



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



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GOVERNOR

THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

February 12, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Thomas D. Watkins, Jr., Chairman

SUBJECT: Presentation by Michigan Ready to Succeed Partnership

The Michigan Ready to Succeed Partnership is a statewide initiative to ensure that all Michigan children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life.

The Ready to Succeed Partnership brings together leaders in business, education, faith, government, health, labor, media, and philanthropy to promote the vision of every Michigan child ready to succeed in school and in life.

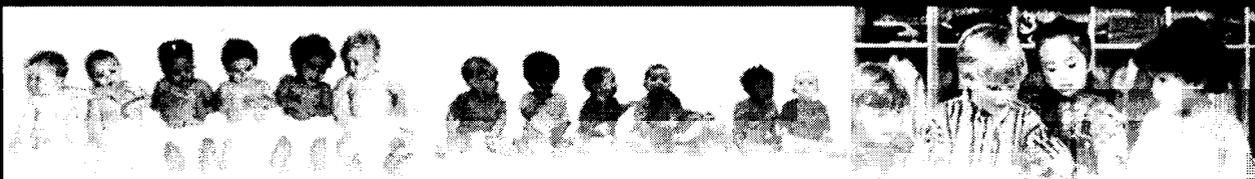
Representatives from the Partnership have been invited to the February 27, 2003, meeting to provide background information and highlight the efforts of the initiative.

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THE MICHIGAN READY TO SUCCEED PARTNERSHIP



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Vision of the Partnership

All children deserve the same start in life. Every Michigan child will enter school engaged in learning, with the capacity for success in school and in life. Every Michigan family will be able to access parent education and support and high-quality early childhood education and care through a system that respects the diversity of all families with regard to factors such as race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, philosophy, disabilities, and income.

To achieve this vision, all parents must have the knowledge and supports they need as their children's most important teachers and caregivers. The following conditions also are necessary:

- Every child always is in the care of or closely supervised by a competent, informed, and caring adult.
- Communities are organized to provide safe havens for children to grow, learn, and play. Within communities, families must have access to affordable health care, with an emphasis on prevention.
- Businesses provide leadership in communities by supporting family life in the structure of the work environment.

Achievement of this vision will be assessed through global measures to be determined. These measures could include assessing child readiness at school entry.

Adopted February 11, 2000

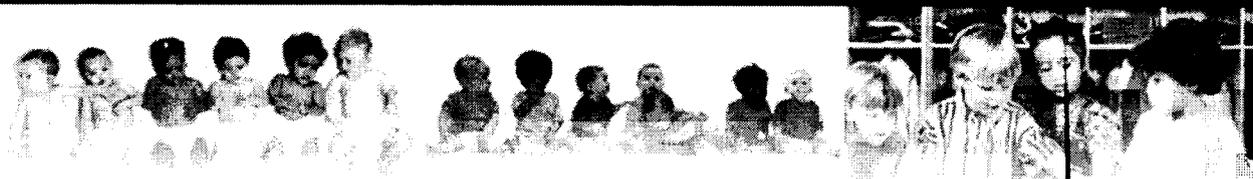


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If you have questions or comments about this website, please contact Jacquie Pouillon at 517-484-4954, or by e-mail at info@readytosucceed.com, or by mail at Michigan Ready to Succeed Partnership, c/o Public Sector Consultants Inc. 600 W. Saint Joseph St., Suite 10, Lansing, Michigan 48933-2267.

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Summary of the Partnership

BACKGROUND

P.A. 135 of 1999 established the Ready to Succeed Dialogue with Michigan (now known as the Ready to Succeed Partnership) to examine how Michigan can develop a system that assures that every child has the opportunity to enter kindergarten ready to succeed. The partnership is committed to

- bringing together leaders working on behalf of the Ready to Succeed vision;
- examining outstanding early childhood education and care practices implemented in Michigan and elsewhere for the purpose of presenting proposals for consideration by the governor and legislature;
- consulting with leaders in the business, education, faith, government, health, labor, media, philanthropy, and other sectors to garner their support in helping all children enter school ready to succeed; and
- efforts to organize local community leadership to address the needs of families with young children and better coordinate local services to achieve this goal.

State funding ended in 2001. The following foundations continue to support the work of the partnership: C.S. Mott Foundation, Colina Foundation, Daimler/Chrysler Foundation, Ford Foundation, Frey Foundation, McGregor Fund, Skillman Foundation, Steelcase Foundation, and W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

COMPONENTS

Executive Council

This group consists of leaders in the eight sectors mentioned above. The council is charged with maintaining progress toward achieving the Ready to Succeed vision, coordinating and supporting the work of committees, communicating widely about the Michigan dialogue, and creating conditions that will result in public and private funding partnerships.

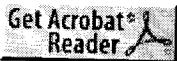
Standing Committees

The **Nominating Committee** recruits new members for the Executive Council and committees.

The **Media Board** oversees the development and implementation of public awareness campaigns.

Ad Hoc Committees

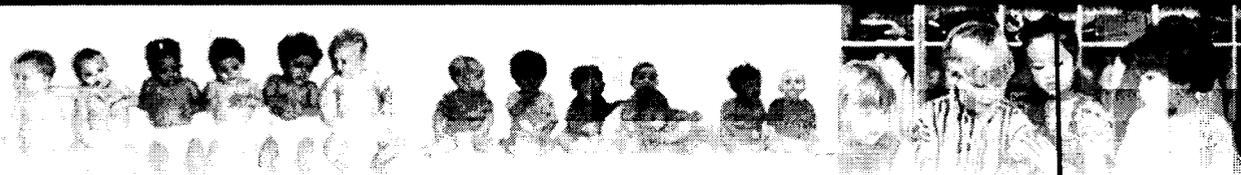
The **Public Information and Education Committee** works to strengthen ties between the Michigan Ready to Succeed Partnership and (1) the legislature and (2) community and grassroots organizations, particularly high-risk communities.
The **Policy Initiatives Committee** is charged with the development and dissemination of consistent information for public policy development.



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No child will be

left behind when

all children get

the best start.

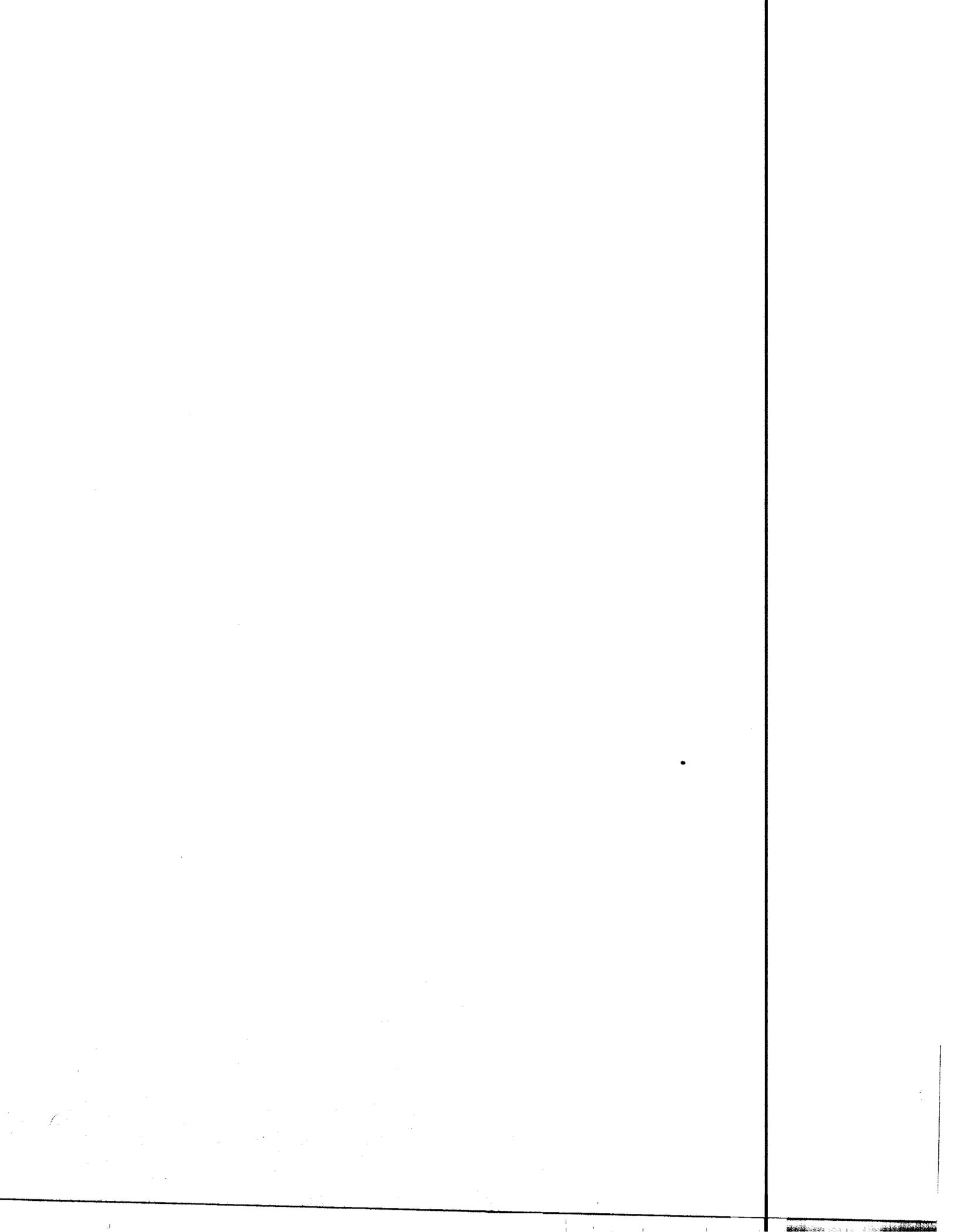
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A New Path For Our Youngest Children

A White Paper on *State Government Leadership, Policy, and Services for Children*

Prepared for the
Michigan Gubernatorial Candidates

Prepared on behalf of the
Michigan Ready to Succeed Partnership
by Public Sector Consultants



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Michigan's state government has a real chance to dramatically increase its effectiveness by aggressively pursuing a vision and policy agenda for all young children. Investment in young children pays off: a doubling of returns from an investment in high-quality education and care for an entire population and sevenfold returns when made for disadvantaged children.

We urge Michigan's governor and state government leadership to pursue the vision of success for all children in school and in life, following these principles:

- *Hold children harmless from efforts to balance the state's budget. In doing so, we must not harm other vulnerable populations.*
- *Broker and leverage public and private funds to maintain and expand resources—especially in this period of declining state revenue—for community systems of early education and care.*
- *Facilitate the continued development of early education and care systems in every community, so that all families have access to what they need to assure the optimal development of their children.*
- *Be a champion for creating new investment in early education and care that is available to all children and eases the financial burden on parents.*
- *Revamp state government so that agencies work collaboratively for the benefit of young children by engaging in dialogue with communities and with leadership from all sectors of society, particularly business, labor, faith, health care, education, and philanthropy, to set priorities for moving the policy agenda forward.*
- *Base policy and programs on what works (research, evaluation, and best practices) and measure and communicate progress toward better outcomes for children.*

We urge state government to lead creation of a policy agenda, working with all stakeholders to set priorities for action in two arenas: (1) high-quality and capacity-building programs and services that support adults in helping children become ready to succeed, and (2) increased resources for programs and services.

State government must play a stronger role in getting positive outcomes for children. Much can be accomplished by using existing resources fully. Regardless of how state government organizes its programs, what matters most is to get started, with vision, principles, policy initiatives, and above all, a sharper focus on the positive outcomes we seek for children. Whatever the organization, it must have authority and be held accountable for turning existing health, social, and education programs and financing mechanisms into a *system* that supports the success of children and families.

We know what to do; now we need the leadership and agenda to make it happen.

INTRODUCTION

Michigan is on the threshold of historic changes in political leadership: a new governor for the first time in 12 years and a turnover of more than half the legislature. We have an unprecedented opportunity for new public policy that responds to today's issues and positions Michigan for the best possible future. The new governor can lead Michigan to greater economic security and prosperity. Ironically, the path that holds the most promise for economic and social advancement has only recently been mentioned in election dialogue and debate. That path requires investment in the development of our children.

Many will say that new public investment is folly when our state budget cannot support current commitments. So many tough issues demand attention: increasing unemployment, rising health care costs, education reform, an aging population, overcrowded prisons, and the imperative of homeland security. None of these issues has a quick fix. We should be compelled to take the right steps on a path that will get at these problems at their roots. That requires investment in children as Michigan's number one public priority.

More and more evidence shows that early childhood is the most critical period for shaping human potential, yet it is the least supported. The human and financial costs of failing to invest in a child's early years are substantial: poor school performance, increased crime, teen pregnancy, and unemployment. Investment in young children pays off: a doubling of returns from an investment in high-quality education and care for an entire population and sevenfold returns when made for disadvantaged children.

"Combined public and private investment in Michigan children under age five is about \$2,200 a year per child compared to about \$7,200 in public investment alone per school-age child."

The new governor can lead Michigan on a path of partnership with families and communities. Listen to parents describe what their children need to be ready for success in school and in life. Compare what parents say with what scientific research tells us. Both say the same thing: high-quality early childhood education and care helps children and families succeed.² But public policy lags behind parents and the research; it is aimed at fixing problems rather than preventing them in the first place, at a cost we cannot continue to pay.

¹ Michigan Ready to Succeed Partnership.

² Early childhood education and care is defined as the full range of experiences and services that affect a child's life and are necessary for a child to develop into a person able to succeed in school and in life to the best of the child's potential. Necessary components are acquiring and maintaining good health, experiencing nurturing human interactions, and having opportunities to achieve excellent development in intellectual, social, emotional, and motor skills.

This white paper offers ideas for the governor to use in helping shape Michigan's future investments in children. We begin with a vision and a start on Michigan's first public policy agenda for all young children. We end with the implications of this vision and policy agenda for the way state government is structured. The principles and alternatives for mobilizing and organizing state government can—and should—be applied to children of all ages. We know what should be done; now we need the leadership and policy agenda to make it happen. This white paper challenges leadership to

We know what to do; now we need the leadership and policy agenda to make it happen.

- forge public policy based on what works to create healthy and achieving children;
- direct new public investment to strategies with high returns in both human and economic development; and
- organize and deliver effective services in partnership with families, communities, and the private sector.

Many organizations participated in preparing this white paper, providing ideas for our next governor to break new ground. The Ready to Succeed Partnership, a coalition of Michigan opinion leaders, facilitated the sharing and coalescing of the ideas put forward. (See the Appendix for the Executive Council roster.) Groups who participated in and endorsed the white paper are:

Allegan County Intermediate School District
 Association for Children's Mental Health
 Branch Intermediate School District
 Capital Area Child and Family Services
 Capital Area Youth Alliance
 Cedar Street Children's Center, Greater Flint
 Association for the Education of Young
 Children
 Child Abuse Prevention Services, Capital
 Area
 Child Care Providers' Network
 Children's Charter of the Courts of Michigan
 Eaton Intermediate School District
 Everybody Ready! of Wayne County
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 Michigan Association of School Boards
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 Michigan Council for Maternal and Child
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 Michigan Small and Rural Schools
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 Michigan's Children
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 Northville Public Schools
 Partnership for Learning
 Priority Children, Genesee County
 Skillman Center for Children, Wayne State
 University
 The Covenant House Michigan
 The Guidance Center, Wayne County
 Van Buren Intermediate School District
 Western Michigan Association for the
 Education of Young Children

A CLEAR VISION FOR ALL OF MICHIGAN'S CHILDREN

Many organizations, both public and private, have stated their "vision" for children. A clear and common vision has emerged from a growing network of Michigan opinion leaders—a vision of success for all children.

All children deserve the same start in life. Every Michigan child will enter school engaged in learning, with the capacity for success in school and in life. Every Michigan family will have access to parent education and support and high-quality early childhood education and care through a system that respects the diversity of all families with regard to factors such as race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, philosophy, disabilities, and income.

To achieve this vision, all parents must have the knowledge and support they need as their children's most important teachers and caregivers. The following conditions also are necessary:

- *Every child always is in the care of or closely supervised by a competent, informed, and caring adult.*
- *Communities are organized to provide safe havens for children to grow, learn, and play. Within communities, families must have access to affordable health care, with an emphasis on prevention.*
- *Businesses provide leadership in communities by supporting family life in the structure of the work environment.*

Source: The Ready to Succeed Partnership

We encourage Michigan's state government to share this vision and use it to guide policy and action as a functioning and unified "whole," intent on promoting healthy social and emotional development and school readiness in young children. Aggressively pursuing this vision will expand public policy beyond fixing problems to developing the capabilities, knowledge, and experience in children that prevent those problems. Pursuing this vision will lead state government beyond human services reform to building partnerships with communities striving to have supports and services for all young children and their families.

This is not to say that state government should weaken its efforts to seek the best way of providing services for correcting learning, behavior, emotional, and health problems. There are many competing needs for resources and state government has a particular responsibility for those with the greatest needs. Public resources should not be further diminished for families with risks, challenges, and burdens beyond the norm. But state government must take the first steps to direct more attention and new public investment to human development and assuring the foundation for learning and achievement. Without this change in direction we will never have enough resources to fix the problems that continue to grow because we neglect human development at its most crucial stage.

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVELY MOBILIZING MICHIGAN'S PUBLIC EFFORTS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Our state government can improve the quality of life for all Michigan citizens by pursuing a vision and wise policies for young children. All state programs face growing demands to reduce costs and improve results. Schools, in particular, face higher expectations for performance. Successfully mobilizing Michigan to achieve good outcomes for all children will make state government a potent force in improving economic and social conditions for everyone. In addition to having a vision of success for all children and consensus on a policy agenda, the state needs clear principles to guide *how* it reaches better results.

- *First and foremost, hold children harmless from efforts to balance the state's budget. In doing so, we must not harm other vulnerable populations.*
- *Broker and leverage public and private funds to maintain and expand resources—especially in this period of declining state revenue—for community systems of early education and care. For example, the state could create incentives for school districts to use funds from the federal No Child Left Behind Act to help build community systems. Moreover, foundations are more likely to allocate their resources for system building, even during a time of limited state funding, if there is a clear state commitment and policy agenda.*
- *Facilitate the continued development of collaborative early education and care systems in every community, assuring that all families have access to the services they need to assure the optimal development of their children. Such systems should have consistent, core services in a continuum, including universal and voluntary services for all young children, risk prevention and early intervention services, special needs intervention, and remediation services. For example, the state could redirect existing funding to create more incentives and new forms of accountability to promote the development and implementation of comprehensive and integrated local plans.*
- *Be a champion for creating new public and private investment in early education and care that is available to all children and eases the financial burden on parents. Currently, parents bear the burden for 55 percent of the cost of early education and care compared to state and localities bearing 93 percent of the cost of public elementary and secondary education.³*
- *Shift from a predominant focus on services that respond to problems that become serious through neglect to services that anticipate problems,*

³ *Preschool for All: Investing In a Productive and Just Society* (Washington, D.C.: Committee for Economic Development, February 2002). [Online, cited 10/8/02] Available: www.ced.org/docs/report/report-preschool.pdf.

recognize and respond to risk factors, and reduce the need for costly services later on.

- *Design and implement policies and programs that respect the differences among children, families, and diverse communities.*
- *Revamp state government's role into that of a collaborative partner, whose agencies work together and with all stakeholders for the benefit of young children.*
- *Base policies and programs on what works (research, evaluation, and best practices) and measure and communicate progress toward better outcomes for children.*

An enormous and growing body of research supports investment in high-quality early childhood education and care. Here are some of the facts:

- **Reduced grade retention and special education:** Early intervention services for children from birth to age five living in poverty reduce subsequent rates of grade retention and use of special education services. Repeating a grade costs roughly \$6,000 for that year, and special education costs about \$8,000 per year. (National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine)
- **Higher reading and math scores, fewer juvenile arrests:** A long-term study of low-income children who participated in preschool shows they have higher reading and math scores in grades 4–6 and at age 15, and are much less likely to be retained during the elementary grades, are less likely to receive special education services, and have lower rates of juvenile arrests than the comparison group. The savings to taxpayers for the 1,000 children in this study totaled \$26 million (1998 dollars). (Chicago Longitudinal Study)
- **Favorable impacts on parent and child development:** Early Head Start (EHS) provides comprehensive, community-based child and family development services, in families' homes, in centers, or a combination of both, with a focus on diversity, parent involvement, staff development, and community partnerships. EHS research programs had significant favorable impacts:
 - o EHS children scored higher on cognitive, language, and socio-emotional development tests than their control group peers.
 - o EHS parents increased their participation in education and employment-oriented activities and were observed to be more emotionally supportive, give more support for language and learning development, and have more enriching home environments than their control group peers.⁴

⁴ *Making a Difference in the Lives of Infants and Toddlers and Their Families: The Impacts of Early Head Start. Volume I: Final Technical report* (Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., June, 2002). [Online, cited 10/8/02] Available: www.mathematica-mpr.com/3rdLevel/ehstoc.htm.

- **High returns on investment:** The long-term study of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program demonstrates that an early intervention program can produce benefits far in excess of its cost: \$12,356 annually per child in cost compared to benefits totaling \$70,786 per child. (National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine)
- **Reduced child abuse and improved health:** Offering home visits to every family with a newborn or newly adopted child produced a 49 percent drop in child abuse from 1990 to 1998 in Vermont. (Vermont Agency of Human Services). Research on home visitation shows it can improve the physical health of infants, increase intellectual test performance among preterm and low birth weight infants, reduce the rate of child protective services intervention, and reduce crime. (Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, "Pay Now or Pay Later")
- **Reduced risk for serious parenting problems:** Healthy Families America (HFA) is a national initiative to help parents of newborns get their children off to a healthy start through home visit services provided to families at greater risk for serious parenting problems (e.g., child abuse and neglect). In Michigan, Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oakland reports from a five-year evaluation study comparing program participants with a control group:
 - o Participants had lower substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect (1.5 percent vs. 14 percent in the control group).
 - o Nearly all the children in the program group were immunized (95 percent vs. 85 percent in the control group).
 - o Emergency room use was 6.2 percent for the program group vs. 42 percent for the control group.
 - o Program group children scored higher on child development assessments than their peers.⁵
- **College attendance:** Children, including children at risk, who participate in high-quality childcare are more likely to attend college. (Children's Defense Fund).

These results are gained through high-quality programs and services. Quality is higher when adult-to-child ratios are high, teachers/caregivers have specialized training in child development, and staff is competitively compensated.⁶ The National Research Council⁷ summarizes what has been found about the difference made by high-quality early education and care:

- Children in high-quality early education and care demonstrate stronger language abilities and better cognitive development.

⁵ S. Schellenbach, *A Five Year Report Healthy Start/Healthy Families*, Executive Summary (Oakland, Mich.: Oakland University, 1999).

⁶ *The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Go to School* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, October, 1999). [Online, cited 10/8/02] Available: www.fpg.unc.edu/~NCEDL/PDFs/CQO-tr.pdf.

⁷ National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, 2002.

- Young children who live in circumstances that place them at greater risk for school failure—including poverty, low levels of maternal education, and maternal depression—are much more likely to succeed in school if they attend high-quality early education and care programs.
- Teachers report fewer behavior problems among children who have been in high-quality programs.
- The positive effects of high-quality early education and care can benefit children into adulthood.

We must address the shameful fact that Michigan ranks lowest among the 50 states in terms of licensing standards related to training and professional development of those caring for young children.

A POLICY AGENDA FOR ALL MICHIGAN CHILDREN

It will take effective public policy initiatives to bring Michigan closer to the vision of all children succeeding. We recognize that poverty is the root of many restricted opportunities that affect a child's development and learning. Unfortunately, a greater proportion of young children live in poverty than do school-age children, with more than 100,000 Michigan children under age five (one out of every six) living in a family that is poor.⁸ And the number of poor families in the nation is increasing, rising to 9.2 percent in 2001 from 8.7 percent in 2000.⁹

Several of the proposed policy initiatives that follow address income limitations that compromise the ability of families to give their children the best start in life, but these initiatives are only part of a broader strategy demanded by the growing income inequalities in our state and nation. In addition to income security, we also stress the importance of effective policy in the arenas of family support, physical and environmental health and safety, youth development, and child welfare. All are important contributors to the health and success of children. The principles that guide efforts on behalf of the care and education of our youngest, most vulnerable citizens should be applied to strengthening public policy in all of these arenas.

"The first line of defense in promoting emotional health and school readiness in young children is ensuring that their families are economically secure and able to access basic supports (including food, health care, housing, and transportation) ... Equally important is access to high-quality early care and learning experiences."¹⁰

⁸ Deb Strong, "How are the Children of Michigan?" Presentation for the Michigan Ready to Succeed Partnership. (Michigan Children's Trust Fund, 2002)

⁹ "Number of People Living in Poverty Increases in U.S." *New York Times*, 25 September 2002.

¹⁰ Jane Knitzer, *Set for Success: Building a Strong Foundation for School Readiness Based on the Social-Emotional Development of Young Children.* (Kansas: The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, 2002.)

When it comes to early childhood education and care, we need programs and services that are appropriate for the task of promoting development in all children, including those at risk and in need of intensive treatment. Before we present policy initiatives for all young children, let us personalize what we seek by noting the characteristics of children who are ready to learn. In addition to being physically healthy, five-year-olds who are ready to succeed need to be:

- **Confident**—They have a sense of control and mastery of their body, behavior, and the world; they are more likely than not to succeed at what they undertake; they believe that adults will be helpful.
- **Curious**—They proceed with the expectation that finding out about things is positive and leads to pleasure.
- **Intentional**—They possess the wish and capacity to have an impact and are persistent; this intent is related to a sense of competence and of being effective.
- **Self-controlled**—They are able to modulate and control their actions in age-appropriate ways; they have a sense of inner control and are nondisruptive.
- **Related**—They are able to engage with others based on the sense of being understood by and understanding others; they are responsive to adults and empathic.
- **Able to communicate**—They are able to use language to exchange ideas, feelings, and concepts with others; this exchange is related to a sense of trust in others and of pleasure in engaging with others, including adults.
- **Cooperative**—They are able to balance their own needs with the needs of others in a group activity.¹¹

We acknowledge that Michigan must set priorities for moving forward on a comprehensive agenda to get better results for our children. A policy agenda must be created as a starting point. Important initiatives to improve access to health care, economic supports for families, and environmental quality are all essential. For example, we know that protecting children from lead poisoning and other toxic threats inside and outside the home reduces developmental delays and IQ impairments, particularly for low-income families.

“State and federal policies fully or partially finance every other essential infrastructure supporting the economy. For example, gasoline taxes pay for highways and mass transit; home mortgage tax deductions and other policies make housing more affordable; and public education is financed by property taxes or other revenue sources. It would appear to be time for policymakers to provide the private early care and education infrastructure the same support as other economically critical sectors.”¹²

¹¹ “Head Start: The Emotional Foundation of School Readiness,” *Zero to Three* (National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families, 1992). [Online, cited 10/8/02] Available: www.zerotothree.org/ztt_journal.html.

¹² M. Cubed, *The National Economic Impacts of the Child Care Sector* (National Child Care Association, 2002). [Online, cited 10/8/02] Available: www.nccanet.org/index.asp.

From the perspective of early childhood care and education, policy initiatives are called for in two arenas: (1) high-quality and capacity-building programs and services that support adults in helping children become ready to succeed, and (2) increased resources for programs and services. The goal of policy initiatives for high-quality programs and services is to improve the quality of early childhood education and care through parent education and support, professional development, and public awareness. The goal of policy initiatives to increase resources for programs and services is to provide sufficient resources so that every child has an opportunity to succeed.

In the arena of high-quality programs and services, policy initiatives for consideration include:

- Supporting the continuation and expansion of high-quality, evidence-based, early childhood education and care programs, including programs that provide children with access to preventive health and mental health services
- Engaging parents and families as the foundation of an education and care system from birth to age 18
- Increasing access of early childhood professionals and other caregivers to education, benefits, and compensation and retaining them in the field
- Engaging the public through an awareness campaign defining and extolling the value of high-quality early childhood education and care

In the arena of increased resources for programs and services, policy initiatives for consideration include:

- Using state resources to leverage both public and private funding for collaborative and evidence-based programs and services
- Developing a formula funding approach for universal access to a system of parent education and family support services
- Creating flexibility and incentives in current funding streams that will encourage and support increased local public and private investment in early childhood education and care
- Establishing new and creative resources for early childhood education and care services

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STRUCTURING AN EFFECTIVE STATE GOVERNMENT FOR CHILDREN

What would the structure of state government look like if it were designed to pursue a new vision, followed principles that mobilize expertise and resources aimed at getting results, and pursued the state's first comprehensive policy agenda for all young children?

So far, the way to reform the structure and financing of human services for children and families in Michigan, as in most states, has been to integrate services for families most in need of help. Creating better connections across services is seen as a way to

make those services less fragmented. Service integration has been seen as the solution, with its tools of pooled funding streams, simplifying complex and cumbersome administrative practices, and mandates to collaborate. Better connections among services are important, but must no longer be the sole or even the primary solution for getting more positive outcomes for children.

Several states (Colorado, Georgia, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Vermont, and West Virginia) have begun the hard task of building a comprehensive system of services for children, with a focus on prevention and child development.¹³ Their approaches and structures vary, based on the unique characteristics and history of each state. To varying degrees, they are linking programs that were unconnected—in part, because of categorical federal funding: there are 93 federal early childhood programs in 11 different agencies and 20 different offices.¹⁴ Ohio has linked planning for education, child protection, health, and juvenile justice. Oregon has local commissions in every county that develop and implement preventive and accessible services. Minnesota claims to be the first state to unify services for children and their families into a single state agency, the Department of Children, Families, and Learning, which coordinates education and social services for young children so that families have easier access to the services that match their needs.

Lessons are emerging from these other states that can be useful to Michigan, but one observation fits closely our state's position on the path to a heightened focus on the development of young children. Planning groups—at either the state or community level—that bring agency directors or their representatives together to transform services often do not sufficiently challenge the way things are being done. What appears to be needed is planning that goes much deeper and wider, including staff from a variety of levels in organizations, families, and communities as full partners in the process of change. Establishing open communication and flexibility as the mode of operation is more important for Michigan than shuffling boxes on an organizational chart.

Specific alternatives and approaches for restructuring state government for children have been identified in the preparation of this white paper. These ideas are summarized as follows:

- A structure for formal, state interagency collaboration across education, public health, mental health, and employment services that parallels local collaborative groups, i.e., multi-purpose collaborative bodies, that is directed to
 - (1) address barriers to redirecting existing resources, (e.g., categorical federal funding, restrictions on state funds, and insufficient interdepartmental coordination) and develop policies and procedures for pooled funding at the state and local level;

¹³ Robert Hughes Jr., "Integrating Services for Families," *Human Development and Family Life Bulletin* II, 2 (Summer 1996). [Online, cited 10/8/02] Available: www.hec.ohio-state.edu/famlife/bulletin/volume.2/bull22f.htm.

¹⁴ *Early Childhood Programs: Multiple Programs and Overlapping Target Groups* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994).

- (2) reach consensus on assignment of resources to programs and services that promote healthy development, bring children to school ready to succeed, and reduce child abuse, health care costs, and delinquency; and
- (3) establish a common name for all state-funded parent/infant/toddler support and intervention services.
- A state office of early childhood development, which could be responsible to the above interagency structure or housed in a state agency, e.g., the Department of Education, that would bring an integrated approach to the social services (such as various home visit programs, e.g., Parents as Teachers, Healthy Families, Infant Mental Health Services, Building Strong Families, Maternal and Infant Support Services) and existing education and care programs (such as the Michigan School Readiness Program, the Head Start–State Collaboration Program, childcare centers, and family daycare homes). The approach should include adequate staff development and teacher/caregiver training.
 - A community partnerships for children office, which could be responsible to the above interagency structure or housed in a state agency, to make state and federal funds available to local collaborative groups to provide education and other services to children prior to kindergarten entry. The state's role would be to determine co-payments (if used), key objectives, and quality standards. The local collaborative groups would develop and implement community plans.
 - A nonpartisan task force appointed by the governor to study and make policy recommendations on sustainable public and private funding of universal access to early education and care. The task force should be appointed jointly by the governor and the State Board of Education, with broad representation of opinion leaders and finance experts from health, mental health, education, early childhood education and care organizations, business, labor, media, philanthropy, faith, law enforcement, and the legislature.

Each of these proposals has potential for helping state government play a stronger role in getting positive outcomes for children. While implementing any of these proposals may take time due to the current fiscal situation, what matters most is to get started, using this framework of vision, principles, policies, and, above all, a sharper focus on the positive outcomes we seek for children. Whatever the structure, it must have authority and be held accountable for turning existing health, social, and education programs and financing mechanisms into a *system* that supports the success of children and families. What it will take is a far-sighted governor guarding the big picture and promoting the dialogue to move Michigan forward for all children.

ACTION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP TO MOVE FORWARD ON THIS NEW PATH

The most important action for state government to take is to get started. The most important action for our new governor is to take the lead, bringing to bear talent, expertise, and resources and adding state government's presence to the growing public and private partnership that recognizes why and how education and social services must change. Current constraints are considerable, but priorities must be set and state government can play a key role in facilitating the dialogue to reach consensus on the short- and long-term priorities and strategies. While new resources are sought, much can be accomplished by directing all programs and services to aim their efforts at improved outcomes for young children.

All who contributed to the ideas contained in this white paper stand ready to work on the policy agenda and to participate in the transition to a state government that leads as a partner.

APPENDIX

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