

**Michigan Interagency Coordinating Council (MICC)**  
***Early On*<sup>®</sup> Michigan**  
**(Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)**  
**Thursday, May 23, 2024**  
**9:30 am – 12:30 pm**  
**Lake Michigan Room**  
**Michigan Library and Historical Center**  
**702 W. Kalamazoo Street**  
**Lansing, MI 48915**

**Minutes**

**Members Present:** Nerita Adams-Spillers, Synthia Britton, Kae Dubay, Monica Gaines, Cheryl Granzo, Stephanie Hirschert-Walton, Beth Jenkins, Irma Lopez-Barajas, Salina Mann, Tori McIntosh, Amy Miilu, Lisa Perugi, Cara Sutcliffe, Jonnie Taton

**Members Absent:** Joe Clark, Andrea LaFramboise, Tami Mannes, Susan Morningstar, Vicki Thomas

**Alternates Present:** LaSean Thompson, Jihan Young

**Staff Present:** Gina Birnbaum, Laura Goldthwait, Kelly Hurshe, Mark Kuipers, Cheryl Najm, Colleen O'Connor, Barb Schinderle, Janet Timbs

**Grantees Present:** Clinton County RESA, Office of Innovative Projects:  
Christy Callahan, Jen Champagne,  
Jenny Koenigsknecht, Lexie Schinderle  
Michigan Alliance for Families  
Victoria Martinez  
Wayne State University (Evaluation Project):  
Charo Hulleza, Mohammad Moiz, and Luna Xuan

**Guests:** Paul Elam, Meghan Shephard, Marney Turner

**Call to Order:** Vice Chairperson Tori McIntosh called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

**Introductions:** Introductions were made and everyone was welcomed.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**A motion was made by Beth Jenkins and supported by Stephanie Hirschert-Walton to approve the minutes.**  
**Motion carried.**

## **Approval of Agenda:**

**A motion was made by Cara Sutcliffe and supported by Nerita Adams-Spillers to approve the agenda.**  
**Motion carried.**

## **"Worth Mentioning":**

A recommendation came from the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) to start each MICC meeting with an activity that keeps children and families at the heart of what we do, helps the MICC members, alternates, grantees, and staff get to know each other better, and allows others to understand the different perspectives that make up the MICC.

Jen Champagne shared a slide honoring her roots, as she is someone who cares so deeply about infants and toddlers. Jen shared pictures of herself in different stages of life, beginning with her as an infant being held by her grandfather and father. This reminds her that what happens in the first three years matters and shapes who you are. She began her career at the Lowry Early Childhood Center at Oakland University, where her father also worked. The Lowry Center practiced full inclusion back in the 80s and it stuck with her as a model. Jen currently is the training and technical assistance manager for *Early On* Training and Technical Assistance (EOT&TA) at Clinton County RESA (CCRESA), Office of Innovative Projects (OIP).

Luna Xuan is a research associate at Wayne State University (WSU). She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology in China, where it is rare to obtain a degree in that field, but that's how she got into the world of social emotional. She pursued her Ph.D. from Penn State University and majored in Developmental Psychology with a focus on preschool language intervention and intervention studies for children with specific language impairments (SLI).

After graduation, Luna joined the Center for Urban Studies at WSU where she collects data for family surveys. She enjoys talking with parents and sharing in their joys and tears, and shared that everything she acquired from her studies applies to real world. "You only live once," and Luna is enjoying the work she does and finds it interesting and inspiring, and likes being part of this system.

## **Updates:**

### **Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP)**

It is with great pleasure that we welcome two new members to the MiLEAP Birth to Five Early Childhood Special Education team.

Gina Birnbaum joins the *Early On* team as an *Early On* consultant. Gina comes to us with over two decades of dedicated service in the field of special education, marked by a deep commitment to fostering inclusive learning environments and advocating for the diverse needs of children. She has experience as a preschool teacher for children with autism, a teacher consultant for autism, and a supervisor of special education. In 2018, she joined the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Special Education as a state-wide monitor and then became a state complaint

investigator, demonstrating a keen understanding of compliance standards and a commitment to upholding the rights of individuals with disabilities.

Mark Kuipers brings a diverse background in special education to his new role as the 619 coordinator. Over the past seven and a half years, Mark has served as a member of CCRESA, OIP, where he provided technical assistance and training in preschool special education. His recent focus has centered on contributing to the Michigan Preschool Inclusion Collective Action Plan. Prior to his time at CCRESA, Mark began his journey in education as a special education teacher, followed by roles as an administrator and a teacher consultant. Mark currently resides in Grand Rapids and holds a master's degree in educational leadership from Western Michigan University after completing his understudies at Calvin University and Grand Valley State University.

### **State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)**

The focus of the SSIP over the past few months has been to complete a Root Cause Analysis with cohort members and state team staff to address the issue: *Statewide, in Michigan, infants and toddlers in Early On are demonstrating less growth in the area of social and emotional development.*

Mary Mackrain synthesized the information from the Root Cause Analysis meetings and organized it into three major themes, each with suggested activities to improve outcomes. T

1. Competent, skilled, and supported **workforce** to address social emotional development and mental health issues with families.
2. Prepared, connected, and supported **Parents**.  
*(Parents/caregivers have the training and support necessary to enrich their relationship with and the social emotional development of their child.)*
3. Clear and consistent statewide policy, data collection, reporting, and use of social emotional data that is connected to Child Outcomes Summary (COS) ratings.

Work with a small group of stakeholders is occurring to develop an action plan with activities and timelines to improve social emotional outcomes.

### **MICC Membership**

The governor's office is in the process of appointing new members to fill the vacancies for:

- Judy Goth-Owens- representative for Higher Education
- Prachi Shah- represents 'other stakeholders' as a developmental pediatrician

Tori McIntosh and Lisa Perugi's terms are also up for reappointment, and they are interested in being reappointed.

### **Early On Conference**

The *Early On* Conference, Ripples to Waves: The Power of Early Intervention will be held at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme, Michigan. The preconference date is November 12, 2024, and the conference is November 13-14, 2024.

### **Celena Barnes Family Leadership Award**

The PIC of the MICC is pleased to present a family leadership award in memory of a dear friend and colleague, Celena Barnes.

Celena passed away in September 2014, and the PIC would like to keep her memory alive, with your help, by selecting an outstanding parent leader to be awarded the "Celena Barnes Family Leadership Award."

Please see the nomination form and consider recommending an exceptional parent leader with whom you have the privilege of working. [Celena Barnes Family Leadership Award - Google Forms](#)

Nominations are due by August 30, 2024. The parent selected will be revealed at the *Early On* Conference in Traverse City, November 13-14, 2024.

### **Early On Family Survey**

The annual *Early On* Family Survey is underway. The PIC created a flyer being circulated to help increase the response rate for all families: [Early On Family Survey Flyer](#). Please help spread the word. The family survey data are reported to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in the Annual Performance Report (APR) Indicator 4, that measures family outcomes.

### **Family Outcomes Target Resetting Ad Hoc:**

The MICC charged the Family Outcomes Target Resetting Ad Hoc Committee with recommending targets for the State Performance Plan (SPP)/APR Indicator 4, family outcomes, that align with the new approach for reporting data to OSEP. By changing the approach, Michigan's data are more aligned with how other states are reporting data.

Twelve *Early On* stakeholders met to review the family outcomes, data, and possible scenarios for family outcomes targets.

The OSEP guidelines for target resetting include:

- must be rigorous yet achievable,
- be set with the advice of stakeholders,
- may remain the same several years in a row, and
- must show improvement over baseline in the end.

Michigan's baseline year, with the new approach, was FFY 2022. Family outcome data for FFY 2022 were high.

The national average was considered to be a benchmark and starting point.

Indicator 4: Percent of families participating in Part C who report that early intervention services have helped the family:

- A. Know their rights;
- B. Effectively communicate their children's needs; and
- C. Help their children develop and learn.

For 4A, Michigan's average result (91.32%) was above the national average (90%). The committee recommended 90%, 91%, and 92.79% for FFY's 2023, 2024, and 2025.

For 4B, Michigan's average result (89.35%) was below the national average (90%). The committee recommended 89%, 89.35%, and 91.15% for FFY's 2023, 2024, and 2025.

For 4C, Michigan's average result (93.68%) was above the national average (92%). The committee recommended 92.5%, 93.45%, and 94.64% for FFY's 2023, 2024 and 2025.

**A motion was made by Nerita Adams-Spillers and supported by Salina Mann to accept the recommended targets, proposed by the Family Outcomes Target Resetting Ad Hoc Committee, for SPP/APR Indicator 4 as follows:**

**4A 90% for FFY 2023, 91% for FFY 2024, 92.79% for FFY 2025**

**4B 89% for FFY 2023, 89.35% for FFY 2024, 91.15% for FFY 2025**

**4C 92.5% for FFY 2023, 93.45% for FFY 2024, 94.64% for FFY 2025**

**Motion passed**

**Examination of Michigan's Part C System, Through a Lens of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI):**

Using American Rescue Plan funding, An Examination of the Michigan Part C System Through the Lens of DEI was conducted by WSU, in partnership with CCRESA, OIP. The purpose of the study was to examine gaps, strengths, and barriers to DEI in the *Early On* system in order to develop action plans and implement strategies to assist local service areas to close the gaps in DEI.

Jonnie Taton read a statement from Michigan's Collective Early Childhood Action Plan, found on page 10 around Michigan's commitment to advancing equity.

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/63fd5631a7e2a6195a2ca000/t/657b21e673326863e9f283a2/1702568452011/Michigan%27s+Collective+Early+Childhood+Action+Plan+FINAL\\_8.18.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/63fd5631a7e2a6195a2ca000/t/657b21e673326863e9f283a2/1702568452011/Michigan%27s+Collective+Early+Childhood+Action+Plan+FINAL_8.18.pdf)

Existing data were analyzed, and a focus group and survey were completed to learn from families who chose not to participate or left *Early On* after six months or less of service.

Gaps and barriers were discovered around race/ethnicity, income level, and geographic regions of the state for the following areas:

- initial Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meetings
- frequency of services

- length of services
- perceived helpfulness of service provider
- family outcomes
- child outcomes

The slides presented were those that show statistically significant findings, the larger slide deck is available upon request. The theme that emerged was that African American/Black children and families did not benefit from *Early On* at as high of a rate as White families. Some of the areas include:

- The *Early On* system completed statistically significantly fewer initial IFSP meetings with families who are African American/Black when compared to other groups.
- African American children received fewer *Early On* services, both in terms of frequency and length of services, when compared to White or Asian children.
- African American families perceived significantly lower levels of service provider's helpfulness compared to White families.
- African American families report experiencing lower levels of positive family impact as a result of their participation in *Early On*, when compared to White families.
- Positive child outcomes for African American children are consistently lower, compared to White families.

Discussion:

- Accommodating families to attend their IFSP meeting is needed even if it's outside of the 8-5 workday.
- A request was made to look at family outcome data by race. Charo Hulleza believes this information is in the larger slide deck, and if not, it can be made available.
- The *Early On* system could tap into many available networks, such as Michigan Alliance for Families, Home Visiting, and Early Head Start.

Dr. Paul Elam, chief strategy officer for the Michigan Public Health Institute, joined Jen Champagne to talk about the pilot site work done after the initial phase of the DEI study. Paul Elam and Marney Turner worked with administrators, service providers, and families from Detroit and the Eastern Upper Peninsula to hold focus groups to dig deeper around six areas: communication, engagement, personnel, professional learning, family rights, and data. They shared slides depicting what they learned. A concern was shared that the data didn't relate to the earlier data that were shared, such as families not being accommodated to attend IFSP meetings.

MICC members shared input around:

What are contributing factors to the data findings?

What are some recommendations to close the gaps?

- DEI/implicit bias/anti bias is ongoing work and regular trainings are needed. Training for administrators is also important since they develop

and implement policies and need the knowledge too. How administrators lead affects how providers work with families.

- Developing partnerships is important. It was shared that in an urban district, the Head Start program partners with other home visiting programs by bringing a trusted member from the community into the meeting with the family. This joint visit(s) helps to build trust and helps the relationship to get off on the right foot.
- Partnerships can also be valuable if *Early On* loses contact with a family. In some cases, the family may be working with Early Head Start who can help reconnect the family to *Early On*. Service providers shouldn't give up on a family, but instead, look at who referred the family and reach out.
- Related to communication, a suggestion was made that service providers be trained to talk with families so they understand more about *Early On*. An example was shared where a family didn't realize their *Early On* services were ending and didn't realize they had a transition meeting. They also didn't know that *Early On* ended at age 3. The approach could be, "We are here to support you, so your child can be their best."
- Related to family rights, there needs to be more work around this rather than just handing the family rights brochure to families and checking a box. There is a feeling that families don't really understand their rights, otherwise there wouldn't be the 'scheduling issues' that were identified in the DEI survey data. Michigan Alliance for Families can help families understand their rights.
- In thinking about the data that were shared, a policy and practice review may be needed. Keep this data in the forefront of our meetings, say what our challenges are out loud. Members in the room have been in meetings where parents' voices were devalued.

Jen Champagne, training and technical assistance manager for CCRESA, OIP shared some possible strategies for closing the gaps around DEI in Michigan and the projected timeline:

- Targeted DEI support in two pilot sites: Detroit and the Eastern Upper Peninsula (December 2023 – May 2024).
- Roll out the equity data dashboard tool through the Center for Educational Performance and Information (Spring 2024).
- Develop a 6<sup>th</sup> Essentials of *Early On* Module around implicit bias (November 2024).
- Share additional options for implicit bias training with *Early On* coordinators (ongoing).
- Strengthen EOT&TA personnel's understanding and skill development of culturally responsive early intervention practices and equity informed decision making (ongoing).
- Identify grant funds/additional revenue to continue work (ongoing).

### **Meeting structure moving forward:**

Tori McIntosh shared that after the conversation at the last MICC meeting, the Executive Committee would like to have a standing agenda item around sharing information from the field. This will be taken to the PIC for further discussion.

**Public Comment:**

Jihan Young shared that the Kalamazoo Public Library hosted an event called 'Party in the Park.' They brought together over 50 different public officials to be readers. Kalamazoo RESA stuffed bags with books and snacks. Children and families spread out in the park, and people came and read to them.

Christy Callahan let everyone know this is an important time in the state budget process. The budget will be finalized by June and funding for *Early On* is being discussed. Now is the time to reach out to your representative. To find your representative go to <https://mightymichigan.com/maps/>. The House version is asking for an increase to \$17 million, the Senate and governor have only minimal increases for *Early On*.

**Adjourn:**

**A motion to adjourn was made by Synthia Britton.**

**Motion carried.**