

Honoring Our Children Inter-Tribal Summit  
June 14, 2013

# Early Childhood Systems *Increasing Advocacy & Awareness*

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# Successful recipe for advocacy on children's issues

- ✧ Gather data and express it in a clear, concise way.
- ✧ Identify desired outcomes for children and families and obstacles to those outcomes.
- ✧ Capitalize on trends, initiatives and relationships.
- ✧ Add specific experience and passion to make a difference.
- ✧ Consider ways to work together on policy solutions.

# The Great Start System



# Michigan's System Building Structures

Early Childhood Investment Corporation



Great Start Collaboratives

Great Start Parent Coalitions

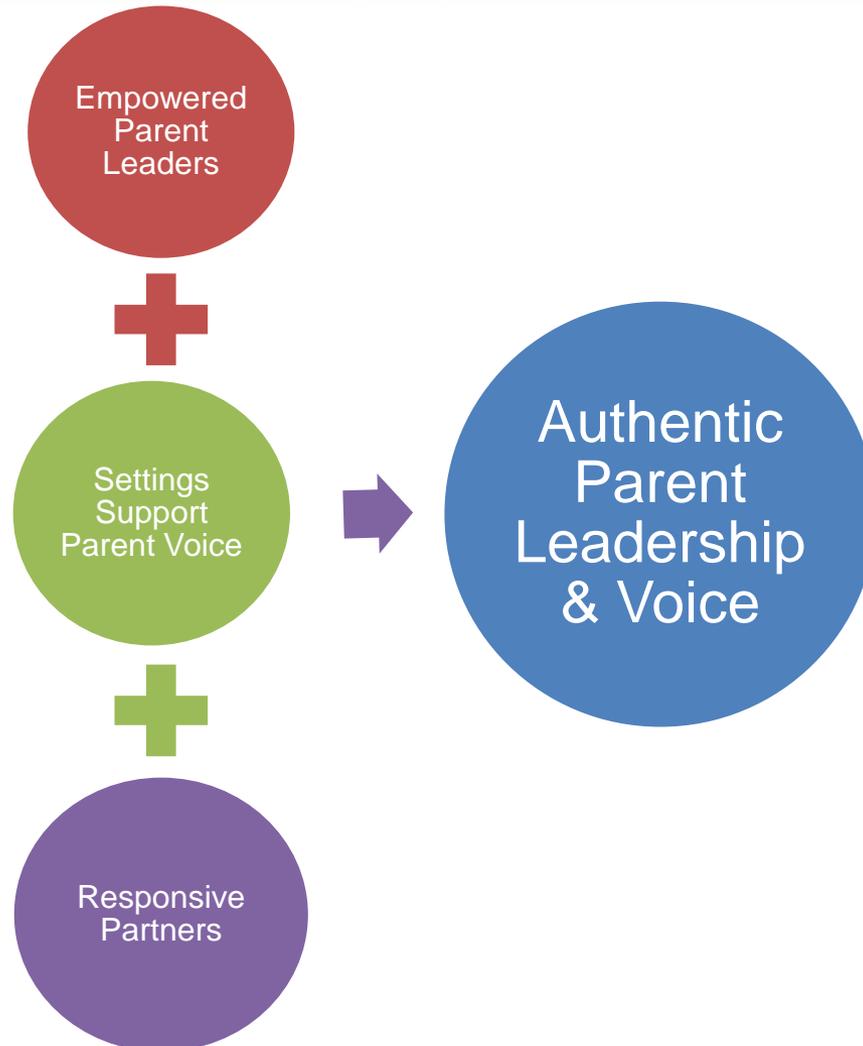


# Why it is important for parents to be involved

- ★ Parents are the first teachers and key decision makers for young children
- ★ Parents are primary customers/consumers of the early childhood system
- ★ Parents provide “real world” perspectives on how programs currently operate
- ★ Parents are knowledgeable about their communities and know what it is like to live, work and raise children in the community.



# Defining Authentic Parent Leadership & Voice



# Key Evaluation Findings

*“Great Start Collaboratives that built strong parent leadership and voice experienced more growth and improvement between 2010 and 2012 and were more effective at guiding an improved early childhood system and a more responsive system.”*

## Definition of strong parent leadership and voice:

- ★ Parents are recognized as strong and effective leaders.
- ★ Parents get organizations that provide services to young children and their families to listen and respond to their concerns.
- ★ Parents influence decisions made by the GSC.
- ★ Parents can get elected officials to listen to their concerns.

# Parents as Change Agents

- ★ Parents are more informed about where to go for services and what questions to ask when they live in communities with more capable and connected GSCs and GSPCs.
- ★ Early childhood systems grow stronger as parents and professionals learn to communicate and collaborate.
- ★ Parents report easier access to services and having their needs met more in communities with capable and connected GSCs and GSPCs.

# Paradigms Shape our View of Possibility

## Program-Centered

- ★ Programs are designed **for** parents
- ★ Program goal is parent involvement, so focus groups are held **after** the program is designed to discover how to engage parents
- ★ Program outreach isn't working, so parental input is sought to improve the program
- ★ When programs fail its because parents are (insert what is said most often in your organization)

## Family-Centered

- ★ Parent advice and input is believed to be essential for effective program design
- ★ Program goal is parent involvement, so focus groups are held **before** the program is designed to learn how to effectively engage parents
- ★ Program outreach is designed based on parent input to learn how to effectively reach parents
- ★ Extensive field testing with parents is undertaken before any program is fully implemented

# Elements that are key to engaging parents

- ★ Removing barriers to participation
- ★ Authentic desire for participation and diverse voices/perspectives
- ★ Orientation and Trainings/clarification of roles
- ★ Support and guidance before and after meetings

# Connecting with Local Collaboratives and Parent Coalitions

[www.greatstartforkids.org](http://www.greatstartforkids.org)





Creating a unified voice of Michigan residents who are passionate about ensuring that all children get a great start in life and that state and federal policies and resources support their health, development and learning from cradle to career



**Partnerships are Key to our success:**

- Michigan Association of United Ways
- Michigan Head Start Association
- Michigan Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Michigan's Children
- Early Childhood Investment Corporation
- Children's Leadership Council
- Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health
- HighScope Educational Research Foundation
- Michigan League for Public Policy
- Michigan Voices



- Create a massive voice in support of early childhood
- Position ourselves as Michigan’s resource for detailed information about policy and legislative action at the State and National level
- Have our membership mirror the diversity of our state and focus on our most at risk children
- Become a force that legislators want to have endorsing their campaigns in the next election in 2 years and to ensure that early childhood is one of the top 5 priorities of candidates
- Raise awareness about the serious problems facing families living in poverty and the challenges that different racial and ethnic groups face and bring solutions to the forefront about how we can narrow these gaps through policy, legislative support and through community action
- Long term, we’d also like to see a more diverse representation in Lansing!



Opportunities to get involved:

- Recruiting and engaging members locally
- Educating the general public on policies, budget and need to advocate
- Bringing voices of historically under-represented groups to the forefront
- Providing access to legislators and other key decision makers for interested members
- Educating candidates and legislators about early childhood needs and support
- Offering trainings to emergent advocates
- Public opinion poll FA 2013
- Large and small state-wide events to show support for early childhood
- Social media
- Voter registration and education efforts

# STAR POWER



# Early childhood issues: What's happening in Lansing?

- ✧ Preschool—Great Start Readiness Program
  - ✧ \$65 million investment starting in the fall
  - ✧ Another \$65 million proposed for following year
- ✧ Pathways to Potential
- ✧ Medical Homes
  - ✧ CHAP projects

# Early childhood issues: What's happening in Lansing?

- ✧ Infant Mortality
- ✧ Home Visiting
- ✧ Child care quality
- ✧ Medicaid expansion—for adults

# Administrative focus

## **Governor Snyder's dashboard for children:**

- ✧ Reading at grade level by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- ✧ Reductions in infant mortality and obesity
- ✧ Access to public mental health services
- ✧ Reduce teen births
- ✧ Percentage of Michigan children 19 to 35 months of age who receive recommended vaccines
- ✧ Reduce childhood poverty

# Crafting meaningful solutions

- ✧ Support solutions or budget items that have already been proposed.
- ✧ Work with a legislator to craft a singular solution.
- ✧ Work with other advocates who share your desired outcomes on broader solutions.
- ✧ Collective advocacy is harder but ultimately much more effective and will result in better outcomes for children.

# Next steps in advocacy to realize vision

- ✧ Need to have plan to monitor issues with momentum
  - ✧ Identify how best accomplished
- ✧ Capitalize by providing unique voice.
  - ✧ A seat at the right tables
  - ✧ Process to engage grassroots
- ✧ Constantly establishing relationships and educate decision makers.

# Working together at the state level

- ✧ Really good work going on in silos...not only in tribal communities but across early childhood.
- ✧ Many issues have nuances, but are primarily the same.
- ✧ This entire effort is about working together across tribes and communities for a common vision—how do you want to translate to broader children's advocates?

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## June 14, 2013

## Thank you!

### We want to help:

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