

***Raising your Concerns
to Elected Officials:
Everyone can – here's how!***

**Michigan's
Children**

***Madeline Elliott,
Policy and Program Associate
Michigan's Children***

***Quinn Wright, Madison
Heights City Council member
and Consultant***



We focus on policies in these priority areas:

- Early Childhood: child care, *Early On*, and early childhood mental health
- Child and Family Health
- Child Prosperity: abuse and neglect prevention, foster and kinship care, runaway and homeless youth, rural child poverty and wellbeing, and youth development
- Family Economic Success: living wages, paid sick leave, housing, and adult education/re-training
- Educational Quality and Access
- Immigrant Family Policy

Michigan's Children



What we do:

- Partner with groups and organizations
- Monitor legislation
- Meet with lawmakers
- Host events to raise awareness
- Produce monthly, virtual Lunch and Learn webinars and *Speaking for Kids* podcast



**Maddie Elliott,
Policy and Programs
Associate**

**I focus on Early Childhood Policy:
Child Care, Early On, and Infant
Mental Health**

madeline@michiganschildren.org



Parents are often the most powerful leaders for change

- Parents use powerful and complex leadership skills and abilities as they manage their households every day and guide their children in the little and big tasks of life. *(Morin, n.d.)*
- Many families may speak up for their own children or work with others to make changes that help many children. *(Cunningham, Kreider, & Ocón, 2012)* Immigrant parents have advanced skills for navigating two cultures and advocating for their children
- Effective parenting skills have a lot in common with effective leadership skills. *(Saad, 2016; Langford & Weisbourd, 1997)*

Professionals who work with children & families know the issues they face better than lawmakers

You likely know families who:

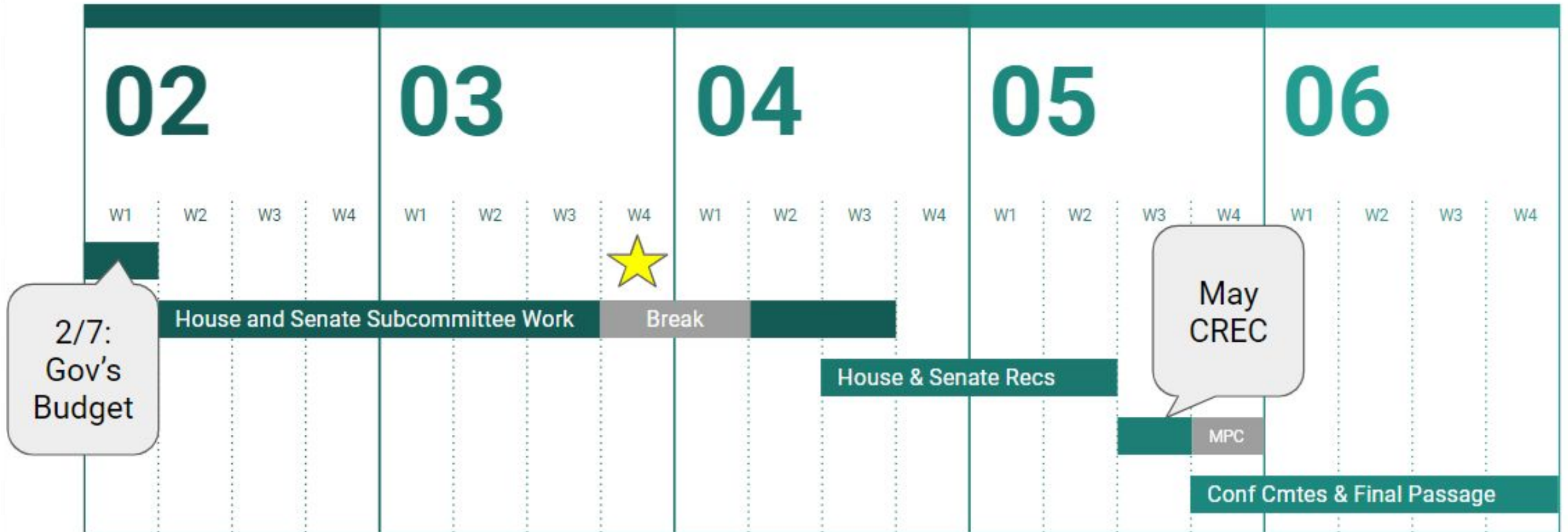
- are trying to avoid expulsion from their child care program and need support managing and getting to the root of their child's challenging behavior
- are desperate for more early intervention support for their child who has a disability or developmental delay
- need support navigating the child welfare system and court proceedings

The Governor & State Legislature

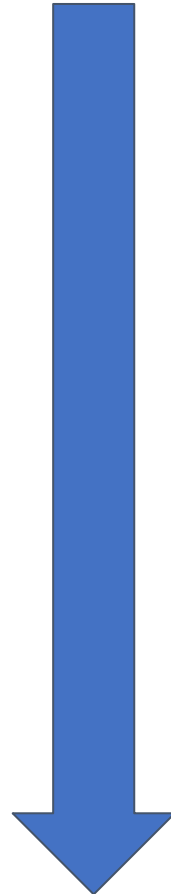
- Controlled by Democrats for the first time in 40 years
- The Governor introduced her proposed budget on Feb 7th
- The state legislature will review the Governor's proposals and then pass their own budgets
- Then they come together to pass a budget, usually in June



The State Budget Timeline



FY 26-27 Budget Timeline



Governor and team begin to formulate next fiscal year's budget

January
February

Governor releases her budget proposal

FY 26-27: Budget Timeline (We Hope) & Advocacy Tasks

FY 26-27: Budget Timeline (We Hope) & Advocacy Tasks

Month	Budget process	Advocacy tasks
October	Governor & team begin to formulate next fiscal year's budget	Exam current year budget & determine priorities
November		Reach out to Executive team
December		Begin educating community & partner awareness & support
January	Governor's budget proposal released	Read proposal, compare to current year
February		Reach out to Senate and House Appropriations/provide data Continue to educate/engage community
March	Senate and House begin working on their budgets	Develop legislative strategies, matchin members to their elected leaders
April		Meet/call/send letters to Senate and House members, and legislators who might slip who might not – a lot to learn from them as well) Increase community engagement/education around top issues/issues without easy support. Encourage calls, blogs, letters to editor, social media, events, etc.
May	Senate & House release budget	Read proposal, compare to Governor's budget, and current year funding and priorities

of advocacy
ities to build
and priorities
members to review
rs
s and community
ropriation ities (and those l)
und top alls, blogs, letters
and current year

January
February
March
April
May
June

July
August
September
October
November
December

Talking to Lawmakers

Lawmakers usually are **not experts in early childhood issues**





How to Talk to a Lawmaker: Planning Your Visit

Prepping for your meeting during lunch:

- ❖ Introduce yourself to people at your table who will be joining you at the meeting with your state Senator.
- ❖ As a table, pick the policy goal(s) that you will discuss with your state Senator:
 - ❖ Expand the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program
 - ❖ Increase state investment in *Early On*
 - ❖ Invest in maternal health

Each think of a story to tell, or an argument to make in favor of your policy goal(s).

Make a plan to each introduce yourself to your Senator

- Your name
- Job title
- City or town

Decide the order that each of you will speak so that the meeting runs smoothly

Meeting Outline:

Part 1: Introduce yourself

Part 2: Ask how familiar they are with the policy issue(s) you are there to discuss

- ❖ Use their answer to gauge how much detail you share about your policy goal

Part 3: Share brief stories and arguments in favor of your policy goal

Part 4: Ask for their perspective on this issue and if they will fight for it. Ask if they have any questions for you.

- ❖ Write down any questions that the lawmaker asks that you don't know the answer to. Bring those questions back to Capitol Day coordinators who will follow up with lawmakers to get those questions answered.

Part 5: Thank them and let them know you can be a resource for them on infant mental health issues (or early intervention, maternal health, etc)

Our Celebrate Babies Infant Mental Health Policy Priorities

- Expand the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program
- Increase investment in *Early On*
- Raise awareness for Early Childhood Courts

Think to Yourself: Which Infant Mental Health policy priority do I want to talk to my state Senator about?



Early On Funding

- Currently *Early On* receives \$23.7 million in state School Aid funding.
- It is estimated that the state needs to invest nine times the current allocation to adequately fund *Early On*

Early On Funding

- Currently *Early On* receives \$23.7 million in state School Aid funding.
- It is estimated that the state needs to invest nine times the current allocation to adequately fund *Early On*

Facts on Developmental Delay and Disability in the U.S.

- 1 in every 6 kids has a developmental delay
- 1 in every 36 kids have an autism spectrum disorder



Supporting Young Children with Disabilities Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Early Intervention

Birth through Two Years Old
IDEA Part C

Early Childhood Special Education

Three through Five Years Old
IDEA Part B Section 619

Special Education

Five through 21 Years Old
IDEA Part B



Infants and toddlers in EI experience:

- Increased motor, social and cognitive functioning;
 - Improved acquisition of age appropriate skills;
 - Reduced negative impacts of their disabilities.
-
- 54% of children who received EI exited functioning *at, or above, age level in overall academic skills*
 - Most of the children (69%) who were eligible for EI because of a risk condition were *not enrolled in special education* at kindergarten
 - 46% of children who had received EI for developmental delay were *not enrolled in special education* at kindergarten

Supporting Young Children with Disabilities Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Early Intervention

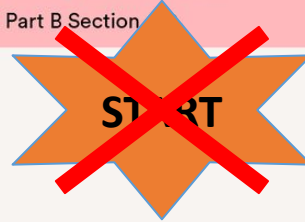
Birth through Two Years Old
IDEA Part C

Early Childhood Special Education

Three through Five Years Old
IDEA Part B Section

Special Education

Five through 21 Years
IDEA Part B



This graphic shows the way in which we conceptualize IDEA for the purposes of this blog series. Age ranges and terminology may differ slightly in different states and circumstances.

-
- **Because earlier makes the most difference, early intervention services are for the youngest years, birth to 3, and families**
 - Established under Part C of IDEA
 - Every state has an early intervention system
 - Eligibility
 - 20% delay in development (or 1 standard deviation below the mean) in any domain
 - Established condition likely to result in delay (medically diagnosed)
 - Home-based services
 - Supporting parents and families so they can support the growth/development of their babies
-

- Target of intervention is the parent who will work with the baby between visits
- Strategies to use in daily routines to promote development and help with functioning and participating in family and community life

Providers include:

- Speech therapist
- Occupational therapist
- Physical therapist
- EC Sp Education teacher
- Social worker
- Psychologist

-
- For every dollar spent, intervening early can save up to \$17 in future costs
 - Early intervention services are 2.5x less costly than special education services in preschool and elementary years
 - Michigan contributed NO STATE FUNDING to *Early On* until 2018
-

IECMHC Funding

-

What is Mental Health Consultation?

care providers with a certified mental health professional to:

- Maintain child care placements
- Strengthen early educators' classroom management skills
- Improve the quality of care and education



Why is Mental
Health
Consultation
critical for kids,
caregivers,

- 10% of US children age 5 and under have behavioral issues
- It keeps parents working
- It supports employers
- It helps retain early childhood educators



Questions?

