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Supporting a Healthy Start in the Michigan State Budget

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

The Michigan House and Senate have adopted their own initial budget plans for the 2022-23 Fiscal Year beginning on October 1. Legislators utilize these initial plans to distinguish their most unique priorities before negotiating between chambers and with the Governor, and they expect the final budget to look different from what they have put out right now. This means that advocates have an opportunity to draw sharp distinctions for policymakers regarding which proposals are strong, what could be stronger, and what critical needs are missing.

Michigan has historically underfunded home-based early intervention services and voluntary home visiting services that are critical for shaping the trajectory of a child's development. In a public opinion poll of nearly 800 likely voters statewide, respondents across diverse regions of Michigan agreed that [kids not receiving the learning supports they need](#) was a top concern. Our state budget must commit to providing what is necessary to support access to voluntary home visiting and early intervention for every child and family that needs support.

Right Now: Governor Whitmer's executive budget proposes \$7.1 million increase in state funds for Early On which would bring its state funding to \$21.25 million. The Governor also recommends 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 budgets did not include these investments.

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 closer to the [overall needs](#) of \$68 million.
- The Governor's proposed **\$2 million increase in state funds for voluntary home visiting** programs, which would bring state funding for home visiting to \$4.5 million. This investment would increase the number of families receiving services and bring Michigan closer to full investment in voluntary home visiting.

Why Invest in Early Intervention?

[Early On Michigan](#) connects families with service professionals who visit them at 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. 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 (ISDs) 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, and 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. HV services are beneficial for the whole family and save taxpayer's 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 reduces a child's future need for more costly services.