

Kent County Great Start Collaborative (GSC)
An Annual Agreement of Membership

The purpose of this agreement is to outline the relationship and expectations between the Great Start Collaborative of Kent County and its members.

The Great Start Collaboratives serve as the local infrastructure for governance, planning, investment, advocacy and innovation for Michigan's Great Start system. Great Start Collaboratives assess the needs of young children and families in their communities; identifies community assets for addressing those needs and plans for systemic change. They implement efforts to address the gaps, strengthens what works and knock down barriers that may range from ineffective structures or policies to lack of resources and programs that impede young children from arriving at kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed in school and in life.

Their work is informed by the partners at the collaborative table such as parents of young children, members of the faith and business communities, local philanthropic organizations, educators and leaders of the local public agencies providing the majority of early childhood services in the community.

In Kent County, this work is further supported by high level community leadership via the First Steps Commission as they work to change public will and policies and advocate for the necessary resources that allow the work to be realized.

It is crucial to the success of the GSC to have an active and engaged membership. The GSC will meet a minimum of six times per year as a full body. It is expected that if administrative or managerial staff are appointed to serve in the absence of the executive, they will report to the executive on the business of the GSC on a regular and ongoing basis. The membership provides overall direction in the governance and operations of the collaborative, appoints work groups to undertake specific functions of the collaborative, and assures accountability for commitments made within the collaborative and the community.

As a participant of the GSC I am committed to the following:

- A. Commit to attend 80% of GSC meetings.
- B. Provide direction, resources and support for committees and workgroups designated by the collaborative.
- C. Review progress, and ensure coordination regarding the strategic plan implementation, while working with community at large on early childhood vision.
- D. Contribute toward fulfilling the mission and purposes of the GSC with open and honest communication.
- E. Recommend, develop, and secure resources needed to fill gaps in existing services per the community plan.

- F. Complete collaborative work toward the development of a seamless system of care for children, birth to kindergarten entry, and families.
- G. Support early childhood grant applications of the GSC and others as their requests align with the community vision. When my agencies grants are discussed and align with the vision, I also expect support.
- H. Promote and support early childhood initiatives in policy decisions by sharing the community vision for early childhood with my agency and work towards its goals while planning.
- I. Build positive community support for early childhood initiatives and services.

As a participant of the GSC I will disclose:

- A. If the work of a GSC Work Group that I am involved with would result in a personal or agency gain, I will notify the Chair of the GSC. I will also remove myself from Work Group leadership or voting on the work that impacts myself or my agency.
- B. Any other unique circumstances that may give the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Member Responsibilities: GSC members commit to support and advocate for the vision, goals, and objectives of the GSC board. Members are expected to attend 80% of all meetings. If the individual is unable to attend, then a designee shall attend in his/her place.

I am fully aware of the expectations stated above. As a member of the GSC, I have made a personal and professional commitment to support and advocate for early childhood initiatives in Kent County. If a designee has been identified for times when I will be absent, I include their information below as well.

GSC Member Print Name

Title

Designee Print Name (as applicable)

Title

Organization/Agency

Kent County Great Start Collaborative Member Participant Signature

Designee (as applicable) Signature

Date _____

Jan 2012