



GREAT START COLLABORATIVE OF KENT COUNTY

Mission: To assure a coordinated system of community resources and supports to help all Kent County families provide a great start for their children from birth to age five.

February 24, 2022 - 1:30-3:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Angela Freier, Ben Brower, Bryana Hopkins, Cara Sutcliffe, Chana Edmond-Verley, Claire Titcombe, Debbie Whitford, Elizabeth Zandstra, Emily Skavnak, Emily Vanden Bos, Fredericka Brown, Heather Boswell, Heather Walczewski, Iris Gipson, Jaime Mueller, Janice Wilks, Jayme Vosovic, Jennifer Cottingham, Jennifer Leys, Joann Hoganson, Karen Lezan, Kathleen Neumann, Katie Szarowicz, Kayla Johns, Kristin Gietzen, Kristyn Bomberg, Lindsey VanDyke, MaDonna Princer, Maggie Lancaster, Matthew Beresford, Maureen Hale, Ray Sutcliffe II, Sara McMullin, Sara Proano, Sarah Wilson, Summer Wright, Susan Chang, Tequia Adams, Wendy Wheeler, Yolanda Johnson, Megan Streng, Paula Brown, Tomarra Richardson, Nicole Burman

- Welcome and Introductions

Maureen Hale

Approval of the December 9, 2021 meeting notes-Approved

- Great Start Parent Coalition Report

**Tomarra Richardson
Nicole Burman**

- Trusted Advisors

- The final Trusted Advisors (TA) Grant was fully awarded \$25,000. The grant timeline is January 11th – November 23rd. The GSPC will provide at least three family bonding events in person or via zoom. Information on how families can participate in these events will be shared with partners.
- The GSPC also utilized a portion of the TA funds to award subrecipient grants to Migrant Legal Aid (\$10,000) and Browning Claytor (\$9,376). Migrant Legal Aid will provide outreach training to migrant workers focused on limiting pesticide exposure to migrant children. Browning Claytor will utilize the funds for their Reach Out & Reach program by providing books in multiple languages to the families they serve.

- ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Training

- Nicole & Tomarra will provide a virtual training on April 26th 10am-12pm. The course is eligible for 2 continuing education credits. Participants can register on MI Registry.
- Organizations that would like to schedule a training for their staff or the families that they serve may email gsparents@successstartsearly.org. Training is available in person or virtually.

- Upcoming Meetings & Events

- The 3rd Annual Books, Blocks & Balls (BBB) event will be Saturday August 13th at Alger Head Start. Organizations that are interested in participating in the event should register at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KB2FHBW>. Details regarding a date for a BBB in Northern Kent County will be communicated at a later date.
- GSPC Meetings
 - 03.10.22 MLPP Kids Count Data
 - 04.14.22 Circles Grand Rapids
 - 05.12.22 Stretching your food dollar during rising gas prices and inflation & good nutrition
- COFI (Community Organizing & Family Issues) hosting their community town hall on January 20th. The group will convene a community task force to discuss the top community concerns that were identified during the community canvassing process. The community task force meeting will be on March 5th 10am – 11:30am.

- Diaper Drive

- The GSPC is 36,000 diapers away from the 2 millionth diaper collection mark. A community celebration will be held in 2022. GSC members that are interested in being on the planning committee may email gsparents@successstartsearly.org.

- Normal Is Never Enough Campaign
 - <https://normalwasneverenough.org/>
 - Ways to get involved:
 - Share out post
 - Create a Guest Blog post
 - Contribute Idea

**Megan Streng
Paula Brown**

- Legislative Update: (PowerPoint attached)
State Budget Overview

Jayme Vosovic

- The Governor's budget has been released. This is the very best time to be advocating and talking to legislators. She broke down data based on the early childhood outcomes. General funds have not caught up with inflation. There is quite a bit of one-time funding in the general fund.
- Tax changes
 - Significant increase to MI Earned Income Tax Credit
 - Rebates for purchase of electric cars
 - Areas of focus:
 - Children Born Healthy
 - Reducing Health Disparities
 - Fathers
 - Clean Safe Water
- Below are the links that were shared during the presentation:
 - MLPP Budget Priorities: <https://mlpp.org/2023-state-budget-priorities-overview/>
 - Bridge Magazine Ballot Proposals: <https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-government/2022-michigan-ballot-issues-tracker-what-know-about-election-proposals>
 - Think Babies: <https://www.ecic4kids.org/policy-thinkbabiesmi/>

- Child Care Update

- Great Start to Quality - Kent Resource Center
 - Great Start to Quality Data:
 - 640 Licensed Providers in Kent County
 - 308 Center (48%)
 - 254 Family Homes (40%)
 - 78 Group Homes (12%)
 - 364 Licensed Star Rated Providers (57%) - State metric for star rated providers is 50% so GSQ is above that with 57%
 - 165 Centers (45%)
 - 147 Family Homes (41%)
 - 52 Group homes (14%)
 - Child Care Openings and Availability:
 - Currently, most licensed programs are open and operating
 - Some are still operating at lower capacity due to COVID/health and safety concerns
 - GSQ asks providers who have openings to let them know.
 - Post current provider openings weekly, if you would like to receive the list contact Mikaela Lamrouex mikaelalamrouex@kentisd.org
 - Child Care Stabilization Grants:
 - 550 Eligible Providers
 - 491 Approved Applications
 - 89% Submission Rate for Kent County
 - \$28,307,765.00 was awarded to Kent County Providers
 - Supporting providers in spending and reporting - Providers must spend the money and do reporting before applying for the next round of funding
 - Thursday, February 24th 6-8pm – in-person Grant Supporting Event
 - March 10th 6-7pm – Grant Reporting Chat on zoom

Jaime Mueller

March 22nd 6-8pm – in-person Grant Reporting Support Event

- **Vibrant Futures** **Chana Edmond-Verley**
 - **Tri-Share Program**
 - The families will pay a 1/3, employers will pay a 1/3 and State will pay a 1/3 to make childcare affordable for working families
 - Eligibility is based upon employee's family size and income level - Targets working families earning 185%-300% of the Federal Poverty Levels
 - Families are eligible for one year
 - Families are underutilizing the childcare subsidy currently
 - Vibrant futures is willing to reach out to employers on behalf of employees; will cost employers about \$3,400 an employee and cost of turnover is about \$3,600 so it is a bargain for employers to participate in this to help families
 - Vibrantfuturesmi.org - click on TOC – Tri-Share – how to get started
 - It is first come first serve
 - This is first come first served and almost ½ of the fund are already committed. They have a little over ¼ Million dollars available. If VF uses up their funding and others haven't there is the potential to tap into other counties funding
 - **Benefits:**
 - ❖ **To working parents:**
 - Provides financial relief by reducing out-of-pocket childcare costs
 - Eases the burden of finding available openings with licensed childcare providers
 - Improves work-life-family balance by providing child care solutions
 - Removes a barrier to seeking and/or maintaining employment
 - ❖ **To employers:**
 - Helps with employee recruitment and retention
 - Removes a significant barrier to employment
 - Develops and strengthens the talent pipeline
 - Opportunities for tax credits
- **GSC Updates & Announcements** **Paula Brown**
Maureen Hale
 - **Staffing Update**
 - **GSC Coordinator**
 - Posted over the holiday
 - First round of interviews are complete
 - One candidate selected for 2nd interview with executive team
 - Posted a position for a parttime Care Coordinator with Help Me Grow Kent
 - **Nomination Committee Update** **Kristen Geitzen**
 - Challenging to identify a replacement chair during these unprecedented times
 - Individual are tapped out on their day-to-day jobs – though there may be interested now may not be a good time, but may be interested in the future
 - Executive committee is recommending keeping Maureen on for a maximum of 2 year or until we identify a new chair, whichever comes first
 - Need to update operating guidelines due to being in unprecedented management times to reflect what happens when someone is in their position longer than stated in the operating guidelines
 - The nominating committee will continue to work on identifying a new chair. They will be meeting regularly
 - Interested in joining the nominating committee contact Maureen or Paula
- **MI Early Childhood Racial Equity Cohort** **Kent County Team: Kent GSC**
DHHS Prevention; Vibrant Futures
Grand Rapids Public Schools
 - Overview & Activity
 - Video: Systemic Racism
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrHIQIO_bdQ

- Opportunity from Great Start to participate in this Cohort to learn about the history of Early Childhood and Racial Equity
- The Team was selected because they were the most diverse group. The team came up with a mission statement and goals around having conversations with staff around equity. Outcomes around having those conversations by analyzing data through an equity driven lens with parents, the collaborative, organizations, and the community about racial equity. Launching a workgroup around this work.

- Nurturing Parent Power Workgroup
One County One Book

Chana Edmond-Verley

- Partner Announcements

Upcoming Meetings:

GSC Executive Team – March 8, 2022 – 2:30 – 4pm – Zoom

April 12, 2022 – 2:30 – 4pm - Zoom

GSC Membership Meeting – April 28, 2022 – 1:30–3:00pm – Zoom