

March, 2022

Supporting a Healthy Start in the Michigan State Budget

Michigan's Children Calls for Increased Funding for Early Intervention and Home Visiting

Michigan's lawmakers are currently considering Governor Whitmer's recommendations and determining their own priorities for spending billions of one-time federal and state revenues for both current-year supplemental spending and for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year, beginning October 1, 2022. The early years are critical for shaping the trajectory of a child's development. However, families with young children often experience a great deal of isolation which affects their children's development and their ability to easily access help. Unfortunately, Michigan has historically underfunded home-based early intervention services and voluntary home visiting services.

To improve families' access to comprehensive services for their young children's development, Michigan's Children supports:

- **Full funding for [Early On](#)**, our state's early intervention program for children aged 0-3 with developmental delays and disabilities, to meet [overall needs](#) costing \$68 million.
- **Increased state funding for voluntary home visiting programs** to increase the number of families receiving services

Right Now: Governor Whitmer's executive budget proposes a \$7.1 million increase in state funds for [Early On](#) which would bring its state funding for to \$21.25 million. The Governor also recommended a \$2 million increase in state funds for voluntary home visiting programs, which would bring state funding for home visiting to \$4.5 million. The House and Senate have not yet released their plans.

Why Invest in Early Intervention?

Early On Michigan connects families with service professionals who visit them in their homes to teach them skills for supporting their child's development at home, and connect them with resources like physical, occupational, and speech therapy to set up their child for success. *Early On* is available to families of all incomes. However, this critical public service has been chronically underfunded, forcing programs across the state to scrape together scarce local funding that often reflects the property values in their county. This leads to uneven service delivery where many kids are not receiving the frequency or types of services they need to thrive. Meeting the statewide identified need of \$68 million would allow all Intermediate School Districts to coordinate their efforts statewide for detecting developmental delays so fewer children fall through the cracks.

Why Invest in Voluntary Home Visiting?

Home visiting is a voluntary program for caregivers with infants and young children and people expecting babies. Home visitors teach families about positive parenting, healthy pregnancy, healthy child growth and development. Home visitors also make the determination to connect families to

resources related to developmental delays and disabilities (*Early On*), health, housing, food, child care, employment, domestic violence, and mental health.

Home visitors help parents develop effective parenting techniques and build knowledge of developmental stages. These services are beneficial for the whole family and save taxpayers money by ensuring that children build strong relationships with their caregivers, have access to doctor's visits, early screening for disabilities and delays, and other basic needs, and receive the emotional support that they need to thrive in adulthood. Home visiting provides wrap-around services for children's social, emotional, physical, and educational needs which reduce the need for more costly services for children as they mature.