

Michigan's "Race to the Top" Gains Speed in Year Three

In the past year, the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Great Start and its Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) partners have continued to make strides towards the goal of improving access to high quality early learning and development programs statewide. Here are some of the year's highlights from January through June 2016:

- The Office of Great Start has contracted [McREL International](#) to conduct a multi-year evaluation of the [Great Start to Quality](#) system, which will result in useful information that will help Michigan further its goal of improved access to high quality early learning and development programs for all children in Michigan.
- One hundred thirty-seven unlicensed, subsidized providers are participating in training cohorts designed to meet their specific needs. Thirty providers have already completed Level 2 training and four have completed Level 3 training.
- Eight hundred eleven Great Start to Quality Participation Bonuses have been awarded between January and June 2016, bringing the total amount of Participation Bonuses awarded to 1,084. This means that more children with high needs, aged 0-5, will have access to high quality programs ensuring that Michigan's early learners are developmentally on track and prepared to succeed in school at the time of school entry.
- Home based provider participation in GSQ increased 5.36 percentage points, bringing the statewide home based provider participation rate to 23.37%.
- Great Start to Quality and the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) participated in Ambassador Training to strengthen the relationship and resources that both can provide to early education efforts in Michigan.
- Efforts for streamlining the child care licensing process are underway as a contract is in place to develop key licensing indicators. Once key indicators are established, licensing consultants will be able to use monitoring time more efficiently, allowing more time to focus on assisting programs with quality improvements to meet licensing requirements.
- The partnering team at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services welcomed a Social and Emotional Health Coordinator who will further the efforts to meet the social and emotional health needs of Michigan's earliest learners.
- Eight Michigan colleges are pursuing accreditation, and one other is pursuing reaccreditation, thanks to Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation grants from [The Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children \(MiAEOYC\)](#).
- With 186 family and group home providers having received scholarships, MiAEOYC has exceeded the initial goal to increase the number of home based providers accessing higher education opportunities through the [T.E.A.C.H. scholarship](#) by 16%.
- Having exceeded the goal to support early childhood educators qualified to teach in Michigan's Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) by 85%, MiAEOYC has expanded support to assistant GSRP teachers, which will ultimately improve the quality of early learning and development programs, GSRPs and all other early learning and development programs, statewide.

- The Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) successfully conducted an Early Childhood Data Collection pilot with Head Start grantee volunteers, and now the process is open to all Head Start grantees. This puts Michigan another step closer to having access to the data necessary to make better decisions about early learning and development programs in Michigan.
- Thanks to CEPI, two Early Childhood data Reports, "Child Count" and "Participation by Kindergarten," are now available on the [Early Childhood MI-School Data portal](#), with more early childhood data reports in the works.
- Pathways to Potential staff trainings were held in seven counties with the intent to improve access to high quality early learning and development programs in Pathways to Potential communities.
- The RTT-ELC Family Engagement Specialist joined the team and has begun forwarding the work of improving the engagement of Michigan families in the education of their young children.

...and it just keeps going! Michigan will continue its race to the top to ensure that all of the state's youngest learners have greater access to high quality early learning and development.

Learn more about the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Great Start, its partners, and its mission to improve access to high quality early learning and development programs through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant by visiting the [grant website](#) or [liking us on Facebook](#).