

Hello! Welcome to the 2014 Early Childhood Action Network. Michigan's Children is continuing to transfer some of our technology, so until that is up and running, you'll be receiving these Early Childhood Action Network e-bulletins through direct emails from me.

In the meantime, Michigan's legislators are now home for Spring Break and will be home for the next several weeks. Now is the time to talk to them about the fiscal year 2015 (FY2015) budget, which begins on October 1, 2014 and ends on September 30, 2015. You may even take advantage of the break by inviting them to visit a high quality early childhood program in your community and the importance of state funding to support these programs.

Some budget provisions you may want to discuss:

- The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for the Department of Community Health has yet to release their budget proposal for FY2015. The Governor and the House Subcommittee both included \$2.5 million to expand voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs to rural communities in northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. Now is the time to talk to your Senators – [particularly if he sits on the DCH Appropriations Subcommittee](#) – about the importance of these programs to ensure that women have healthy pregnancies, that babies are born healthy, and that new parents have the tools they need to be their child's first and best teacher.
- Also in the DCH budget, the Governor and House Subcommittee both included funds to expand the [Healthy Kids Dental Program](#) to Kalamazoo and Macomb counties. Again, please talk to your Senators about the importance of this program to ensure that Medicaid-eligible children can receive the dental care they need.
- Both the House and the Senate Subcommittees for K-12 Education included the second \$65 million expansion for the Great Start Readiness Program that the Governor recommended. However, the House Subcommittee did not include the Governor's recommended \$100 increase to the slot amount from \$3,625 to \$3,725; the Senate Subcommittee adopted a \$50 increase for a slot amount of \$3,675. We know the slot allocation continues to be insufficient to cover the true cost of providing GSRP, and that many local schools and programs must supplement these programs with their own resources. Increasing the slot amount is essential to maintain the quality of the program while not taking away from other critical needs of programs and K-12 education. For more information on the proposed changes to GSRP, [visit the Sandbox Party website](#).

*As always, please let me know if you have any questions, and thanks for your commitment to Michigan's youngest residents!*

Best,  
Mina

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