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Supporting Adult Skill-Building and Family Literacy in the Michigan State Budget *Michigan's Children calls for Adult Education funding to grow the workforce and improve literacy rates*

Michigan's newly-elected legislative leadership are currently considering Governor Whitmer's state budget recommendations and determining their own priorities for spending billions of one-time federal and state revenues for both current-year spending and for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year which begins on October 1, 2023. Their choices could change the odds for children, youth, and families who continue to face hardships from years of public health and economic shocks.

Lawmakers are looking to dig deeper to meet Michigan's goal of making sure that 60% of adults have a post-secondary degree or skill certificate by 2030. Lawmakers are also rethinking their approach to improving early literacy rates that remain below those of many other states. For both important priorities, parents and adults who have not yet achieved a full high school education present a great opportunity to move the needle. Yet, Michigan has placed little focus on supporting the educational needs of parents with limited skills themselves.

To equip parents to best improve their own skills and support their children's education, Michigan's Children recommends:

- **Increase ongoing adult education funding by \$15 million** to a total of \$45 million.
- **Provide \$15 million in one-time funds to connect adult learners with postsecondary and workforce pathways.**
- **Support the creation of the Adult Literacy and Opportunity Grant at \$4.725 million** to support community-based literacy programs.

Right Now: Governor Gretchen Whitmer's budget recommendations contain a \$15 million increase for adult education programs as well as one-time \$15 million for adult learner postsecondary and workforce pathways, but contains no dedicated increase for adult literacy programs. The House and Senate have not yet released plans.

Why Invest in Adult Education and Family Literacy?

Over 40,000 Michiganders aged 18-34 have less than a ninth-grade education and over 13,000 babies are born each year to a mom without a high school credential. An estimated 1.7 million Michigan adults fall below a ninth-grade level for reading and math, disqualifying them from access to post-secondary education and the workforce development pipeline. For these adults to be self-supporting, public school and community-based adult education programs support young adults and parents to build literacy and other basic skills, earn a high school equivalency, and prepare for a career. However, Michigan has consistently failed to invest in this critical piece of our education and workforce development system.