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CONTACTS:

Matt Friedman or Kristin Priest
For Detroit Public Television
(248) 626-0006

Andrew Heller
For the Early Childhood Investment Corp.
(517) 371-9000

Laura L. Rodwan
For United Way for Southeastern MI.
(313) 477-2750

NEW PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTS “MICHIGAN’S BEST INVESTMENT”

Michigan’s Early Childhood Investment Corporation and Detroit Public Television
Announce First-Of-Its Kind Collaboration to Reach Caregivers

LANSING AND WIXOM, Mich. (April 5, 2011) – Michigan’s Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC), Detroit Public Television (DPTV) and United Way for Southeastern Michigan today announce a first-of-its-kind partnership designed to use the power of media to help prepare more Michigan pre-school age children for success in the classroom. The partners formed this collaboration to address Michigan’s extraordinary number of children in poverty who do not attend licensed or regulated child-care programs. These children spend their days with family, friends and neighbors, and a survey of Michigan kindergarten teachers reveals that 35 percent of Michigan children enter kindergarten unprepared. This partnership is designed to connect and inspire Michigan parents and caregivers, focusing on early childhood engagement that will be a foundation for Michigan’s success in the future.

The partnership advances with the debut of a one-hour television special, “Michigan’s Best Investment,” which airs on DPTV at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 12, 2011. Every public television station in Michigan also will broadcast the special (check local listings). The program reveals how Michigan residents can elevate the state by strengthening early childhood development in their communities.

To accomplish the ECIC’s objectives beyond the special, DPTV has produced and has been airing a series of vignettes, designed to reach caregivers through the power of public television with informative, clear and expert advice on how to engage pre-school age children inside the home. This content also is being used by partner organizations to serve local parents and caregivers. The vignettes are being broadcast on an ongoing basis on DPTV, are hosted on dptv.org and are being broadcast on public television stations statewide.

Additionally, these vignettes will be available at no additional cost to all Comcast Digital Cable customers via Comcast ON DEMAND by selecting the “Get Local” category from the On Demand menu and then “Early Learning Tips.” Clear Channel Radio’s Detroit cluster has agreed to partner in this project, making the vignettes available to its audience. Users of Facebook and Twitter also will see regular, timely links to the vignettes online by following the feeds of the ECIC and the United Way for Southeastern Michigan.

“People aren’t accustomed to viewing early childhood development as economic development but there’s a strong, research-based link,” said Judy Y. Samelson, chief executive officer of the ECIC, a public/private initiative working to improve early childhood factors in Michigan. “By raising school-ready children we’re increasing the odds that they’ll grow up to be part of the high-skill workforce that Michigan needs to reboot its economy. This partnership can help with that.”

“Nearly half a million viewers watch Detroit Public Television kids shows every week, making us Michigan’s largest classroom,” said Rich Homberg, president and general manager of DPTV. “This partnership allows us to deliver on our most important mission – helping important local and regional organizations reach their objectives by using the power of public media to help solve Michigan’s most important issues.” To view each of the vignettes, visit <http://www.youtube.com/user/unitedwaysemich>, <http://greatstartforkids.org/> or <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheECIC>.

The **Early Childhood Investment Corporation** is a public/private initiative working to restructure Michigan’s investment in children from birth to five through state and local community efforts. For more information about ECIC and its efforts, go to <http://greatstartforkids.org>

WTVS Detroit Public Television (DPTV) is the non-commercial, viewer-supported PBS-member station watched by more than 1.5 million people per week in Detroit and Southeast Michigan and also another 1.2 million people throughout Canada. Our vision is to educate, entertain and inspire – in partnership with the community. DPTV also manages WRCJ 90.9 FM, Detroit’s classical and jazz radio station, in collaboration with the license-holder, the Detroit Public Schools. The radio station is located in the Detroit School of Arts. DPTV began broadcasting in 1955 and is licensed to the Detroit Educational Television Foundation, which is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees from the local, business, civic, and cultural communities. The station is operated by a professional staff, headed by President and General Manager Rich Homberg.

United Way for Southeastern Michigan mobilizes the caring power of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties to improve lives in measurable and lasting ways throughout the region. The organization is led by a diverse group of volunteers from business, labor, government, human services, education and the community. United Way provides opportunities to invest in the metropolitan Detroit community and is a leader in convening partners to impact local residents each year by providing individuals with the three building blocks for a good life: Education, Income and Basic Needs. Additional information is available at www.uwsem.org.