



Traverse Bay/Manistee

Great Start Traverse Bay/Manistee Collaborative Summary of Strategic Priorities & Goals

SHARED PRIORITIES & SHARED WORK

The Great Start Traverse Bay/Manistee Collaborative is comprised of representatives from two Intermediate School Districts, three Departments of Human Services jurisdictions, four health departments, six county collaboratives each with its own 0 – 6 work group, and numerous parent organizations, agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, faith-based groups and concerned citizens. In collaboration, we can be both opportunistic—taking advantage of opportunities as they come along to support each others’ work—and intentional in directing our efforts toward common goals and outcomes.

The following shared priorities and goals are based on evaluation of local, regional and state data as well as comparisons to national trends and benchmarks. We cast a wide net over the community to gather input on the issues and the actions. Our thinking together with our communities represents collaboration in its truest form: coordinated action based on a common agenda.

Our Vision

All children will be born healthy with continuous access to comprehensive care that supports the whole child. All children have their basic needs met—food, clothing and supplies, shelter and safety. Infants, young children and their families are socially and emotionally healthy. All families are resilient, have knowledge of child development, and are valued for nurturing their children. All children succeed and schools are ready for all children.

8 SHARED PRIORITIES

1. All families will be encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle for children ages pre-birth to eight
2. Employers and agencies have access to evidence-based information about family-friendly best practices that have direct impact on the workforce, benefit employers and are measurable.
3. Ensure that children’s safety issues and community crisis response plans are coordinated across agencies.
4. Increase public and parent awareness and knowledge of social/emotional health, and ensure that all families have access to screening, referral, and treatment and support services.
5. The region adopts the Strengthening Families framework for parent and community engagement to promote awareness, education and action.
6. Increase access to affordable, high quality early care and learning options, including opt-in universal preschool, for children ages birth to five.
7. Children with developmental delays or disabilities receive the interventions and continuous support they need to develop to their highest potential.

8. Increase access to quality information about early childhood development and learning, and opportunities for continuing education, for all caregivers, including parents and guardians.

SHARED WORK

Shared work differs from shared priorities in this important way: shared work is work in which all agencies/organizations/individuals play a role. We chose the pie chart as the visualization of how this work is shared. The pie chart is conceptually accurate because it is non-hierarchical and every piece touches the center. Thus it is with our Collaborative: we contribute according to our capacity toward a common goal.

This part of our Early Childhood Action Agenda is a set of six critical areas that emerged as a result of priorities identified in our GSC's Priority Matrix. The Priority Matrix itself resulted from a synthesis of the 2010 Strategic Plan and the economic impact study "The Dividends of a Great Start: *Regional Economic Impacts of Conditions Affecting Children Birth to Five Years in Six Michigan Counties*" commissioned by this GSC in 2010 [documents available at www.greatstartkids.com] Each area consists of a statement upon which we agree and one or more motivating questions, posed in a direct, personal style, to guide our thinking and prompt responses. In this way we ask each other to act both as individuals and as agents of the organizations we might represent, and share the work among all of us.

The Six Strategic Areas of Shared Work & the Motivating Questions

Strengthening Families: We agree to implement Strengthening Families & the Protective Factors as our framework for working with families and engaging the community.

- What will you do to move this work forward personally and as part of a group or organization?

Parent Voice: Parents are their children's first and best teachers and advocates. Their input guides decision-making.

- How do you get better at hearing parents?
- How do you ensure that parent voice and parent energy are helping to drive the work?

Communications & Community Education: Communication is relationship-building and the foundation for collaboration.

- What is the common message you want everyone in the community to hear?
- What are the most effective ways for you to reach people?

Needs, Gaps & Data sharing: Data drives our decision-making.

- How do you work with others to identify needs and gaps?
- How can we share our data to create stronger, more responsive systems?

Funding: Sustainability is the hallmark of successful programs.

- How do we identify where there are funding gaps?
- How can you work with others to create sustainable funding?

Great Start for Success Network: All families, all children have the resources they need to develop to their potential.

- What is most important to you about this idea of a "one-stop-shop" network for families?
- What great ideas will you bring to this concept?

Strong Families, Thriving Communities Begin with a Great Start