

February 10, 2019

The Michigan Division for Early Childhood (MiDEC) Governmental Relations Committee has a platform with two issues they would like to put forward. The first issue is the PreK-3 banding change in teacher certification in the state of Michigan. The second issue is related to *Early On*, Michigan's early intervention system which provides supports and services to families of eligible infants and toddlers with developmental delays and established conditions. In order to promote optimal educational outcomes for Michigan's children, we must fully support our youngest learners, beginning with the infants, toddlers and young children with developmental delays, established conditions, special health care needs and disabilities.

MiDEC Platform for PreK-3 Banding Change in Teacher Certification

The Michigan Division for Early Childhood (MiDEC) supports including all the current and proposed Early Childhood Standards (ZS) into the redesign of the Michigan teacher certification requirements. The current standards ensure that all PreK-3 teachers possess critical knowledge in academic content and child development. Importantly, these standards also include a crucial focus on supporting social-emotional development and mental health, as a means of helping children to build strong foundations for life.

The proposed standards are very literacy and numeracy rich. As an organization MiDEC strongly supports this emphasis. We would, however, urge that associated courses be taught by individuals who are not only content area specialists, but who also have a deep understanding of developmentally appropriate practices as they apply to children birth to eight years of age.

In addition to the current and proposed standards, MiDEC heartily encourages a heightened emphasis on Early Childhood Standards that ensure that teachers be highly qualified to teach young children from diverse backgrounds and with varied strengths and challenges. Though current regulations and research consistently dictate supporting learners in regular preschool settings, over a five-year span the state of Michigan has demonstrated less than a 2% gain in the opportunities they afford to children with disabilities. At present less than one-third of our children with disabilities are being educated with their peers in typical preschool settings. Our state's ongoing educational practice of supporting large numbers of children with disabilities in segregated educational environments collides with evidence-based practice as well as policy statements from leaders and organizations in the field of early childhood.

Data from the field indicates that early educators do not feel they possess the skills or experience needed to address the needs of varied learners. In this light, MiDEC strongly encourages required coursework and field experience that focuses on designing and providing academic instruction and emotional supports that are individualized and scaffolded. Indeed, these requirements expand opportunities for both children who have and have not been identified as having a disability.

Some additional recommendations that have been identified to strengthen the PreK-3 teaching band standards include:

- Knowledge, understanding, and application of the content, functions, and achievements of dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts to promote the ability to create, perform and respond in and through the arts. Candidates know that all students can learn the knowledge and skills that make up the arts.

- Demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and application of research-based strategies to create opportunities for all students to develop critical knowledge, skills, and behaviors that contribute to lifelong health.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding through planning and appropriate implementation of effective past and current research-based human movement and physical activity strategies as central elements to foster active, life-long, healthy lifestyles for all students.

In sum, MiDEC recommends that the PreK-3 grade band should include all the current and proposed ZS standards as well as a heightened emphasis on supporting learners with diverse abilities and backgrounds. Academic and social-emotional outcomes for Michigan’s citizens will continue to be at risk without the inclusion of these standards. An emphasis on improving and refining the current Early Childhood Standards will serve the children and families of Michigan well.

MiDEC Platform on *Early On*® Michigan

Established under the federal Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Michigan has been unique in its lack of state appropriation for birth to three. We know that intervening as early as possible in the life of a child is the most efficient and effective strategy for supporting maximum developmental outcomes for young children with developmental delays and disabilities. Services to infants and toddlers who have or are at risk for developmental delays have been shown to positively impact outcomes across developmental domains, including language and communication, cognitive development, social/emotional development, and health. Families benefit from early intervention by being able to better meet their children’s unique needs from an early age and throughout their lives.

In 2018-19 Michigan saw its first state investment in *Early On* Michigan. The \$5 million allocation represents an important initial investment on the part of the state to address the serious needs of families who have infants and toddlers eligible under Michigan’s *Early On*/Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) early intervention system. It is the first step to reach the estimated need of \$68 million for our infants and toddlers with delays and disabilities and their families.

In order to reach the need and support successful implementation statewide, the *Early On* Michigan Foundation recommends reaching the goal incrementally:

Status	Year	Recommended Allocation	Increase from Previous Year	Progress toward goal
	2018-19	\$5 M*	\$5 M	7%
	2019-20	\$20 M	\$15 M	29%
	2020-21	\$36 M	\$16 M	53%
	2021-22	\$52 M	\$16 M	76%

	2022-2 3	\$68 M	\$16 M	100%
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*This amount represents the actual allocation, not the recommendation of the *Early On* Michigan Foundation.

The Michigan Division for Early Childhood strongly supports this recommendation. The recommendation is based on the projected annual cost of \$1,920 to cover one hour of service per month for one child. **An investment of \$20 million will provide enough resources to cover approximately 1 hour of service per month.** While this amount is **not** sufficient to adequately serve infants and toddlers with developmental delays and established conditions, it represents an increase in resources available to families and follows a plan for successful statewide implementation of our early intervention system. The recent (June 2018) “snapshot” child count (one date in time) of eligible infants and toddlers in Michigan is 10,873. The number served over one year is 22,190.