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Local Saginaw advocates for children's funding to travel to Sandbox Party Convention in East Lansing

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Lindsay Knake | The Saginaw News

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EAST LANSING — Several Saginaw moms and their kids are heading to Lansing this week to create awareness of the need for government funding to support programs for young children.

The first Sandbox Party Convention is from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday at Michigan State University's Breslin Center.

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The funding makes a world of difference throughout young children's school careers, said Heather Appold, 33, of Hemlock, who is one local mother attending.

"As a parent, why wouldn't you want the focus on early childhood?" she said.

Jill Armentrout, Great Start Collaborative parent liaison, she said is looking forward to hearing legislators speak about the issue.

The event is a way for groups to get fired up about supporting early childhood development, defined as birth to 5 years of age, and to promote information about why the services are important, Armentrout said.

"It's getting early childhood into the whole realm of political agenda and making it part of the conversation," she said.

Between 20 and 25 Saginaw-area parents and children will attend the convention, which also