



Child Care Expansion

Below are the latest monthly updates regarding the three main priority areas for child care expansion.

Priority 1: Expand Access of Quality Early Learning Environments

- We continue to work through the licensing process of inspections, policies, procedures, zoning, staffing plans, furniture/materials, etc. at this time for our expanding classrooms at the Sault Early Learning Center (Soo Twp); EUPISD Early Learning Center (Kincheloe), and Les Cheneaux Early Learning Center (Cedarville Elementary).

Priority 2: Early Educator Workforce Development

A competent and qualified workforce is crucial to providing safe, nurturing, and quality environments. There is a major shortage of qualified early educators. The following efforts are underway to build and retain workforce:

- The Early Childhood CTE Instructor position with Sault Area Schools has not been filled. To ensure programming starts this fall, we are looking at partnership opportunities to contract one of our staff members to operate the CTE program. We will bring an updated job description and additional information to the board in July.
- In partnership with Sault Area Schools, we have secured 2 VISTA workers for the summer to assist at our child care sites.
- A Site Supervisor for Sault Early Learning Center has been hired by Chippewa-Luce-Mackinac Community Action Agency (CLMCAA). As a collaborative partnership between Head Start, GSRP, and our ISD operated tuition-based classrooms we will pay a prorated portion of the Site Supervisor salary and benefits.

Priority 3: Partnerships and Economic Development

- On May 18, 2023 Amy Kronemeyer, Superintendent of Sault Area Public Schools and myself were the keynote speakers for the Sault Area Chamber of Commerce Economic Luncheon. We had the honor and privilege of addressing the economic impact of childcare with business and community leaders. We had an overwhelming response to our presentation and have several follow-up meetings and activities underway. These efforts include growing business investment to make quality affordable for families, supporting businesses in establishing childcare benefit programs for employees, and building strategies to support a qualified and competent workforce.

Increasing Child Needs in Early Childhood Programs

The rise in young children (ages birth to three) being diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in our region, state, and nation continues to rise. You can see the impact in our region in the chart below. The numbers reflect the number of children (ages birth to three) found eligible for Michigan Mandatory Special Education (MMSE) under ASD. The increase in the past program year is staggering. The increase is not unique to our service region. Other service areas across the state are experiencing significant increases, as well. Why this drastic increase? No one truly knows at this point but many express concerns related to the pandemic and how that impacted our youngest learners. Our Early On program has been reviewing our evaluation process

for MMSE, participating in state-level groups and professional learning opportunities to address this issue systematically at the local, state, and national levels.

Program Year	Number of Children (ages birth to 3) Found Eligible with ASD
2017-2018	3
2018-2019	0
2019-2020	6
2020-2021	5
2021-2022	3
2022-2023	19

We are seeing similar trends in preschool needs. There has been an uptick in the number of children who are categorically eligible with an IEP in our GSRP programs across the region and state. Some GSRP classrooms had up to 50% of enrolled children with an IEP this school year.

Program Year	Percentage of Children in GSRP with an IEP
2020-2021	10.8%
2021-2022	9.2%
2022-2023	16.8%

Staffing Update

Filled

- None this month.

Needs

- Lead teacher at Superior Start to replace Justice Kjolhede who promoted to Site Supervisor.
- Lead and Assistant Instructors for Infant/Toddler Care are posted for Sault Ste. Marie, Kincheloe, and Cedarville.
- Child Care Aide positions are posted for all sites.

Board Agenda Items

Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) Agreement with Delta-Schoolcraft ISD

The expansion of GSRP funding has supported new classrooms opening throughout the state over the past couple of years. When we originally began supporting Early Childhood Specialist services in Delta-Schoolcraft ISD there were 4 classrooms. They now have 10 classrooms with more expansion underway. The Early Childhood Contact (ECC) for Delta-Schoolcraft tragically lost her life in an automobile accident in January. Between the expansion and staff death, DSISD has hired staff internally to support their GSRP needs. A contract to provide training, mentoring, and coaching supports in the upcoming year for the new Early Childhood Specialist is on the agenda for your approval this month. This is a one-year/short-term contract.

Approval to Purchase Furniture and Materials for new Infant/Toddler Classrooms

The expansion of new classrooms requires furniture and materials. Due to timelines, availability of products, and shipping time, we are requesting approval to purchase now to have classrooms ready to open in September.

Approval of Contract with Dr. Jackie Joseph Buzek

We are seeking approval for a training contract with Dr. Jackie Joseph Buzek to provide 2 days of training in August with a follow-up training in the spring (date to be determined) and a monthly leadership community-of-practice related to inclusion and multi-tier systems of support.

Family Engagement



SUMMER
Family Engagement
& FUN!

★ THURSDAYS ★ 10 AM TO 12 PM ★

June 15 - **Rudyard Township Park**
June 22 - **Cedarville - Snows Heritage Park**
June 29 - **St. Ignace - Red, White, & Blue Park**
July 13 - **Tahquamenon School Playground**
July 20 - **Pickford Township Park**
July 27 - **Sault - Project Playground**
August 3 - **Kinross Rec. Center Playground**

*Rain locations will be park pavilions except
Tahquamenon which would be at the library.

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Scavenger Hunt
- Story Time
- Movement & Dancing
- Free Play
- Snack

All dates will have the same activities, but families are welcome to attend any or all locations

ALL AGES WELCOME!

- FOCUSED AGES 2-6
- BRING YOUR OWN BLANKET TO SIT ON!

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