

Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage

Annual Update for January 1 – December 31, 2022



CONTENTS

Overview of 2022	p. 2
Goals and Outcomes	p. 4
Overview by Service Type	p. 5
Ready by Five Evaluation	p. 13
Ready by Five Media Coverage	Attachment A
Ready by Five Demographic Reach	Attachment B



Supported by the Kent County Ready by Five Millage.

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OVERVIEW OF 2022

"I am glad to have gone to Baby Scholars. I am a first-time mom and did not know that my baby could learn so much and that it is easy to teach my baby and I didn't have to be a teacher. I learned that I can sit down with my child on her level and just be present to help her learn and give her my time and energy. My coach was the best!" Z.G. (Baby Scholars Participant – Corewell Health)

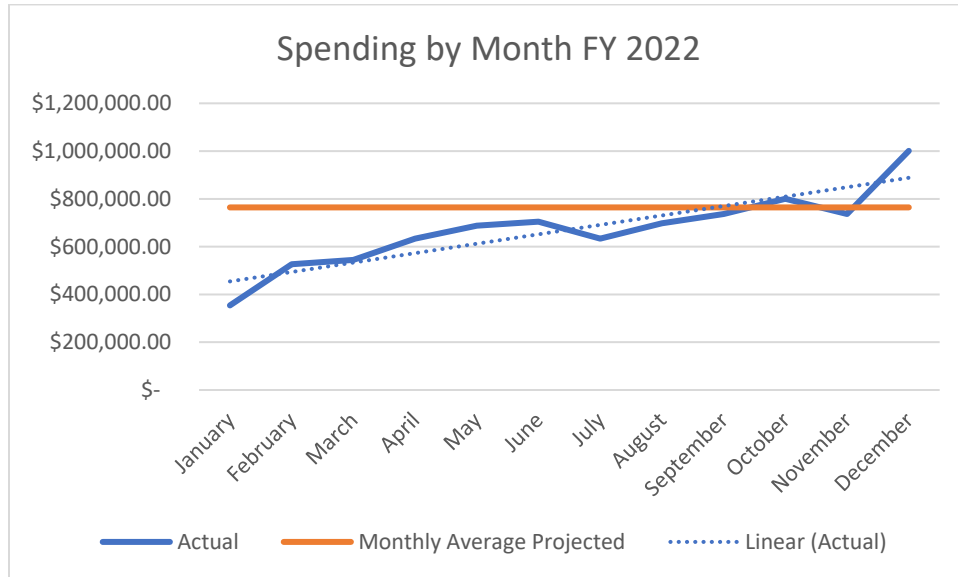
In 2022, more than **12,400 young children and expectant parents** in Kent County have benefitted from direct services funded by the Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage. Parents are receiving one-on-one, ongoing support to better understand what their baby needs and how to provide it. They're monitoring their child's development, looking for signs of potential delays or disabilities. Families are joining play and learn groups, where children build the skills needed for school success and adults learn how to nurture those skills at home. Expectant parents are engaging in prenatal programs that lead to healthier births. Lead and other environmental hazards are being removed from homes. Families are connecting to resources that help with housing, food, and other essential needs. On top of that, tens of thousands of families are getting critical information about child development and books to read with their young children. Ready by Five supports **21 community-based organizations** that provide **33 different early childhood programs**.

The families served in 2022 represent every zip code in Kent County, with the largest concentration in the most densely populated communities: the core cities of Grand Rapids, Grandville, Kentwood, Walker, and Wyoming. Services are available to all expectant parents and families with children five years of age and younger, with an intentional focus on serving those with the greatest needs and in communities that are most under-resourced and/or geographically isolated. More information about who was served in Kent County can be found in Attachment 2 of this report.

The year 2022 proved to be a "return to more typical" year for the Ready by Five partner network. Throughout the year, programs funded by the Ready by Five Millage re-established partnerships within healthcare and early education, two key sectors that provide necessary connections and referrals to early childhood program and resources in Kent County.

Aftershocks from the pandemic continued in the first half of 2022. Consistent with trends across many sectors of the workforce, hiring and turnover of program staff continued to be a significant challenge for Ready by Five service providers, especially for the first six months of the year. As programs operated with fewer employees, the overall cost of staffing programs was less than projected. Although less significant than in 2021, this was the primary reason programs continued to underspend in early 2022.

There was a significant upward trajectory in spending as the year progressed, and open positions were filled among programs. By the end of 2022, \$8,057,909 (88%) of the \$9,172,646 Ready by Five Millage funds allocated for the year had been spent. Programs collected \$4,895 for cost sharing and donation funds.



In 2022, First Steps Kent raised \$85,419 in additional philanthropic funding to underwrite the costs of administering the Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage. The administrative work costs more than the allotted 5.7 percent of annual millage revenue that First Steps Kent receives. The additional costs are used for necessary staff time to support the development and implementation of all millage components including data collection, procurement, allocation, evaluation, technical assistance, and contract oversight.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

EARLY OUTCOMES

Early childhood development and how the experiences and relationships they have as babies impact their later success. Brains are built from the bottom up, with basic circuits and skills providing the foundation for more advanced circuits and skills. Scientists know that a strong foundation increases the likelihood of positive outcomes, while a weak foundation does the opposite. Prolonged and persistent stress in early childhood weakens the developing brain, which can lead to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health.

The most significant benefits of early childhood investments are realized as children get older, first with improved school performance and reduced need for remediation, later as they are more likely to graduate from high school and contribute to the local economy.

HIGHER RETURNS THAN PRESCHOOL ALONE Every dollar invested in high-quality birth-to-five early childhood education for disadvantaged children delivers a 13% annual return on investment, significantly higher than the 7-10% return delivered by preschool alone. (www.heckmanequation.com)

GOALS

Ready by Five programs are available to all children five-years-old and younger in Kent County, with an intentional focus on communities that have been historically under-resourced.

The goals of the Ready by Five Early Childhood millage are to:

- Support parents so they can ensure their children are healthy and ready for kindergarten,
- Increase access to high-quality early learning experiences that build a strong social, emotional, and intellectual foundation, and
- Support early identification of delays and disabilities so children get the treatment they need.

First Steps Kent is improving the system of early childhood services funded by the Ready by Five Millage. Programs are better aligned and coordinated, which reduces unnecessary duplication and increases efficiency. There is now a uniform method for collecting and analyzing data, which provides a clear picture of community-level progress toward goals. We are building the skills and capacity of the system of services, with learning opportunities – such as training in trauma-informed care – for all Ready by Five providers.

OVERVIEW BY SERVICE TYPE

OUTREACH AND NAVIGATION services are available to all families with young children in Kent County and can range from a series of phone calls to more intensive support that helps families engage with the programs and resources that will best serve them. Through the Outreach and Navigation network, partners have successfully navigated 3,900 children and families by connecting them to at least one resource. The most frequent requests during 2022 included assistance with home visiting services, housing support, and food access.

Summary of Outreach and Navigation Outcomes

Prior to Ready by Five, there was no coordinated system to reach families and connect them to services that support the healthy development and early learning of their young children. Ready by Five funding allowed for the creation of an Outreach and Navigation network that serves as the “front door” to the early childhood system of services and community resources.

Outreach and Navigation is crucial to connecting families to resources within the five domains of the Social Determinants of Health: healthcare access, economic stability, education access, safety, and social support. These “Social Determinants” can be a primary source of family stress; research shows stress early in life can have adverse consequences on educational outcomes as well as long-term health and wellbeing.

In 2022, the eight Ready by Five Outreach and Navigation programs were successful in reaching families more than 49,000 times and completing 10,566 screenings. Programs were successful in providing 3,900¹ referrals in which a family had a confirmed outcome. In many cases, without Outreach and Navigation, the family likely would not have engaged with those community services. Outreach and Navigation services spent \$2,698,635 last year.

The top five types of support families most often requested in 2022 included:

- Home visiting services: 1,013 referrals
- Housing support: 558 referrals
- Food access support: 483 referrals
- Dental services: 460 referrals
- Baby supplies: 416 referrals

The Outreach and Navigation network is structured to include two types of providers: those with a broad outreach focus in the community and those with a specialty in engaging a specific group or community that has historically been underserved.

¹ Beginning in 2022, First Steps Kent updated the definition of how individual served is counted. In 2021 we reported that 4,195 individuals were reached with no additional specifications. In 2022 we request service counts based on the number of individuals who engaged with Navigation and had a known outcome of one or more referrals. This number may not include informational contacts with families where no referral was made.

Broadly focused providers concentrate on establishing conditions, communications, and touchpoints for information and awareness of services. These providers included:

- Outreach and Navigation Connections (Family Futures)
- Continuation and Expansion of Early Childhood Outreach and Navigation at Clinical Delivery Sites (Health Net of West Michigan)
- Help Me Grow Kent (Kent ISD)

Niche services focus on engaging and supporting families with specialized support related to their needs. Examples include families who are experiencing homelessness, parents of young children who are engaged in the child foster care system, parents and families from the Latinx community, as well as families who are refugees. Providers supporting niche services included:

- Outreach and Navigation Services (Hispanic Center of Western Michigan)
- Hands Connected Early Childhood Navigation Services (Bethany Christian Services)
- Outreach and Navigation Services for Families Experiencing Homelessness (Family Promise)
- Fostering Connections: Connecting Foster Children and Families to Early Childhood Service (Health Net of West Michigan)
- Parent Engagement: Engaging, Involving and Equipping Parents Involved with the Child Welfare System (West Michigan Partnership for Children)

Outreach and Navigation services were most focused on families with babies and toddlers, with 72 percent of those served having a 3-year-old or younger. Of parents who responded to satisfaction surveys for all Outreach and Navigation programs, 85 percent were satisfied with their services. Of the families whose income was known, 60 percent had household income below \$80,000 per year. The most-reached zip codes were 49507 (10% of those served) and 49508 (8%).

HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ensure expectant parents and those with young children have access to comprehensive, coordinated care that maximizes the child's physical and emotional health. Healthy Development programming follows evidence-based or evidence-informed practices that demonstrate success in supporting positive health behaviors and that drive better health outcomes for children from birth through five years, as well as expectant parents. Programming in this area focuses on improving outcomes related to healthy births, child health and well-being, as well as ensuring children are developmentally on track. In 2022, Healthy Development programs spent \$1,605,951.

Summary of Healthy Development Outcomes

In 2022, Healthy Development programming continued to scale services to reach more families throughout Kent County. Programs in this category are varied and include behavioral health services, organizations that work to eliminate home safety and health hazards, and much more.

A few highlighted outcomes from Healthy Development programs include:

Lead Identification and Remediation – Lead in the home is a silent and prevalent danger in Kent County, as four out of five homes in the city of Grand Rapids and nearly three out of five countywide were built before 1978, the year lead was banned from paint. Exposure to even low amounts of lead can cause irreversible neurological, developmental, and health issues. Early identification of lead in the home followed by remediation are critical to eliminating exposure. In 2022, Ready by Five-funded programs completed 378 risk screenings, comprehensive assessments, and follow-up screening. Of homes screened for environmental risks, lead was the most identified risk (115 screenings). The screening also identified other environmental risks to be addressed, including those that contribute to asthma, injuries, and pests. Many of these additional risks were mitigated through educating and problem solving with the family.

Millage funds also support additional sanitarian staff who have training and expertise with using specialized equipment that identifies the specific source of lead in a home. This team completed 73 comprehensive Lead Inspection and Risk Assessments (LIRAs) and were successful in fully remediating 12 homes this year, leveraging federal, state, and private funds. This program continues to support remediation of additional homes in Kent County.

Children Screened and Connected to Early Intervention – Developmental screening is a standardized tool that offers a comparison of a young child’s development to milestones that are typical at specific ages. It does not diagnose a developmental delay or concern but rather offers an early indication that additional investigation may be warranted. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates one in six children have one or more developmental or behavioral disabilities; identifying them early leads to better outcomes for children and less costly treatment or remediation.

Approximately 6,800 screenings were completed in 2022, with the goal of having families do the screenings at the recommended intervals of every six or 12 months, depending on the age of the child. Results are reviewed to assess a child’s developmental progress and discuss milestones with families. In 2022, 428 children had screenings that identified a possible developmental concern. When there is an identified concern, programs work with families to provide information and referrals that ensure a child receives the level of support that is needed.

Fetal Infant Mortality Review Network - The Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) Network lead is focused on improving birth outcomes, health outcomes, and reducing disparities. The FIMR Network provides understanding of the factors that contribute to infant mortality, including consideration of disparate outcomes among babies of different races and ethnicities. This knowledge will further inform Kent County’s early childhood network on what key programs and initiatives are necessary to support the healthy development of all babies. The report also identifies numerous factors that contribute to infant mortality, many of which programs in the

Ready by Five partner network address. The [2022 Kent County FIMR report](#) highlighted key disparities that jeopardize healthy pregnancies and births:²

- Prenatal care is necessary to address health concerns and provide education and resources to families. Asian mothers were most likely (50%) to have a late entry into prenatal care, Black mothers (25.5%) had higher percentages of missed prenatal appointments, and Black mothers (23.4 %) and other race mothers (27.3%) were most likely to inappropriately use the Emergency Department.
- Having inadequate or unreliable transportation can prevent a mother from attending prenatal appointments, pediatric appointments, and can limit employment opportunities. 8.9 percent of families found that transportation was inadequate or unreliable, with Black mothers (14.9%), Hispanic mothers (16%) and Asian mothers (16.7%) the most likely to experience these barriers.
- Maternal anxiety and depression are risk factors for preterm delivery and low birth weight infants. Mental health factors that may be present before, during or after pregnancy. 40 percent of mothers had a history of mental illness while 24.4 percent had a mental illness during pregnancy. Black mothers were more likely to have multiple stressors (42.6%) and social chaos (19.1%) while Asian mothers (50%) had the highest percentages of concerns about money.

Seven Healthy Development programs provided 2,421³ services in all areas of Kent County. Programs include:

- Keep Early Education Positive (KEEP) (Arbor Circle)
- Infant Toddler Developmental Services (ITDS) (Arbor Circle)
- Healthy Development Connections Enhancement Program (Family Futures)
- Health Development (Easterseals MORC)
- NIDO Home Screening Project (Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan)
- Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) Network (Kent County Health Department)
- Home Lead Assessment Program Expansion (Kent County Health Department)

These programs served an “older” demographic of children, with 60 percent being 3- to 5- year-olds. Of parents who responded to satisfaction surveys for all Healthy Development programs, 97 percent were satisfied with services. Healthy Development programs reached many families with lower income. Of those known, four out of five had a household income of \$80,000 or less. Programs geographic reach was 38 percent of families living in zip codes 49503, 49504, and 49507.

² Full FIMR report for Kent County is available here: <https://www.accesskent.com/Health/Families/pdf/FIMR-Report-2022.pdf>

³ Beginning in 2022, First Steps Kent updated definitions with how services are accounted for. We also updated the specifications for service categories which resulted in some program counts were moved to other categories FY 2022. In 2021 we reported that 2,486 individuals were reached by Healthy Development. In 2022 First Steps Kent began to define counts using the unit of service that was defined in each service provide agreement.

PARENTING EDUCATION AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS ensure parents have the knowledge and skills to support their children’s health, development, and learning. Services provide in-home and/or community-based support and education. The parenting education programs spent \$2,324,682 last year.

Summary of Parent Education and Support Outcomes

Home Visiting – Home visiting services provide access to the information, resources, and social support parents need to feel more confident and empowered to make informed choices for their families. More than 10,000 home visits funded by Ready by Five were completed in 2022 alone, with nearly 1,700 children and expectant parents participating.

Rigorous evaluation of high-quality home visiting programs has shown positive impact on reducing child abuse and neglect, increasing healthy births, and improving the school readiness of young children. Long-term benefits can include lower special education and grade retention costs, higher high school graduation rates, reduced reliance on public assistance, increased workforce participation, and lower criminal justice expenses. Research shows the return-on-investment ranges from \$1.75 to \$5.70 for every dollar spent.¹

Recognizing not all families want or need a service as intimate or intensive as home visiting, Ready by Five also funds a variety of programs using models identified as “promising practices.” Research shows those services lead to increased parent engagement and exposure to books and language, earlier identification of delays and disabilities, and improved social and emotional health.

Child Safety Initiatives - Newly funded in 2022 are services that support child safety, specifically addressing safe sleep and automobile safety. The 2022 Fetal Infant Mortality Review report found that 12.8 percent of infant deaths in Kent County were due to an unsafe sleep environment -- the most preventable cause of death for babies. Prevention includes educating all parents and caregivers on how to place an infant safely to sleep, while also examining indirect factors such as a lack of partner or family support, lack of supportive services and resources, or mental illness that may increase the likelihood of placing an infant in an unsafe sleeping environment.

The Michigan State Police’s data for 2020⁴ reported there are close to 6,000 children through the age of three that are involved in an automobile crash, 35 percent of which resulted in a child injury. More than 15,000 children ages four to ten involved in crashes, and those leading to child injury, was similar at 37 percent. The Centers for Disease Control reports⁵ that it is more common for Black children, Hispanic children, and American Indian children to travel

⁴ Source: https://www.michigan.gov/msp/-/media/Project/Websites/msp/cjic/pdfs9/2020_year_end_traffic_crash_statistics.pdf

⁵ Source: https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/child_passenger_safety/cps-factsheet.html

unrestrained or improperly restrained when compared with all children. Studies also indicate that children in rural areas are more likely to be incorrectly restrained than children in urban areas. A multistate study using data from car seat check events found that child restraint misuse was more common in rural locations (91%) than in urban locations (83%).

The Ready by Five millage has made it possible for organizations to address preventable deaths and injury of young children by providing education to parents about the importance of safe sleep following guidelines approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics as well as providing a portable crib for families that meet income requirements. Programs are also trained by the National Passenger Safety Board to teach parents to correctly install car seats. Families who meet income requirements are provided a car seat by the agency.

Translation and Interpretation - Any program funded by the Ready by Five millage can request translation or interpretation services to serve families who speak a variety of languages. Programs utilized translation services 97 times for purposes such as translating program or marketing materials. Interpretation services were used more than 1,900 times within all types of services, the most common languages requested were Spanish, Kinyarwanda, and Swahili.

Service Type	Number of fulfilled requests – Translation	Number of fulfilled requests – Interpretation
Early Learning	0	29
Healthy Development	34	353
Outreach & Navigation	29	1,060
Parent Education & Support	34	464
Total	97	1,906

Fifteen Parent Education and Support programs provided 13,100⁶ services in all areas of Kent County.

- Hands Connected Child Safety Services (Bethany Christian Services)
- Child Safety Passenger Program (Cherry Health)
- Child Safety Initiative (Family Futures)
- Maternal Infant Health Program Enhancement (Cherry Health)
- Early Childhood Attachment Services – (D.A. Blodgett - St. John’s)
- The Incredible Years Home Coaching (Easterseals MORC)
- Kent County Healthy Families (Family Futures)
- Bright Beginnings (Kent ISD)
- Hands-On Post-Partum Support (Momsbloom)

⁶ Beginning in 2022, First Steps Kent updated definitions with how services are accounted for. In 2021 we reported that 875 individuals were reached by Parent Education and Support programs. In 2022 First Steps Kent began to define counts using the unit of service that was defined in each service provide agreement.

- Baby Scholars (Corewell Health)
- Strong Beginnings (Corewell Health)
- Little Scholars (Vibrant Futures)
- Translation & Interpretation (Bethany Christian Services, Hispanic Center of West Michigan, and Liaison Linguistics)

Parenting Education and Support programs reached many families facing economic disadvantages, with 99 percent of those for whom income was reported in households earning less than \$80,000 per year. These programs served every zip code in Kent County, with the most encounters in 49507 and 49508. Four out of five children who participated were two years old or younger. Of parents who responded to satisfaction surveys for all Parent Education and Support programs, 99 percent were satisfied with services.

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS nurture a child’s cognitive, social, and emotional development. Examples of services include play and learn groups, support for caregivers, and linkages to early intervention services.

Early childhood research substantiates the rapid development of emergent literacy and language skills that occur in a child’s first three years of life. In combination with key skills in the socio-emotional, physical, and cognitive domains, these skills are the foundation for lifelong learning beginning in kindergarten and continuing into subsequent school years. The amount spent in 2022 on Early Learning programs was \$1,181,288.

Summary of Early Learning Outcomes

Ready by Five funded programs included under the Early Learning service category increase early learning opportunities by offering children high-quality early learning experiences that nurture their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Programs will ensure caretakers have the knowledge to best support early learning as well as provide linkages to developmental screenings for all children in Kent County.

Early Literacy and Learning - Funds the Reach Out and Read (ROR) program in about 20 pediatric practices throughout Kent County. ROR equips providers with training to help them educate parents on the importance of reading aloud and to help model strategies for parents to promote language development and early literacy. In addition to this support, each family receives a book during their well-child visit, ensuring they have access to age-appropriate, high-quality books to engage their child with words and intellectual exploration from an early age. In 2022, Reach out and Read distributed 24,000 books to 14,158 children.

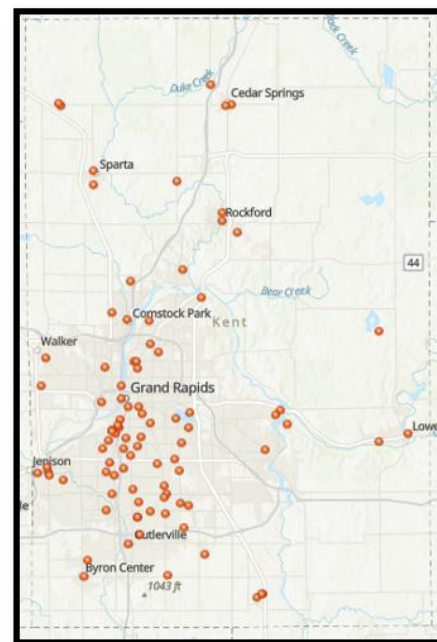
Six Early Learning programs provided just over 25,000⁷ services in all areas of Kent County.

- Therapeutic Play and Learn Groups (Comprehensive Therapy Center)
- Play to Learn (Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative)
- Play and Learn (Grand Rapids Community College)
- Bright Beginnings Playgroups (Kent ISD)
- Reach Out and Read West Michigan (Reach Out and Read)
- Little Learners (Vibrant Futures)

Play and Learn Communities - Programs are designed for the purpose of reaching and connecting with all types of caretakers to strengthen their understanding of child development and increase opportunities for all children to receive age-appropriate activities that enrich holistic development of social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Programs follow the evidence-informed Kaleidoscope Play and Learn model with each session offering information to support understanding of how they can help their child’s early learning development.

In 2022, There were 974 Play and Learn groups held at 94 locations across Kent County.

More than half of families providing income information had a household income of \$80,000 or less. The ages of the children were distributed evenly amongst ages zero to 5. Of the known zip codes, 25 percent of participants were from either 49503, 49504, or 49508 zip codes. Of parents who responded to satisfaction surveys for all Early Learning programs, 90 percent were satisfied with services.



Play and Learn Locations

⁷ Beginning in 2022, First Steps Kent updated definitions with how services are accounted for. We also updated the specifications for service categories which resulted in the Reach Out and Read program counts included in this category FY 2022. In 2021 we reported that 461 children were reached by Early Learning programs. In 2022 First Steps Kent began to define counts using the unit of service that was defined in each service provide agreement.

READY BY FIVE MILLAGE EVALUATION

In addition to expanding services and increasing participation, another significant focus of 2022 was implementing the process to evaluate the impact of Ready by Five. External evaluation firm Basis Policy Research began an independent and neutral assessment for how millage investments are impacting contributors to kindergarten success including:

- Parents' access to resources and information.
- Programming that supports the health of expectant and new parents increases mother's health & well-being.
- Children developmentally on track.
- Children living in a healthy and safe home environment.

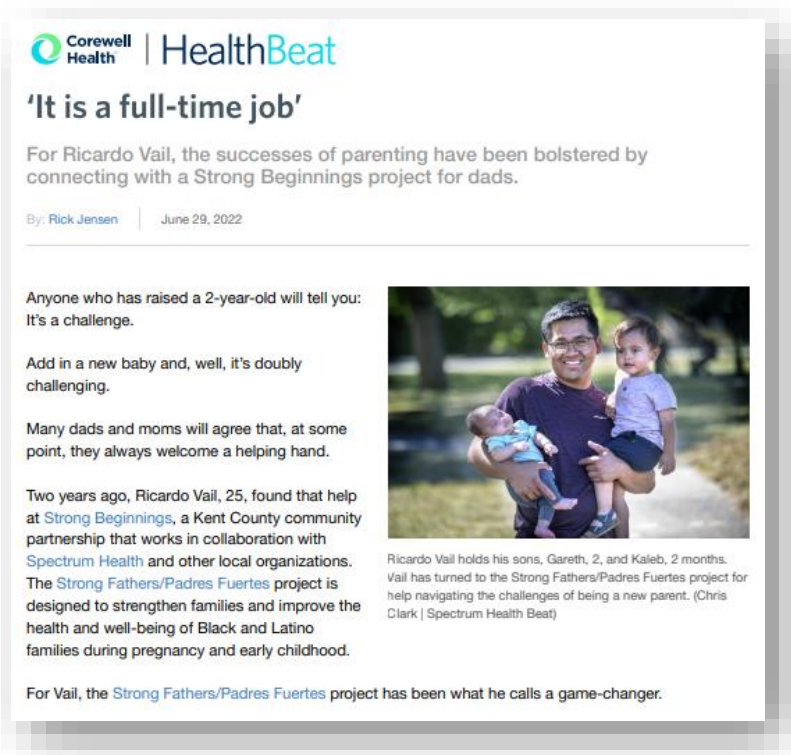
The evaluation uses a mixed-methodology approach to provide First Steps Kent with evidence of impact across the lifecycle of the millage. The Ready by Five evaluation will address the following questions:

- To what extent did Ready by Five service providers implement services with fidelity?
- What types of Ready by Five services are related to improved health and academic outcomes?
- What is the impact of Ready by Five services on participants' health and academic outcomes?
- How do the benefits of Ready by Five services compare to the financial investment of the Ready by Five millage?

Additionally, the evaluation will assess the effectiveness of the funding administrator agency, First Steps Kent. This includes examination of whether there is successful reach of Ready by Five funded services in gaining new participants, ensuring programs are operating at near or full capacity, and reaching county-wide geography and diverse racial/ethnic and economic groups. The final year one report will be released in May 2023. In 2022, First Steps Kent spent \$247,353 on the third-party evaluation.

ATTACHMENT 1: MEDIA FEATURING THE READY BY FIVE MILLAGE

- FOX 17, January 6, 2022 - [GRCC receives \\$1M grant to support 'Play and Learn' groups](#)
- PRWeb, February 16, 2022 - [West Michigan Partnership for Children celebrates "Reunification Month" and new Parent Engagement Program](#)
- School News Network, February 2, 2022 - [More funding means more playgroups, home visits, help for county families of young children](#)
- The WGVM Morning Show, May 26, 2022 - [School Talk](#)
- Corewell Health HealthBeat, June 29, 2022 - ['It is a full-time job'](#)
- FOX 17, September 21, 2022 - [Ready By Five Program prepares "COVID Generation" kids for school](#)
- The Rapidian, September 29, 2022 - [Family Futures provides Pack n' Plays and car seats to families in need](#)
- Early Learning Nation, December 21, 2022 - [The Next Steps for First Steps Kent](#)



Corewell Health | HealthBeat

'It is a full-time job'

For Ricardo Vail, the successes of parenting have been bolstered by connecting with a Strong Beginnings project for dads.

By: Rick Jensen | June 29, 2022


Anyone who has raised a 2-year-old will tell you: It's a challenge.

Add in a new baby and, well, it's doubly challenging.

Many dads and moms will agree that, at some point, they always welcome a helping hand.

Two years ago, Ricardo Vail, 25, found that help at **Strong Beginnings**, a Kent County community partnership that works in collaboration with **Spectrum Health** and other local organizations. The **Strong Fathers/Padres Fuertes** project is designed to strengthen families and improve the health and well-being of Black and Latino families during pregnancy and early childhood.

For Vail, the **Strong Fathers/Padres Fuertes** project has been what he calls a game-changer.



Ricardo Vail holds his sons, Gareth, 2, and Kaleb, 2 months. Vail has turned to the Strong Fathers/Padres Fuertes project for help navigating the challenges of being a new parent. (Chris Clark | Spectrum Health Beat)



Kent ID

More funding means more playgroups, home visits, help for county families of young children

By Morgan Jarema February 2, 2022



The number of Bright Beginnings playgroups in Kent County will grow by nearly double thanks to a new round of Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage funding

ATTACHMENT 2: READY BY FIVE MILLAGE DEMOGRAPHIC REACH

The tables below show overall reach by geographic areas, family income, race, and the ethnicity of individuals served in 2022. Numbers represent a count of unique individuals who consented to sharing demographic information.

TYPE OF INDIVIDUAL SERVED

Type of Individual	Total Jan – Dec 2022
Child*	10,672
Expecting Parent	1,443
Not Specified	518
Total	12,416

**The Reach Out and Read program reported serving 14,150 children in Kent County. Due to limitations with the deidentified healthcare data submitted by this specific program, First Steps Kent is unable to determine a total estimate of unique children served that includes Reach Out and Read. The number of children is likely higher than the 10,672 children represented in the chart above.*

DEMOGRAPHICS - RACE AND ETHNICITY

Race **	Jan – Dec 2022
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%
Asian	4%
Black / African American	24%
Multi-Racial	10%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%
White	62%

Ethnicity **	Jan – Dec 2022
Hispanic or Latinx	22%
Not Hispanic or Latinx	78%

AGE OF CHILD

Age**	Jan – Dec 2022
0	43%
1	21%
2	15%
3	14%
4	13%
5	6%

GEOGRAPHY

Community Type **	Jan – Dec 2022	Communities Including:
Urban Communities	70%	Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming
Eastern Kent County	4%	Forest Hills, Alto, Freeport, and Lowell
Northern Kent County	12%	Belmont, Greenville, Cedar Springs, Kent City, Rockford, Sand Lake, and Sparta
Southern Kent County	4%	Byron Center and Caledonia
Suburban Communities	10%	Comstock Park, Grandville, Northview, and Walker

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Household Income Range**	Jan – Dec 2022
Less than \$20,000	34%
\$20,000-\$39,999	20%
\$40,000-\$59,999	13%
\$60,000-\$79,999	7%
\$80,000-\$99,999	8%
More than \$100,000	18%

According to the [2022 Kids Count in Kent County Data Profile](#), the average median household income sits at \$65,012. Just over 65 percent of individuals served by Ready by Five programming (who reported income) had a household income less than this average median household income.

** Race, ethnicity, geography, household income, and age of child tables above include the percentages of known participants. Some participants have chosen not to disclose their information.

Note: All demographic information included in this report represents only individuals who consented to sharing personal demographic information.



These programs and services were made possible because of the generosity of Kent County taxpayers and the voter-approved Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage

For more information about the Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage, please visit:
<https://www.firststepskent.org/millage>