

November 19, 2015

The Honorable Rick Snyder  
Governor of Michigan  
P.O. Box 30013  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Snyder:

The undersigned organizations applaud Michigan's focus to ensure children have a great start in life, as demonstrated by our investments in the Great Start Readiness Program, evidence-based home visiting, and early literacy programming. We also recognize that many Michigan children continue to be at-risk of beginning school underprepared as a result of challenges they face well-before four years of age. In recognition of this, we are writing to ask for your support to allocate state funds for Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) known in Michigan as *Early On*.

Annually, *Early On* provides specialized early intervention services and supports to approximately 18,000 infants and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays, and their families. While federal funds provide limited support to the Part C system, IDEA did not intend to fund direct services primarily with federal dollars. Unlike the majority of other states, Michigan does not allocate any state funding for Part C, leaving the system vastly underfunded. As a result of this underinvestment, a 2013 audit conducted by the Michigan Office of the Auditor General concluded that there are deficiencies in the system and that additional funding is necessary for the early intervention system to adequately find, evaluate, serve, and support infants, toddlers, and their families.

We know that you are well-aware of the brain science in early childhood. Investing in services for young children who have or are at-risk for developmental delays not only better meets children's special needs from an early age, but also reduces special education costs down the road. In fact, national estimates indicate that of all young children who receive appropriate early intervention services, 37% of those children will not need special education services when they enter preschool and 42% will not need special education services by the time they reach kindergarten. If Michigan could realize these types of returns on *Early On*, we could not only save significant special education dollars but our investments in the Great Start Readiness Program and efforts to improve third grade reading will go even further. And, state funding for *Early On* would enable Michigan to address the deficiencies found by the Michigan Auditor General so that all families with eligible infants and toddlers receive timely, appropriate early intervention services.

Now is the time to bolster supports for Michigan's infants and toddlers with disabilities and delays so that they may be successful in school and in life. We need to follow in the footsteps of the majority of other states and begin providing state resource to support *Early On*. It's a critical step to make Michigan a top ten education state in the next ten years. Please continue to be the Governor who supports early childhood by supporting *Early On*; it is the next logical step.

Sincerely,

### Statewide Organizations

The ARC Michigan  
Early Childhood Investment Corporation  
*Early On*® Michigan Foundation  
Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan  
HighScope Educational Research Foundation  
Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health  
Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children  
Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education  
Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators  
Michigan Association of United Ways  
Michigan Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Michigan's Children/Michigan Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America  
Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health  
Michigan Disability Rights Coalition  
The Michigan Division for Early Childhood  
Michigan Family Voices  
Michigan Head Start Association  
Michigan League for Public Policy  
Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service, Inc.  
United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan

### Intermediate School Districts/Local Education Agencies

Allegan Area Educational Service Agency  
Ann Arbor Public Schools  
Alpena-Montmorency-Alcona Educational Service District  
Barry Intermediate School District  
Bay-Arenac Intermediate School District  
Branch Intermediate School District  
Cedar Springs Public Schools  
Charlevoix-Emmet Intermediate School District  
Cheboygan Otsego Presque Isle Educational Service District  
Clare-Gladwin Intermediate School District  
Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency  
C.O.O.R. Intermediate School District  
Delta-Schoolcraft Intermediate School District  
Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District  
Eaton Regional Educational Service Agency  
Genesee Intermediate School District  
Gratiot-Isabella Regional Educational Service District  
Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District  
Hillsdale County Intermediate School District  
Holton Public Schools  
Ingham Intermediate School District

Ionia County Intermediate School District  
Iosco Regional Educational Service Agency  
Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency  
Kent Intermediate School District  
Lapeer Intermediate School District  
Livingston Educational Service Agency  
Macomb Intermediate School District  
Manistee Intermediate School District  
Mecosta-Osceola Intermediate School District  
Midland County Educational Services Agency  
Montague Area Public Schools  
Monroe Intermediate School District  
Montcalm Area Intermediate School District  
Muskegon Area Intermediate School District  
Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency  
North Muskegon Public Schools  
Okemos Public Schools  
Ottawa Area Intermediate School District  
Reeths-Puffer Public Schools  
Shiawassee Regional Educational Service District  
St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency  
Van Buren Intermediate School District  
Washtenaw Intermediate School District  
Wayne Regional Educational Service Agency  
Wexford-Missaukee Intermediate School District

Great Start Collaboratives

Barry County Great Start Collaborative  
Clinton Great Start Collaborative  
Eastern Upper Peninsula Great Start Collaborative  
Genesee Great Start Collaborative  
Great Start Collaborative Cheboygan Otsego Presque Isle  
Great Start Collaborative – Lapeer County  
Gogebic-Ontonagon Great Start Collaborative  
Great Start Shiawassee  
Great Start Collaborative-Wayne  
Hillsdale County Great Start Collaborative  
Ingham Great Start Collaborative  
Ionia County Great Start Collaborative  
Kent Great Start Collaborative  
Lenawee Great Start Collaborative  
Monroe County Great Start Collaborative  
Ottawa Great Start Collaborative  
Washtenaw Success by 6 Great Start Collaborative

Early On/Other Service Providers

Arbor Circle (Grand Rapids)

Calhoun *Early On*

Camp Fire West Michigan 4C (Kent County)

Child Abuse Prevention Services/Family Growth Centers, a Division of Child and Family Charities (Clinton, Eaton and Ingham Counties)

Child Care Network (Washtenaw)

Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council for Cheboygan Otsego and Presque Isle Counties

*Early On* Wexford-Missaukee Intermediate School District

Educational Child Care Center (Lansing)

Family Futures (Grand Rapids)

A Father's Walk (Grand Rapids)

First Steps-Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor Public Schools

First Steps Kent

Grand Rapids Children's Museum

Great Start Parent Coalition of Kent County

Kent School Services Network

Menominee County *Early On*

Oakland Family Services

Saginaw County Youth Protection Council

Schoolcraft County *Early On*

Southern Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children

Starfish Family Services (Wayne County)

St. Joseph County Board of Education

St. Joseph County Early Childhood Workgroup

YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids

Others

Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber

Capital Area United Way (Lansing)

Claytor Peters Consulting

Gud Marketing

Ingham County Sheriff's Office

Michigan State University's Autism Research Lab

Michigan State University Psychological Clinic

United Way of Washtenaw County

Washtenaw County

Wayne State University Center for Urban Studies