



# 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

**December 14, 2023 – 1:30pm-3:00pm**

**MSU Extension**

**775 Ball Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503**

**Attendees:** Amari Fuller, Joann Hoganson, Tara Gwamna, Barb Hawkins-Palmer, Cara Sutcliffe, Ray Sutcliffe, Kathie Hoffmann, Stephanie McKendry, Lesly Sis, Sarah Miller, Tequia Adams, Ashley Karsten, LeeAnn Ritzema, Jaime Mueller, Lindsey VanDyke, Ashley Sturgis, Karen Lezan, Wendy Wheeler, Abylene Vargas-Leon, Maggie Lancaster, Jaime Maclangs, Traci Shenkel, Betsy Zandstra, Kristyn Bomberg, Kasey Young, Karrie Roy, Kelly Gerlinger, Tess Gibb, Kimberly Spencer, Rebekah Santana, Bryana Hopkins, Jennifer Headley-Nordman, Maureen Hale

**Staff:** Paula Brown, Tomarra Richardson, Shanequa Mosely

- Welcome **Maureen Hale**
  - Approval of minutes for October 26<sup>th</sup>
    - Minutes Approved
  
- DEI Activity **Tequia Adams**
  - Video 1: <https://youtu.be/kGd8seSSQH8?feature=shared>
  - Activity: Think, Group, Share- Imagine that you are hosting a party for early childhood community members from all over the world.
    - How would you prepare the party for your guests?
    - What steps would you take to ensure your guests have a feeling of belonging at your party?
  - Group Share:
    - Food from various ethnic groups
    - Invitations-various languages
    - Sensitive to areas with conflict
    - Learning about the way different cultures look at early childhood
    - Who would be invited
    - Create the UN for early childhood
    - Multiple ways to invite-braille, visual
    - Playlist featuring everyone's favorite song
    - Quiet Area
    - Accessible access for all
    - Icebreaker
    - Dietary Needs/Childcare
    - Emotional Support Animals on site
    - Bring guest to feel supported/not alone
    - Google form to get info on preferences-food/allergens
    - Decor artwork from their communities
    - Translators
    - Common Theme
  - Video 2: <https://youtu.be/M5JcGo3FCyk?si=1UcMTtc3PEztQYc3>
  - Goal: As we plan events remember the “Colorfulness” of your team-keep DEI at the forefront



- Great Start Family Coalition Report

**Tomarra Richardson**

**Shanequa Mosley**

- Great Start Parent Coalition Meetings
  - November - Young Money Finances – Great turnout
  - December - Protect Young Eyes – Tonight
  - January – Storytelling - Literacy
  - February – Maximize Love, Manage Stress – Social/Emotional
- Parent Cafés
  - Monthly with light dinner/snacks and childcare
  - Safe space for parents only
  - Expanded to Northern Kent in addition to Kent County
- Diaper Drive
  - The Learning Experience is currently doing a drive
  - The Goddard School just wrapped up a drive and surprised us with a donation

- GSC Updates

**Paula Brown**

- MiLEAP  
Michigan Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential
  - Early Childhood Education, Higher Education, Education Partnerships- 3 offices
    - Early Childhood Education - lead statewide efforts to ensure that all young children meet their developmental milestones and enter kindergarten with the tools and ability to succeed in school.
    - Higher Education - lead statewide efforts to ensure that every Michigander has the skill certificate or degree they need to prosper
    - Education Partnerships - lead statewide efforts to build and sustain partnerships that enhance educational opportunities and outcomes throughout the state from preschool through postsecondary education ensures all available resources, data, and dollars are aligned around a single vision—building an education system from preschool through postsecondary that can support children and families
- MiFamily Engagement Centers & Literacy Hub Grant
  - 35i-ISD to apply for our area is Ottawa County ISD
  - United Way Lakeshore will remain as the Literacy Hub
  - 35i - \$14,000,000 over the next 4 years to intermediate districts or consortia of intermediate districts to administer 10 MiFamily Engagement Centers across this state.
  - Within each MiFamily Center, \$120,000 must be dedicated to continuing the work of the Literacy Support Network Hub in each area
  - Funds must be used by MiFamily Engagement Centers for compensation and travel for coordinators and coaches, launching activities, including, but not limited to, training, coaching, technical assistance, resource development, and online learning modules.
  - In addition to the MiFamily Center funds, there is allocated for 2023-2024 only \$2,000,000.00 to implement a statewide campaign to share how parents can support early literacy for children from birth to grade 5
- Workgroup Overview
  - Small group breakouts
    - Social/Emotional Health  
APA – critical importance of open-ended play  
Partner with Children’s Museum  
Sharable resources – Tip sheets
    - School Readiness Advisory
    - Nurturing Parent Power
      - Individuals within small group: Kacey Young, Tomarra Richardson, Jennifer Norman, Rebekah, Karrie Roy, Jamie, Betsy, LeeAnne, Lyndsey VanDyk



- Are these strategies in alignment with the goals?
  - Add a two generational/multigenerational approach to the strategies by addressing the literacy of the parents as well. Emerging adult learners book at a level they could read. Promoting family literacy. Karrie Roy, Director Family Literacy Program, may be a good resource for this strategy.
  - [LeeAnne question] Is there a way to help children with literacy that do not have a desire to read a book. Are there other strategies that can help children? GSFC response: The January GSFC meeting on storytelling led by Jacque Viol will help with this along with the March GSFC meeting.
  - [Jennifer suggestion] Is there data that can be sprinkled in with the strategies that are listed to help determine/track if the strategies are making progress towards the goals.
- Are there additional revisions/work needed?
  - What is happening county wide to support family literacy? One response: Literacy classes are happening in schools to support parental literacy.
- Determine if this workgroup has adequate resources to lead the work.
  - Kacey Young would like to be added to the workgroup. She noted that there is alignment with PBS resources. Karrie Roy would also like to be added.

- Legislative Update

**Amari Fuller**

MLPP – Link to presentation: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1qnsWAC-7mCHOOd0biJ3AJumhSMWYtHdXG3ZGk5iGi70/edit?usp=sharing>

- Year-end Celebration

➤ 2023 Community Celebrations – See attached PDF

- Partner Announcements

➤ RFP- The West Michigan Perinatal Quality Collaborative has released an RFP for funding projects under the Advancing Healthy Births - 12 grants of 50,000 to be used over 9 months  
Deadline for proposals is January 3, 2024.  
Attached is more information.

**Upcoming Meetings:**

**GSC Executive Team: January 9th, 2:30pm-4pm (Zoom)**

**February 13th, 2:30pm-4pm (Zoom)**

**GSC Membership Meeting: February 22nd, 1:30–3:00pm**

MSU Extension - 775 Ball Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503