



## Great Start Collaborative of Kent County Meeting Minutes

**Date:** October 24, 2024, 1:30-3:00 p.m.

**Location:** MSU Extension | 775 Ball Ave. NE | Grand Rapids, MI 49503

### Attendance

- General Members: Amber Jones, Kalicia Mohit, Karen Lezan, Ray Sutcliffe II, Kayla Johns, Aarie Wade, Madelyn Olson, Ben Brower, Barb Hawkins-Palmer, Sarah Miller, Bryana Hopkins, Elizabeth Zandstra, Kathleen Neumann, Lesly Sis, Angela Freier, Chess Van Wyk, Ashley Karsten, Cara Sutcliffe, Hannah Beller-Coggins, Amelia Coburn, Pam Shoemaker, Lacey Ahmed, Merin Dekruyter, Ashley Sturgis, Jaime Mueller, Kate Meaton, Marcy Steenstra, Becca Boot, Tequia Adams, Kathie Hoffmann
- Executive Team Members: Joann Hoganson, Kelly Gerlinger
- Staff Members: Paula Brown, Tomarra Richardson, Shanequa Mosley, Jourdan DeRidder

### 1. Welcome & Introductions

Participants introduced themselves, their role and connection to the work of the Great Start Collaborative.

### 2. Diversity Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Activity

Led by Wendy Wheeler, DHHS, members watched the video [Barriers and Bias - A Mother's Journey To Self Sufficiency](#). A discussion ensued regarding GSC members' reaction to the video along with a guided discussion. You can view the discussion questions [here](#).

### 3. Review Past Meeting Minutes

The past meeting minutes were approved.

### 4. Great Start Family Coalition Report

- New Parent Representatives
  - Amber Jones, Kalicia Mohit, Sylvia Wallace & Autumn Moore
- Books, Blocks & Balls (BBB)
  - The 5-year anniversary of the Sparta BBB event was held at the Sparta Early Childhood Center.
  - Families loved the resources that they received from our partner organizations.



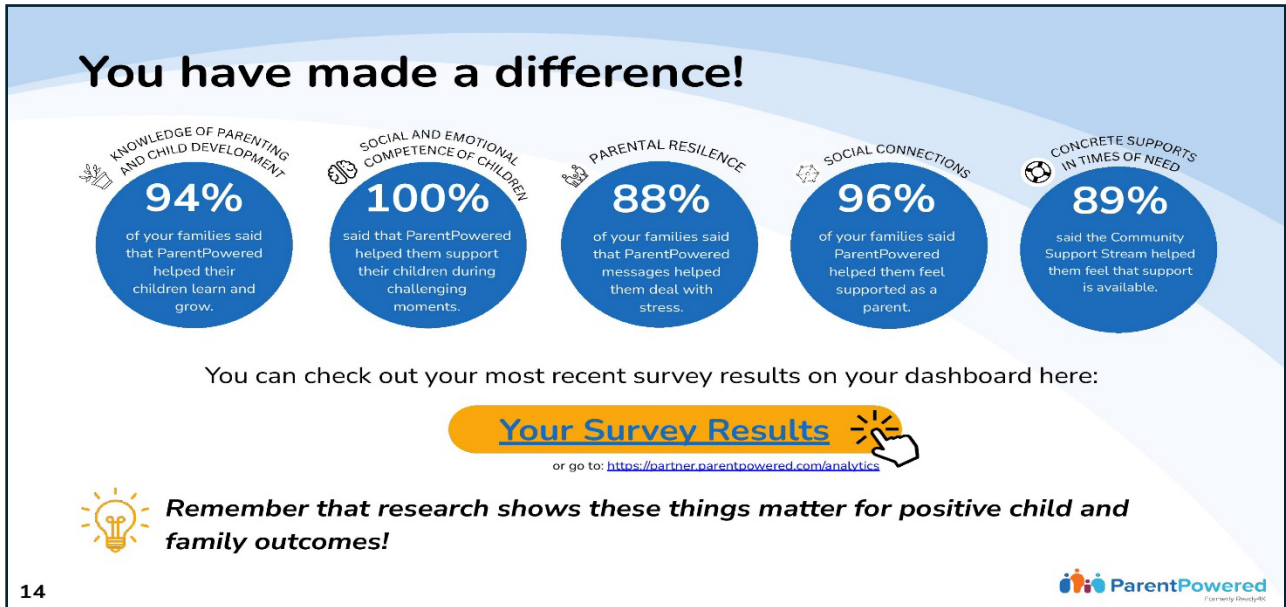
*Mission: To assure a coordinated system of community resources and supports to help all Kent County families provide a great start for their children from birth to age five.*

- **New this year** – We had an ASQ activity station to focus on gross and fine motor skills. Families were also able to complete an ASQ onsite while observing their child in the ASQ activity station.
- GSFC Meetings
  - 09.12.24 September GSFC meeting on Healthy Outcomes Positive Experiences (HOPE) presented by Kathy Peppin, WECSN Director.
  - 10.03.24 Fall Into The Love Of Reading Harvest Fest
    - Families received 7 books to build their home library
    - There were 5 stations centered around the Kent County Success Basics. Learn more about the basics at [www.successtartsearly.org](http://www.successtartsearly.org).
  - 11.12.24 November GSFC meeting will focus on being Thankful with Marcy Steenstra, WGVU. Families can RSVP [here](#).
- Community Organizing & Family Issues (COFI)
  - The GSFC is facilitating their 2<sup>nd</sup> Cohort of COFI Phase II training in Collaboration with Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan.
  - Information will be shared soon with the date of the Townhall Meeting after the group surveys the community to determine the area of focus for their group project.
- Diaper Drive
  - 17,358 diapers were collected in September from the Meijer, Kent County Sheriff Department, Gold Coast Douglas and Kent District Library diaper drives.
  - The Kent County Health Department is hosting a diaper drive in November.

## 5. GSC FY 2025 Action Agenda Feedback

- **Outcome 1**
  - No feedback noted.
- **Outcome 2**
  - No feedback noted.
- **Outcome 3**
  - As a community can we develop language around what school readiness is to share with families

- **Outcome 4**
  - One County One Book – Expand data collection on literacy movement via survey QR code stickers that is used in the books provided to WIC, Doulas and Home Visitors.
  - Please note the impact of Parent Powered summarized in the image.



## 6. Great Start Collaborative Updates

- **MiLEAP**
  - Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) awarded the grant to provide technical assistance to the GSCs and GSFCs.
  - Preschool Development Block Grant B-5 awarded to the state in the amount of \$33M over 3 years. Four focus areas:
    1. Make the child care sector more attractive for top talent by creating a consortium to make it easier for employers to offer healthcare and retirement benefits for early childhood educators.
    2. Build on local and regional efforts to improve wages for child care professionals while keeping child care affordable for families.
    3. Expand local efforts to hire and deploy substitute educators to ensure child care business can stay open and provide safe care when someone is out sick.
    4. Double down on the state’s commitment to quality care by investing in child care educators and providing free trainings in early literacy, support for children with disabilities, and more to strengthen the industry’s ability to provide the best care to all of Michigan’s children.



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- FY 2025 Budget – sent to the collaborative members 10.23.24 for review.
  - Please reach out to Paula with questions.

## 7. Partner Announcements

- The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) has openings across the county. Children are placed within a few days when all the information is provided.
- Refugee Education Center will run the Early Childhood Program in HUB 07. Additional information and details can be found [here](#).
- WGVU PBS kids new program New PBS show *Carl The Collector* follows the everyday adventures of Carl, a warm-hearted autistic raccoon who enjoys collecting things and loves his friends and family in Fuzzytown.
- Think Babies Michigan is looking for a childcare provider to sit on the board. Preference will be given to a childcare director in order to attend the meetings. Anyone interested can contact Cara Sutcliffe @ [carajeannie@gmail.com](mailto:carajeannie@gmail.com).
- Baby Scholars has openings (no waitlist for the winter session). Interested families can sign up at [Baby Scholars Enrollment](#).

## 8. Call to Action

- No calls to action were given.

## 9. Adjourn

### Upcoming Meetings:

**GSC Executive Team: November 12th, 2:30pm-4pm (Zoom)**

**December 10th, 2:30pm-4pm (Zoom)**

**GSC General Membership Meeting: December 12th, 1:30pm–3:00pm**

Kent County Health Department | 700 Fuller Ave NE | Grand Rapids, MI 49503

**School Readiness Advisory Committee: November 8th, 12:00 pm – 2:00pm**

Kent County Health Department | 700 Fuller Ave NE | Grand Rapids, MI 49503

**Social Emotional Health Workgroup: December 11th, 10:30am – 11:30am (Zoom)**

**Nurturing Parent Power Workgroup: November 26<sup>th</sup>, 12:30am – 2:00pm (Zoom)**