



Montcalm County

Montcalm County Great Start Collaborative

Agenda

10/1/25

11:30am - 1:30pm

Meeting in Person at MAISD 621 New St Stanton

- I. Call to order:
- II. Welcome & Introductions:
- III. Public Comment:
- IV. October Agenda Approval:
- V. August Meeting Minutes Approval:
- VI. Director Report: Cari O'Connor
 - [Childcare Means Business](#)
 - Have you seen this? [Stand for Head Start](#)
 - Worth the read – [New Mexico is the first state in nation to over universal childcare](#)
- VII. New Business:
 - A. Highlight Presentation: Montcalm Prevention Collaborative
 - B. [MCGSC 2026-2029 Strategic Plan](#): Action*
- VIII. Old Business:
 - A. Dolly Parton Imagination Library update: Mindy Train
 - B. Early On Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC): Cindy DeYoung
 - C. [Talking is Teaching](#) Update: Monique Cooper
- IX. Committee Reports:
 - A. Executive & Communication: Jen Peterman
 - B. Early Care & Education: Mindy Train
 - C. Family Wellness: Monique Cooper
 - D. Family Leadership: Monique Cooper
- X. Roundtable Updates
- XI. Principals of Collaboration Survey
- XII. Adjournment

Next Meeting Date December 3rd, 2025, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Location 621 New St Stanton MI 48888

*Advance health equities.
Early Childhood services meet high standards of quality.
Children prenatal to age five and their families thrive.*

Visit our website for the most updated calendar information at www.GreatStartMontcalm.org



Setting the Record Straight: Early Childhood Matters to Our Region 2024-2025 Data

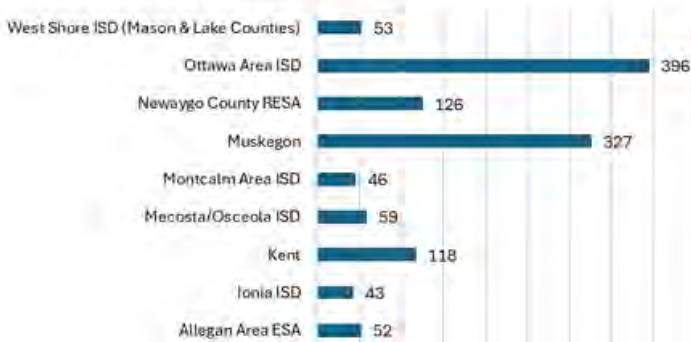
For over 20 years, Great Start Collaboratives (GSCs) have been a cornerstone in supporting young children and their families across our region. Our community understands that investing early in children’s development leads to stronger schools, healthier families, and a more resilient future.

Community-Led, Community-Driven

Over 1,220 community members have partnered with GSC initiatives, not as bystanders—but as active participants—ensuring that initiatives are responsive, inclusive, and built on local strengths. This isn’t just about programs; it’s about partnerships.



Community Partners



Literacy and Learning Start Early

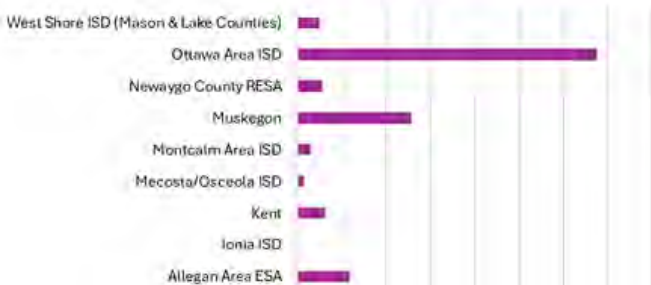
Thanks to GSC’s Literacy Efforts across our region, at least 69,292 families have engaged in early literacy initiatives, equipping children with critical resources long before they enter kindergarten. Reading aloud, storytelling, and family literacy events are just some of the ways GSC fosters a love of learning.



Literacy Supports



Family Support: GSC System Navigation (Resource & Referral)



Early Support Sets the Foundation

Early identification and intervention make all the difference. Through GSC’s child find and connections to resources like developmental screening activities, over 25,367 families have been supported in identifying needs early—often preventing more serious challenges later. These screenings are not just helpful—they’re essential.



A Voice for Early Childhood in Our Region

GSC isn’t just working for families—they’re working with families. By lifting up local voices, supporting leadership development, and advocating for early childhood at the regional level, GSC ensures our children are not left behind.

SUPPORT FAMILIES
TO BUILD READERS
FROM BIRTH



SUPPORT HIGH
QUALITY
EARLY
CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION



LET'S
TALK

ABOUT

GREAT START
COLLABORATIVE

Aa
Bb Cc



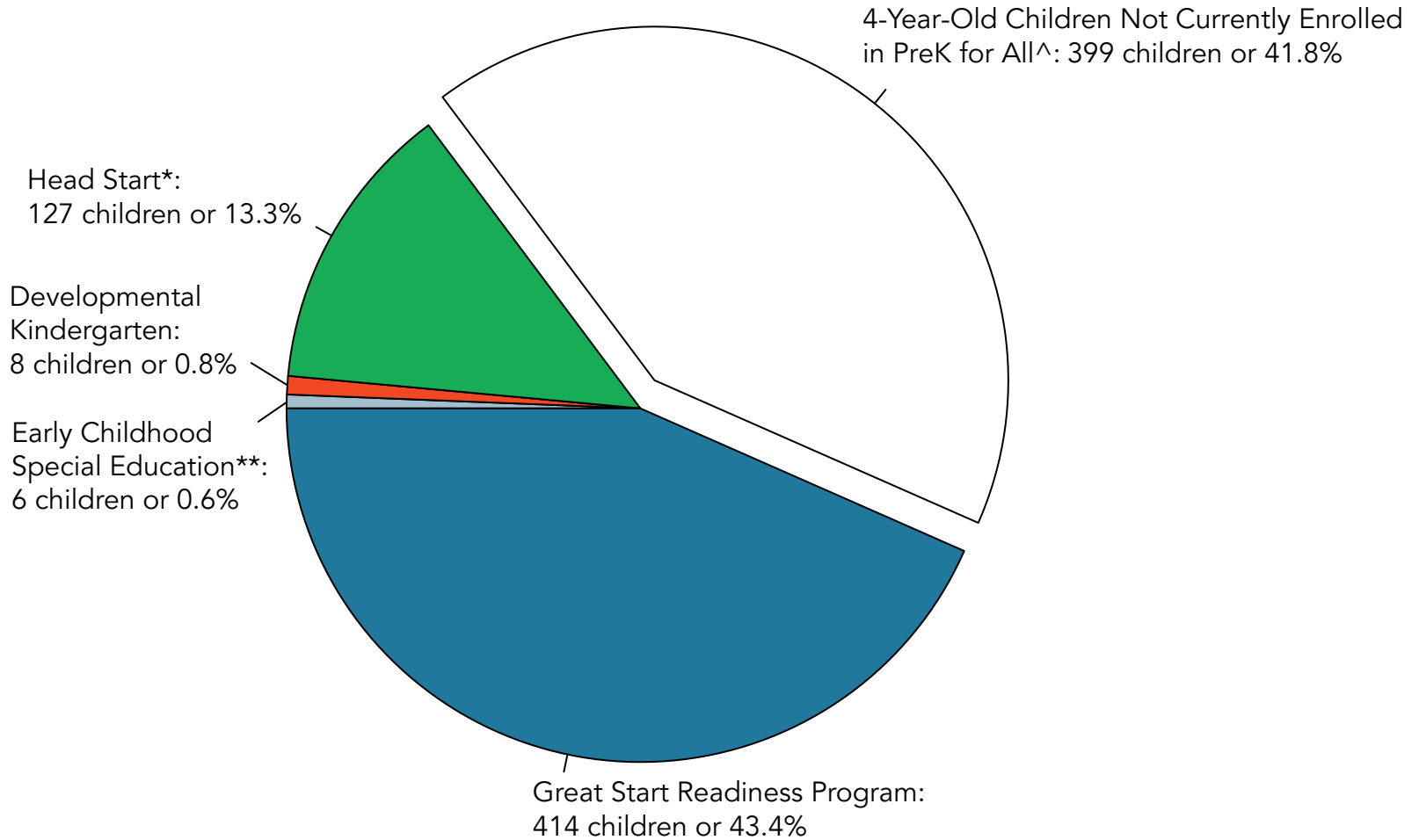
COLLABORATION

PARENT
EDUCATION



TALK
READ
SING
TALKING IS TEACHING.ORG

58.2% of 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in PreK for All
555 children



*Data from SY 2023–2024. **Early Childhood Special Education Self-Contained classrooms. ^Children may be enrolled in other, non-PreK for All programs, such as private preschool. Note: All percentages are approximate based on ACS data (954 children).



MiEarly Apprentice helps ensure that Michigan's youngest learners have committed, dedicated and skilled teachers by investing in individuals who are investing in our children's futures. Participants receive resource navigation, funding, and wrap-around supports to begin, continue, and/or complete their journey towards becoming an associate or lead teacher in an early childhood setting.

Key Dates:
 Virtual Info Session
 September 30, 2025
 6:00 – 7:30pm
 Application Deadline
 October 17, 2025

Program Benefits

- Best-fit Program Matching
- Full Tuition Coverage
- 1:1 Success Navigation
- Wrap-around Financial Support
- Retention Bonus
- Increased Future Earning Potential

Certification Pathways

- Child Development Associate (CDA)
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor's Degree + Teacher Certification
- Teacher Certification Only



Scan here for application and additional information.

<https://www.miedworkforce.org>





Summary

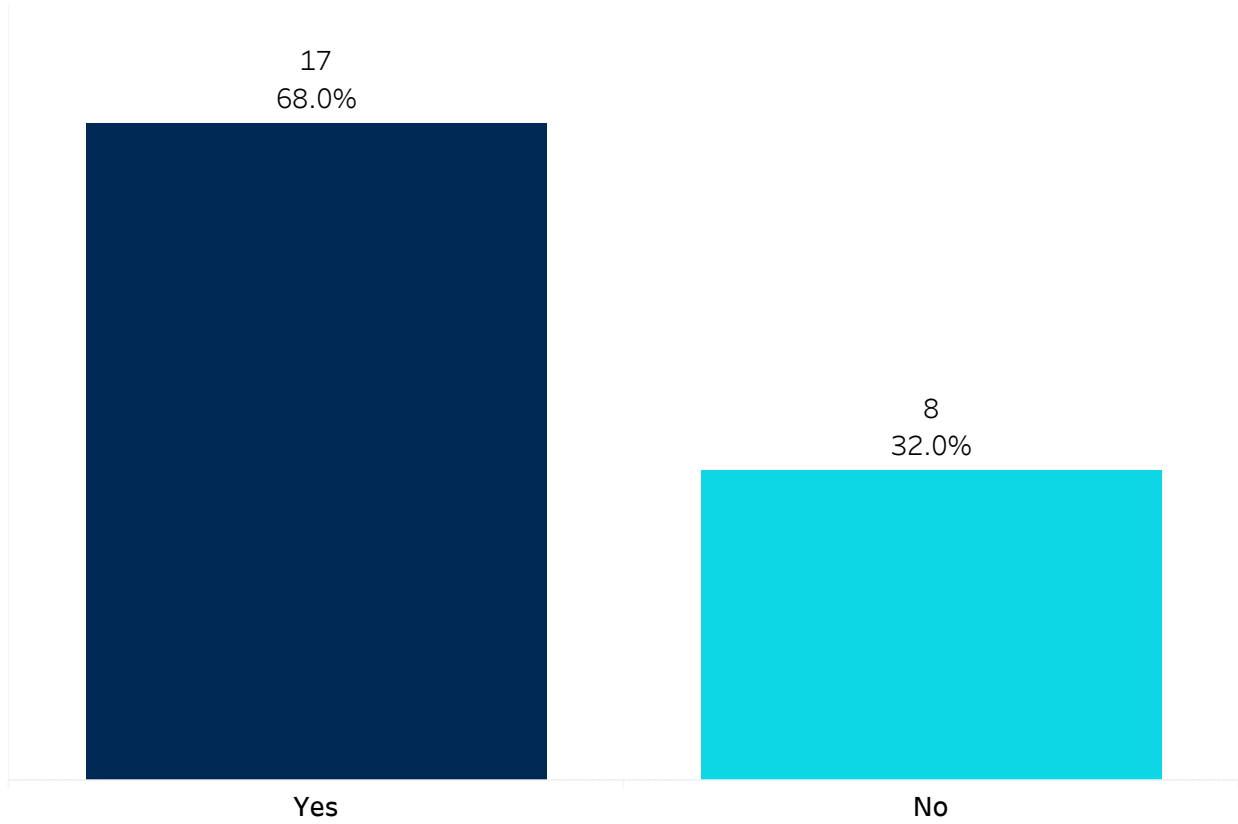
The Welcome Baby Program is a cooperative venture of the Montcalm Area Intermediate School District, Early On, Montcalm County Great Start Collaborative, 0-3 Early Head Start, Carson City Hospital, Mid Michigan District Health Department, and Corewell Health United Lifestyles.

7 new families were enrolled in the Welcome Baby program between September 1, 2024, and August 31, 2025. Over the same period, 25 families were served by our Welcome Baby team.

The results presented in this report are self-reported answers obtained from the child's mother at their latest visit.



The baby/child's immunizations are up to date
Number of Responses: 25

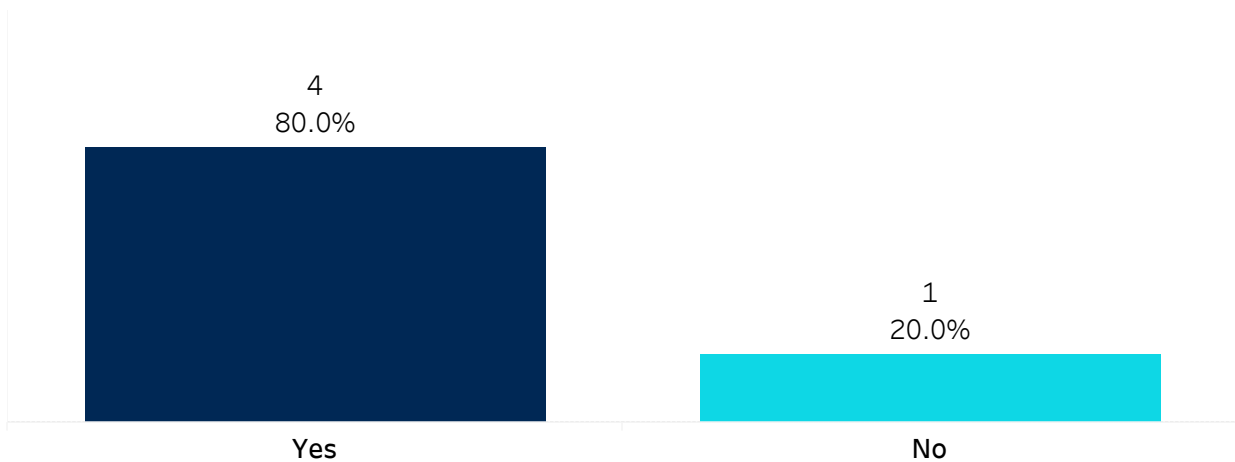




The mother initiated breastfeeding their child
Number of Responses: 25



The mother received breastfeeding support at their last visit
(Infants less than 12 months of age at encounter)
Number of Responses: 5

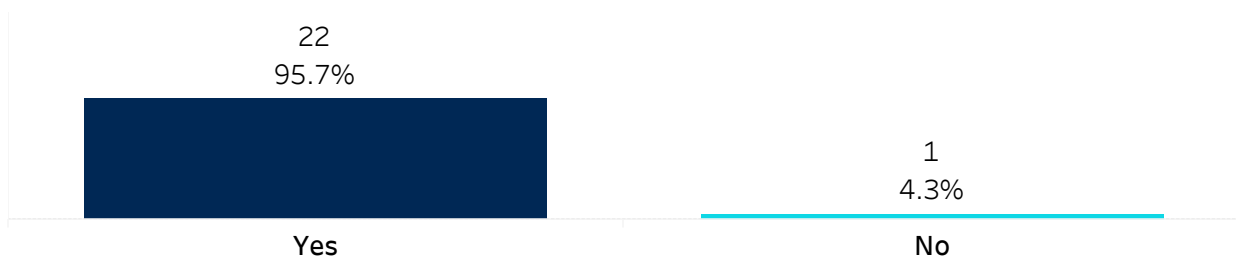




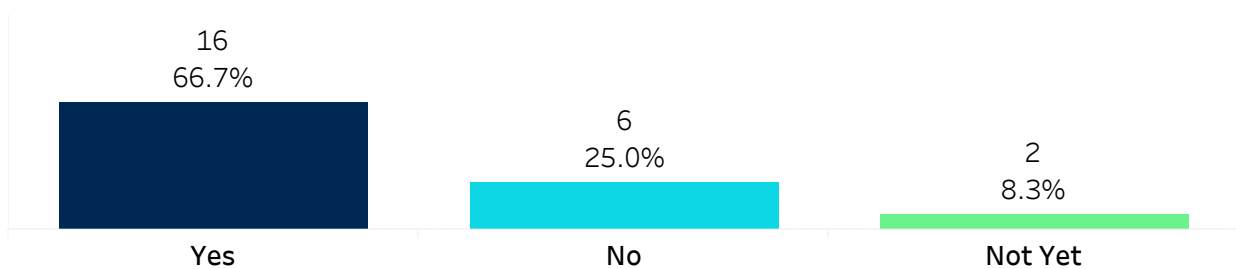
Parent received education that positively impacted their understanding and/or confidence in assessing developmental milestones
Number of Responses: 23



The mother identified one positive parenting technique during the latest visit
Number of Responses: 23



The baby/child met all developmental milestones from the Ages and Stages Questionnaire
Number of Responses: 24





Links to State Reports

2022 Birth Year Michigan Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) Estimates - <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/MCH-Epidemiology/2024-06-12---2022-MI-PRAMS-Annual-Tables-FINAL.pdf?rev=b739c156555c42b99303d3de0dc60ab8&hash=93A81B32924509CB20F4224EDDAE0C5E>

2022 Michigan Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (MPINC) Results Report - <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/mpinc/states/2022/michigan-2022-mpinc-report-508.pdf>

2025 – 2026



FREE Playgroup Opportunities in Montcalm County for families and children!

Any family with children aged birth thru 4 years old living in Montcalm Area Intermediate School District is welcome to attend.

Registration is preferred prior to attending. Call 616-225-6146 to register or for more information.

Highlights

- *Try new activities with your child that will stimulate your child’s development!
- *Learn songs and read books (receive a copy of each book to keep)
- *Interact with other parents and children!
- *Learn strategies to use at home and have access to Early Childhood professionals to ask questions.

Book of the Month

October – Seed, Sprout, Pumpkin Pie
November – The Good Egg
December – Footprints in the Snow
January – Who Lives in the Arctic?

February – I Need a Hug
March – The Very Hungry Caterpillar
April – Big Bear, Small Mouse
May – Maria Had a Little Llama

<p>MacNaughton Elementary School 415 Cedar St, Howard City, 49329 Tuesday Morning 9:30 am – 11:00 am</p> <p>October – 7th, 14th November – 4th, 11th, 18th December – 2nd, 9th, 16th January – 13th, 20th, 27th February – 3rd, 10th, 17th March – 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th April – 14th, 21st, 28th May – 5th, 12th</p>	<p>Montabella Elementary 1456 North County Line Rd, Blanchard 49310 Wednesday Morning 9:30 am – 11:00 am</p> <p>October – 8th, 15th November – 5th, 12th, 19th December – 3rd, 10th, 17th January – 14th, 21st, 28th February - 4th, 11th, 18th March – 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th April – 15th, 22nd, 29th May – 6th, 13th</p>
<p>Montcalm Area Career Center 1550 W Sidney Rd, Sidney 48885 Wednesday Morning 9:30 am – 11:00 am</p> <p>October – 8th, 15th November – 5th, 12th, 19th December – 3rd, 10th, 17th January – 14th, 21st, 28th February - 4th, 11th, 18th March – 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th April – 15th, 22nd, 29th May – 6th, 13th</p>	<p>MCC – Greenville Campus – Ash Building 1325 Yellow Jacket Dr, Greenville 48838 Thursday Morning 9:30 am – 11:00 am</p> <p>October – 16th November – 6th, 13th, 20th December – 4th, 11th, 18th January – 15th, 22nd, 29th February – 5th, 12th, 19th March – 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th April – 16th, 23rd, 30th May – 7th, 14th</p>

Evening Playgroup at the Montcalm Area Career Center

1550 W Sidney Rd, Sidney 48885
Thursday Evening 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

October 16th
November 20th
December 18th

January 22nd
February 19th
March 19th

April 23rd
May 14th