



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.

Minutes

April 25, 2024 – 1:30pm-3:00pm

KCHD - 700 Fuller Ave NE, Grand Rapids MI 49503

Attendees: Madelyn Olson, Pam Shoemaker, Kathy Steiner, Kayla Johns, Ashley Sturgis, Lindsey VanDyke, Kimberly Spencer, Monica Moody, Lesly Sis, Ben Brower, Becca Boot, Amari Fuller, Anne Kuhnen, Joann Hoganson, Kristyn Bomberg, Paula Brown, Ashley Karsten, Jennifer Headley-Nordman, Amy Turner-Thole, Wendy Wheeler, Ray Sutcliffe II, Kristin Gietzen, Kathie Hoffman, Brittany Price, Kathy Peppin, Sarah Miller, Elizabeth Zandstra, Madison Perian, Kathleen Neumann, Tequia Adams, Abby Bishop, Chess VanWyk

- **Welcome & Introductions**

Kristyn Bomberg

Approval of minutes for February 22, 2024

- **Great Start Family Coalition Report**

**Tomarra Richardson
Shanequa Mosley**

- Upcoming Meetings & Celebrations
 - All Things Fatherhood – May 9th
 - Summer Celebration – June 27th
 - Charlie & The Chocolate Factory Book Club Celebration
- Books, Blocks, Balls
 - August 10th – Grand Rapids
 - September 21st – Sparta
 - Both events are 10am – 1pm
- Parent Cafés
 - Partnership with community organizations to continue parent cafés in the summer.
 - Neland CRC parent cafes
- Community Baby Shower
 - June 1, 2024
 - Paul I Phillips Recreation Center
 - 1pm – 3pm
 - The first 150 families in line will receive a pack n play
 - Local business donating and hosting a onesie painting session during the baby shower for the first 25 pregnant moms to arrive at the baby shower.
- Diaper Drive Update
 - GSC Wide Diaper Drive kickoff during Diaper Awareness Week during September.
 - Award for the organization that collects the most diapers

- **Child Wellbeing in Kent County: A Look At the Numbers
Michigan League for Public Policy**

**Amari Fuller
Anne Kuhnen**

Link to the virtual Kids Count book is [here](#)
Link to the county census factsheets are [here](#)
The flyer for Advocacy Boot Camp is [here](#)
Registration link for Advocacy Boot Camp is [here](#)

MLPP is a statewide organization dedicated to economic opportunity for all.

- Using data, community engagement, and advocacy they develop solutions that lift Michiganders up out of poverty.
- Kids Count in Michigan



- Measures child wellbeing at the state and local levels and uses that information to shape public policies and programs to improve the lives of children and their families.
- Michigan ranks 32nd overall in child well-being
 - 32nd in economic wellbeing
 - 42nd in education
 - 26th in health
 - 30th in family and community
- Kent county is home to nearly 50,000 children ages birth to five
- Overall results of Kent County are similar to Michigan as a whole
- The child population is declining even as Kent County gains population
- More than one in three births in Grand Rapids receives less than adequate prenatal care
 - Kent county is slightly better than Michigan as a whole, Grand Rapids is slightly worse
- White women are getting better than average prenatal care, Hispanic women are getting less than adequate care
- The share of births to mothers who smoked during pregnancy has been declining since 2013
- Child welfare children 0-17 in Kent County
 - 13,141 children in investigated families
 - 1,406 confirmed victims
 - 382 Children in out-of-home care
- Kent County has a smaller share of children in out of home care due to abuse and neglect
- Children of color in Kent County are disproportionately likely to be confirmed victims of abuse and neglect
- Michigan's child welfare system has an overrepresentation of children of color
- Food assistance for young children has risen slightly after years of decline from a great recession peak
- Nearly half of children in Kent County were tested for lead in 2022
 - Grand Rapids tested 89.2% children 1-2 for lead, 5.3% had elevated levels
- School Readiness
 - Kent County has seen a decline in childcare providers compared to pre-pandemic levels
 - ✓ Significant decline in family home childcare
 - The average cost of childcare has been rising more than inflation since 2018
 - ✓ \$780/ month in Kent County, \$740/ month in Michigan
 - Kent County has slightly above-average share of children in early education programs
 - ✓ 8,886 children ages 3&4 enrolled in preschool
 - ✓ 2,927 children enrolled in GSRP
 - The share of children accessing early intervention services reached new highs in 2022
 - Ready by Five millage
 - ✓ Dedicated and sustainable funding for programs that support the health, school readiness and wellbeing of children 5 and under.
 - Many children in Kent County do not begin receiving special education services until they enter elementary school
 - A growing share of Kent ISD students are receiving ESL services
 - ✓ +8% children where English is not the primary language spoken at home
 - ✓ +13% English is spoken "less than well" where English is not spoken in the home
 - More than half of students are not proficient in reading in 3rd grade
- Economic Security
 - 1/3 children in Kent County, 1/2 in Grand Rapids live in low-income families
 - The number of families in MI receiving direct cash assistance through TANF is at an all-time low (11,947 families)
 - ✓ Payment standard:
 - ❖ \$814 maximum monthly income to be eligible for a first-time claim
 - ❖ \$495 maximum monthly benefit
 - ❖ These payment amounts have not changed since 1993
 - ✓ Barriers to cash assistance:
 - ❖ 48-month lifetime limit



- ❖ Elimination of “clock-stoppers”
- ❖ Sanctions for not meeting work requirements
- ❖ Drug felony ban
- ❖ Asset test of \$15,000

- SB 285: school attendance
 - Passed in senate on 4/16
 - Would require children to enroll in kindergarten at the age of 5 beginning in 25/26 school year
 - Would likely increase kindergarten attendance by 4,500 which would also increase funding for districts
- Omnibus package
 - Led by MI State of Birth Justice to address gaps in Black maternal health
- Federal CTC
 - Bipartisan Child Tax Credit proposal would lift some half a million or more children above the poverty line when fully in effect
 - In its first year, as many as 400,000 children were lifted above the poverty line
- HB 5290 & SB 632: Payday lending legislation
 - Passed in senate
 - House committee took testimony
- During this time continue to contact legislators. Find out who is on the conference committees and communicate with them.

- **Ready by Five Millage Update
Gaps & Opportunities**

- [Ready by Five Millage Update Presentation](#)
 - [FAQ Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage](#)

- 2024 Early Childhood Millage

- KCBOC approved .25 mill renewal for 6 years
 - Includes language for childcare infrastructure BUT does not require it
 - RB5 committee had requested .45 mill

- Gap Analysis

- More than 12,000 children served a year
 - Thousands more received services
 - Home visiting: 50% increase in families served
 - Play and Learn: 800% increase
 - Outreach and Navigation: 2,200 served
 - Gaps in Programming:
 - 25% of children 0-5 receive Rb5 services
 - Goal: 10,000-12,000 more children
 - Requires more funding and resources
 - Childcare access & cost
 - Challenges:
 - ✓ Children & families with broader and deeper needs
 - ✓ Shortage of skilled workers; relatively low pay
 - ✓ Increasing cost of service delivery
 - Cumulative K-Readiness, 2021-2023
 - ✓ Even though it's a small set of data, seeing increases for children receiving services
 - Kindergarten Readiness
 - ✓ Enthusiastic learner
 - ✓ Listens & communicates
 - ✓ Wants to be independent
 - ✓ Plays well with others
 - ✓ Strong fine-motor skills

Jennifer Headley-Nordman
Amy Turner-Thole



- ✓ Basic letter and number recognition
- Early Childhood Millage Renewal
 - August 6, 2024, Primary Election
 - What's on the ballot?
 - .25 mill renewal
 - \$300,000 home= \$37.50/ year or \$3.13/ month
 - 6 years
 - Estimated it will generate \$7.7 million in 2025
 - Informational campaign, First Steps Kent
 - Political Campaign, Yes Ready by Five Ballot Committee
 - Yesreadyby5.com
 - Social media ads
 - Radio and tv ads
 - Billboards
 - Mailers
 - Yard signs
 - Word of mouth
 - Key Messages
 - RB5 helps ensure children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn and succeed
 - RB5 provides dedicated funding for evidence-based programs that are proven to work
 - More than 12,000 children and parents a year, from every zip code in Kent County participate in programs funded by the millage
 - (More from PowerPoint)
 - How You Can Help
 - Spread the word
 - Endorse the millage
 - Host a yard sign
 - Invite RB5 to present to your groups
 - www.yesreadyby5.com
 - Amy Turner-Thole, 616-633-9573, aturnerthole@gmail.com

Everyone is invited to the Ready by Five Campaign Kickoff Event

When: 10 a.m. on Tuesday, June 11

Where: Millennium Park, Grant Pavilion on Meadows side of the park

Who: Parents, children, service providers, advocates...anyone who supports young children and Ready by Five

▪ **GSC Updates**

Paula Brown

- One County One Book Launch Update

Link to an overview video of the One County One Book Launch:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/15gvshGOJQgsW7LLg2-BcKLE7A2nq-9i/view?usp=sharing>

- Staffing Update

The GSC Administrative Coordinator position is still open. Requesting GSC partners to help spread the word

- Child Care and Development Fund State Plan

Help Wanted: Child Care and Development Fund State Plan Input

The Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) helps promote families' economic self-sufficiency by making child care more affordable. It also fosters healthy child development and school success by improving the quality of early learning and after-school programs. Over the years, significant advancements have been made possible through CCDF funds, including defining health and safety requirements for child care providers, outlining family-friendly eligibility policies, and ensuring parents and the general public have transparent information about child care choices.



Please consider this opportunity and share this with your networks to help develop the new 3-year plan.

- **Registration link for April 30 at 6:15 PM:**

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_CbucFZ6rTHaX0_y7enzi5Qter/WN_CbucFZ6rTHaX0_y7enzi5Q

- To submit written feedback for the Market Rate Survey please

click: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MRS_Report_Feedback

- **Partner Announcements**

- GSRP “Here I Come!” Event

- At multiple locations tomorrow, 4/26
- Time for families to walk through classrooms, meet teachers, learn about the schools, etc.

- Vibrant Futures

- Thanks for bringing up the child-care subsidy, wants to emphasize how important it is and what an impact it has on the families they work with.

Upcoming Meetings:

GSC Executive Team: May 14th, 2:30pm-4pm (Zoom)

June 11th, 2:30pm-4pm (Zoom)

GSC Membership Meeting: June 27th, 1:30–3:00pm

KCHD Lakes Room - 700 Fuller NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503