

Service Providers (Health Care, Family Support, Early Care and Education, Child Welfare, etc.)

Collaboration with community groups bring additional skills, resources and points of view to support improvement in areas such as education, supports, services, reducing barriers

- ☆ Educate families, staff and the public about the importance of the first years of life. Make an effort to reach those not fluent in English or isolated from the community by geographic, cultural, social, or economic factors.
- ☆ Collaborate with other service providers and community partners to expand, coordinate, and improve early childhood programs and services. Share newsletters, sponsor shared staff training or develop new projects together.
- ☆ Make facilities safe and inviting for young children and their parents and caregivers.
- ☆ Enhance the quality of the early childhood services through staff development, national accreditation, and ongoing evaluation and improvement efforts.
- ☆ Participate in community efforts to define and improve the quality of services for young children and their families. Establish or contribute to "one-stop" resource centers to link families with appropriate services.
- ☆ Make collaborative efforts to help parents identify and seek early assistance for young children with disabilities.
- ☆ Raise money or host a drive for children's books, diapers, food or other needed resources in the community.

Unions: Collaboration with community groups bring additional skills, resources and points of view to support improvement in areas such as curriculum, school safety, support services and education reform.

- ☆ Provide members with information about early childhood development, early learning, child care options, and community resources.
- ☆ Help members understand community resources available to them.
- ☆ Convene, support, and work in public-private partnerships to enlist broad supports for early childhood programs and services.
- ☆ Address child care, child health, and parenting support issues as part of the union's political agenda.
- ☆ Include messages about early learning in paid advertising.

Young People Through community service or volunteerism young people gain responsibility and bring additional skills, resources, energy and points of view to a community.

- ☆ Take seriously your leadership potential as a role model for younger siblings and other young children in your neighborhood.
- ☆ Get together with friends and raise money to buy and donate children's books to early childhood programs.
Contact the Macomb Great Start Collaborative to find out what the current needs are for young children and their families in the community. Great Start Macomb www.greatstartmacomb.org 586.228.3495
- ☆ Read to younger children in preschools, family child care homes, libraries, churches, temples, mosques, schools, family centers, and hospitals.
- ☆ Be aware of your actions when you're around young children in the neighborhood- and be a role model for them.
- ☆ Lead an effort to gather and donate school supplies (paper, pencils, markers, etc.) to an early childhood program or library.
- ☆ Share your opinions about early childhood issues with media, policy makers, and other opinion leaders.

44001 Garfield Road, Clinton Township, MI 48038
ph. 1.866.4MACOMB (866.462.2662)
www.greatstartmacomb.org



Macomb Intermediate School District



Great Parents Macomb 1.866.4MACOMB



A partner of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation

How Can You Invest In Macomb County's Economic Future?

Early Childhood Action Tips

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Parent and Community involvement thrives and children achievement increases when:

Parents, communities, businesses, churches, nonprofit organizations and government at all levels can work together to maximum our most valuable resource —our youngest citizens.

How do we prepare Macomb's children to be healthy, safe and ready to succeed in school and life? The answer is not to build government programs, make parents feel guilty, force employers to absorb huge costs in childcare benefits or move parents from workplace to the home. It is also not a question of writing a new state law or taking money away from other areas of education, health or community services. The question is how parents, communities, businesses, churches, nonprofit organizations and government at all levels can work together to maximize our most valuable resource – its very youngest citizens. There is, of course, no single answer and everyone must be involved in the solution.

A Role for Everyone

Inside this booklet are some specific action tips to consider, try some of these or think of your own ideas! Encourage your peers, colleagues, family and friends to get involved too. **You are needed!**

This information is adapted from "The Seven Lessons of Early Childhood Public Engagement" prepared by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Families and Work Institute and the Jumpstart Tulsa website: www.jumpstarttulsa.com/what-you-can-do.htm.

Did you know...

There are over 9,700 live births each year in Macomb County.

Source: Kids Count in Michigan Data Book 2010



Brain plasticity is greatest during pregnancy and in the early years when basic neural pathways are constructed for the first time.

Architects, Developers and the Building Trades

(Contractors, Carpenters, Electricians, Painters, Plumbers, etc.)

Collaboration with the skills bring knowledge, and experience of the skilled trades in a community and provide the muscle necessary to get complete skilled trades projects.

- ☆ Volunteer to repair or renovate early childhood playgrounds and facilities.
- ☆ Design and build low-cost early care and education and family center facilities.
- ☆ Encourage clients in public spaces to include rooms for parent classes and meetings, areas for mothers to nurse their infants and early care and education facilities in workplaces, parks, housing and commercial developments, and other public places.
- ☆ Include instruction about early childhood facility design and construction in architecture schools and building trades training and apprenticeship programs.
- ☆ Develop partnerships that encourage and help prepare students for the world of work and civic responsibility.

Businesses and Other Employers

When businesses and employees strengthen the early childhood systems in a community, a more competitive business environment is created that will attract a families and business to a community.

- ☆ Inform employees about the importance of the first years of life and provide parenting information in a variety of ways like bulletin boards, in-house newsletters or in paycheck envelopes. Offer employees access to online parenting information and resources at work.
- ☆ Learn about best practices in the work / family arena. Review polities and practices to consider how to become more supportive to families, and whenever possible, offer flexible work schedules and telecommuting options.
- ☆ Conduct surveys or focus groups to learn about employee needs
- ☆ Underwrite some employee child care costs
- ☆ Sponsor community parenting seminars or family support groups at the workplace. Invite local speakers to offer parenting seminars at work sites.
- ☆ Help publicize programs that offer parent education, family support, early care, education and health services by displaying posters, circulating flyers and providing informational brochures.
- ☆ Share expertise (such as accounting skills, management training, public relations, etc.) with early care and education programs and volunteer to serve on their boards.
- ☆ Provide in-kind support, such as copying, faxing, mailing or printing to local early childhood health, education and care, and family support programs.
- ☆ Communicate concern about the importance of the early years to public officials, fellow business leaders and the public about the vital role quality early childhood care and education plays in the future of workforce development.
- ☆ Work with other community partners to expand and improve health services, early care and education, and family support / parent education programs for families with young children.
- ☆ Serve as a leader on the Great Start Collaborative-Macomb to elevate the role of early childhood education.
- ☆ Donate office equipment and supplies.
- ☆ Contribute funds to an early childhood program or service.
- ☆ Raise money or host a drive for diapers, books, food or other needed resource in the community.

Retirees: Seniors and retired community members can be important advocates for quality education. As partners, they help build public understanding an support. They can also play an advocacy role in the community.

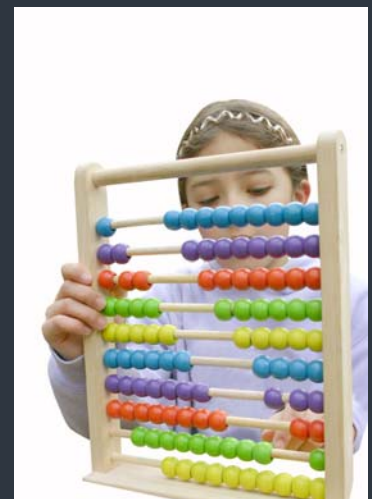
- ☆ Volunteer to assist community organizations, agencies, and programs serving young children and their families.
- ☆ Learn and share information about early childhood development, including brain development.
- ☆ Volunteer to read to young children at libraries, hospitals, schools, early care and education programs, and family resource centers.
- ☆ Volunteer to assist at a community drive for children's books, diapers, food or other needed resources in the community.
- ☆ "Adopt" or "Mentor" young families.
- ☆ Google "retirees volunteering in schools" and see what many other options are available to become involved.

Schools: When schools and homes communicate effectively: positive relationships develop; problems are more easily solved; and student achievement increases.

- ☆ Inform all school personnel and parents about the importance of the first years of life. Make this information available, to the greatest extent possible, to parents who are not fluent in English.
- ☆ Build partnerships with neighborhood early childhood programs and create effective transition programs from early childhood programs to schools.
- ☆ Offer voluntary parent education programs, such as Parents as Teachers, HIPPY and family literacy programs.
- ☆ Provide programs that help teen parents finish school and learn parenting skills.
- ☆ Collaborate with other community partners to expand/improve services that assist families with young children.
- ☆ Include early care and education and family center facilities in new school construction projects and reallocate vacant classrooms for such programs, when available.
- ☆ Host a drive or raise money for children's books, diapers, food or other needed resources in the community.
- ☆ Offer indoor and outdoor space to early childhood program facilities.
- ☆ Provide opportunities to parents to communicate with school administrators regarding issues of concern; provide forums on the curriculum and how parents can support their children's learning at home.
- ☆ Provide adults and students with opportunities to learn together (e.g. family math, science and technology events).
- ☆ Provide training on effective parent outreach and engagement strategies. including the importance of regular and two-way communication between the school and home to all personnel.
- ☆ Foster an appreciation for involving all stakeholders in school governance and advocacy. Bring all staff, parents and community members together for training in leadership, collaboration, advocacy and shared decision-making.



When a parent connects to resources in their communities early in their child's development, families can develop a broad network that can serve as a resource later in their child's life.



“Early experiences determine whether a child’s developing brain architecture provides a strong or weak foundation for all future learning, behavior and health.”

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child



Media

Media outlets provide the mode in which the community can learn about initiatives that will benefit its members. Newspapers, radio, and television have the ability to impact in a positive light, the good things people working together in Macomb County can accomplish.

- ☆ Create and broadcast programs that inform the public about the importance of the early years.
- ☆ Report on efforts to expand and improve programs and services that assist families with young children.
- ☆ Publicize local resources available to families with young children.
- ☆ Report on state and community early childhood champions-individuals, organizations and businesses that are improving programs and services for young children and their families.
- ☆ Understand why early learning matters.
- ☆ Learn more about the Macomb Great Start Collaborative www.greatstartmacomb.org

Parents: As a child’s first teacher, parents prepare and support successful learners. As the “big picture” team members in a child’s education, families engage, inform, nurture, support and guide children’s learning 365 days a year—far beyond the twelve 180+ days years spent in school. From providing a nurturing home environment to setting appropriate expectations and limits, successful parenting strategies can significantly raise educational performance.

- ☆ Join the Great Start Macomb Parent Coalition. Call 866-462-2662 for details.
- ☆ Be aggressive about getting the skills and tools you need to be the best parent you can be.
- ☆ Join a parent support organization.
- ☆ Share special skills or knowledge with young children.
- ☆ Speak out for children’s issues- write letters to the editor or to your elected officials urging them to support young children and their families.
- ☆ Vote for candidates or ballot initiatives that support early childhood resources.
- ☆ Contribute to or raise money for early childhood causes.
- ☆ Volunteer to help organize a drive for children’s books, diapers, food or other needed resources in the community.

Philanthropy: Philanthropy is the driving force behind community efforts. Through financial support, time, energy and resources philanthropy can provide, strengthen, improve, protect, enhance, and support the efforts and development that directly effect change in a community.

- ☆ Provide long-term support for early childhood system development efforts.
- ☆ Fund or sponsor community efforts to expand and improve the quality of programs and services available to young children and their families.
- ☆ Fund projects that demonstrate or replicate successful early childhood projects.
- ☆ Provide low-or no-interest loans for quality improvement by early childhood programs, including facility renovation.
- ☆ Inform policymakers about the importance of the first years of life.
- ☆ Form funding partnerships to leverage or generate new resources for early childhood programs and services.
- ☆ Use funding to support innovative programs to link child care and community and economic development efforts.

Civic, Community and Professional Organizations

Collaboration with community groups bring additional skills, resources and points of view to support improvement in areas such as curriculum, school safety, support services and education reform.

- ☆ Host or co-sponsor community forums on early childhood topics, such as early childhood brain development, parenting programs that work, improving the quality of child care, or expanding access to health care.
- ☆ Help local service providers design services that are culturally sensitive to the linguistic needs and preferences of the community. Help providers recognize and eliminate obstacles that may prevent segments of the community from using their services.
- ☆ Organize volunteers to build or refurbish playgrounds or improve child care facilities.
- ☆ Celebrate and honor community leaders and organizations making a difference for young children and their families.
- ☆ Organize a drive for children’s books, diapers, food or other needed resources in the community.

Colleges and Universities Collaboration with community groups bring additional skills, resources and points of view to support improvement in areas such as curriculum, school safety, support services and education reform.

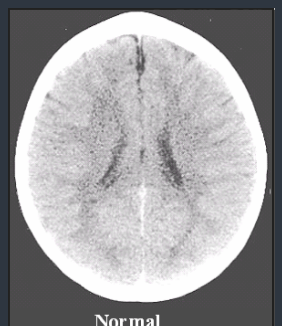
- ☆ Include information about the importance of positive early childhood development in professional and trade association publications and conferences on campus.
- ☆ Encourage and support students, faculty, and staff to perform volunteer service in early childhood health, education, and care, and family support/parent education programs.
- ☆ Host well-publicized state and community public policy seminars and events that showcase and inform the public and policy makers about early learning research.
- ☆ Take an active part in local, regional, and national efforts to raise qualifications of individuals providing services for young children and their families.

Faith Communities Collaboration with faith communities provide spiritual support, promote service and goodwill towards all members of the community and bring additional resources such as provide facilities, and generate resources for community support efforts.

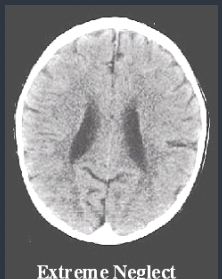
- ☆ Sponsor or donate space for parenting, family support, health care, and early care and education programs.
- ☆ Adopt a local early childhood program, offering financial support and other resources, the use of facilities, and / or volunteers from your congregation.
- ☆ Mobilize retired and senior congregation members to volunteer in hospitals, early care and education programs, at libraries and at family centers.
- ☆ Establish or become an active participant in a community interfaith council of child and family ministries that focus on the needs of parents.

Scientific research shows that experiences children have, prior to kindergarten entry, impact how their brain is wired and provide the foundation for establishing their future health, learning and behavior.

3 year old Children



Normal



Extreme Neglect

“Life experiences directly impact a child’s development beginning at birth and continuing through childhood. Young children are highly influenced by their relationships with adults, by the environment where they live and by the opportunities they have to play, learn and grow.”

Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development

Government (at all levels)

When all levels of government officials are informed on the importance of early childhood growth and development they can make early childhood a priority for our community.

- ☆ Increase investments in young children and their families. Look for opportunities to link early care investment with other economic and business development in the community.
- ☆ Create incentives, in the public and private sectors, to expand and improve services to families with young children.
- ☆ Require collaboration and coordination among agencies that administer early childhood programs and services.
- ☆ Convene a group of business leaders to investigate creative financing for early childhood programs and services.
- ☆ Institute appropriate mechanisms to assure the safety and healthy development of young children in early childhood programs, and provide technical assistance to those who need to improve quality.
- ☆ Provide low- or no-interest loans to early childhood programs that have plans to improve quality or undertake facility construction and renovation.
- ☆ Establish tax advantages for family-friendly businesses.
- ☆ Develop legislation, public policies, budgets, taxes, economic development and strategic plans, and financing mechanisms that assist families with young children.
- ☆ Use planning and zoning data about children and families to create appropriate regulations and facilities (parks, sidewalks, child care centers, family child care homes, housing, etc.)
- ☆ Link economic development and job creation with initiatives that meet the needs of young children and their families.
- ☆ Collaborate with community partners to expand and improve services for young children and their families.
- ☆ Advocate for young children and their families with county, state, and federal governments.
- ☆ Encourage the education of the people who serve young children, through scholarship funds and other strategies.
- ☆ Work with county, state, and federal regulators so that municipal regulations on fire, safety, and buildings are the same and/or complementary when applied to facilities for young children.



Hospitals and Health Care Professionals A healthy community grows into a strong community when health care professionals and hospitals promote family wellness and provide families with information on the importance of the first years of life to support to ensure all children get a healthy start.

- ☆ Educate families, patients and staff about the importance of the first years of life, early brain development, and the importance of every child having a primary health care provider.
- ☆ Provide facilities and materials for prenatal and parenting classes, early care and education programs, and other services that support healthy early childhood development.
- ☆ Collaborate with other community partners to expand and improve locally available health, parenting and family support and early care and education programs.
- ☆ Inform policymakers and the importance of the first years of life, and support policies that increase and improve health, family support and early care and education programs.
- ☆ Volunteer as telephone/ on-site consultant to early childhood programs on health and safety issues.
- ☆ Raise money or host a drive for children’s books, diapers, food or other needed resources in the community.

Law Enforcement

When law enforcement and the early childhood community communicate effectively, advocates, educators and information is brought to the front line to help families in the community in need. Through collaboration advocates are created to improve the future of our community.

- ☆ Inform other community members of the law enforcement community, and the public at large, about the importance of the first years of life and the wisdom of prevention.
- ☆ Collaborate with other community partners (such as schools, health care providers, early care programs, and family support/parent education programs) to expand and improve services to families with young children.
- ☆ Include information about early child development, as well as child abuse prevention and intervention, in training programs for law enforcement professionals. Train police officers to work collaboratively with other professionals who interact with young children and their families.

Libraries

When libraries collaborate there is an increase in communication and information accessibility in the community and early childhood experiences for families with young children become enhanced.

- ☆ Become an information source about all community, child, and family activities and initiatives.
- ☆ Establish family reading rooms for community groups.
- ☆ Publicize the availability of parenting materials and resources and books for young children.
- ☆ Encourage families to read to their children beginning at birth and throughout childhood.
- ☆ Share online library services with early childhood programs.
- ☆ Organize and host a drive for children’s books, diapers, food or other needed resource in the community.



“We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility.

It’s easy to say, ‘It’s not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.’

Then, there are those who see the need and respond. I consider these people my heroes.”

Fred Rogers, Legendary PBS Television Actor