

Date: July 20, 2020
To: Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters
RE: Supporting the Essential Early Needs of Children and Families

As the federal government makes its next steps during this crisis, we the undersigned organizations urge you to recognize the dramatic increased challenges that families in our state have faced by supporting dramatically increased resources for essential supports and services that will uphold the well-being of our state's families and communities, based what we have learned from their voices. All of these investments are included in recent proposals from your colleagues. All are essential to positioning our state to weather the crisis and ultimately, and will bolster the effectiveness of direct aid for state and local governments.

Child Abuse Prevention

During this time of increased stress and in this pandemic's wake, our state needs dedicated support for community-based supports and services to strengthen families, and for increasing the state's ability to safely prevent, investigate, and treat child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect prevention benefits children and youth of all ages, but a disproportionate number of child abuse cases are opened regarding young children.

- *\$1.5 billion for child abuse prevention via the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), including for tribal and migrant communities.*

Child Care

Families continue to work, or make difficult choices about work because of tough child care decisions, and more are resorting to new care arrangements at least for the time being. In this time of upheaval, we must ensure that high-quality affordable child care stays viable and available for all families. Child care investment will support not only infants, toddlers, and young children, but also school-aged care.

- *\$50 billion via the Child Care and Development Block Grant*

Equitable Educational Supports

As our state develops plans to reopen, it is clear that increased resources will need to be marshaled to provide the learning supports that many students, and their families, will need, especially resources that support the early educational needs of children and families who shoulder significant challenges.

- *\$12 billion for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including \$11 billion for K-12 (Part B), \$500 million for infant and toddler programs (Part C), and \$400 million for preschool programs (Sec 619)*
- *\$1 billion to increase access to adult education and family literacy programs*
- *\$500 million for the Education for Homeless Children and Youths program*

Health Care Access

Medicaid pays for nearly half of all births in Michigan and covers a greater share of births in rural areas, among young women, women of color and women with lower levels of educational attainment. The current 6.2% FMAP increase has meant hundreds of millions that can be utilized in Michigan to adjust for caseload increases but more support is needed. Increased FMAP funding will support nearly all state priorities that are tied with the provision of services to improve child and family health.

- *Increase federal Medicaid share (FMAP rate), maintain the increase until the state is economically stable, and require states to maintain coverage for anyone enrolled on/after March 18 beyond the federal emergency declaration while preserving current benefits and rates to providers.*
- *Delay the pending decrease in the CHIP matching rate currently scheduled for 2021 and extend the enrollment protections tied to the FMAP increase to separate state CHIP programs*

Increased MCH funding could be used to ensure prenatal and postpartum services and care coordination to reduce maternal mortality, particularly among African Americans and other mothers at higher risk, and support infant health through vaccinations, check-ins, and services.

- *Support an increase in funding for Title V MCH funds*

Home Visiting Programs

Michigan's home visiting programs didn't miss a beat during COVID-19, reaching out and supporting families, primarily through virtual visits but also through delivering much-needed supplies to families and helping them connect to crisis resources. There is a need to maintain home visiting staffing and to provide technology improvements and emergency supplies and needs for families.

- *Increase funding for MIECHV, and give states flexibility necessary to use these funds to support home visiting systems regardless of whether the services delivered are funded through MIECHV or with other state or federal funds, especially states like Michigan where a great deal of state commitment has gone into building a robust system of services for as many families as possible*
- *Allow virtual home visits to count as home visits to reflect our new reality*

Thank you for your work on behalf of children, youth, and families in Michigan. Please prioritize these issues in your efforts this month. We look forward to working with you to make public policy decisions in the best interests of children, youth, and families at this important moment.

Signed,

Early Childhood Investment Corporation
Early On Michigan Foundation
Michigan Chapter – American Academy of Pediatrics
Michigan's Children
Michigan Council for Maternal Child Health
Michigan Public Health Institute
Sarah Engstrom
Scott Koenigsknecht