

GSC Membership Meeting
August 26, 2021 - 1:30-3:00 p.m.
Zoom

Attendees: Tequia Adams, Iris Gipson, Yolanda Johnson, Nicole Burman, Heather Walczewski, Kristyn Bomberg, Joann Hoganson, Betsy Zandstra, Sarah Wilson, Ashley Karsten, Amber Davis, Jaime Mueller, Anna Silva, Mallory Willenbring, Jenna Leys, Sarah McMullin, Emily Skavnak, Alissa Finley, Karen Lezan, Alyssa Byran, Bryana Hopkins, Debbie Whitford, Heather Boswell, Jayme Vosovic, Aarie Wade, Fredericka Brown, Wendy Wheeler, Linda Pickett, Rachel Cain, Cara Sutcliffe, Tomarra Richardson, Leslie Hawkins, Maureen Hale, Paula Brown, Kailey Cline, Ray Sutcliffe

- **Welcome and Introductions**

Maureen Hale

Approval of the June 24, 2021 meeting notes

Inclusion Activity

- **Great Start Parent Coalition Report**

Tomarra Richardson
Nicole Burman

- **Books Blocks & Balls:** The event was August 14th at Alger Head Start and went very well. GSC staff was featured on multiple media outlets including WOOD TV8, Fox17, iHeart radio, WCSG, and Shelly Irwin. The event has a specific emphasis on developmental screens. 143 parents attended with 166 children. 55% of parents polled had not heard of the ASQ before this event. A big thank you to all of our community partners who helped make this event a success! Majority of families served were in the 49507 and 49508 according to the surveys that were completed.
- **COFI:** The first cohort of the second phase of COFI is completed and will have a graduation ceremony next week. Previous cohorts tend to lose attendees from the beginning to the end due to changes in life situations and availability. This session all have remained the entire time and 13 will be graduating. Next for the group is community canvassing to learn what the community sees as needs and what they want improved. This cohort has additional support from a CSSP grant. A third cohort of Phase I is kicking off at Dickinson Academy on the week of October 7th to be facilitated by Tomarra and Nicole. These sessions will be held during the day and while they are targeting the Dickinson school community all are welcome.
- **Trusted Advisors:** The TA grant continues to move forward. The grant is supporting Latinx and Northern Kent Coalition meetings, parent cafes, as well as virtual family enrichment opportunities. We've also begun an opportunity for parents to become parent ambassadors to reach out directly to the community they live in or connect with. This is different than the role of parent reps.
- **GSPC Meetings:** The first in-person meeting takes place September 9th for the general GSPC meeting. The topic is Setting Healthy Boundaries and Discipline. The meeting will be taking place at First CRC on the SE side of Grand Rapids. To share out the Facebook event with your networks click [here](#).
- **Diaper Drive:** We are getting close to our goal of 2 million diapers! After a very successful drive from Appletree with over 18,000 diapers collected we are 61,000 diapers within the range of our goal. Additional drives in the last few months include Sparta Baptist with over 2700 diapers, Fourth Reformed with over 3200 diapers, and Sparta United Methodist collected 11,000 diapers. Neland CRC is holding a drive with it wrapping up next week. The annual GSC drive begins the last week of September during Diaper Needs Awareness week and will run through the end of October. Reach out to Nicole and Leslie if you would like your organization to participate. Winner will receive the rotating trophy and a pizza party!

- Parent Cafés: There are four options for cafes at this time. BMH weekly virtual café on Monday nights, Grace CRC church on Wednesdays biweekly from at 10am, and beginning next month North Kent Connect and City Impact in the northern part of the county.

- **First Steps Kent Update**

Heather Boswell

- Ready by Five: Proposals for funding that will begin in 2022 are due tomorrow at 1pm. Next steps will involve The Ready by Resident Proposal Review Board meeting the week of September 20 to discuss proposals and develop recommendations. Recommendations will continue through the approval process that requires approval by First Steps Kent Commission/Board and the Kent County Board of Commissioners. This process should be complete in November.
- Shared Services: Quality Child Care Shared Services Pilot is entering the third year of the pilot project. We started this work on June 24 and have already made great strides during our design sessions. A timeline has been developed for the third year, with the focus of this first quarter being to distill what's been learned and synthesizing the data and feedback collected during our piloted activities. Starting in October, Shared Services will engage local childcare providers, early childhood leaders, and a diverse group of community and business partners for a series of focus groups facilitated by an outside consultant. Information from these sessions will be used to launch into quarter three and the development of the final Shared Services framework. Stay tuned, more information will be shared out in the coming weeks. If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to First Steps Kent.

- **Great Start Readiness Program Update**

Ashley Karsten

There are slots to add to classrooms but also need more children. It is easy to enroll children in preschool. Use this link: <https://www.kentisd.org/early-childhood/free-preschool/> or call 616.447.2409. Children could be in a classroom within a week if all the documentation is in. Children must be four by September 1st with a waiver for those four by December 1st. 15% can be over income. Not only have additional slots have been added but an increase in the amount per child. Many CBO's are using it to increase pay for staff. There is a mask mandate for all preschool programs. Some parents have asked if they must sign up for full day. If a parent feels their child isn't ready to do full day, they have the option to pick up earlier. For families that aren't comfortable with wearing masks encouraging them to come when there is outside classroom time then they will have a spot if things change, or they are comfortable. Have we ever shared a list of locations? Ashley will send the list to Leslie and will send out with the minutes. All programs are hiring and are flexible with those interested in getting a CDA. If you want to be a CBO partner email Ashley to begin that process. No substitute pool, maybe as a group we could work on that. All programs are struggling to fully staff. All GSRP teachers and staff must wear a mask.

- **ARP Funding – Childcare**

Jayne Vosovic

\$150 million to be dispersed June 28th through the end of the fiscal year to providers based on enrollment not attendance for licensed childcare providers. Not ARPA money but federal funds we would lose if we don't spend by the end of September. Legislature is working on the fiscal budget and are not touching the ARPA money until the end of the year or beginning of the year. Childcare is the exception hopefully. The dollars for providers need to be appropriated as soon as possible. Click [here](#) to find information on how to contact your legislators. To learn more or with any questions feel free to email Jayme at jvosovic@mlpp.org.

- **GSC Updates**

**Paula Brown
Maureen Hale**

- Budget: Budget presented to the group current as of June 30. Last four months of the budget year we typically see a lot of spending. This doesn't account of the last quarter of spending. Email or call Paula with questions.
- FY2021/2022 Work Plan: Power Point to be shared with the group.
- GSC Nomination Committee: K'Sandra Earle and Heather Walczewski also joined the committee. Those that have a nomination are invited to send those along to Maureen, Paula or Leslie.

- **Partner Announcements**

GRPL:

- Social Justice Begins with Me: children's book club for children ages 4 – 8 years old and 9 – 11 years old. Click on the link to learn more <https://www.grpl.org/kids-and-teens/sjbookclub/>
- Library Card Sign Up Month: September is Library Card Sign Up Month <https://www.grpl.org/library-card-sign-up-month/>

Michigan Alliance for Families: stakeholder meeting with future work supporting foster care parents. Click [here](#) for the flyer to share out. Trying to gather resources and information to best support those families. Can be current or past foster care family and is statewide.