

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

PROGRESS REPORT

COMMUNITY: Holland, Zeeland and Hamilton

PREPARED BY: Donna Gowry, MD, President/CEO Ready for School



2020

KINDERGARTEN READINESS PROGRESS REPORT

POTENTIAL IS EQUALLY DISTRIBUTED ACROSS A POPULATION. **OPPORTUNITY IS NOT.**

READY FOR SCHOOL IS **CLOSING THE GAP** BETWEEN POTENTIAL AND OPPORTUNITY. HOW? **ACCESS.** Education, community engagement, and collaboration have been Ready for School's blueprint since 2017. Three years ago the focus area rankings below looked quite different: There were no *doing well* and many *not yet* categories. Since then, evidence-based community level practices that didn't previously exist are in place, and are making a positive change where the need is greatest. In 2020 the need was great. Childcare, preschool and pediatric care providers worked tirelessly, Municipalities kept parks open, providing welcoming and safe outdoor learning spaces. This is **ACCESS** and key to sustaining growth.

Local data tells the story of our progress: Community-level kindergarten readiness is up from **62%** where it was in 2017 and has increased from **43% to 70%** in the last decade.

EDUCATION	DOING WELL	MAKING PROGRESS	NOT YET
Increasing access to high quality preschool		X	
Financially sustainable community preschool access		X	
Access to high-quality year-round early childhood learning that includes a focus on social-emotional skill development		X	
Being a recognized and trusted referral resource	X		
Equipping children and families for a better transition to kindergarten by bridging pre-K environments and area schools	X		
Professional learning for early childhood educators to elevate and sustain quality in childcare and preschool		X	
Strategies for reinforcing and sustaining readiness gains		X	
Elevating world class talent in early childhood education		X	

NOTES:

In 2020 we maintained year-round early learning and increased our response to family needs by creating content that supported caregivers in their role as their child's teacher. We made more family connections than ever before by mobilizing deliveries of hundreds of bilingual hands-on learning kits. When we couldn't meet families because of COVID, Ready for School supported families and those that care for them through supporting childcare providers and preschool partners with check-ins, continued learning, and opportunities for self-care.

COMMUNITY IMPACT	DOING WELL	MAKING PROGRESS	NOT YET
Local data guiding our work to areas of greatest need	X		
Improving access to high-quality early learning opportunities for all children	X		
Catalyzing new gap filling programs		X	
Linking literacy and health through trusted healthcare providers	X		
Community-wide focus on early literacy, social-emotional readiness & the transition to kindergarten	X		
Building an equity framework for community readiness		X	
Raising community-level awareness of the value of investing in early childhood	X		
NOTES:			

Ready for Schools linkage of literacy and health through pediatric primary care providers has received national recognition. As the West Michigan Reach Out and Read Affiliate, we led in providing 10,000+ multi-lingual, culturally rich books through well-child visits. The Reach Out and Read model builds home libraries, sparks conversations, supports immunization compliance and helps identify early developmental delays that get earlier intervention. This is equity building from the beginning of life.

COLLABORATION	DOING WELL	MAKING PROGRESS	NOT YET
Leveraging systems and building partnerships that model smart use of resources	X		
Aligning with community partners on innovative solutions	X		
Using research to establish and implement best practices for sustainable increase in community level school readiness	X		
Public/private partnerships that promote equity, integrate efforts and engage across sectors		X	
Elevating Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as a community issue	X		
NOTES:			

A healthy and economically vibrant community requires meeting the real time needs of families, employers, and the services that support working families. Together we are testing solutions that accelerate progress! Advancing evidence based early care and learning initiatives across home, community, and school.

PRESIDENT/CEO COMMENTS:



Right now, nearly 2,000 Kindergarten students - the Class of 2033 - are approaching Kindergarten graduation. Whether at home or school, this milestone will be celebrated in many places with pomp and circumstance that won't be experienced again until high school graduation. When my son, a graduating senior, had medical issues that made home the safest place for his Kindergarten year, I combed the State and community for resources to support his learning. I became his Kindergarten teacher and navigating the landscape was very challenging. 2020 has been a year like none other, but a decade of community investment in early childhood supports and strategies has created a community safety net that has helped hundreds of our youngest learners! Whether they have been attending in-person Kindergarten, learning remotely all year, or a blend of both, every one of our community's soon-to-be first graders share something in common - living in a community that saw their potential before they were even born.

While Ready for School investigates and charts a path forward, we are listening to understand the root causes of barriers to Kindergarten readiness. Listening informs our learning which drives child wellness and readiness solutions. Our community's children will thrive because of the strategies that public and private partnerships have created and will continue to sustain together.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

Ready for School's mission is to **PREPARE** children for success in school by **EQUIPPING** parents and families through the integrated **SUPPORT** of local communities. Made possible by the donors, foundations, corporations and organizations that supported this work in 2020.



\$641,138

2020 SOURCES OF FUNDING

24% Foundations	42% Individuals
8% Corporations	2% In-Kind
24% Program Income	

\$698,369

2020 EXPENDITURES

82% Programs & Services
10% Management & General
8% Fundraising