

Overview of Studies to Update the Michigan Early Childhood Needs Assessment



What are the Michigan Needs Assessment studies?

- The Michigan Department of Education's Office of Great Start (MDE OGS) received federal Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) funds to strengthen the state's comprehensive early childhood (EC) system by (1) investing in the EC workforce to develop long-term, sustainable, cross-systems solutions for workforce shortages and (2) reviewing the current structures for engaging Michigan families and communities in a mixed delivery of services.
- MDE OGS is using PDG B-5 funds to conduct two research studies that will update the state's EC Needs Assessment. These studies focus on (1) the EC workforce and (2) coordination across the state's EC family and community intake and referral structures.
- The studies require participation from partners at all levels of the EC system, such as families, state-level program administrators, regional coordinating bodies, trusted community partners, and local program staff. The studies also require participation across the range of EC programs, including child care, preschool, early intervention/early childhood special education, home visiting, and social emotional consultation.

What do we expect to learn?

By relying on input from those who work in the EC system, the studies will help identify strengths of the system, needs, and opportunities to address those needs. The results will inform the state's Collective Action Plan implementation and system improvement efforts.

Study	Purpose	What We Expect to Learn
EC Workforce	• Learn more about the EC workforce both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic • Explore key issues (e.g., workforce shortages, compensation, staff retention), and the impacts on family access to services	1. Who makes up the EC workforce, including their demographic, educational, and geographic characteristics? Why are they working in EC? 2. Why do individuals enter, remain in, move through, and leave the EC workforce? 3. How do individuals progress through different pathways in the EC system? Where are they heading with their career plans? 4. What are the working conditions of individuals in the EC workforce? What policies can be implemented to improve working conditions?
Family and Community Coordination	• Identify family access points to EC services • Examine collaborative structures supporting family access • Better understand how coordination among services occurs across all levels of the system	1. What are the family access points to the EC system? What are the intermediary structures that support the access points? 2. How well do the family access points and intermediary structures coordinate and align to form a "no wrong door" system for families? 3. What are the barriers to increased coordination and alignment? What are recommended strategies for increasing coordination and alignment?

What are the major activities of the Michigan Needs Assessment studies?

Study	Data Collection Activities	Expected Participants
EC Workforce	1. Literature review 2. Analysis of available federal and state data about EC workforce 3. Survey of the EC workforce 4. Listening-workshopping sessions	• Organizational partners from state agencies and the field • Staff and administrators working in child care, preschool programs, early intervention/early childhood special education, home visiting programs, and social emotional consultation
Family and Community Coordination	1. Landscape analysis 2. Key informant interviews 3. Survey of access point and intermediary structures staff 4. Family story bank 5. Regional data validation and workshopping sessions	• Leaders at state agencies and quasi-governmental entities that administer EC programs • Staff at organizations that serve as family access points to EC services • Staff at intermediary structures that support EC services and family access to services • Families with young children

What is the general timeline for the studies?

We expect the studies to run from summer 2023 through the first half of 2024.

Who is leading the research studies?

MDE OGS is working with a team from **SRI Education** (SRI) and **Public Policy Associates** to conduct the studies.

- SRI is leading the Family and Community Engagement Study. Please contact Wei-Bing Chen at wei-bing.chen@sri.com with any questions.
- Public Policy Associates is leading the EC Workforce Study. Please contact Colleen Graber at cgraber@publicpolicy.com with any questions.
- For general questions about the Needs Assessment, contact Jonnie Taton at tatonj2@michigan.gov at the Michigan Department of Education.



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