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A Tool Kit for the Faith Community of Ingham County

Great Start
 Ingham
 ...Be their Hero from age Zero
 517-244-4514
 Website: www.migreatparents.org

Vision

“Every Ingham County child ready to succeed in school and in life.”



*Developed by the 0-5 Subcommittee of the
Ingham County Human Services Advisory Council*

Made possible through grant funding by the
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Sample Bulletin Insert

Early Years are Learning Years

- **By age 2:** a child's capacity to control his or her emotions and make social attachments is developed.
- **By age 3:** a major part of a child's capacity for language and vocabulary is developed.
- **By age 4:** a child's brain develops largely in response to experiences.
- **By age 5:** 85% of a child's capacity for learning is developed.



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Examples of Community Service Opportunities

The Faith Community Can:

- Adopt an early childhood program or family support program for focused volunteer efforts (such as painting, playground clean-up, donation of books, or fundraiser).
- Establish partnerships with early childhood programs that would like volunteers to read to or work with their children.
- Share talents, skills, and expertise (such as accounting skills, management training, public relations, construction, technology, music, etc.) with early childhood and family support programs.
- Provide space for early childhood programs, parenting education and workshops.
- Encourage members to serve on community planning and improvement committees and boards of early childhood and family support programs.



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Creating an Early Childhood Family Focus

The Faith Community Can:

- Develop a group to educate parents about the importance of early education and care.
- Develop a support network for families with young children within your faith community.
- Provide child development and parenting information by using bulletin boards, newsletters, electronic networks, literature racks or envelopes. (Sample enclosed)
- Sponsor local speakers to offer child development seminars to parent support and education groups.
- Refer families seeking early care and education information to the Office for Young Children (Phone: (517) 887-4319; Web site: <http://www.ingham.org/HD/OYC>)
- Organize activities for families with young children. Consider adapting events or activities to be more child friendly.



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Promoting Importance of Early Childhood

The Faith Community Can:

- Help publicize community programs that offer parent education, family support, early care and education, and health services by displaying posters, circulating flyers, and providing informational brochures.
- Hang posters regarding the importance of the early years on bulletin boards, in meeting rooms, and in gathering areas. (Sample posters included in this kit)
- Work with and support other community partners (United Way, service providers, Human Services Advisory Committee 0-5 subcommittee, government, media, philanthropy, schools, libraries, employers, unions, etc.) to expand and improve physical and mental health services, early care and education, and family support and parent education programs for families with young children.
- Inform members about the importance of the early years in newsletters and in bulletins. For example, articles highlighting healthy social-emotional development. (Sample included in this kit)
- Be aware of policies impacting young children and their families. Communicate concerns about the importance of the early years to policymakers by writing letters or making telephone calls.
- Promote early childhood education training for caregivers and volunteers in your nursery or childcare programs.



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Sample Newsletter Article

Encouraging Healthy Social-Emotional Development

The National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families suggests the following practices to ensure your child's healthy social-emotional development:

Responsive care: Spending time with your child, observing his/her interactions, and responding to his/her needs provides insight into the child's behavior, and the child learns to trust;

Affection and nurturing: Loving touches and encouraging words send a message to young children that they are special and valued. When children receive love and affection from their parents, it builds their self-esteem and they learn how to love and nurture others.

Resolving conflict and understanding their feelings: As toddlers begin to develop self-awareness, sharing can become a difficult task. To help your child resolve conflicts and understand his/her feelings, create opportunities to identify and discuss your child's feelings. Discussing characters in books and movies may be a good way to begin discussions about feelings and conflict resolution.

Understanding the emotional world of young children can be an exciting and challenging task. Being responsive, nurturing, and concerned about their feelings is very important. For assistance, parents should seek the advice of other parents and early childhood professionals.

Ingham County Great Start believes that healthy social-emotional development is important in ensuring a healthy future for children in the Greater Lansing area. For more information about early childhood social-emotional health, you can go to the Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families website at www.zerotothree.org, or for assistance at the local level, contact Dr. Barry Kaufman, (517) 346-8053, with Clinton -Eaton -Ingham Community Mental Health (CEI-CMH).



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The Importance of Early Learning

The Role of the Faith Community in Early Learning

The faith community can play an important role in making sure our children are ready for school by educating parents and others about the importance of early childhood development.

This toolkit provides great examples of ways that the faith community can provide information on early childhood and school readiness to parents. There are also suggested activities for community involvement to ensure healthy development for children ages 0-5.

Research by the High/Scope Foundation (<http://www.highscope.org>) shows that children who are raised in nurturing and supportive environments and participate in high quality early childhood learning programs:

- Are twice as likely to enter kindergarten “ready to learn”
- Receive higher scores in their word problems, reading, and math tests
- Are 65% more likely to graduate from high school
- Are twice as likely to continue their education and go to a four-year college
- Earn \$228,216 more over the course of their career
- Are five times less likely to break the law as adults

By working together, we can ensure that all of our children are healthy and develop the skills and knowledge they need to be productive and self-supporting adults.



*“Well-educated children make a healthier congregation.
A healthier congregation makes for a stronger church body.”
Stan Parker, Pastor - Faith Fellowship Baptist Church, Lansing, MI*

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