



FACT SHEET

# The State of Early Childhood in Michigan

April 10, 2015

Preschool in Michigan received an initial state investment in 1985 when the Michigan Department of Education Appropriation Act funded a pilot preschool program.<sup>1</sup> This funding eventually led to the creation of the Michigan School Readiness Program, or MSRP, now called the Great Start Readiness Program, or GSRP. The program targets four-year-olds from low-income families with specific risk factors, such as a parent or guardian with low educational attainment or environmental risks.<sup>2</sup> Although the GSRP originally only provided half-day programs, it has begun to transition toward school-day programs. Consequently, the program now serves fewer children. However, with more investment, Michigan would be more likely to expand access and quality while maintaining the full-day program. The program currently serves 21 percent of the age-eligible population in public schools and private child care centers.<sup>3</sup>

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Michigan children would benefit from more funding in order to increase access and quality

One of the leading research intuitions on state preschool programs, the National Institute for Early Education Research, or NIEER, has established 10 benchmarks of quality. Michigan meets seven of them. The state has the opportunity to improve quality by ensuring that teachers have at least 15 hours of in-service time, providing meals, and conducting site visits. Michigan would be more likely to increase accessibility and improve quality by increasing the funding of the program.

- In 2013, Michigan ranked 18 out of 41 states in per-student funding.<sup>4</sup>
- Michigan currently spends \$4,452 per student, more than the spending rates in states with programs that meet almost all of the benchmarks, including Oklahoma and Georgia. It is slightly above the national average of \$4,026.<sup>5</sup>

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## Early childhood education can help support one of Michigan's most vulnerable populations

Many Michigan children live in families feeling severe financial strain. Growing up in such an environment affects young children's ability to thrive, putting them behind their wealthier peers on a number of developmental, educational, and social measures. The stress that often comes with living in poverty can also adversely affect brain development in children's early years. High-quality early education has been proven to alleviate these risk factors and help close the school-readiness gap.<sup>6</sup>

- 50 percent of Michigan children under age 6 live in low-income families.<sup>7</sup>
- 17 percent of Michigan children live in areas of concentrated poverty, putting them at a greater risk of starting kindergarten behind.<sup>8</sup>

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## Child care is out of reach for many Michigan families

The cost of child care in Michigan is slightly less than public college tuition, but it is still out of reach for most families. In Michigan, where 66 percent of children under age 6 have all available parents in the workforce, child care is not a luxury—it is a necessity.<sup>9</sup>

- For a family with children in Michigan, the median income is \$58,600 per year.<sup>10</sup>
- The average annual cost of a child care center in Michigan is \$9,724 for an infant and \$7,956 for a 4-year-old.<sup>11</sup>

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## Endnotes

1 Clio Area School, "Great Start Readiness Program," available at <http://www.clioschools.org/education/components/scrapbook/default.php?sectiondetailid=620&> (last accessed March 2015).

2 Michigan Department of Education, "Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)" (2013), available at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Risk\\_Factor\\_Guidance\\_Table\\_2013\\_432427\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Risk_Factor_Guidance_Table_2013_432427_7.pdf).

3 W. Steven Barnett and others, "The State of Preschool 2013: State Preschool Yearbook" (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, 2013), available at <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/yearbook2013.pdf>.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Jack P. Shonkoff and others, "The Lifelong Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress," *Pediatrics* 129 (1) (2012): e232–e246, available at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/1/e232.short>.

7 National Center for Children in Poverty, "Michigan: Demographics of Young, Low-Income Children," available at [http://www.nccp.org/profiles/MI\\_profile\\_8.html](http://www.nccp.org/profiles/MI_profile_8.html) (last accessed March 2015).

8 Kids Count Data Center, "Children Living in Areas of Concentrated Poverty" (Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013), available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/6795-children-living-in-areas-of-concentrated-poverty#detailed/2/2-52/false/1376,1201,1074,880,11/any/13891,13892>.

9 Kids Count Data Center, "Children Under Age 6 with All Parents in the Labor Force" (Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013), available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/5057-children-under-age-6-with-all-available-parents-in-the-labor-force#detailed/2/2-52/false/36,868,867,133,38/any/11472,11473>.

10 Kids Count Data Center, "Median Family Income Among Households with Children" (Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013), available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/65-median-family-income-among-households-with-children#detailed/2/2-52/false/36,868,867,133,38/any/365>.

11 Child Care Aware of America, "Parents and the High Cost of Child Care" (2013), available at [http://usa.childcareaware.org/sites/default/files/cost\\_of\\_care\\_2013\\_103113\\_0.pdf](http://usa.childcareaware.org/sites/default/files/cost_of_care_2013_103113_0.pdf).

12 Authors' calculations based on Child Care Aware of America, "Parents and the High Cost of Child Care."

# 66%

of children under age 6 have all available parents in the workforce

For a typical Michigan family with an infant and a 4-year-old, the average cost of child care at a center amounts to

# 1/3

of annual income<sup>12</sup>