



Montcalm County Great Start Collaborative Status of Young Children 2022

Dear Community Member,

The Montcalm County Great Start Collaborative (MCGSC) recognizes that the last two years have been hard on our families with young children. We know that in our ever-changing world it is hard to continue to keep families with young children at the forefront given our community has so many needs. MCGSC continues to make it a priority to build a community where our families with young children thrive. This keeps evolving and changing based on the faces of our young children. Family support will continue to be a priority for the MCGSC work we are engaging in with our community partners. **MCGSC welcomes you to join in the conversation about the well-being of our young children in our annual Status of Young Children report.** We value every voice in our community! This data shares a story that the MCGSC wants to share to support our community in being a place that supports the first five years of a child's life as a time of great opportunity. Research tells us that by age six, most of a child's brain is developed. In 2021, there were 694 births and a total of 4,278 children from birth to age five living in Montcalm County.

Parents and community leaders in Montcalm County who understand the vital importance of investing in young children continue to work together to implement the 2022-2025 MCGSC Strategic Plan. Please take a moment to look at the data story. **Continued investment in research-based, high-quality early childhood supports is essential.** Please contact us with any feedback at www.GreatStartMontcalm.org

MCGSC wants to Remind you that when you talk, read, and sing with your child—even before they can use words—you're building their brain and helping to prepare them for success in school and life.

Talking is Teaching
<https://talkingisteaching.org/>



OUR VISION:

Children in Montcalm County have the opportunity to be healthy, eager, and prepared to succeed in school and life.

The Montcalm County Great Start Collaborative and the Great Start Parent Coalition are the focal point for local early childhood efforts. For more information about Early Childhood supports & services in Montcalm County or to provide feedback regarding this data, please contact:

**MCGSC at: (616) 225-6146
GreatStartMontcalm.org**

WHAT THE DATA SHOWS US:

- 18% of children aged birth to seventeen live in poverty. The state of MI is 17%
- 64% of students receive free or reduced school lunch assistance; a slight rise from 2020 at 62%. The state of MI is 52%
- 32% of Montcalm County mothers who gave birth did not receive appropriate health care in 2019. This is a slight improvement from the last 6 years and a continued positive trend for mothers & babies in Montcalm County.
- Medicaid pays for 42% of Montcalm County births. State average: 40%. This remained consistent from last year.
- 70% of 19–35-month age children in Montcalm County are up to date on their immunizations. This is an area we have remained higher than the state average; however, we continue to dip each year in this area as compared to the last 4 years. The State average is 69%.
- 53% of children ages 0-4 are participating in Women, Infant, & Children (WIC). The state average is 44%. We have remained consistent in this area as well as in the State of MI.
- Montcalm County is higher than the state average in the rate of children birth to five that were substantiated for child abuse and neglect. Montcalm County stands at 21% while the state average is at 17%. The last two years have been a downward trend. Even though Montcalm communities are higher than the state average we are moving in the right direction
- 321 birth to five children were served through Early ON & Special Education services in the calendar year of 2021. 4% of our three to five age children were receiving special education services and 4% of our birth to three age children were receiving Early On services.

Report Data Sources: Michigan Kids Count