



Great



Starts



Here!

Dear Friends,

First of all, thank you for your interest and ongoing support of Ingham County Great Start Collaborative! As you know, we are a group made up of parents, clergy, business people and health and human service organization leaders, and our mission to ensure that all children arrive at the kindergarten door ready, willing and able to succeed.

Fiscal year 2009 was a tough, busy one, to be sure. The state budget tested all, but most especially young children and their families. That said, out of trial comes strength, and the good news was that we discovered that by working together passionately we can improve the lives of young learners and their families, and therefore improve Michigan's economic and social future.

The listing below is by no means comprehensive, but it does provide the highlights of the year and demonstrates the hard work and commitment of the Ingham GSC and Parent Coalition members.

I wish you all the best as we head into another challenging, and hopefully rewarding fiscal year.

- Michelle Nicholson, Ingham GSC Coordinator



Advocating a Great Start for all Michigan's Children

GSC Activities

Increasing Access to Early Childhood Services and Supports:

- Through targeted joint recruitment efforts, and stream-lined enrollment procedures, families have gained increased access to both public and private preschool programming.
- Concerted efforts have focused on creating targeted Play & Learn groups for high-risk families, supporting mental health for families with young children in need, and developing scholarships to increase access to quality child care settings.
- Increased collaboration and inter-agency planning has resulted in more effective referrals and connections between GSC partner agencies and families with young children.

Building Public Will for Early Childhood:

- The Ingham GSC led a local advocacy campaign with elected officials in support of early childhood programs highlighting the importance of investment in early childhood. Ingham GSC partner agencies and parents also participated in the Star Power Rally at the State Capitol.
- The GSC initiated a Parenting Counts/Born Learning media campaign, promoting parenting and child development information through a variety of media including movie theater spots and print media.



Success Stories

Increased Funding for Early Childhood Services and Supports:

- Ingham GSC secured a joint grant from the Capital Area United Way, Capital Region Community Foundation and REO Olds Foundation for \$675,000 (\$225,000 a year for each of three years). In the first year the grant funds help support a variety of activities to implement the Ingham GSC Children's Action Agenda. The activities included: targeted Play & Learn Groups (110 adults with 86 children served); home visiting (beginning with 7 families); professional development through coaching at 8 area child care centers; inter-agency training workshops on three topics (providing in-service for over 300 staff and parents); oral dental health promotion activities; literacy activities and more.
- Ingham GSC received a grant from Consumers Energy Foundation for \$25,000 to support child care scholarships with CAUW/CRCF funds used to assist 34 children in low-income families with child care expenses.
- CACS Head Start working with several GSC partners received competitive grant awards for Head Start and Early Head Start expansion totaling \$1,679,764.



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