



Montcalm County Great Start Collaborative

Status of Young Children 2026

Dear Community Member,

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 (MCGSC) previously supported Early Childhood initiatives throughout the Montcalm Area ISD. With the elimination of all funding used to support these activities, the MAISD continues to lift Early Childhood as a priority. The MAISD will continue to drive conversations around the Early Childhood data that identifies the work we need to do to build a system that supports the well-being of all young children. We are committed to advocating for our youngest learners. Please share the final Status of Young Children report meant to grow the opportunities for conversations around the needs families of young children have throughout Montcalm County.

As partners in our community, more than ever, we need everyone to advocate for young children and their families to be a priority. We know that the first five years of a child's life is a time of great opportunity! Research tells us that by age six, most of a child's brain is developed. This is a critical time for investments that stimulate brain development and build environments where young children thrive. In 2022-2024, there were 705 births and a total of 6,621 children birth to age eight living in Montcalm County. We must continue to make decisions that help families to raise healthy children prepared to succeed in school and life.

We invite you to join us in fighting for a continued investment in research-based, high-quality early childhood supports.

For more information about early childhood in Montcalm County or to provide feedback regarding this data, please go to:

www.MAISD.com

Visit us on Facebook:

[MontcalmAreaISDgreatstartmontcalmcounty](https://www.facebook.com/MontcalmAreaISDgreatstartmontcalmcounty)



What The Data Shows Us:

- In 2024, 19% of children ages birth to seventeen live in poverty. State of MI is 18%.
- In 2025, 59% of students receive free or reduced-price school lunch assistance, down from 67% in 2023. State of MI is 50%.
- 2022-2024, 37% of Montcalm County mothers who gave birth did not receive appropriate health care. The State of MI is 31%.
- 2022-2024, Medicaid paid for 33% of Montcalm County births. State of MI is 38%.
- In 2024, 66% of 19–to 35-month-old children in Montcalm County are up to date on their immunizations. The State average is 70%.
- In 2025, 43% of children ages 0-4 participate in Women, Infants, & Children (WIC). The state average is 40%. Data from the last five-plus years shows a decreasing enrollment trend despite being above the state average.
- In 2025, Montcalm County was lower than the state average in the number of children birth to five who were substantiated for child abuse and neglect. Montcalm County stands at a rate per 1,000 of 15.5, while the state average is at a rate per 1,000 of 16.3.
- 142 children aged birth to two were served through Early ON & Special Education services in 2024. This number has increased from 112 children in 2020. Children from birth to 5 years old receiving special education in Michigan and Montcalm County were at 6%.

Report Data Source: Michigan Kids Count Data



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