



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

June 27, 2024 – 1:30pm-3:00pm

KCHD - 700 Fuller Ave NE, Grand Rapids MI 49503

Attendees: Madelyn Olson, Marcy Steenstra, Alexis Reame, Emily VandenBos, Pam Shoemaker, Kayla Johns, Brittany Price, Betsy Zandstra, Marian Russell, Chess VanWyk, Kristin Gietzen, Joann Hoganson, Sarah Miller, Chana Edmond – Verley, Shanequa Mosley, Jourdan DeRidder, Abby Bishop, Kathie Hoffman, Ray Sutcliffe II, Paula Brown.

- **Welcome & Introductions**

Maureen Hale

Approval of minutes for April 25, 2024

- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Activity**

I am, but I am not

This activity helps to break down stereotypes and misconceptions among teams.

- **Great Start Family Coalition Report**

Shanequa Mosley

- “Oh Baby” Community Baby Shower
- Diaper Drive
- Summer Celebration
- Books, Blocks & Balls
 - Grand Rapids – August 10th
 - Sparta – Sparta Early Childhood Center
- Upcoming Meetings

- **GSC Updates**

Paula Brown

➤ Staffing Update

➤ MiLEAP – PDG B-5 Needs Assessment

To help inform efforts to improve services to all families in Michigan, the Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP) is inviting 100 families to submit their story about looking for and receiving services for their family and young child(ren), including child care, education and child development, home visiting, maternal and child health and wellness, and financial support. To learn more about this opportunity and share it with others, please see the flyer available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Arabic](#).

➤ Count the Kicks

- **PreK for All State Legislation Update**

Chana Edmond Verley

- The budget was approved at the state level. Huge win for early childhood programs.
- The 30% objective stays in for community-based organizations.
- New director Dr. Sophia Lafayette-Lause from Wayne County RESA will be over GSRP for the whole state
- Recent conversations around removing community-based organizations from pre-k for all funding
- Michigan has one of the top 5 states in mixed delivery programs with community-based organizations
- 40% of children in Michigan still do not have a childcare slot, which led to the roadmap planning for PreK for All



- 90% of the brain is developed by the age of 5. Having a strong infrastructure of brain development is vital to a child's successful learning experience.
- ROI is 2/3 greater at age 5 vs. in a later grade
- This is a win for parents, children, and businesses. Childcare is vital for everyone.
- Head Start for Kent County is the largest Head Start program in the state.
- Joan Hogensen asked- "Federal funds for Head Start used to be required to be completely utilized. Is that still the case?"
 - Chana isn't completely sure of the nuances of the situation
 - Maureen- Head Start has been able to adjust to full days and serving more 3-year-olds due to funding
 - Chess- GSRP is debating moving to a 5-day model vs a 4-day model. Baxter Community Center is trying out the model to adjust for family needs and it has made them a desirable program for many families.
- \$4 million dollars for childcare network business support (Family Childcare Network)
 - Vibrant Futures, Bethany, Kent ISD
- 15% increase in childcare scholarships
- \$24 million in childcare stabilization grants
- \$18.9 million in Great Start to Quality
- \$3.4 million in Tri-Share program
- \$ million in Wonderschool
- \$3 million in mental health

• **Home Visiting Exploration and Planning**

Small Groups

- \$350,000 funds from this grant currently in Kent County for home visiting services
- This grant will likely be put out for re-competition next fiscal year (FY26) for the first time since 2016
- Currently funding: PAT Bright Beginnings at Kent ISD and Baby Scholars, were previously funding Early Head Start until the beginning of this year
- Are there new pockets of poverty? Has Ready by 5 shifted the needs of our community? Etc.
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- **Partner Announcements**
- Joann Hogansen- new legislation on safe storage of firearms. KCHD is providing free locks to anyone in the community that is interested. Anyone can be referred to the Health Department to pick up a free gun locks. Staff is also available to visit programs at staff meetings for education around safe storage of firearms.
- Chana Edmond Verley- looking to fill a position for a data gathering specialist- 10 week commitment- flexible, hybrid, weekly paychecks.
- Betsy- GRPL's summer reading program is currently happening for ages 0-elderly. The program is free to sign up. You can sign up online or reach out to Betsy directly. Free books and cool prizes for everyone.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM

Upcoming Meetings:

GSC Executive Team: August 13th, 2:30pm-4pm (Zoom)

School Readiness Advisory: July 25th, 1:00-3:00pm
Location TBD

GSC General Membership Meeting: August 22nd, 1:30-3:00pm
KCHD Lakes Room - 700 Fuller NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503