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## **Nearly \$3 Million in Early Childhood Grants Will Boost School Readiness & Future Workforce**

*Grants awarded to 30 Great Start Collaboratives across Michigan*

LANSING – The Early Childhood Investment Corp. (ECIC) today announced that 30 Great Start Collaboratives across the state have been awarded a total of \$2.8 million in grants to stimulate private investment in local early childhood efforts and to pay for child care/preschool scholarships for vulnerable 3-year-olds.

The grants range from \$3,000 to the Ionia County Great Start Collaborative on up to \$400,000 to the Kent Great Start Collaborative.

Collaboratives receiving grants include: Bay-Arenac-Saginaw (\$150,000); Branch (20,000); Crawford, Iosco, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Roscommon Counties (\$100,000); Calhoun (\$175,000); Charlevoix-Emmet (\$25,000) Cheboygan-Otsego-Presque Isle ESD (\$50,000); Clinton (\$10,000); Copper Country (\$100,000); Eaton (\$60,000); Genesee (\$100,000); Hillsdale (\$50,000); Huron (\$20,000); Ingham (\$125,000); Ionia (\$3,000); Jackson (\$150,000); Kalamazoo (\$150,000); Kent (\$400,000); Lenawee (\$70,000); Macomb (\$100,000); Marquette-Alger (\$125,000); Midland (\$120,000); Monroe (\$10,000); Muskegon (\$100,000); Ottawa (\$30,000); Shiawassee (\$99,927); St. Joseph (\$30,000); Traverse Bay/Manistee (\$250,000); Tuscola (\$25,000); Wayne (\$150,000); Wexford-Missaukee (\$56,630).

The collaboratives receiving grants will establish local matching funds and 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, collaboratives will spend their original “seed” grants from ECIC on child care/preschool scholarships for the most at-risk 3-year-olds from low-income families, creating an immediate benefit.

In Michigan, the cost of quality child care is often prohibitive for families. The average cost of full-time care for an infant or young child in a family child care home or center in Michigan is

between \$6,400 and \$8,900, according to a study by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

Early childhood advocates say quality child care is among the supports that children need to boost their chances of being ready to thrive once they reach kindergarten. Research has shown that early childhood supports increase the chances of life success, cut government costs and stimulate local, state and national economies.

“Kids from low-income homes need quality care the same as anyone else, so we’re pleased to help the collaboratives offer these scholarships,” said Karen Roback, director of the Great Start Child Care Quality Program for the ECIC, which oversees the collaboratives. “But in these tough times it’s also crucial to stimulate continued private investment in early childhood at the local level, and the matching fund aspect of these awards will help the collaboratives do that.”

In the last four years, Michigan’s Great Start Collaboratives and ECIC have leveraged over \$23 million in funds from public and private sources. There are 54 collaboratives in the Great Start system, covering every county in Michigan.

The grants, which are funded through a combination of public and private sources, were awarded following a proposal process to collaboratives that met specific funding criteria and had a demonstrated history of strong performance, according to ECIC. In future years, local communities will help decide how contributions to their matching funds are used.

Local collaboratives will identify the most appropriate local fiduciary – a community foundation, Chamber of Commerce or Intermediate School District - to receive and administer the funds.

The child care scholarships will be awarded to licensed child care homes and centers beginning in late summer 2011. For a full list of local awards and local contacts, please see the attached documents.

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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/>*