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- [WKAR Feature Archive](#)
- [reWorking Michigan](#)
- [Election 2010](#)
- [In Michigan](#)
- [The Economy Project](#)
- [Nation](#)
- [World](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Science/Tech](#)
- [Arts & Culture](#)
- [Sports](#)

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In Michigan

"Sandbox Party" to advance interests of MI's young children

Mark Bashore, WKAR (2010-07-01)
LANSING, MI (WKAR) -

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Advocates of early childhood programs gathered in Lansing Thursday morning to announce the formation of the "Sandbox Party" to advance the interests of Michigan children up to the age of five.

Organizers say they have taken a cue from the tea party movement and other groups.

Judy Samuelson is CEO of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation. She stresses the economic benefits of investing in programs for young children:

"We know that the state of Michigan, uh, is--this year--going to have \$1.2 billion more than it would have had, had it not invested just in pre-K over the past 25 years," she says. "And we can say the same things about health and other aspects of the work of early childhood."

Organizers say they are encouraged by an expected bump in early childhood funding in the state's revised school aid budget, but they also point to possible cuts to child care and other public health programs for children.

The Sandbox Party has invited the state's gubernatorial candidates to attend a "convention" late next month at MSU's Breslin Center.

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