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Immediate Release

## Governor's Budget Moves in Right Direction Except for Child Care – Michigan's Children

(Feb. 9, 2022) Governor Whitmer's FY2022-23 budget plan makes important strides in recognizing the need for critical funding for addressing the early childhood workforce crisis, preschool, afterschool programs, and mental health services. However, it falls short of necessary state resources to strengthen the state's child care system, an issue that's emerged as a top economic and social problem plaguing employers, providers and working parents across Michigan, Michigan's Children President & CEO Matt Gillard said today.

Gillard responded to the elements of the Governor's budget proposal related to supports and services geared to the state's children, youth and families by identifying areas of positive developments, as well as where the plan misses the mark in these priority areas. The [Governor's \\$74.1 billion spending plan](#) was unveiled before a joint meeting of the House and Senate appropriations committee this morning.

The positive highlights he detailed included a \$21 million funding increase for the state's free **Great Start Readiness Program** for four year olds, raising the per student allotment from \$8,700 to \$9,135; a significant and critical increase of \$7.1 million to just over \$21 million in **Early On services** for families of children (0-3) with developmental delays and disabilities; \$9.5 million more for **home visiting programs** that help build parenting skills and provide supports for those raising young children; and scholarships and bonus pay for teachers and school-based professionals including those working in pre-K programs.

"We all want Michigan to become the best place to have a family and raise children, but getting there will require sustained and continued investments. The needs are great," he said. "In GSRP, for example, fewer than 38,000 children of 100,000 eligible are being served today. With expanded funding, vital services that put our youngest learners on a strong start for success will reach more families who need and want them."

Another area that Michigan's Children has taken a strong lead, advocating alongside the Michigan Afterschool Partnership (MASP), is securing state funding for **afterschool programs**. The Governor's plan proposes a \$50 million investment, only half of which she intends to make ongoing. Afterschool advocates have been building support for a \$100 million request in large part to expand programs that provide academic and homework help to counter the effects of the pandemic on learning loss, a top worry among educators, advocates and families.

Gillard said the Governor missed the boat in addressing the fundamental problem with the state's child care system. "We didn't see a major commitment of new state funding today for child care that we were hoping for," Gillard said.

"Michigan lags way behind most other states in state investments. That's why our rates for providers and family eligibility are still so low, and why so many child care providers are leaving the workforce every week," he added. "Last year the Governor and Legislature moved a significant amount of federal dollars, \$1.4 billion, mostly for stabilization grants to help providers keep their doors open during the pandemic. What we really need is bold action to improve the funding formula so that families can afford child care and providers can afford to pay their people more and stay in business."

*Michigan's Children is an independent voice working to reduce disparities in child outcomes from cradle through career through policy change. It has served to improve the odds for all children and families in Michigan for more than 25 years.*