

Acknowledgments and Very Special Thanks

Michigan's Children is a non-profit, privately funded advocacy group which acts as a voice for children. In collaboration with policy-makers, other organizations, and communities throughout the state, Michigan's Children endeavors to improve the quality of life for children and their families.

This handbook, and accompanying video highlighting effective family support programs in Michigan, was made possible through a generous grant from the **Gerber Foundation**. Michigan's Children would also like to acknowledge the **Children's Trust Fund** for its help in printing and disseminating the handbook. Finally, we wish to recognize **Susan Miller**, the consultant to Michigan's Children who authored this work and travelled throughout the state to identify family support programs that work.

Sally and Ron decided to deliver their first child in northern Michigan where they have a summer home, not realizing how isolated they would be from friends and family. A Healthy Futures nurse visited Sally shortly after the birth of her child, as part of a routine home visit offered to all parents in the county. Finding Sally lonely and depressed, the nurse quickly connected her to counseling resources, and told her about a new mothers group she could join. Healthy Futures is part of a collaborative community effort working to make home visiting, parenting education and support as essential a community resource as the public library.

LuWanna was a young single mom living on public assistance when she first met her Healthy Start Family Support Worker in the hospital after delivering her second child. LuWanna was skeptical at first about letting a stranger into her home and life, but through regular home visits, this worker has supported LuWanna through many difficult times, always making sure LuWanna had what she needed to provide for the everyday needs of her children. During her four years in the program, LuWanna went back to school, obtained her associate's degree and is now employed as a paramedic. She has her own apartment, no longer receives public assistance and plans to buy a house in the near future.

I was an isolated, trying-to-do-it-solo parent. My story is not really a family support story, but then it is because it points out how hard it is when those elements are missing. My son has a mental health disorder, so prevention may not have been a key, but then again, once the strength-based nonjudgemental "I'll hang in there with you no matter what and we'll find the answers" perspective, started happening for us, things really did change and today my son is doing incredibly well — no medications or therapy - just living real life!

Supporting Michigan Families

This handbook highlights the stories of families and communities like these. Through the voices of

families, community leaders, and program staff, we learn how families and their children benefit when communities provide nurturing, safe and supportive environments; when programs provide resources and support that respect the individual strengths of each family member, celebrate their diversity, and involve them as equal partners in meeting the needs of their children, their families and their communities; and when states support these efforts with resources and assistance.

About Family Support

At its core, family support is an old-fashioned way of thinking about what it takes to raise children in any society— and how that way of thinking translates into action.¹

All families rely, and always have, on resources outside the home to help them raise their children — relatives, neighbors, doctors, schools, neighborhood clubs, religious leaders. Yet today, for many families and communities, these supports are less available. Increased job mobility takes families away from friends and relatives. Improved health and longevity keep grandparents active in work or retirement, with less time to help out the younger generation in their child rearing tasks. Family doctors with time for house calls and questions have been replaced long ago. Increases in divorce, single parenthood, and two-parent working families place additional stresses on parents and family life. And, for the growing numbers of children living in poverty, the family and community resources they need for healthy development are even more limited.

Over the past thirty years, family support services have developed across the nation in response to these changes. With its roots in settlement houses of the early 1900's, the self-help movements of the fifties and sixties, and the comprehensive approach of Head Start, the "family supportive movement" is becoming a crucial aspect of building communities that can sustain families and support the growth of healthy children, ensuring that families have the supports they've always needed.

What Does Family Support Look Like?

Family support programs and services vary in the families they serve, the services they provide, and where they provide them.

Family support has many faces...

- A group of parents and their toddlers meeting once a week in a church basement to share ideas while their children play.
- A nurse making weekly visits to a young mother, answering questions about her new baby's development, connecting her with a primary health care provider, and helping her return to school.
- A public child welfare agency whose staff members have been trained to include families and their natural support networks as equal partners in resolving family crisis.
- A community planning group of parents, community leaders, and human services professionals meeting to identify gaps in community services and develop a coordinated response to these gaps.

Family support is an approach to bringing information, services, resources and support to families that builds on family and community strengths, focuses on promotion and prevention rather than intervention, and views child and family development as inseparable from the communities, the cultures and the larger society within which they live.

Family support is a belief system, accepting that:

- Most parents want to do what's best for their children, but they may lack the resources or the information to do so.
- All families, at some point or another, need the help and support of neighborhood and community resources.
- All segments of the society must support families in their critical job of raising children.
- Parents can best nurture their children when their own growth and development is nurtured.
- Working with families and communities to promote healthy child development and prevent problems from occurring is more cost-effective and caring than treating problems later through foster care, special education and the criminal justice system.

Critical Elements of Family Support

■ *Focus on promotion and prevention*

Instead of waiting until a crisis has occurred, family supportive services develop mechanisms to connect with families early. They work to promote healthy child and family development and prevent serious problems from occurring by strengthening family and community systems and detecting potential problems early on. Family support systems provide access to information, resources and skills families need to raise their children. Families have a place to turn — a person or organization they have come to know and trust — with their concerns and questions, whether about their child or themselves.

■ *Are voluntary*

Family support systems provide opportunities for families to participate in prevention-focused services if and when they want, offering a variety of services that meet families' needs at different stages in their lives and in different ways.

■ *Build on strengths*

Family supportive services build on the premise that individuals, families and communities all possess unique strengths and assets, regardless of any immediate problem. By tapping into these strengths, programs and service systems help families increase their own abilities to take charge of their lives, and in that way be better prepared to take charge as parents.

Family support services work with all family members, helping them to identify and enhance the resources they have at hand — their own skills, the resources of family and friends, and those of the larger community. They provide opportunities for families to use their skills and knowledge in all aspects of programming and services, from responding to surveys on program offerings to participation on governance councils to working in a volunteer or paid position. In this way, programs and families both benefit.

Similarly, when communities develop family supportive systems, they assess existing assets, and build on these. Communities look for natural leaders and organizations — schools, faith groups, businesses — that already have strong links with families; they learn what families view as the major concerns and barriers to the health of their children and work with parents and other community members to address these concerns.

■ *Build partnerships of respect and trust*

Partnerships of equality and respect are at the core of family supportive services — between staff and families, staff and their supervisors, supervisors and administrators, program services and the community they serve. Traditional social services consider themselves the experts on what's best for a family and community. Family supportive programs recognize that all partners have information, knowledge and skills to share. Families are experts on the uniqueness of their own children, their family situation, and the cultural roots and values that shape their family life. Family support staff have expertise on child and family development, the tools to assess developmental concerns, and information on community resources and how to access them. In a similar way community members know how state support can best work in a particular community.

Relationships of trust take time to develop. Effective family supportive services ensure that the relationships they build with families and in communities will last over a long enough time and be intensive enough to make a difference.

To work effectively with families, family support workers must themselves receive support and training within a supportive supervisory relationship. In quality programs, the relationship between staff and supervisor mirrors the partnerships that staff develop with families, each bringing to the relationship a specific set of information and knowledge.

Families are empowered when their strengths are recognized, respected and encouraged.

– Allegan County Intermediate School District

■ **Affirm diversity**

Family supportive services affirm families’ cultural roots and traditions, for it is the values derived from these traditions that guide how families raise their children. All families must prepare their children to function within an increasingly diverse society. Family supportive services help families identify their own cultural, racial and linguistic identities and pass these on to their children. At the same time, they help families and their children understand and function in the dominant culture.

■ **Are flexible and responsive to changing needs**

Family supportive services are not restricted to nine to five business hours, nor necessarily to a set amount of time. Workers bring services to families’ homes, or provide them in centers with home-like atmospheres. Drop-in programs allow parents to use them when they most need to, and provide opportunities for families to interact informally with each other and with staff members. Many home visiting programs provide services in the evenings or on weekends. Programs offer a range of formal and informal services and activities, allowing families to participate in different ways, or choose one way that is most comfortable for them. Flexibility also allows programs and communities to respond to family input.

■ **Build community**

Children and families grow within communities, and family supportive services play a crucial role in ensuring that families are connected to the range of resources they need to raise their children. Effective family support programs and services become an important part of the very fabric of community life. Programs encourage families to become active members of their communities and work with families to enhance the networks and systems that support healthy family and community life. Programs respond to community issues and engage families as partners in this process. They participate in community-wide planning efforts, working to develop coordinated responses to community needs.

■ **Demonstrate progress**

Family support programs and services are working to develop evaluation measures and processes that reflect the key principles of family support — focusing on strengths, involving participants and other stakeholders in defining outcomes and indicators of progress, and recognizing cultural and community values. ²

The Early Years Are Key

Families need information and support for each stage of their child’s development. However, because of the emphasis on prevention, and the growing understanding of the importance of the earliest years in learning and development, many family support services focus on parents with infants and toddlers. Recent discoveries in brain development support this focus, confirming what parents and early childhood experts alike have long suspected — a child’s earliest experiences greatly affect how that child will grow and learn. From brain research, we now know that these early experiences affect the very growth of the brain itself.

Early experiences that are sensory, active, novel and challenging actually thicken the cortex of an infant’s brain, spurring neuron connections that determine intelligence and behavior. Conversely, when a young child lives under extreme stress or fear, or lacks warm and stable relationships with a parent or other caregiver, brain growth does not occur. While neurons continue to make connections until a child is nine or ten, and human learning continues throughout life, much of the intellectual and emotional “wiring” of the brain has been set by the time children enter kindergarten, influenced, positively or negatively, by the experiences and relationships children have encountered.

If we want children to succeed, we must start early and then keep going. Houses need foundations. So do children.

– Stephen Shames, photographer ³

A Selection of National Models of Early Childhood and Family Support

■ **Early Head Start (EHS)**

This federally funded program, begun in 1995, provides comprehensive, community-based services to at-risk pregnant women and families with children from birth to age three, in families' homes, in centers, or a combination of both. Some programs provide EHS services in family day care settings as well. Like Head Start, EHS provides a comprehensive array of child and family development services, with a focus on diversity, parent involvement, staff development and community partnerships.

■ **Healthy Families America**

Healthy Families America is a national initiative to help parents of newborns get their children off to a healthy start. Modeled after Hawaii's Healthy Start program, HFA is a voluntary program that targets home visiting services to families at greater risk for serious parenting problems, including child abuse and neglect. Families determined at risk are offered home visits, beginning during pregnancy or shortly after the child's birth. Home visits vary in frequency depending on the family's situation and can continue until the child is five. HFA staff are trained in developing trusting, respectful relationships with parents, and helping parents develop similar relationships with their children. Other HFA services include developmental screening, links to a medical provider and other community services, and often parenting groups. Some programs offer some services (periodic newsletters, family activities, and community resource information) to all families, regardless of risk.⁴

■ **Parents As Teachers**

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a parent education program that begins prenatally and continues through the child's fifth birthday. Based on the premise that parents are their children's first and best teachers, the program helps parents strengthen their parenting skills and knowledge of child development and prepare their child for school, through home visits by trained parent educators, parent group meetings, developmental screening, and connections to community resources. PAT's Born to Learn[®] curriculum, revised in 1997 to reflect the latest in neuroscience and early brain development, offers clear and concise information on each stage of a child's early development, as well as suggestions for parent-child activities. The program and curriculum have been adapted for use with teen parents, Native American families, and with Head Start and family child care providers. PAT programs are offered in all but one state, as well as other countries. Sixty-six communities in Michigan offer PAT programs.⁵

■ **Even Start Family Literacy Program**

Even Start is a federal program designed to address the educational needs of low-income parents and their children up to age eight. Established in 1989, the program's goal is to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy for low-income families by combining early childhood education with adult literacy and parenting education. By improving parents' literacy and parenting skills, the program hopes to increase parents' involvement with their children's ongoing education. Community-based family support programs often incorporate Even Start to expand the range of services they can offer families. Even Start program services are provided through a variety of activities, including home visits, parent discussion groups, parent-child literacy activities and early childhood programs. Even Start is offered in 22 communities in Michigan.⁶

■ **Infant Mental Health**

Rather than a specific program, infant mental health (IMH) is an interdisciplinary field of practice that promotes healthy child development by strengthening the relationships between infants and their parents or primary caregivers. Infant mental health specialists work with families and children who are at high risk of developing later difficulties. IMH professionals are trained to develop trusting, non-judgmental relationships with parents. They focus on the infant within the context of the parent-child relationship and help parents develop healthier patterns of interaction and coping mechanisms. Increasingly, infant mental health specialists are being used as supervisors, staff, or consultants in a variety of family support programs to provide enhanced services to families with greater needs.⁷

Common Components of Family Support Programs

- Parent education classes, workshops, support groups
- Parent-child activities and family events
- Home visits
- Child Care while parents participate in center-based programs
- Life skills
- Health and developmental screening
- Information and referral to other community resources
- Drop-in times
- Crisis intervention and family counseling
- Community involvement and advocacy

Making A Difference

Evaluating the impact of family support services raises a number of important issues. First, traditional research methods that randomly assign families from the same population to a group that receives services or to a control group that does not, and that require families to participate for a specific amount or length of time, conflict with core beliefs of family support services: that they are voluntary and universal, open to any family seeking support. Secondly, family supportive services are usually only one aspect of a community — when other resources are lacking (safety, an economic base, effective schools, for example), the impact of prevention-oriented services on healthy outcomes for children and families is limited. Finally, because family support is more an approach to how services and resources are made available to families than a distinct program model, an evaluation review must consider a range of programs that incorporate family supportive services.

Despite these difficulties, existing research indicates that providing early and sustained support to families does make a difference in outcomes for children. Across a range of programs, family supportive services have resulted in fewer teenage pregnancies, reduced juvenile delinquency, improved behavior and performance in school, fewer incidents of child abuse and neglect, increased self-confidence, knowledge of child development and parenting skills among parents, and increased educational achievement of children and youths. Most effective are programs and communities that offer families a comprehensive array of services and resources, including home-based parenting support, center-based early education, employment training and other supports for all family members.

...the spirit and practice of family support will be as normative as traffic lights in cities, grains of wheat on American farms, and the seasons of the year — predictable, durable, ubiquitous, and embedded in the social fabric of the nation.⁸

— Bernice Weissbourd
President, Family Focus, Inc.

Family Support
Services Improve Outcomes



Family Support Programs That Work

In the nation..

Parents As Teachers

Early studies showed that at age three, children in PAT, compared to non-program children, had significantly better language and problem solving skills. Their parents were more involved in their children's schooling, and had increased their knowledge of child development and parenting practices.

- *A 1998 study showed Missouri children who participated in PAT for at least one year scored higher in school readiness.*⁹

Early Head Start

A recent national evaluation showed that after a year in the program:

- *Early Head Start children scored higher in infant and toddler development tests than non-program children, had larger vocabularies and used more complex sentences, according to their parents.*
- *Parents in the program had more positive parenting behaviors, used physical punishment less often, and were more likely to read to their children daily, and play with them in more stimulating ways.*¹⁰

These positive findings are all known to be related to improved social and reading abilities and general readiness for school.

Prenatal and Early Infancy Program

In this program, specially trained nurses provide first-time at-risk mothers with regular home visits during pregnancy and for two years after the child's birth. Mothers receive coaching in parenting skills, support to reduce the use of cigarettes, alcohol and illegal drugs during pregnancy, and help in continuing their education and finding work. Studies show that for the neediest families:

- *The program reduced child abuse by 80% for children under two, and helped mothers post-pone subsequent pregnancies and move into the work force.*
- *Fifteen years after the services ended, these mothers had only one-third as many arrests, and their children smoked and drank less, had fewer sex partners, and were half as likely to be delinquent.*¹¹

Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education Program (ECFE)

This program, supported by a combination of state funds and local tax levies totaling more than \$39 million in 2000, is one of the largest and oldest of its type in the nation. Provided through local public school systems, ECFE programs offer a range of services to all families with young children, including parent education groups, guided play for children, and planned parent-child activities; home visits; developmental screening; and information on community resources. A 1995 study of low-income families participating in ECFE found that parents improved both their knowledge of child development and their parenting skills.¹²

In Michigan..

Bendle-Carman/Ainsworth Learning Community

A follow-up study of fourth-grade students who participated in the Learning Community as three and four-year olds showed that the mean scores of these students on the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) were consistently higher than other low-income students in the district. The study also showed that children who participated in the program over a longer time and received more intensive services performed better on the fourth-grade test.¹³

Building Strong Families

This home-based program, developed by Michigan State University County Extension Program, works with low-income parents of children under three, using a strength-based, multi-cultural parenting education curriculum. Recent studies of programs in Michigan cities found that, compared to non-program parents, parents in the program were more likely to report more positive interaction with their children in developmentally appropriate ways, to provide safer home environments and to make positive personal changes in their lives. They reported a greater increase in satisfaction with their level of social support and demonstrated more positive change in parenting behavior.¹⁴

Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oakland

A five-year evaluation study comparing program participants with a control group found that the program had a significant impact on child abuse and neglect, child health and development, and the quality of parenting and social support.

- *1.5% of participants had substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect compared to 14% of the control group;*
- *95% of participant children were fully immunized compared to 85% of control children;*
- *6.2% of the program group used emergency room medical services while increasing their visits to physicians, compared to emergency room use by 42% of the control group;*
- *Participant children scored significantly higher than control children on child development assessments.*¹⁵

Family Support Services Save Money!

- Home-based family support services for one family for an entire year can cost from \$3,000 to \$7,000, depending on the family's needs and the structure of the program, while intervention and treatment services for an abused child and her family can cost \$50,000 or more a year. ¹⁶
- Every dollar invested in quality early childhood programs that include home- and center-based support for parents can save up to \$7.00 in later social costs (in welfare and child welfare, juvenile justice, health and mental health, and special education services).

Building Strong Communities

A family support approach is key to building strong, family-friendly communities. Michigan's efforts to move toward family-centered community systems of care over the past five years reflect similar efforts in communities and states across the country.

Putting it Together for Michigan Families (PIT), Michigan's system reform effort, brings together an interagency group of state-level human service agencies committed to working across systems to improve services to families and children. Multi-purpose collaborative bodies (MPCBs) operating in all counties of the state, parallel the state-level collaboration and are responsible for making decisions regarding the use of funds and resources available for this purpose.

Increasingly, a number of MPCBs are playing a critical role in implementing innovative family centered practice and directing resources to services that are family-centered and focus on promotion and prevention.

The principles that guide Michigan's system reform efforts reflect their basis in a family support approach to service delivery. They work to ensure that services to families at all levels are: locally-driven; collaborative; tailored to specific needs, culture, community and neighborhoods; and derived from partnerships with existing community and neighborhood collaborations. Under systems reform, state departments must reassess the traditional way of providing services, changing to support locally driven service systems and working to eliminate barriers to change.

"MPCBs serve as the vehicle for system reform in communities. They are the 'keeper of the values,' leading the way for collaboration, parent participation, and a seamless system of care."

— Parent Member, MPCB

What You Can Do...

As a parent:

- Learn how you can support and enhance your children at each stage of their development.
- Find out what family support services are available in your community.
- Get involved with your child's school and education.
- Inform community leaders and decision-makers about the importance of community supports to strengthen families before problems occur.
- Become a parent representative on your county's multipurpose collaborative body.

As a community member:

- Volunteer in your local family support program.
- Educate legislators and the business community on the importance of investing in community systems that focus on promoting healthy families and preventing poor outcomes for children.

As a human services administrator:

- Support the development of state- and community-level family supportive systems of care.
- Provide opportunities for staff training and supervision in family-centered practice.

As a legislator:

- Visit a family support program.
- Learn about family-centered services in your community.
- Support state and national investments in community-based, collaborative, family-centered programs.

National Organizations

Family Support America (FSA)

Formerly Family Resource Coalition of America, FSA promotes family support as the national strategy for strengthening and empowering families and communities so they can foster the optimal development of children, youth and adult family members. FSA provides technical assistance, training and education, conferences and publications.

20 N. Wacker Drive Suite 1100
Chicago, IL 60606
312-338-0900
www.familysupportamerica.org

Prevent Child Abuse America

Prevent Child Abuse America advocates for policies at the national, state and local levels that protect children and strengthen families. Programs include Healthy Families America, a national initiative to help parents of newborns get their children off to a healthy start, and the National Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research that enhances the link between research and practice.

200 S. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60604-2404
(312) 663-3520
www.preventchildabuse.org

Children's Defense Fund (CDF)

The Children's Defense Fund provides a strong and effective voice for all children in America who cannot vote, lobby or speak for themselves, with particular attention to the needs of poor and minority children and those with disabilities. CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventive investment before problems occur.

25 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-628-8787
www.childrensdefense.org

Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth, and Family Policies

As part of the Columbia University Institute for Child and Family Policy, the Clearinghouse provides comparative information and linkages regarding policies, programs, benefits and services available in advanced industrialized countries to address child, youth and family needs.

Columbia University
622 West 113th Street
McVicker, Mail Code 4600
New York, NY 10025
212-854-5448
www.childpolicyintl.org

Parents As Teachers National Center

Parents as Teachers National Center provides technical assistance and support to a network of more than 2,600 local programs in the United States and other countries. Focusing on the early years, prenatal through age 5, PAT-trained and -certified parent educators provide parents with parenting support and information on their developing child.

10176 Corporate Square Drive
St. Louis, MO 63132
(314) 432-4330
www.patnc.org

Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families

Zero to Three is a national organization whose aim is to strengthen and support families, practitioners and centers to promote the healthy development of babies and toddlers. Zero to Three develops resources for practitioners and parents.

2000 M Street NW Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
202-638-1144
www.zerotothree.org

Michigan Organizations

Children's Charter of the Courts of MI

The Children's Charter addresses a variety of child and family concerns through education, professional and technical training, assisting communities in developing services and programs, and public policy advocacy. It works to establish a full continuum of effective services for children and families in the areas of family support, family preservation, family reunification, permanency planning, and adoption and post-adoption services.

Zero to Five Advocacy Network (ZFAN)

ZFAN is a collaborative network of Michigan home visitor prevention programs supported by the Children's Charter. ZFAN meets monthly and has three primary goals: advocating at state and local levels for the development and funding of home visitor prevention programs; supporting information-sharing regarding best practices for serving families; and collaborating on conferences, training, and program evaluation.

324 N. Pine St. #1
Lansing, MI 48913
517-482-7533
www.childcrt.org

Michigan's Children

Michigan's Children is a statewide, multi-issue, independent advocacy group which works with policy-makers, communities, other organizations and the public to improve the quality of life for children and their families. It maintains an extensive database of information about child and family well-being in Michigan's counties, cities and townships, follows state and national research, and provides information, at no charge, through publications, presentations and individual requests.

428 West Lenawee
Lansing, MI 48933
517-485-3500 or
800-330-8674 (in Michigan)
www.michiganschildren.org

Putting it Together with Michigan's Families (PIT) Crew

Family-Centered Services Pilot Project

The (PIT) Crew serves as a state-level inter-agency forum to advocate and promote the development of collaborative, community-driven, family-friendly policies and programs. The Family-Centered Services Pilot Project provides support and technical assistance to selected Michigan communities to increase family-centered practice in these communities.

P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909-7964
517-241-0062
www.mdch.state.mi.us/pit

Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (MI-AIMH)

An affiliate of the World Association for Infant Mental Health, MI-AIMH focuses on promoting and supporting nurturing relationships for all infants, and emphasizes the role of early intervention in supporting infants and families.

Kellogg Center Room 4
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824-1022
(517) 432-3793
www.msu.edu/user/maimh

Institute for Children, Youth and Families (ICYF) at Michigan State University

ICYF is a multidisciplinary research institute that conducts and disseminates research on children, youth and families in diverse communities and promotes university-community collaboration. Program areas include: *The Youngest, Child Well Being, Youth Development, Parent and Family Development, Diversity, and Community Capacity Building.*

Suite 27 Kellogg Center
East Lansing, MI 48824
(517) 353-6617
www.icyf.msu.edu

The Michigan Children's Trust Fund

The Children's Trust Fund (CTF), an autonomous agency within the Michigan Family Independence Agency, promotes the health, safety and welfare of all children and families in Michigan by supporting and funding effective collaborative programs and services that prevent child abuse and neglect. CTF funds local councils that serve as the outreach component for the prevention of child abuse and neglect. These local councils identify needs and facilitate collaborative prevention programs in their communities. CTF also funds community-based direct service programs throughout the state.

P.O. Box 30037
Lansing, MI 48909
517-373-4320
www.mfia.state.mi.us/cfsadmin/ctf

Michigan Department of Education Early Childhood and Parenting Programs

Early Childhood and Parenting Programs staff provide assistance for the planning, development and delivery of programs that meet the developmental needs of all children 0-8 years of age. They administer the *All Children Achieve Program* - Parent Involvement and Education Grants (ASAP-PIE) that provide funds to intermediate and local school districts for collaborative efforts to develop parent involvement and education programs for all families of children from birth to age five.

P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909
517-373-8483
www.state.mi.us/mde/staa/earlychild

Resources for Parents

- **Learning and Growing Together: Understanding and Supporting Your Child's Development**
Zero To Three National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families (2001). Zero to Three's first parenting book. Chapters include: Tuning In To Your Child, Ready Baby's Signals, Thoughts to Grow On.
For more information: www.zerotothree.org
- **I Am Your Child Campaign**
I Am Your Child is a national public awareness campaign launched in 1997 to make early childhood development a top priority for the nation.
I Am Your Child: The First Years Last Forever. Through a video, booklets, and CD-ROM, helps parents understand the importance of the first three years of life; provides tips on how families and caregivers can promote young children's healthy development; and addresses questions about child development from prenatal period through the first three years of life. Other videos include Ready to Learn and Your Healthy Baby.
The I Am Your Child website includes a list of internet resources for parents: www.iamyourchild.org or (310) 285-2385
- **Zero To Three National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families**
Web site includes a range of information for parents including Tip of the Week, Developmental Milestones, and Brainwonders.
www.zerotothree.org/parent
- **The Parent's Journal, National Public Radio**
A weekly hour-long program with an emphasis on child development. It uses an interview format, featuring child development experts and authors of new or important books.

READY Kits

(Read, Educate and Develop Youth)

READY Kits are part of Michigan's READY (*Read, Educate and Develop Youth*) program, begun in 1998 to strengthen parent involvement in the early childhood years so that children develop the language and pre-reading skills needed to enter school ready to read and succeed. READY Kits contain age appropriate materials for infants (0-1), toddlers (1-21/2) and preschoolers (2 - 4), including a children's book, parent-child activity cards, an activity magnet and a list of books, as well as and general information and materials.

For a copy of a READY Kit, call the READY toll-free hotline (877) 997-3239, managed by the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children.

For further information please visit: www.state.mi.us/mde/ready

Suggested Reading

- **Best Practice Briefs**
Outreach Partnerships@Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.
- **Family Support Magazine**
Family Support America, Chicago, IL
- **From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development**
Shankoff, J. and Phillips, D., Eds. National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, Washington, DC: National Academy Press (2000)
- **Ghosts from the Nursery: Tracing the Roots of Violence**
Robin Karr-Morse and Meredith S. Wiley, New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, (1997).
- **Guidelines for Family Support Practice**
Chicago, IL: Family Resource Coalition (1996).
- **Heart Start: The Emotional Foundations of School Readiness**
Zero To Three National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, Washington, DC (1992).
- **How Are We Doing? A Program Self-Assessment Toolkit for the Family Support Field**
Nilofer Ahsan and Lina Cramer, Family Support America, Chicago, IL, (1998).
- **Inside the Brain: Revolutionary Discoveries of How the Mind Works**
Ron Kotulak, Kansas City, MO: Andrews and McMeel (1996).
- **Making Room at the Table: Fostering Family Involvement in the Planning and Governance of Formal Support Systems**
Elizabeth Jeppens, Josie Thomas, Anthony Markward, JoAnne Kelly, Gail Koser, and David Diehl, Family Support America, Chicago, IL (1997).
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