure attachment in infants of low-sensitivity mothers
- Fewer reports of problem behavior
- Higher cognitive performance
- Higher language skill

- Higher levels of school readiness

(The Abecedarian Project and NICHD Early Child Care findings were excerpted from *Briefing Report: Michigan Family Impact Seminars: Child Care and Education*, March 2000, Michigan State University and Wayne State University)

**Findings: *Points of Light: Third-Year Report of the Michigan School Readiness Program*, HIGH/SCOPE Educational Research Foundation**

The Michigan School Readiness Program (MSRP) is a preschool program funded and sponsored by the State of Michigan. Beginning as a small pilot in 1995, the nine-month child developmental preschool program for four-year-olds identified as being at risk of school failure includes age-appropriate activities to promote intellectual and social growth and school readiness and parenting support, guidance, and referrals to community services as needed. A total of 212,000 children have been served since the program's inception.

A longitudinal study of the effectiveness of the program finds that:

- For Cohort 1 participants (who were in kindergarten in the first study year and Grade 1 in the second), in their *kindergarten* year, outside observers rated the MSRP group significantly more advanced in *initiative, social relations, creative representation, music and movement, language and literacy, and overall development* than the comparison group. Teachers also rated the MSRP children significantly higher overall on the School Readiness Rating Scale than comparison children. In *Grade 1*, teachers rated the MSRP group significantly higher than the comparison group on several items on the School Readiness Rating Scale.
- For Cohort 2 participants (who were in kindergarten in the second study year), teachers rated the students who had attended the MSRP as significantly more developmentally ready for learning overall and in several major areas than the students who had not attended the program.

The third-year study confirmed the following program effects through the second grade:

- The students who had participated in the MSRP remained significantly higher than nonparticipants in overall development on the Child Observation Record and on of the 6 subscale scores in kindergarten.
- The students who had participated in the MSRP had significantly higher ratings than nonparticipants on some items (e.g., *ready to learn, retaining learning, good attendance, interest in school work*) of the School Readiness Rating Scale from kindergarten through grade 2.
- The Cohort 1 MSRP group had a significantly lower grade retention rate than did the comparison group by the end of grade 2 (8 percent versus 15 percent).

*Quality of care is the most consistent child care predictor of child development outcomes.*

—National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, *Early Child Care Study*

## **ACTION PLAN**

### **Priority Action Team 4: STATE AND LOCAL PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

*Prepared for the Ready to Succeed Coordinating Council, August 7, 2000*

The priority action team on partnerships recommends that the Coordinating Council shall consider and make a commitment to a plan for establishing a Michigan Ready to Succeed Partnership. It is the consensus of the team that the RTS Dialogue with Michigan has made tremendous progress toward the vision of universal and high-quality early childhood education and care. Essential to this success has been the state-level structure supporting the Dialogue, moving from a planning committee in the first year to a Coordinating Council with broad representation in the second year. The RTS initiative must continue to evolve, strengthening and expanding the partnership to sustain and increase momentum for state and local action. This action plan proposes such a partnership—one that is responsive to local interests and needs that have been identified at community forums and during the May 2 State Forum for Community Networking.

It also is recommended that the Coordinating Council adopt measures of progress that are tied to each of the steps in the action plan for establishing a partnership. Measures of progress should be defined once the Coordinating Council finalizes the action plan. In addition to choosing measures for monitoring implementation of the partnership, the Coordinating Council shall assure that the partnership establishes clear goals and measures to assess regularly whether activities and strategies are meeting goals necessary to make progress toward achieving the Ready to Succeed vision for Michigan's young children and their families.

#### **Goal**

Establish a statewide public and private partnership that will (1) mobilize and support community action to support families with young children; and (2) promote health, safety, and education policies and programs that maximize child development.

#### **Overall Strategy**

Stimulate statewide local planning and action focused on early learning through a state-level partnership that will guide and support movement toward universal, high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC).

#### **Short-Term Action Steps**

- 1. The Coordinating Council shall guide the creation of a highly visible and dynamic statewide Michigan Ready to Succeed Partnership.*

In the fall of 2000, the Coordinating Council shall begin establishing a partnership structure to achieve the overall goal of mobilizing community action and promoting policies and programs that maximize child development consistent with the Ready to Succeed vision. The partnership shall be designed to bring resources to action and continuing dialogue to engage the public.

2. *The Coordinating Council shall consider options and select a state-level governance structure for the partnership. Regardless of the structure selected, the partnership shall be a place to join public and private interests in pursuit of the vision of universal, high-quality ECEC.*

Options for a state-level governance structure are

- A private, nonprofit entity created in legislation
- A voluntary organization that uses agreements to define roles, responsibilities, and commitments
- The status quo, with fiduciary agents and an informal coordinating body

The Partnership Priority Action Team supports the second option as the minimum step forward in the evolution of Michigan's public and private commitment to early childhood education and care.

3. *The Coordinating Council shall adopt and implement a partnership financing strategy that supports the partnership structure and leverages investments made by state government, philanthropy, business, and other sectors for collaborative action.*

The financing strategy needs to cover both operating costs for the partnership and resources to carry out the functions described in step five of this action plan. Many states have set up revolving funds from which to make innovation-and-education grants to communities working toward universal, high-quality ECEC. In some states, funding is available to support operating costs of local partnerships that provide mechanisms for joint action and investment across the public and private sectors. This approach is not intended to duplicate investments from any one sector. Rather, the role of the partnership is to leverage investments, allowing each sector to work with other sectors to determine how each can have maximum impact with their unique type and level of contribution to an early childhood education and care system.

Results are promising in other states that are using this type of approach for investment leveraging. Based on an initial state appropriation mandating that its partnership raise \$1 for every \$10 received in state funding, North Carolina's Smart Start has raised over \$30 million in cash and in-kind contributions. This strategy was used in year one of the Ready to Learn Dialogue with Michigan, when, dollar for dollar, the state appropriation was matched by the philanthropic and corporate sectors. This approach has considerable potential for the future, assuming clear goals and a plan of action are set.

4. *The Coordinating Council shall establish a set of principles to guide the Michigan RTS Partnership.*

The Coordinating Council shall consider the following principles, many of which have been documented as success factors in reaching early childhood partnership goals. The partnership will have the following:



- Objectives stated at the outset to ensure understanding among partners, guiding efforts through obstacles and challenges
- A clear governance structure and set of ground rules
- Broad-based participation, with all stakeholders involved from the beginning
- The involvement of families, the ultimate consumers of ECEC
- Champions in every sector who will communicate the goals of the partnership and build a broad base of support
- Communities as partners
- Regular measuring of progress to assess objectives, strategies, and the effectiveness of the partnership
- An entrepreneurial mindset that encourages change as opportunities arise
- A plan for maintaining and sustaining momentum

5. *The Coordinating Council shall define functions of the state-level partnership.*

Michigan communities working on the RTS vision suggest that the following activities of a state-level partnership would help them the most:

- A strong communication and supportive link among communities and between communities and a credible state-level structure focused on ECEC, with particular emphasis on connecting the statewide public awareness campaign with communities
- Technical assistance in the following areas:
  - Mobilizing communities by providing guidelines for organizing locally and getting all sectors involved (facilitation *across* sectors, especially business and the media), helping with education, using common messages, and setting broadly-shared local goals
  - Knowing about and using research and best practices, so we don't all have to reinvent everything
  - Finding and using experts and tools to assess gaps, resources, and strategies
  - Creating financing mechanism and new ways to leverage cross-sector investments in ECEC (particularly need help blending funding streams and other resources)
  - Measuring progress toward the Ready to Succeed vision and connecting results to statewide goals
- Financial support for community-based public/private partnerships, building on existing infrastructure, to systematically improve access to universal, high-quality ECEC. In light of new public investments, the first areas of focus should be parent education and support and professional development of other caregivers.

The financial support for communities should be matched by local resources and contingent on participation by all sectors. Communities say that diversity is the key to getting “out of the box.”

## **Longer-Term Action Steps**

- 1. Apply findings from monitoring progress to demonstrate returns on investment specific to Michigan.*
- 2. Assure long-term commitment for increasing access to universal, high-quality ECEC.*



APPENDIX H  
Year Two RTS Community Forums  
*Summary of Proceedings*

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**ISABELLA COUNTY**  
*September 19, 2000*  
*Winding Brook Conference Center, Shepherd*  
*Attendance: 29*

**Public/Private Partnerships—Selected Priorities**

- Leadership (state and local)—Vision (local)
  - Clear, defined, agreed-to goals
- Combine meetings
  - Focus on results

**Public/Private Partnerships—“Solutions”**

- True prevention: providing/defining
- No new programs—Don’t recreate the wheel
- Clear leadership from the top (state level)
- Local leadership
- Continuing
  - CARE (Child Assessment Referral and Encouragement) Connections
  - Infancy Workgroup
- Prioritize—CHILDREN FIRST
- Staffing
  
- Collaborative Planning of awareness activities/positive perspective of parent education (i.e., community fair, bring-a-friend programs,
- Volunteer mentors beginning prenatally
- Build partnerships with business

**Parent Education—“Solutions”**

- Bring-a-friend promotions for parent education
- Community fair
- Public/parent awareness to break down stigma of parent education
- Partnerships with business
- Creative planning with timing and topics
- Collaborative planning/promotion
- Administrative support for collaborative efforts

- Volunteer groups for new parents
- Distribution of READY kits

### **Caregiver Professional Development—Selected Priorities**

- Education—continued education for providers
- Funding for education
- Partnership with the education system

### **Caregiver Professional Development—“Solutions”**

- Partnerships
  - Community groups (collaborative council, America’s Promise, CAFE, Character Counts)
- Partnership with the education system (schools, Head Start, Early On, Project Find)
  - Each other (support group)
  - Politicians
  - Employers (to help support parents in supporting providers)
- Education
  - Funding
  - Available at convenient times
  - Affordable; resources to provide qualified subs and cover cost
  - Alternative, on-site child care
  - Age and developmentally appropriate activities for children
  - Mentoring—provider to provider/licensing
- Requiring continuing education/professional development
  - Community support
- Funding—grants, education, wages, rewards, subs
  - Changing attitudes
  - Quality childcare standards info for parents
  - Mentoring—other professionals

### **Community Awareness—Priorities**

- Coordination of services
- Mentorship: people to people
- Involve medical community with coordinated effort with schools

## **Community Awareness—“Solutions”**

- Coordination of activities, services to families
- One-stop, seamless services
- Mentoring for new families
- Involvement from the medical community (not Public Health)
- Support for peoples’ motivation to get involved with children



## **MECOSTA/OSCEOLA COUNTIES**

*August 24*

*Holiday Inn, Big Rapids*

*Attendance: 19*

### **Public/Private Partnerships**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?
  - Public awareness about the importance of early care and education on brain development
2. What would help our community move forward?
  - Saturate the market with the message in many ways and many times using a statewide, well-known spokesperson
3. Other key discussion points
  - Have a paid position to put energy into the education of the private and public sector

### **Parent Education/Support**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?
  - Educate pediatricians, obstetricians, and gynecologists on community services, so they can pass information on to parents and expecting parents
2. What would help our community move forward?
  - Target businesses (factories) in area to
    - Educate on the importance of flexibility for families
    - Educate on the benefits that they will get in return for being flexible and family friendly
    - Get involved in early education and mentoring

### **Caregiver Professional Development**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?
  - Community standards—Educate the community so they can set their own standards above the state requirements
2. What would help our community move forward?
  - Education for parents on quality childcare

### 3. Other key discussion points

- Recognize childcare providers that are doing quality care—Show the positive effects of quality early education on children

#### **Other**

Our community will use the 0–6 work group to continue from this forum. Other insights are:

- A linkage is needed between providers and the school system
- Financial support for quality childcare is needed from other resources, the workplace, government, and families

## **NEWAYGO COUNTY**

*August 24, 2000*

*Newaygo County Community Services Building, Fremont*

*Attendance: 30*

### **Public/Private Partnerships**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?
  - Partner with newspapers and local radio station to “spread the word”
  - Offer speakers on-site for information on programs/parenting/child care
  - Develop a roster of providers who would offer emergency child care
  - Do presentations on available programs and child care information at new and different sites
  - Invite Jaycees, Lions Club, pastors, businesses to in-services
2. What would help our community move forward?
  - Keep the Multi-Agency Consortium (MAC) informed and actively participating in effort via early intervention action team
  - 2000–01 MAC Conference theme directly related to above goals
3. Other key discussion points
  - Need for transportation system in Newaygo County
  - Need for medical, dental, and vision services for all children
  - Continue to get the medical community involved
  - Need for comprehensive preschool programs for all children

### **Parent Education/Support**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?
  - Secure funds to expand Parent’s As Teachers in Newaygo County
  - Plan and implement formal parenting classes in county school districts
  - Partner with newspapers and local radio station to “spread the word”
  - Utilize local school districts’ newsletters to reach broader audience
  - Continue to work closely with local hospital and health department to reach parents of all newborns
2. What would help our community move forward?
  - Keep the Multi-Agency Consortium (MAC) informed and actively participating in effort via early intervention action team
  - 2000–01 MAC Conference theme directly related to above goals

- Organize planning team to respond to “parenting” RFP
- Work with PCA to reorganize and update informational kits for new parents

3. Other key discussion points

- Need for transportation system in Newaygo County
- Need for medical, dental, and vision services for all children
- Continue to get the medical community involved
- Need for comprehensive preschool programs for all children

### **Caregiver Professional Development**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?

- Continue to secure funds for local resource and referral staff person
- Continue to partner with Kent 4C
- Continue to support the providers’ association
- Continue to help sponsor Newaygo County Child Care Conference
- Continue to invite child care providers to all training and in-services
- Continue effort to include relative and aide child care providers in the loop of information and opportunities
- Continue to support the lending library for supplies and equipment available to providers
- Continue to secure funds for training and education dollars available to providers for classes and conferences
- Continue to education the public on the importance of quality child care along with information on local providers who are demonstrating local “standards of quality”
- Continue to offer assistance in writing Equip grants to providers
- Continue to facilitate mentoring program for providers

2. What would help our community move forward?

- Keep the Multi-Agency Consortium (MAC) informed and actively participating in effort via early intervention action team
- Have Michigan’s Children help with more talking points to providers and community

### **Public Awareness**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?

- Partner with newspapers and local radio station to “spread the word”
- Utilize local school districts’ newsletters to reach broader audience
- Continue to work closely with local hospital and health department to reach parents of all newborns

2. What would help our community move forward?

- Keep the Multi-Agency Consortium (MAC) informed and actively participating in effort via early intervention action team
- 2000–01 MAC Conference theme directly related to above goals
- Work with PCA to reorganize and update informational kits for new parents

3. Other key discussion points

- Need for transportation system in Newaygo County
- Need for medical, dental, and vision services for all children
- Continue to get the medical community involved
- Need comprehensive preschool programs for all children

## **WAYNE COUNTY—DEARBORN**

*September 13, 2000*

*Davenport University, Dearborn*

*Attendance: 16*

### **What Can be Done In Our Community to Reach These Goals?**

- Want to encourage relationship between mothers/fathers and children—reading to kids
  - Challenged by fact that many books are not in Arabic
  - READY Kits need to be in Arabic
- MDE will print READY tools/materials in Arabic if they get translated—ACCESS and DPS can do translation
- Many refugee families in area—Many parents do not read/write in native language; also, experiences at camps, resettlement, and trauma compromise their ability to be good parents even with good intentions and instinct
- Awareness is limited that help available
- Need good media campaign
- ACCESS working on 15 hours of video training series on parenting—They have some funding but need help and more resources
- Video-based learning could be highly effective with Arab-Americans—Use of Arab television/local cable excellent way to get to parents, more emphasis on that mode of communication over written, as literacy in English could be a challenge to parents
- Need to make more outreach effort to business, faith community, etc., and not rely so much on schools, nonprofits—Need access to media and resources
- New state funding could help with initiatives on local level
- Business needs to be educated as to their great stake in this as it is their future workforce
- Collaboration with local business, other agencies and schools could be imperative to getting state funding
- Having material in Arabic is not enough—Need to get to parents, especially newcomers, as they are dealing with so many other stresses that this may not seem like a priority at the time
- If there are ways to make parent meetings mandatory, it could help facilitate getting information to parents
- Lawrey School does lots of contact with parents—newsletters, phone calls, meetings, speakers, classes for parents
- Those in greatest need don't come to services—That's why video could be ideal
- Even professionals in field are not necessarily aware of what resources are out there
- How to maintain parent motivation after initial education/intervention and early “momentum”—It will wear down/wear out—what to do then
- Can we go to families' homes? How can we focus on results to families so they can build trust in us and the system and so they can share good PR with other families
- Need to work on follow-up mechanisms/survey/program into what we do
- Focus on building relationship with family and building trust and not just do services

- Too much reliance of school alone—Need to highlight role of parents and others in community
- Parents as teachers model is very positive and needs to be increased
- Very young children experience stress in very intense ways—“Paper people” program that shows how much little kids know about what is going on in their home and the stress on concealing what happens
- Kids under stress cannot learn or learn most effectively
- Need to relieve terrors to children
- Many of us don’t understand stresses of refugee families because as we have not lived that experience—We need to work on learning more about that
- Commitment of agency to answering question or finding resources people need—follow-up with families in timely fashion
- As a parent, I know that parents need to know someone is out there to help and that my needs are responded to
- We go out to parents directly whenever possible (ESL classes)—Home visits very important and should be done whenever possible
- Children learn to hide what is going on at home, to isolate themselves for self-protection and also to protect parents, who are their primary caregiver
- Need to integrate religious community and teachings/beliefs into how we address/approach people—Cannot ignore faith; need to use faith and beliefs to support what we teach
- Parent education most vital
- Teach what rights parents have
- Help lessen intimidation of school districts/authorities
- May not know they can question
- Town meetings to get people together to support each other, pass on information
- Train-the-trainer programs are most important—Create cultural change, peer group contacts
- Need incentive to parents
- Media must reinforce messages—Have had good experience with Arabic media but need more
- Mosques/social clubs can help get message out—Must have coordinated plan so it is not too isolated
- Can reach men at health fair settings and a few others, but most outreach gets to women/mothers
- Cannot ignore extended family when doing outreach and intervention
- Need to provide child care when events are presented
- Network of social connections very important—not just professional relationships
- Health care providers need to expand definition of health and understand role they have as resource person to customers—We are working at tracking our medical residents and other employers about this
- We can start to approach employers to present parent education and support programs on site
- Family Independence Agency could be important to linking to families—Families could respond better to invitations that come from them or present our programs at FIA offices
- Immunization services could be good point of contact with parents

- Need to education other providers (not associated with ACCESS or ACC) as to what families are experiencing cultural diversity issues (train FIA, health care, schools, etc. about cultural diversity)
- Maybe we, as program providers, need to learn marketing and PR skills or let the business sector do marketing/PR for us as a collaborative effort
- Need to start an advisory group that is multi-faceted with representatives from all over



## **WAYNE COUNTY—DETROIT EASTSIDE, SUBURBS**

*August 23, 2000*

*Detroit/Riverview Hospital, Detroit*

*Attendance: 36*

### **Public/Private Partnerships**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?

#### ■ Partnerships

- Franklin Settlement
- Friends of Parkside
- YMCA
- GM, Ford, DaimlerChrysler
- Hospital—birth center (where birth takes place)
- Hospital clinic (immigrant)
- Senior groups (i.e., grandparents who raise grandchildren)
- 4Cs
- Warren Conner
- Butzel Kettering
- state fair
- St. John Clinic

2. What would help our community move forward?

- TV, PSA, community channel—Hmong, Chaldean, Arab, Spanish
- Key radio/television personality
- Place of worship/church
- Preach from pulpit, WIL, FIA, community center
- Literacy program, deaf/mute program, read to interact

3. Other key discussion points

- Importance of immunization record
- Evaluation form is needed for assessing preschool
- Define community's next step

### **Parent Education/Support**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?

- Work with young men, as well as young women, early in the birth process
- Engage the media in the message and engage celebrities to give the message
- Work with parents on values and standards for parenting children

- Reach out to the homes of parents—client-centered and home-based
- Involve ourselves in modeling positive behavior

2. What would help our community move forward?

- Strong leadership from clergy
- CHCEJ health care educators
- Engaging community-based organizations
- Engaging the health care arena
- Working with PTAs to assist in the effort

3. Other key discussion points

- Set up a kiosk in the malls to give the message
- Be supportive of parents by monitoring, visiting, helping, etc.
- Be able to provide resources to families
- Schools should also support through after-school programs and GED programs, etc.
- Schools should not have control, but put the infrastructure together to support families
- Churches can develop programs for reading and social services to families

### **Caregiver Professional Development**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?

- Licensing and regulation—increase to reach high levels of quality
- Early care education free or at low cost
- Use a variety of methods to promote early care and education

2. What would help our community move forward?

- Policy changes
  - Funding for early care education and a living wage
  - Training and parent assistance
- Marketing existing programs by using community calendars of churches, schools, community centers, etc.
- Support of local legislators

### **Public Awareness**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?

- Have information available in the county organizations, monthly events, doctors' offices, health fairs
- Media coverage and public announcements

- Access to programs, e.g., mobile units (bookmobile)
- Faith-based support, block clubs
- Message that reaches father, grandparents, foster parents
- Must recognize where what we have is located

2. What would help our community move forward?

- Must be ongoing
- Get the word out through media, radio; get volunteers
- Faith-based organizations, recruitment of volunteers
- Police department, churches, block liaison with volunteer staff, funeral homes
- Need big messages to reinforce; e.g., “Hear the best for the future”; “Your child counts”; “I need you”; “I’m ready, Are you ready?”
- Coalition that would make all of this possible

3. Other key discussion points

- Make it universal—Transcend all children’s social and economic groups and developmental handicaps
- Prenatal/kits
- Short and direct
- Visual for all community neighbors, police officers, grocery
- Understand child will be influenced by everything—make sure it is positive influence
- Need parent to promote
- Involve parents
- Involve mayor, state legislative representatives

## **WAYNE COUNTY—DETROIT NORTH CENTRAL, HIGHLAND PARK**

*August 22, 2000*

*The Family Place, Detroit*

*Attendance: 13*

### **Public/Private Partnerships and Public Awareness**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?
  - Literacy for adults
  - Affordable housing
  - Quality childcare
  - Adequate nutrition
  - More community coordination
  
2. What would help our community move forward?
  - Innovative outreach (billboards, buses, lottery places, grocery stores, cable television, doctor offices, etc.)
  - Expansion of early care education 0–5
  - Enhance support for parent education
  - Enhance support for families
  - Outreach to other relatives/aide caregivers not in the system
  - Adequate funding for the professional childcare provider and training to help upgrade the knowledge base for providers
  
3. Other key discussion points
  - Working with the community, family, and children
  - We need to ready the schools for parents and children
  - Basic adequate income

### **Parent Education and Support/Caregiver Professional Development**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?
  - Promoting basic child development and parent education and information messages so parents understand
  - Reward parents—Give incentives, we need to increase motivation by offering incentives
  - Connections to resources and networking need to happen—We need to share our resources and learn from each other
  - Importance of infant message—teaching parents how to do it and benefits to child and

2. What would help our community move forward?
  - Health education on lead and asthma for families
  - All parents can't read, and they learn in a variety of ways—All materials and information need to be communicated through a variety of forms/written materials
  - Engaging the faith community
  - Helping parent understand brain development through a user friendly delivery model
  - Money to make services available to all without working from a deficit model—Everyone wants access to services and materials
3. Other key discussion points
  - Discussion of *It Takes a Village*
  - Discussed adult literacy levels
  - The importance of making sure our work continues locally and our needs heard in Lansing

## **Other**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?
  - Getting more local businesses involved
  - Getting our legislators to take the lead
2. What would help our community move forward?
  - More linkage at local/neighborhood level with businesses in the area
  - Spokesperson who will galvanize people at the issues

## **WAYNE COUNTY—LIVONIA, NORTHWEST WAYNE**

*August 30, 2000*

*Dickenson School, Livonia*

*Attendance: 13*

### **Public/Private Partnerships**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?
  - Contact community social groups (e.g., Kiwanis, Rotary, Goodfellows, etc.) and provide speakers on early childhood issues
  - Educate employers and community groups on the importance of early childhood and how it affects them personally

### **Parent Education/Support**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?
  - More funding for education and intervention
  - Mandatory parenting classes
  - Early childhood information available at “parent-friendly” sites (e.g., Babies R Us, Toys R Us)
  - Support groups for single parents, teen parents
  - Forums for at-risk teen girls to discuss pregnancy
  - Child care for parenting teens
  - Transportation available for parenting teens to continue their education
  - Schools districts should work on the teen parent issue, especially transportation and child care

### **Caregiver Professional Development**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?
  - Increase availability of qualified adults
  - Childcare needs: flexible hours, seven days a week
  - Ratings for child care—information available on locating quality child care
  - Family Independence Agency reimbursement in a more timely manner
  - One or two scholarship spots available at each child care center (funded by local businesses?)
  - RSVP to assist with child care provided by senior volunteers at Senior Centers
  - More training for childcare providers
  - Additional monitoring of childcare providers
  - Address issues of low pay and staff turnover in childcare settings
  - More school and agency collaboration

## **Public Awareness**

1. What can be done in our community to reach these goals?
  - Parenting classes mandatory in high school curriculum
  - Newspaper articles featuring early childhood issues and developments
  - Cable television to do spots on child development, parenting, etc.
  - Forums offered through the school district
  - Information available through La Leche League and natural childbirth associations
  - Multi-language literature
  - Outreach to large employers—send childcare and early childhood information
  - Outreach to business groups like Rotary and Kiwanis to engage them in the issues

## **Public and Private Partnerships/Caregiver Professional Development/Public Awareness**

1. What would help our community move forward?
  - Need transportation and care for teen parents' babies so parent can complete schooling
  - Pregnant teen issue in general, in terms of how districts deal with and support the teen parent and meet the teen parent's needs so that education doesn't get interrupted or they drop out. The issue is still taboo.
2. Other key discussion points
  - Utilize seniors—through RSVP and senior centers—for childcare
  - Use local newspapers and cable and speak to community groups

## **WEXFORD/MISSAUKEE COUNTIES**

*August 16*

*Wexford Missaukee ISD, Cadillac*

*Attendance: 28*

### **What Can be Done in Our Community to Reach These Goals**

- Provide community wide education of early childhood brain development
- Offer universal services—Don't just focus on at-risk or families that are already in trouble
- Create a new community norm for education on child development
- Provide support to day care providers
- Develop a community wide family support network
- Empower stay at home mothers (validate them)
- The helping agencies need personal connections with business and industry
- Promote a mentoring process—Mobilize informal resources
- Provide Head Start in day care centers
- Increase partnerships throughout the community to include employers, churches, and medical community
- Promote/increase community responsibility as a part of extended family
- Increase young child-based activities that bring parents/caregivers and kids together (e.g., fieldtrips, both days and evenings)

### **What Would Help Our Community Move Forward**

- State needs to promote public awareness regarding early childhood brain development and the value of early intervention
- State should expedite process for dollars and resources
- Make certain day care licensing and oversight focuses on what is really important, e.g., safety issues
- Expansion of Head Start
- Help day care providers through FIA payment process
- Offer universal services, don't just focus on at-risk or families that area already in trouble
- Share resources/ideas from other communities
- Acknowledge and support day care providers

### **Other Key Discussion Points**

- Consider bringing in Joan Firestone as a speaker for our community
- Consider a local summit—a local planning group formed to try to do such a local summit in October
- We need to be specific about what we want from business and industry and think about how we can be helpful to tem
- Keep it simple for parents and day care providers who do need help



- Day care providers are feeling overwhelmed with the stresses they face (e.g., parents and employers sometimes forget day care is a business, media coverage too often focuses on the negative, low pay, and insurance and licensing problems)
- Children need to be our top priority