

LIVINGSTON COUNTY GREAT START LIVINGSTON FACT SHEET Early Childhood Needs in Livingston County

December 2008

“The future of any society depends on its ability to foster the health and well-being of the next generation. When we fail to provide children with what they need to build a strong foundation for healthy and productive lives, we put our future prosperity and security at risk.”ⁱ

Are the needs of Livingston County’s estimated 12,009 children under age 5 being met?ⁱⁱ

Economic Security

- Approximately **803 or 7%** of Livingston County young children live below the federal poverty level.ⁱⁱⁱ
- In 2006, out of 30 children in homeless families **40%** were age birth to five.^{iv}
- Gleaners Community Food Bank provided **107,000** meals during the month of October, 2008; compared to **58,000** meals served over the same period one year ago.
- **12.4%** of children enrolled in Livingston County public schools (K-12) during the 2006-2007 school year qualified for free or reduced priced lunch (**up from 6.9% in 2000-2001**). This program serves children in families with incomes up to 185% of the federal poverty level.^v
- Out of 5,040 children who are owed child support **2,122 (42%)** receive less than 70% of owed support and **543 (11%)** receive no support.⁶
- Livingston County families spend an average of **21.2% of their income on child care costs**, which is significantly higher than the statewide average of 15.6%.⁷

Child Health and Safety

- As of September 2008, among Medicaid eligible 3 year old children in Livingston County, **59%** have blood testing for Lead.⁸
- For the period 2004 – 2006 the substantiation rate per 100 children age birth to five for abuse and neglect investigations was **five per 100**. The rate varies by zip code from 1 per 100 young children to 8 per 100.⁹

Child Care and Early Childhood Education

- 2008 total capacity of licensed or registered child care spaces for children is **4,832** for the estimated 12,009 children under 5 in Livingston County.¹⁰ Potential need exceeds capacity by 148%.
- Of Livingston County’s, **209** licensed or registered family/ group child care homes and child care centers in 2008 **only 6 are accredited** for meeting quality child care standards, **and only 3 of the 6 accredited child care programs offer infant/toddler care.**¹¹

- Annually Livingston County receives State funding to train approximately **150** child care and preschool staff - to improve skills and quality care for young children. Actual need is to provide low-cost, state mandated quality training to over **1,200** individuals annually.¹²
- Early On has identified **187 children** between birth and age three at risk for developmental delay.¹³
- Head Start provides comprehensive child development services to **183**, 3 to 5 year olds identified at or below the poverty level in the County.¹⁴
- Great Start Readiness Program funding provides comprehensive services to **185, four year olds identified as at-risk for school failure.**¹⁵
- As of December 1, 2008 there were **401 children** ages 0 to 5 identified and receiving special education services.¹⁶

Why are these Facts about Young Children's Lives Important?

- From birth to age 3, early experiences shape the architecture of the brain – including cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional capacities – at a phenomenal rate. During this critical period, children are most at-risk for poverty and most vulnerable to its effects, which can permanently affect their ability to learn.¹⁷
- Brain research tells us that toxic stress, like homelessness, or child abuse can permanently damage brain architecture.¹⁸
- Maternal depression is a significant risk factor affecting the well-being and school readiness of young children.¹⁹
- A study on the long-term effects of high-quality early care and education on low-income 3 and 4 year-olds documented that adults at age 40 who participated in a preschool program in their early years were more productive resulting in a return to society of over \$16 for every tax dollar invested in the early care and education program.²⁰
- Families and communities play critical roles in helping children get ready for school. Children from economically secure families and those that have healthy relationships are more likely to succeed in school.²¹

What Services Exist in Livingston County to Assist with Raising Young Children?

Livingston County has a variety of quality preschool programs, including preschool for low-income families. Home visiting programs such as Healthy Families Livingston, the Parent Infant Program, and the Community Nursing program are available to a limited number of families. Parenting materials are available through local libraries, organizations, and on line at www.ecic4kids.org and www.migreatparents.org.

What can the Community do to Help?

- Spend time reading to children and encouraging parents to talk, sing, and read to their children.
- Educate yourself about the important first few years of life and how to support young children's growth and development www.migreatparents.org and www.ecic4kids.org.
- Join a workgroup of Great Start Livingston to assist in planning to meet our children's needs.
- Support quality child care initiatives, ongoing training for child care providers, and seek licensed, quality childcare for your own children.
- Donate funds or resources to local programs that support the needs of young children and families.
- Support funding for key health care programs such as MICHild (the federal SCHIP program) and Medicaid.

For more information or to get involved, contact Jean Garratt at 517-548-2100 or GarratJ@livingstonesa.org

Early Childhood Fact Sheet References

- ⁱ National Scientific Council on The Developing Child, *The Science of Early Childhood Development: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do*, 2007.
- ⁱⁱ Michigan Department of Community Health, Office of the State Registrar and Center for Health Statistics, 2002-2005.
- ^{iii, 5, 6,} Michigan League for Human Services, Kids Count Data Book, 2007
- ^{iv} 2006 Livingston County Homeless Point in Time Count.
- ^{7, 10, 11} Livingston County Community Coordinated Child Care (4C) Council Child Care Provider Database, November 20, 2008.
Population estimate by MDCH, Office of the State Registrar and Center for Health Statistics, 2002-2005.
- ⁸ Michigan Department of Community Health, Data Analysis and Quality Assurance Office. Medicaid Blood Lead Testing, September 2008.
- ⁹ Michigan Department of Human Services, Special run by George Noonan for Eastern Michigan University. US Census Bureau 2000 Census. Rates per 100 calculated by EMU.
- ¹² Livingston County Community Coordinated Child Care (4C) Council Child Care Provider Database, Michigan Act No. 116 of the Public Acts of 1973, as amended, Act No. 218 of the Public Acts of 1979. Michigan 4C Association, November 20, 2008
- ^{13, 14, 15, 16} Livingston Educational Service Agency, Internal Data Management and Child Accounting Systems, MCIS and Zangle, November 2008.
- ¹⁷ *Starting Off Right: Promoting Child Development from Birth in State Early Care and Education Initiatives*, 2006.
- ¹⁸ *The Science of Early Childhood Development*, 2007.
- ¹⁹ Reducing Maternal Depression and It's Impact on Young Children: Toward a Responsive Early Childhood Policy Framework, January 2008.
- ²⁰ High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Press Release, 2004.
- ²¹ *Executive Summary: National School Readiness Indicators Initiative, A 17 State Partnership*, February 2005.