



For Immediate Release
Jan. 17, 2010

For More Information Contact
Media Director Andy Heller
517-371-9000

Survey Respondents Want to Hear Support for Early Childhood Issues in State of the State

A two-day Michigan Sandbox Party survey last week netted more than 1,300 responses from Michigan residents hoping Gov. Rick Snyder will make early childhood issues a key component of his State of the State speech Wednesday, recognizing that investing in early childhood programs including child care, early education and learning, physical and psychological health, parenting and family support, are the best way to get the outcomes he has said are vital to Michigan's future.

The majority of the 1,380 respondents also said they hoped the Governor would not ask the Legislature to cut early childhood programs. Rather, they would like to see lawmakers go further and "not to just say how important early childhood is, but to back it up with real dollars."

Even when the state's financial challenges were underscored, respondents still want increased funding along with no further cuts, consolidated state-funded early childhood programs for easier access to services and more local efficiency, and identification of a dedicated funding source to support existing early childhood programs.

"Early childhood issues are critical to an economic recovery in Michigan," said Judy Samelson, Chief Executive Officer of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation, a public/private initiative focused on restructuring state investment in early childhood leading to school readiness. "Those who responded to this survey recognize this and want to know that Michigan's new government recognizes it too."

The survey asked what people most wanted to hear Gov. Snyder say about early childhood during his State of the State address. Most said they'd like to hear the



Governor articulate support for actions that help ensure our youngest children have an opportunity for quality health care and education at the beginning of life.

“Early childhood is an investment in our future,” said one. “We need to invest in early childhood now to build a robust economy. We cannot afford to wait.”

That sentiment was echoed by many others who also pointed out that the cost of disinvestment is far too high.

“The cost without early childhood investments in education and supports far exceeds the current and underfunded supports available,” said one parent. “Without Early On (an early intervention program for infants and toddlers with delays or disabilities) my child would not be walking or eating without significant medical intervention she no longer needs.”

"I want to hear him say that despite the pressures on the budget we need to think like any family and take some off the top for "investment in the future," said one respondent.

A resident of St. Joseph County Michigan said "I want to hear Governor Snyder say he will support programs and services that render the greatest return on investments. Regardless of what we are used to providing in our communities or to whom we will utilize best practices in service delivery. We will utilize evidence-based programs and services."

More than 87 percent of those who responded said early childhood issues were a consideration when casting votes in the last election, 59 percent are interested in state policy and budget updates and 57 percent are interested in following the voting records of lawmakers on early childhood issues.

The survey and an entire list of responses are available at <http://www.michigansandboxparty.com>.

The Michigan Sandbox Party is a non-partisan movement created to educate and remind leaders across the state – voters, candidates and lawmakers alike – that infants and young children are the most important resource we have. They are not only our future, but critical to revitalizing Michigan's economy today.