



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Andy Heller
(810) 399-4997/aheller@ecic4kids.org

\$3 Million to Boost School Readiness & Future Workforce *Challenge funds to be announced at Business Summit*

LANSING – The Early Childhood Investment Corp. (ECIC) today announced that it will award \$3 million in grants to Great Start Collaboratives across Michigan to establish local matching funds.

Judy Y. Samelson, chief executive officer of ECIC, said Great Start Collaboratives receiving grants will annually “challenge” local businesses and foundations to contribute to the fund, thereby creating an ongoing pool from which to boost local early childhood efforts.

In addition to establishing the funds, collaboratives will spend their original “seed” grants from ECIC on child care scholarships for local low-income parents, creating an immediate benefit to families.

In Michigan, the average cost of full-time care for an infant or young child in a family child care home or center is between \$6,400 and \$8,900, according to a study by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

“Paying for child care scholarships in the first year makes the most sense because outside of the family home child care is the most significant early learning environment for children,” said Samelson.

In future years, local communities will help decide how contributions to the matching fund by businesses and foundations are used.

The challenge grants, announced Tuesday at the Great Start Business Summit in East Lansing, will be funded through a combination of public and private sources.

Through a proposal process, collaboratives will be able to request up to \$100,000 to establish a matching fund. Grants will be awarded to collaboratives that meet specific funding criteria and have a demonstrated history of strong performance, according to ECIC.

Great Start Collaboratives - which serve as the local infrastructure for the Great Start early childhood system in Michigan - have leveraged roughly \$10 million in private contributions to early childhood since 2007. There are 54 collaboratives in the Great Start system, covering every county in Michigan.

Local collaboratives will identify the most appropriate local fiduciary – a community foundation, Chamber of Commerce or Women’s Caring Program - to receive and administer the funds.

The child care scholarships, which will awarded to parents beginning in late summer 2011, are intended to increase access to high quality child care by the state’s most vulnerable children.

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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, visit <http://greatstartforkids.org/>