



MomsBloom



Public policy
in the best interest
of children



Contact: Teri Banas
teri@michiganschildren.org
(517) 896-0241

Immediate Release

Grand Rapids Families Question Candidates on their Stances on Early Childhood Issues
Great Start Collaborative, MomsBloom, First Steps Kent, Michigan's Children, Think Babies
Michigan Host Forum Oct. 27th in four Legislative Races

GRAND RAPIDS - The struggles Kent County families have with child care and other daily challenges will be raised at a family-led candidate forum in southeast Grand Rapids on **Thursday, Oct. 27th (6-8 p.m.)** before candidates in four state Legislative races.

Local sponsoring groups - the [Great Start Collaborative of Kent County](#), [MomsBloom](#), and [First Steps Kent](#) – will join statewide advocates [Michigan's Children](#) and [Think Babies Michigan](#) for the event at the **First Christian Reformed Church, 651 Martin Luther King Jr. St., SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49507.**

Invited candidates are: **Sen. Winnie Brinks** (D), and **state Rep. Tommy Brann** (R) in the 29th state Senate race; **Kristina Grant** (D) and **Ryan Malinoski** (R) in the 82nd state House race; **state Rep. Rachel Hood** (D) and **Lynn Afendoulis** (R) in the 81st state House race; and **state Rep. Carol Glanville** (D) and **Mike Milanowski Jr.** (R) in the 84th state House race. Nearly all candidates have confirmed their attendance.

Enterprise reporter and producer **Dustin Dwyer**, of Michigan Radio's West Michigan Bureau, will moderate the forum.

"At MomsBloom, we see firsthand every day the many barriers parents in our community face and are working so hard to overcome," said **MomsBloom Executive Director Carrie Kolehouse**. "We're so glad that parents will have the chance to share about their challenges and concerns, and ask questions of the candidates who will soon be representing them in the legislature at this event."

Supporter **Daniel VanderMolen**, a **project manager for First Steps Kent**, said maintaining steady employment in the face of child care woes weigh heavy on the minds of Kent County families. "It's clear that the availability of child care is going to be a deciding factor for when, or if, people return to work," he said. "The health of **Michigan's economy depends on a workforce that can access safe, affordable, high-quality child care.**"

Michigan's Children, 215 S. Washington Sq., Ste 135, Lansing, Michigan 48933 (517) 485-3500
www.michiganschildren.org

Michigan's Children President & CEO Matt Gillard said the November 8th election is significant this year because political district lines have shifted following the 2020 census, with many voters facing new names on their ballots.

"We're proud to partner with Kent County in this effort in civic and candidate engagement. When voters speak up and candidates listen, it leads to better policy-making in the best interest of kids and families," he said. "It's important to recognize and elect people who will fight for children and families in Lansing."

The public forum is a free event. Learn more on Facebook [here](#).

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MomsBloom's mission is to connect families with newborns to passionate community members who provide quality, hands-on postpartum support.



First Steps Kent's community vision is that every young child in Kent County will enter kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed in school and life. First Steps Kent is working with our community partners to make that vision a reality.



As a true resource for partners and families in our community, we bring together local philanthropic organizations, educators, leaders of public agencies, and parents who strive to address the needs of children throughout Kent County. By connecting these perspectives, we identify plans for systemic change to ensure all children, from birth to age eight, can access high-quality early learning and development programs.



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Michigan's Children is the only statewide, multi-issue advocacy organization focused solely on public policy in the best interest of children from cradle to career and their families. We have been creating opportunities for young people and caregivers to share their stories, concerns and suggestions directly with policymakers since 1996. As a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, our forums are presented as a non-partisan activity. <http://www.michiganschildren.org>



Think Babies Michigan is a collaborative of thousands of members—leaders, experts, families, organizations and providers—working together to improve the lives of babies prenatally through age 3 in Michigan.