Description of Services and Programs Funded by The Ready by Five Millage (FY 2023-2024)

Outreach and Navigation Services: Coordinated Outreach, Screening, and Navigation

Overview

Outreach and Navigation is crucial to connecting families to early childhood information and community resources within the five domains of the Social Determinants of Health: healthcare access, economic stability, education access, safety, and social support. Needs within the 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.

Ready by Five funding has allowed for the creation of an Outreach and Navigation network that serves as the "front door" to help families find available resources and choose those most appropriate for their needs.

Description, Attributes and Results of Services

The goal of this program is to increase cross-agency collaboration between outreach and navigation partners to ensure efforts to reach and engage families are maximized. Outreach aims to increase the usage of early childhood programs by engaging future parents and families with young children not currently engaged in services or who are unaware of program options. Services also support families in connecting with additional needed community resources. As families are engaged, programs work to identify the needs of families through formal screening as well as conversation with the individuals served. As needs are identified,

navigation will address barriers to accessing services, information, and resources to ensure families are successfully connected to referrals and information.

Programs must define four components in their model including: Coordination, Outreach, Screening, and Navigation. Each component has been defined by First Steps Kent in the Ready by Five Outreach and Navigation Program Standards. Programs will be required to meet all specifications as outlined in this document. A summary of each component is included below:

- **Coordination:** Within the Ready by Five network, partners funded as Outreach and Navigation providers are collectively working towards increasing entry points for expectant parents and families with young children to access services, information, and resources. Within the first 60 days of the contract start date, all partners working in this program type must convene to develop a coordinated strategy and a method of ongoing communication to ensure alignment within the shared outreach strategy continues for the term of the contract period. Service Partners will also coordinate with the agency developing the Early Education Technology Link programming.

- **Outreach:** This is the initial contact with potential families/caregivers that seeks to engage families to make them aware that assistance and information is available. This could include general messaging, place-based messaging, or specific connection points with an individual. Each service partner establishes the conditions, communications, and touchpoints for information, awareness, and potential services to empower families and caregivers. Outreach services aim to:
    - Increase connections to early childhood programming and community resources by engaging future parents and families with young children not currently engaged in any services or who are unaware of services.
    - Support families who are engaged in services with connections to additional needed services (i.e., Play and Learn Communities).

- **Screening:** Programs will identify the needs of families through a defined screening approach as well as through conversation with individuals served. All programs must develop a consistent screening approach for determining the needs of all individuals engaged by the program. Each funded program will designate a specific screening tool to ensure needs related to the [Social Determinants of Health](#) are identified by the agency. Programs may opt to include multiple screening tools (i.e., ASQ screening) to further identify and guide families to resources.
    - For families who indicate an interest in home visiting options in Kent County, First Steps Kent strongly encourages programs to utilize the [Kent County Parent Support](#) site. This is especially important if the provider also offers a home visiting program within their agency to ensure families are fully aware of all home visiting program options available.

- **Navigation:** Programs will offer shared relationships through which navigators partner with families/caregivers to prioritize identified needs, explore available resources, and make progress in overcoming barriers. Once needs are identified, navigation will offer connection and address barriers to access services, information, and resources.

Programs will have clear procedures for tracking referral success. Additionally, navigation services will:

- – Provide trusted, accessible, person-centered care with culturally responsive, trained, and supported staff who use best practices in the field.
- – Develop procedures to ensure families requiring interpretation services are effectively served.

All programs must employ professionals with expertise that is applicable to the model. This may include professionals who are registered nurses, nurse practitioners, educators, social workers, community health workers, or other similarly trained professionals. All positions funded by Ready by Five must complete a background check upon hire, maintain current professional licensing as required by the model, complete training as required by the model, and complete all training required by First Steps Kent.

Results: All programs will increase access to information that imparts knowledge to parents and other adult caregivers thus impacting one or more of the following result indicators:

- Increased referral completion and follow-through.
- Increase in the number of children and expectant parents engaged in navigation support.
- Increase in the number of families receiving referrals to additional ongoing support.

Outreach and Navigation Technology Solutions: Early Education Technology Link

Overview

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 social-emotional, physical, and cognitive domains, these skills are the foundation for lifelong learning beginning in kindergarten and continuing into subsequent school years. Access to quality child care is essential to supporting a child's early development.

First Steps Kent convened partners and parents to learn more about the challenges with accessing child care. Two significant themes emerged: 1) child care costs too much and 2) parents cannot find child care easily.

These challenges have been acknowledged and efforts are underway to solve the issue of child care shortages through start up grants and small business startup support that have been put in place by the State of Michigan. Additionally, at this time the issue of affordability is being addressed by a local Vibrant Futures pilot funded through philanthropic dollars to ensure families are accessing available child care benefits (e.g., child care subsidy, Tri Share) that will ease the cost burden of child care on families.

This program supports the development of an enhanced infrastructure that provides up to date information about the current child care openings available in Kent County.

Description, Attributes and Results of Services

One agency currently in Kent County will be selected to lead implementation and oversight of a technology-based solution and program supports that will foster better connections between families and child care providers.

With this service area, efforts at the local level must align with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) efforts and long-term planning happening at the state level. As technology is developed, regular communication with the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) and Michigan's Office of Great Start is crucial.

The agency selected will attain all the following program components:

An online Platform Technology solution: This will organize and provide access to information related to current child care openings in Kent County in the following ways:

- The online user interface is accessible and compatible with computer/PC, smartphone, and tablet.
- Features will include a parent-facing search feature that allows navigators and families to find care options that fit their needs, and a provider-facing system that allows for an efficient way to update information about child care slots that are open.
- This platform will align with the current Great Start to Quality (GSQ) online system, adding a provider and parent facing experience that complements the current GSQ website.
- This technology would give navigators, parents, and providers across the county information about currently available child care slots.
- The platform will offer a welcoming interface that is simple to navigate. Users will experience a site that offers clear instructions and prompts to guide users through the steps to sign into the system, update information, and access all features of the system.
- Provides simple, yet secure, log in and sign-up experience for parents, navigators and child care providers accessing the site. Ideally, the feature would include single sign on technology as well as a password-reset option.
- Development of a solution that aligns with the GSQ online system currently administered by the Michigan Department of Education and Early Childhood Investment Corporation.

Community Support: The Agency selected will provide outreach, support, and technical assistance to: a) families who are looking for care, b) providers with available openings, and c) community partners providing navigation services to families.

The platform and program staff will serve three distinct groups in the following ways:

Group:	Child Care Providers	Families	Community Partners
Platform and Technical Features:	Allow information about openings to be updated in an efficient way. Support new child care providers who are filling new available child care openings.	Communicates information in a simple format for parents to understand key information about the child care options available that best meet their needs and preferences (e.g., location, hours, quality rating). Locate care that meets specific needs of families, including care for a child with special needs.	Communicates information in a simple format for parents to understand key information about the child care options available that best meet their needs and preferences (e.g., location, hours, quality rating). Locate care that meets specific needs of families, including care for a child with special needs.
Group:	Child Care Providers	Families	Community Partners
Staff Support Features:	Marketing to increase awareness of the platform and increase child care providers engagement with the platform. Dedicated time to build personalized relationships with Kent County providers to encourage engagement in the platform.	Marketing to increase parent awareness and how to access the platform. Offering options supporting parents with questions about finding child care options ideally offering phone, text and email options for parents to contact program staff. Convening and supporting the parent advisory group.	Marketing to invite community partners to learn about the platform and how community navigators can access the platform. Maintaining a contact list of community partner navigators who support families with platform access. Provide regular communications with updates to partners. Educating community partners and groups about how to access the platform and related support services.

Programming will also ensure the following components are in place:

- Regular hours for parents, child care providers, and partners to contact program staff for assistance.
- Ensure technical components are fully functioning and families, providers, and navigators are supported if they have technical questions or concerns.
- Reporting of the identified gaps with child care services and successes to community partners, the parent advisory group, and First Steps Kent.
- Process to collect feedback from community partners, families, and child care providers on how the platform functions and ideas to improve the platform.

Additionally, the program will establish formal partnerships that will allow the platform and staff the ability to offer connectivity to child care resources and additional child care related support including:

- Availability of information about child care benefit programs available (e.g., CDC subsidy and Tri share). This includes one on one assistance with determining if parents are eligible for benefits and connection to assistance with applying for benefits (this may be supported by partners).
- Connection to navigation programs that can assist with identifying and connecting to resources to address additional needs (e.g., health benefits, housing, WIC).
- An online directory of key supports, and helpful resources related to child care.

All programs must employ professionals with expertise that is applicable to the model. This may include professionals who are registered nurses, nurse practitioners, educators, social workers, community health workers, or other similarly trained professionals. All positions funded by Ready by Five must complete a background check upon hire, maintain current professional licensing as required by the model, complete training as required by the model, and complete all training required by First Steps Kent.

Programs are required to track key demographics and information about services and referrals for individuals served that will be submitted through the monthly data submission process. Specifications of required data fields to be reported will be defined with the service partner as development of the technology solution progresses.

Programming will align with the Ready by Five Outreach and Navigation network which functions as the "front door" for families accessing early childhood services by ensuring all families living in Kent County are connected with the right service at the right time.

Results: The agency will increase access to information for parents and other adult caregivers thus impacting one or more of the following result Indicators:

- Increased referral completion and follow-through.
- Increase in the number of children and expectant parents engaged in navigation support.
- Increase in the number of families receiving referrals to additional ongoing support.

Healthy Development Services

Overview

Health through the early years is an important contributor to later educational success and life-long health. Nationally and in Kent County, data supports the need for services beginning in a child's early years and before kindergarten entry. First Steps Kent is seeking equitable interventions and programming that support all children and address the significant disparities in health, well-being, and developmental concerns among groups.

Healthy Development Services provide programming to expectant parents and children through age five currently residing in Kent County, Michigan. Programming will demonstrate success in supporting positive health behaviors and drive better health and developmental outcomes for children ages birth through five years as well as expectant parents.

Description, Attributes and Results of Services

Models in this area will focus on improving outcomes related to healthy births, child health, and well-being as well as ensuring children through age five are developmentally on track. Programming will build on the family or child's strengths while supporting individualized needs. Programs may work in a specialized way with populations to provide services that are centered around specific cultural and/or group-based needs.

All models must employ professionals with expertise that is applicable to the model. This may include professionals who are registered nurses, nurse practitioners, educators, social workers, community health workers, or other similarly trained professionals. All positions funded by Ready by Five must complete a background check upon hire, maintain current professional licensing as required by the model, complete training as required by the model, and complete all training required by First Steps Kent.

Program Type 1: Healthy Expectant and New Parent Programming

From the time of conception through postpartum, support and information can positively impact the health and well-being of new parents and their baby. First Steps Kent is seeking programs that support improved health outcomes for expectant and new parents. This area includes programs increasing parental support during the pregnancy through, at minimum, the postpartum period (first six weeks following pregnancy).

Requirements of programs funded in this area include:

- This programming complements (not duplicate) the expectant parent's health home.
- Programs will work with parents to establish individualized goals or a plan to support individual behavior change with improving health outcomes that will sustain parental well-being and their baby's health.
- All programs will establish a program-specific protocol to ensure families with an identified need are connected to further assessment, community resources, or programming.

- Each program will establish a continuation plan to ensure early childhood support is established for all families that discharge out of services due to age eligibility or other reasons.

Results: Programs will impact one or more of the following result indicators:

- Decrease in expectant parent smoking during pregnancy.
- Decrease in expectant parents using non-prescribed substances during pregnancy.
- Ensure expectant parents and primary caregivers are screened for well-being.
- Ensure expectant parents receive adequate prenatal care. (Defined by the Kotelchuck Index)
- Increase in healthy births. (Defined as Babies Born at Healthy Weight at 2500 Grams)
- Increase in breastfeeding.
- Increase in the number of families receiving referrals to additional ongoing support (i.e., home visits, early intervention).

Program Type 2: Developmental and Social Emotional Screenings and Referral

Children and their caregivers will have access to comprehensive, coordinated care that maximizes the child's physical and emotional health. Programming ensures children have regular developmental screenings to identify developmental delays, disabilities, and emotional challenges.

This Program Type includes models that ensure access to clinical interventions. Models may offer individualized service, a group-based service, or a combination of both. Program components include one or more of the following:

- Supporting a healthy parent-infant attachment,
- Addressing positive social and emotional development of children,
- Promoting parental well-being through an evidence-informed facilitated group model so families acquire new coping skills to strengthen their overall wellbeing.

Regardless of the model, all programs funded in this Program Type will implement the following components:

- Screening: All funded programs will implement and report on the completion and results of developmental screenings (specifically Brookes' [Ages and Stages](#) ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE developmental screening tools) through the monthly data submission process. Programs may opt to include additional screening or assessment tools to further identify needs and guide families.
- Connection: All programs will establish a referral protocol to ensure all children with an identified concern are referred and connected to further additional assessment or resources to address the concern(s) at hand. Information about referrals will be submitted through the monthly data submission process.

Results: Agencies under this program type will impact one or more of the following result indicators:

- Increase in the number of children screened by programs for developmental concerns.

- Increase in the number of children screened by programs for social emotional concerns.
- Increase in the number of children successfully connected to support when a developmental or social emotional concern is identified.

Program Type 3: Healthy and Safe Home Environment Programming

This area includes programming that ensures families have access to support that specifically addresses environmental home health concerns including, but not limited to, lead-based paint dangers and other home-based environmental concerns that contribute to poor health outcomes for young children living in Kent County.

Services could include but are not limited to:

- Environmental home health screenings to reduce home-based environmental health hazards regarding lead, asthma, accidental injury, etc.,
- Child elevated blood lead level screening,
- Case management for addressing lead issues and home environment hazards,
- Development of activities to carry out outreach efforts to target audiences in specific neighborhoods, groups, or geographic regions about identifying home-based lead and other hazards as well as sharing resources to support with questions and concerns about home-based hazards,
- Develop data-focused strategies to respond to lead-based environmental hazards, or
- Provide informational classes on nutrition health and wellbeing to reduce or prevent issues related to lead exposure.

Note: funds may not be used to cover costs related to home repairs or lead remediation services.

All programs will establish a protocol to ensure all homes with an identified environmental hazard will be connected to further assessment or resources for home lead remediation.

All programs will report on all program features described below (as applicable) though the monthly data submission process:

- Screening/testing for environmental and lead-based home hazards and the outcome.
- Child elevated blood lead level screening/test results.
- Information about referrals will be submitted through the monthly data submission process.

Results: Programs will impact one or more of the following result indicators:

- Increase in the number of children receiving blood screening to test for elevated levels of lead.
- Increase in the number of children's homes screened for environmental hazards and lead by a trained professional.
- Increase the number of families successfully referred to resources and services when one or more environmental concerns in the home have been identified.

Program Type 4: Niche Family Supports

This program type will fund agencies who have experience reaching, supporting, and connecting families who benefit from specialized services and support. This program encourages agencies who have an established position of trust and experience reaching and supporting families who would otherwise not be reached by programming. This may include:

- Families who are refugees or New Americans,
- Families engaged within an intervention-type service such as child welfare services,
- Those experiencing housing insecurity,
- Those otherwise engaged in any program serving at-risk adults with young children, or
- Agencies may identify how families with a very specialized or specific need may be served within their scope of services.

Programs will work with parents to establish individualized goals or plan to encourage individual behavior change that will support parental well-being as well as their child's early development.

Programs will work to promote positive parenting practices and ensure families are supported and empowered with knowledge of how to access the available resources and services that support the healthy development and early learning of their young children.

All programs will establish a program-specific protocol to ensure families with an identified need are connected to further assessment, community resources, or programming. Information about referrals will be submitted through the monthly data submission process.

**Results:** All programs will increase access to information that imparts knowledge and skills to parents and other adult caregivers about their child's development thus impacting one or more of the following result indicators:

- Increased referral completion and follow-through.
- Increase in the number of children and expectant parents engaged in support.
- Increase in the number of families receiving referrals to additional ongoing support.

Healthy Development Infant Health: Fetal Infant Mortality Review Network Lead

Overview

Ready by Five seeks to ensure services are addressing the social, equity, economic, and health factors that contribute to healthy births in Kent County.

The rate of fetal and infant (defined as before a child's first birthday) death is recognized by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, among other leading health organizations, as an important indicator of a community's overall health. The Healthy Development: Fetal Infant Mortality Review Network Lead Agency program will focus on improving birth outcomes, health

outcomes, and reducing disparities. Investment in the Fetal Infant Mortality Review Network will provide insight and understanding of the factors that contribute to infant mortality, as well as understanding the factors that contribute to the disparities with mortality rates among babies of different race 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 and infants.

Description, Attributes of Services

This agency will lead the implementation and ongoing management of the Fetal Infant Mortality Review Network for Kent County.

The model will closely follow the Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) model as established at the state level. More information about the Michigan FIMR process is available HERE.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services describes the Fetal Infant Mortality Review as an evidence-based process of identification and analysis of factors that contribute to fetal and infant death. FIMR complements other studies of infant death but uses an approach that is community-based, action-oriented, and designed to bring together local health providers, consumers, advocates, and leaders.

The Fetal Infant Mortality Review has two overarching goals:

- Describe significant social, economic, cultural, safety, health, and systems factors that contribute to mortality; and
- Design and implement community-based action plans founded on the information obtained from the reviews.

This lead agency will have established relationships in Kent County and be recognized as an agency with expertise in maternal infant health. This agency will successfully establish relationships with public health and healthcare providers to access current, case-specific information related to fetal and infant deaths in Kent County.

The selected agency will convene and lead the Fetal Infant Mortality Review network. This network will include stakeholders with an interest in maternal infant health in Kent County. Members will include but not be limited to clinicians, public health professionals, home visiting program staff, children's protective services staff, educators, non-profit organizations, medical providers, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, researchers, social justice advocates, grief support professionals, and other committed community members.

The selected agency will provide necessary data expertise to analyze and extrapolate data, as well as review, compile and identify relevant information to include in reports to the community. Quarterly updates and an annual summary of findings will be made available to all early childhood providers in Kent County.

This agency would be familiar with and have established all necessary privacy and security standards for sharing and protecting sensitive information.

The network will review incidents of fetal and infant deaths by means of interviews and chart reviews. Based on the findings, the lead agency will publish and present (as requested)

quarterly updates and a published annual update of key themes and trends with infant mortality in Kent County that would include recommendations for:

- Improving access to critical services to reduce disparities in care.
- Increasing cultural relevance within service delivery.
- Identifying enhanced support for families before and after birth.
- Inform funding of services, community-based education, and communications initiatives to support families.
- Recommendations of policy.
- Additional key findings.

Parent Education and Support Services

Overview

Parent Education and Support Services ensure parents have the knowledge and skills to support their children's health, development, and learning. As a result of these services, parents will have access to the information, resources, and social support they need to be more confident and empowered to make informed choices for themselves, their children, and their families. Services provide in-home and/or community-based support and education.

Description, Attributes and Results of Services

Programs that ensure expectant parents and families with young children offer parent education through home visits and ancillary support that addresses preventable causes of child accidents and mortality.

All programs must employ professionals with expertise that is applicable to the model. This may include professionals who are registered nurses, nurse practitioners, educators, social workers, community health workers, or other similarly trained professionals. All positions funded by Ready by Five must complete a background check upon hire, maintain current professional licensing as required by the model, complete training as required by the model, and complete all training required by First Steps Kent.

Program Type 1: Home Visiting Programming

Home visiting services address a number of outcomes across child health, pregnancy health, family economic well-being, positive parenting practices, and school readiness. Programs have shown evidence of reductions in child maltreatment, family economic self-sufficiency, increasing linkages to community resources and support, as well as reductions in family violence.

Programming will follow evidence-based or evidence-informed practices that demonstrate success in driving better outcomes for children from birth through five years of age, as well as expectant parents. Home visiting models include those that are:

- Recognized by the [HomVee (USDHHS)](link) or [State of Michigan MIECHV](link) as an evidence-based home visiting model; or
- Evidence-informed or those that are promising practices of home visiting models.

At minimum, all programs must implement the [Ages and Stages Questionnaire](link) (ASQ-3 and ASQ SE) if they serve families beyond the postpartum period. Programs may opt to include additional screening and assessment tools to further identify needs and guide families. Results of screening will be submitted through the monthly data submission process.

Additionally, all programs will establish a referral protocol to ensure all children with an identified concern are referred and connected to further additional assessment or resources to address the concern(s) at hand. Information about referrals will be submitted through the monthly data submission process.

Results: Programs will be asked to submit data on additional program features only as it is applicable to each model that relates to the result indicators listed below. Programs must track impact with one or more of the following result Indicators:

- Decrease in expectant parents smoking during pregnancy.
- Decrease in expectant parents using non-prescribed substances during pregnancy.
- Ensure expectant parents and primary caregivers are screened for wellbeing.
- Ensure expectant parents receive adequate prenatal care. (Defined by the Kotelchuck Index)
- Increase in healthy births. (Defined as Babies Born at Healthy Weight at 2500 Grams)
- Increase in breastfeeding.
- Increase in the number of children screened by programs for developmental concerns.
- Increase in the number of children screened by programs for social emotional concerns.
- Increase in the number of children successfully connected to support when a developmental or social emotional concerns is identified.

Program Type 2: Child Safety Initiatives

The Program Type includes services that support child safety – specifically safe sleep and automobile safety for children from birth through five years of age who are currently living in Kent County.

Agencies will specifically commit to all the following:

- Being visible and accessible, serving all families in Kent County (i.e., not limiting the services to only individuals enrolled in a specific program or agency).
- Identifying a clear outreach plan to ensure families know about the availability of this service.
- Verifying a family's residency and identifying a family's ability to pay by following a standardized cost-share formula as outlined in the [Ready by Five Service Provider Manual's Cost Share Policy.](link)
- With the delivery of a crib, provide one on one service to demonstrate how the crib operates and information to parents that emphasizes the importance of the ABCs of

Safe Sleep (1. Baby is sleeping <u>A</u>lone, 2. on their <u>B</u>ack, and 3) in a <u>C</u>rib) in an effort to reduce the number of infant deaths due to unsafe sleeping environments. Safe Sleep content that is based on [MDHHS information](#) or the [AAP's safe sleep guidelines](#) meet expectations for information that is shared with families.

- Providing one on one service to families that will ensure babies, infants, and children through age five are secure in the appropriate car seat when being transported by automobile. In addition to providing a car seat for families who meet household income requirements, a trained professional will be available to demonstrate the proper installation of the car seat. Certification as a [Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST)](#) is required for all professionals supporting with car seat installation.
- Purchasing car seats and cribs through vendors or organizations that allow for items to be purchased at a reduced rate. This includes leveraging grants and donations to cover the cost of cribs and car seats when possible.
- Agency must have adequate facility space to property store items as well as procedures in place to fully track inventory.
- Develop procedures to ensure families requiring interpretation services are effectively served.

Results: Programs are required to track demographics and services received for each individual served. This information will be submitted through the monthly data submission process. Programs will impact the following result indicators:

- Increase in the number of children and expectant parents engaged in support.

Early Learning Services

Overview

Early Learning Services 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.

Description, Attributes and Results of Services

All programming will incorporate the [Early Childhood Standards of Quality](#) (ECSQ) as provided by the Michigan State Board of Education as well as incorporate appropriate materials developed by the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrator's [Literacy Essentials](#).

In addition to describing the program model, agencies will include the following in their scope of work:

- Services that may not have a navigation focus must still describe how they will promote linkages between caretakers and [Ready by Five Outreach and Navigation Services](#) for families to be connected to additional resources within their programming.
- These services may not be conducive to providing developmental screenings but will at minimum describe how they will promote linkages between caretakers and Ready by Five programs offering developmental screening and navigation supports in their programming.
- All programs must employ professionals with expertise that is applicable to the model. This may include professionals who are registered nurses, nurse practitioners, educators, social workers, community health workers, or other similarly trained professionals. All positions funded by Ready by Five must complete a background check upon hire, maintain current professional licensing as required by the model, complete training as required by the model, and complete all training required by First Steps Kent.

Program Type 1: Play and Learn Community Programming

Programs are designed for the purpose of reaching and connecting with all types of caretakers (e.g., parents, relative-aide providers, licensed providers, child care center staff, preschool teachers) to strengthen their understanding of child development to increase opportunities for all children to receive age-appropriate activities that enrich holistic development of a child's social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Play and Learn Community Programming must follow an evidence-informed model such as the [Kaleidoscope Model](#) or other nationally recognized model.

Typically, Play and Learn Community programs offer regularly scheduled play-based sessions for at least 90 minutes in public neighborhood locations such as community centers, elementary schools, public libraries, and public or transitional housing. Programs are designed to be attended on a drop-in basis and are welcoming to all children and their caretakers who attend a session.

Each program offers information to develop a caretaker's understanding of how they can nurture their child's early learning development. At each session, caretakers have an opportunity to connect and learn from professionals who have early childhood expertise on a variety of topics including, but not limited to, basic math skills, literacy skills, and social emotional development. During each session, the child engages in play with their caretaker that is set up in stations to reflect a learning domain linked to the Michigan Department of Education's Learning Expectations. Sessions contain defined, essential learning objectives for the child and their caretaker. Every child who attends generally leaves with a small takeaway project or book to extend the age-appropriate learning that occurred in that session.

Communities can be customized by the needs and feedback from the caretakers who attend. Materials may be customized to offer culturally relevant information about early child development and school readiness. Programs will ensure staff training and processes are implemented to support culturally responsive program delivery to all children and caregivers who attend.

In addition to play-based sessions, programs may offer workshops and training for families and caretakers. Topics may include child development, health, and social emotional well-being.

Programs are required to track demographics and services received for each child served. This information will be submitted through the monthly data submission process.

Results: All programs will increase access to information that imparts knowledge and skills to parents and other adult caregivers about their child's development thus impacting one or more of the following result Indicators:

- Increase in the number of new children with access to developmentally appropriate activities that promote early learning and literacy.

Program Type 2: Early Literacy and Learning Programming

This area is broad and encompasses evidence-informed early literacy programming that supports improved language ability, listening, and communication skills in young children. All programming will include one or more of expectations as defined by the MDE [Early Childhood Standards of Quality](#), including:

- **Creative arts**: including visual arts (drawing, painting, ceramics, sculpture, printmaking, fiber, and multimedia), instrumental and vocal music, creative movement, and dramatic play (puppetry, storytelling, mime, and role playing). Support for children's creative development is essential to foster their appreciation of the arts and their competence, self-reliance, and success.

- **Language and early literacy development:** Children begin to communicate at birth. During the preschool years they are emerging as language users and developing competence as listeners, speakers, readers, writers, and viewers. Each of these language arts is strengthened by integrated literacy experiences in print-rich active learning environments in homes, neighborhoods, outdoor play spaces, and in all formal and informal early learning settings.

- **Early technology literacy:** Digital technology plays an increasing role in the lives of young children in preschool programs and beyond. The array of such tools continues to expand as does understanding of both their potential and cautions. Research supports young children's age-appropriate use of technology to support and to extend learning and development under the guidance of adults who understand how to use it appropriately.

- **Early learning in the areas of mathematics, science, and social studies:** Young children's early understandings of mathematics are broad in scope and extend well beyond numbers and counting. Problem solving is the central focus of the mathematics curriculum from the early years onward. Early learning in science builds on young children's natural sense of wonder and curiosity. It provides them with a better understanding of the world around them and how it works. The balance of age-

appropriate content and the use of inquiry to learn more about the people in their families and neighborhoods, the earth they live on, the people who live on the earth and learning more about their histories, will give young children the skills they will need as citizens of a democracy.

- **Social emotional development:** To develop socially and emotionally, children need to develop the capacity to experience, express, and gain self-control over their emotions and social interactions. Children learn and thrive when they feel emotionally secure with and socially connected to adults who provide nurturing relationships and positive early learning experiences and with other children. When children feel emotionally secure and physically safe, they feel more confident to explore their environment and to learn.

Programs are required to track key demographics and information about services and referrals for individuals served that will be submitted through the monthly data submission process.

Results: All programs will increase access to information that imparts knowledge and skills to parents and other adult caregivers about their child's development thus impacting one or more of the following Ready by Five Result Indicators:

- Increase in the number of new children with access to developmentally appropriate activities that promote early learning and literacy.

Parent Education and Language Support Services: Translation and Interpretation Supports

Overview

The languages and dialects spoken by families in Kent County are vast and varied. Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage funded services have provided services in languages and dialects including Spanish, Nepali, Kinyarwanda, Serbo-Croatian, Swahili, French, Burmese, American Sign Language, Vietnamese, Arabic, Pashto, Urdu, Tamil, Hindi, Farsi, Dar, and Karen.

First Steps Kent acknowledges the importance of investment in resources to support communication with families of many languages and cultures. It is imperative to reach all children ages five and younger in Kent County and their expectant parents.

Programs will improve access to early learning and health focused programming by increasing availability of interpretation and translation services so early childhood programs will more effectively serve families who are not first language English or Spanish speakers. Services will help to reduce outcome disparities across specific target populations by increasing provider capacity to offer culturally relevant services inclusive of all populations.

Description, Attributes and Results of Services

Currently, there are about 30 programs funded by the Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage. All current Ready by Five funded programs will be eligible to request interpretation and translation services and the cost will be covered by this source of Millage funding.

Agencies will offer translation and interpretation services in one or more of the following formats:

- Face-to-face (from English to another language or vice versa).
- Over Telephone/Video Interpretation.
- Document translation (English to another language).
- One-hour in-services for requesting agency staff to learn about cultural considerations as they serve families through translation services.

Due to the varied needs of different service providers, a variety of certification levels are needed including general, on demand, educational, and medical interpretation.

Languages needed include, but are not limited to, Spanish, Nepali, Kinyarwanda, Serbo-Croatian, Swahili, Burmese, American Sign Language, Vietnamese, Arabic, Pashto, Urdu, Tamil, Hindi, Farsi, Dar, and Karen.

First Steps Kent will provide a current list of programs currently funded that are eligible for translation and interpretation, including the name of each agency, program, and the authorized primary contact who may request services. Agencies are required to track the eligibility of agencies requesting service against this list of eligible agencies prior to submitting an invoice to First Steps Kent.

Contract Specifications

Ready by Five Service Providers will be paid monthly at a pre-determined rate that is set during the contracting period.

On a monthly basis, Ready by Five will work with translation and interpretation agencies to reconcile invoices with services reported by Ready by Five service partners. Annual Program Assessments will include verification of interpreter credentialing, licensing, and qualifications as described in their scope for work for staff providing services paid for by millage funds.

Healthy Development Training – Ready by Five Network Training & Education Leads

Overview

The Ready by Five Millage funds programs that seek to reach expectant parents and children under the age of five and younger in Kent County. This network includes over 30 programs that were successful in reaching over 12,400 children and expectant parents in 2022. The importance of the Ready by Five network being knowledgeable in key areas is important as services are delivered to so many families in Kent County.

With the significant reach of children and expectant parents in Kent County, First Steps Kent sees an opportunity to further cultivate a network that is responsive to the needs of families and young children in Kent County. Based on data and feedback from community partners, First Steps Kent seeks to increase training and knowledge in the network through the support of training opportunities for all direct service professionals funded by Ready by Five and their direct supervisors.

Description, Attributes and Results of Services

This program will offer quality training by providers who have the expertise and capacity to develop and deliver training programs designed to further the professional development of Ready by Five Millage funded programs. The programs will include various delivery methods (i.e., e-learning and/or face-to-face) and can be prepared as a single or reoccurring service, activity, or workshop.

First Steps Kent requests the delivery of training by professionals qualified to provide professional development and who have expertise in each topic. Training topics will address the following four areas:

- Responding to family needs with a trauma-informed approach.
- Understanding implicit bias
- Domestic violence and family safety – How to respond and support families with young children.
- Quality program practices to improve services to families with young children.

Responding to Family Needs with a Trauma-Informed Approach

Training in this area will strengthen knowledge of the prevalence, causes, and consequences of trauma. Considering the broad professional audience, trainings will offer clear strategies and practices for how early childhood professionals may recognize, address, and prevent trauma in their daily work with families by supporting the protective factors that promote healing and recovery in young children, expectant parents, and their families. Training will provide information on key concepts of trauma, at minimum addressing all the following:

- The importance of attachment relationships,
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and how traumatic stressors may impact ongoing development,
- Toxic stress, and
- Re-traumatization.

Training will also provide current information about additional community resources and programs available in Kent County that offer support for children and families who have experienced trauma.

Agencies are strongly encouraged to offer Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

Understanding Implicit Bias

Promoting equity is critical to truly making a difference in the lives of those we serve. To that end, we make a conscious and explicit effort to ensure our work focuses on the elimination of disparities in child outcome by:

- Educating ourselves and others to improve understanding of explicit bias and the historical context of inequities, which is vital to recognizing and dismantling barriers to improve outcomes.
- Critically examining policies and practices using a racial equity lens and work to ensure that both their intent and impact will promote fairness and equity.
- Model, as organizations, the changes we want to see implemented throughout our community and advocate for the elimination of institutional and structural racism in systems we influence.
- Serve our community's children through active engagement of their families, listening to their needs, understanding their strengths, and advocating for needed policies, programs, and supports.

Training requirements will at minimum follow the [requirements the Michigan Department Licensing and Regulatory Affairs](#) and must include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following topics:

- Information on implicit bias and serving a diverse population, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and cultural sensitivity.
- Strategies to remedy the negative impact of implicit bias by recognizing and understanding how it impacts perception, judgment, and actions that may result in inequitable decision making, failure to effectively communicate, and result in barriers and disparities in the access to and delivery of services.
- The historical basis and present consequences of implicit biases that are based on an individual's characteristics.
- Discussion of current research on implicit bias in the access to and delivery of services.
- Training must include strategies to reduce disparities in access to and delivery of services and the administration of pre- and post-test implicit bias assessments.

For the purpose of the Ready by Five network, trainings with be offered in one of the following ways:

- Training will be offered by, or in conjunction with, a State of Michigan approved agency.
- Training will be offered by an accredited college or university.
- Training will be offered by an organization with demonstrated specialization in diversity, equity, and inclusion issues.

Agencies are strongly encouraged to offer Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

Note: Early childhood professionals that are currently licensed of registered [under the Michigan Public Health Code to complete Implicit Bias CEUs](#) would be exempt from training in this area.

Domestic Violence and Safety

In response to the increased incidents of domestic violence and recommendations from Kent County's Fetal Infant Mortality Review Network to, "increase education on domestic violence for mandated reporters via mandatory credits in domestic violence to improve training and education," First Steps Kent is requesting training that will present on the prevalence of domestic violence in Kent County and with a trauma-informed, attachment-based approach this training will offer clear strategies for how early childhood professionals can addresses the topic of domestic violence from an integrated parent-child perspective that at minimum:

- Increases understanding how to support parents and caregivers currently affected by domestic violence.
- Educates professionals on signs to recognize, address, and prevent sexual abuse.
- Provides information on how to specifically support young children, caregivers and families heal from the trauma of domestic violence.
- Training will also provide current information about community resources and supports available that offer specialized supports for children and families who have experienced domestic violence.

Agencies are strongly encouraged to offer Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

Quality Program Practices

Training in this area will be designed by agencies for the purpose of building communities of practice that foster increasing knowledge and expertise throughout the Ready by Five network.

While topics may not be relevant to every program, the training(s) must be made available to all participating Ready by Five programs.

Training currently included in a contract's scope of work will not be reimbursed under this program type (i.e., technical assistance with ASQs).

Areas of particular interest include:

- Ensuring successful navigation and referrals to community partners
- Technical training that improves completion success of a specific benefit application (e.g., WIC, Medicaid, CDC Subsidy)
- Topics relevant to the provision of quality services including but not limited to documentation, motivational interviewing, reflective supervision, and conflict resolutions.

Agencies are strongly encouraged to offer Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

Additional Attributes of All Trainings

All training will include technical and soft skills that must be applicable to the broad audience of early childhood professionals across programs, including but not limited to, social workers, community health workers, play and learn coaches, nurses, navigators, behavioral health clinicians, and home visitors.

Training developed for the sole purpose of training professionals outside this network will not be reimbursed. Additionally, agencies will not be reimbursed any training session(s) provided to agency staff outside of the Ready by Five network.

Agencies will be responsible for advertising and communicating training opportunities to qualifying agencies in the Ready by Five service partner network. Additionally, agencies providing training will be required to track participation of all individuals attending each training session, ensure eligible early childhood staff attend sessions, and provide documentation of training completion to the employing agency for each participant.

Trainings may be delivered in the following formats:

- **Classroom:** offered in a traditional, in-person, training format at one time or through multiple days, in specific locations around the county.
- **Synchronous:** geographically dispersed registrations accessing a unique link to a specific training event. The instructor will lead training through either conference call phone access or computer audio. Presentations will include access to instructional material during live training with download capability as well as the option to have sessions recorded for later review through system archives. Registrants must have access via audio or real time chat box functions to interact with the instructor and fellow students.
- **Asynchronous:** on-demand training registrants can access at any time via a unique link. The scope of work will describe the training format as facilitated or self-paced and include information outlining how assignments and potential group and instructor interaction will be facilitated.
- **E-learning:** the use of electronic means to disperse training using electronic technologies such as computer and Internet-based courseware, local and wide area networks.
- **Blended learning:** combining face-to-face classroom methods with e-learning activities to form an integrated instructional approach.

The content of all training must be informed by reputable, nationally recognized organizations (e.g., Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, National Child Trauma Stress Network, National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma and Mental Health).

All training will address cultural responsiveness as service providers providing training will demonstrate an understanding that both the culture of each participant in the training and the trainer's own culture hold influences in their teaching. Content will also reflect the importance of cultural awareness and responsiveness when working with families in Kent County.