

WORKING TOWARDS GREAT FUTURES



The Status of Young Children
in Our Six County Region

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ANTRIM | BENZIE | GRAND TRAVERSE | KALKASKA | LEELANAU | MANISTEE



Traverse Bay/Manistee

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

90% of the brain's architecture is built and most of the foundation for language, social behavior, problem solving ability and emotional health is created in the first 5 years.

The first five years of a child's life are a time of great opportunity. A young child's early experiences and environment directly impact the developing architecture of his or her brain.

For our community to make wise decisions about the future of our young children, we must first examine the current status of young children in our 6 county region. This report presents current community data in five areas, each of which makes a critical contribution to the optimal brain development, health and early learning of young children.

Community leaders in our region who understand the vital importance of investing in young children have come together to form the Traverse Bay/Manistee Great Start Collaborative.

The Collaborative works in partnership with, and is funded by, the Early Childhood Investment Corporation to prepare and implement the Traverse Bay/Manistee Early Childhood Action Agenda. Our agenda will outline a strategy to ensure that every child enters kindergarten healthy and eager to learn.



“Early childhood programs and services are an essential part of the social infrastructure. The fastest growing areas in the country are also those that have invested in infrastructure that supports families. In the new economy, these are the areas where people will choose to live.”

– Doug Luciani, President & CEO, Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce

COMMUNITY CONDITIONS

Each of these six Northwest Michigan counties saw a significant rise in unemployment over the last year. Antrim and Kalkaska counties saw unemployment jump more than 5% in just one year.

	Population Estimate (2008)	Persons Under 5 (2008)	Median Income (2007)	Persons Below Poverty (2007)	Unemployment July 2008	Unemployment July 2009
MICHIGAN	10,003,422	6.3%	\$47,931	13.9%	9.1%	15.4%
ANTRIM	24,109	5.1%	\$43,099	12.0%	8.4%	14.3%
BENZIE	17,396	5.7%	\$41,198	9.7%	7.8%	12.1%
GRAND TRAVERSE	86,071	5.9%	\$47,747	8.8%	7.3%	11.7%
KALKASKA	17,066	6.4%	\$39,739	14.0%	8.4%	14.4%
LEELANAU	21,783	4.4%	\$55,292	7.5%	5.5%	8.1%
MANISTEE	24,640	4.9%	\$38,949	14.1%	8.6%	12.8%

Source: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26.html>
Unemployment Rates: United States Bureau of Labor Statistics

PHYSICAL HEALTHCARE

Infants, young children and their families are physically healthy. A healthy beginning in life for all children is an essential part of a healthy community.



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Healthy children are more able to engage in the full range of life experiences that promote early learning. A lack of healthcare or delays in the treatment of health problems can negatively affect their development, sometimes with lifelong consequences. Young children who have a regular healthcare provider (a medical home) are more likely to receive the quality and preventive care they need, including immunizations and screenings for developmental, hearing and vision problems.

A quality start in life begins with consistent and competent prenatal care. Prenatal care is essential to optimizing healthy birth outcomes for children.

Infant mortality has long been a measure of a community's health and its overall social and economic well-being. Infant mortality occurs most frequently in communities with the highest levels of social and economic stress, and lowest levels of resources and supports.

“In many respects, child health providers play the role of “first responder” to a wide variety of issues that affect young children’s healthy development and readiness for school. **Collaboration** between the primary care child health practitioner and other services and supports for children and their families **is essential to promoting healthy development.**”

*Issue Brief: Connecting Child Health and School Readiness
Charles Bruner, Build Initiative and Child and Family Policy Center*

PHYSICAL HEALTHCARE



WHAT DO THE NUMBERS TELL US?

The infant mortality rate is the number of infant deaths for every 1,000 live births. In the 6 county region in 2006 the infant mortality rate was 6.5%. By comparison Sweden’s infant mortality rate is only 2.8%, illustrating the potential for modern industrialized countries.

Smoking during pregnancy is a preventable risk factor associated with low birth weight, prematurity and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, among other poor outcomes. The average for the 6 county region is 19.6%. This is significantly higher than both the state (12.8% in 2006) and the nation (10.2% in 2005).

The percent of live births with low birth weight (3 year average) in 2006 ranged from a low of 5.3% in Antrim County to a high of 8.9% in Manistee County.

County	% of live births to women with less than adequate prenatal care (DCH-CLIKS)	% of live births to women who smoked during pregnancy (CLIKS-RIGHT START)
ANTRIM	21.2	19.0
BENZIE	16.4	19.3
GRAND TRAVERSE	15.3	15.3
KALKASKA	17.4	29.5
LEELANAU	17.9	9.7
MANISTEE	25.0	25.2

PROMOTING THE HEALTH OF YOUNG CHILDREN, BEFORE FIVE YEARS OF AGE, COULD **SAVE SOCIETY UP TO \$65 BILLION** IN FUTURE HEALTHCARE COSTS. *(American Academy of Pediatrics, May 09)*

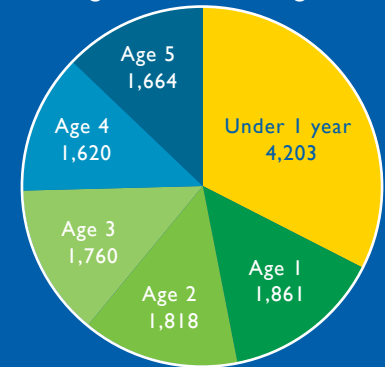
WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Young children who are socially and emotionally healthy are self-confident and can more easily cope with their emotions, control their impulses and form friendships. Healthy young children have learned through nurturing relationships that they can trust adults and look to them for guidance. Research tells us that social and emotional skills and competencies are the foundation for success in school.

When parents suffer mental illness, chemical dependency, depression, or are overwhelmed, they cannot respond appropriately to their children's needs. The best way to help young children thrive socially and emotionally is to ensure that those who are closest to them have sufficient knowledge and support.

Research clearly indicates that unstable, unpredictable caregivers or disrupted relationships render children unable to focus their energies on mastering the appropriate developmental tasks. The maltreatment of children under five occurs at a critical time when the brain is continuing to form, and causes changes in the way the brain develops that are nearly irreversible. Traumatic emotional experiences in early childhood predispose children to school failure, criminal behavior and a repeat cycle of maltreatment of their own children. This is at great emotional cost to the individuals involved and to society, as taxpayers support foster care, criminal justice systems, and the lost earning potential of school dropouts.

2007 Substantiated Victims of Child Abuse and Neglect Ages 0-5 in Michigan



Number of children 0-17 = 29,638
Number of children 0-5 = 12,926 (43.6%)
Number of children 6-17 = 16,712 (56.4%)

Source: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-Legislative-Sec514-PA131-2007-SPS_227770_7.pdf

“Exposure to **trauma, neglect or severe stress** has been shown to be damaging to the developing brain, which **can result in learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral problems.**”

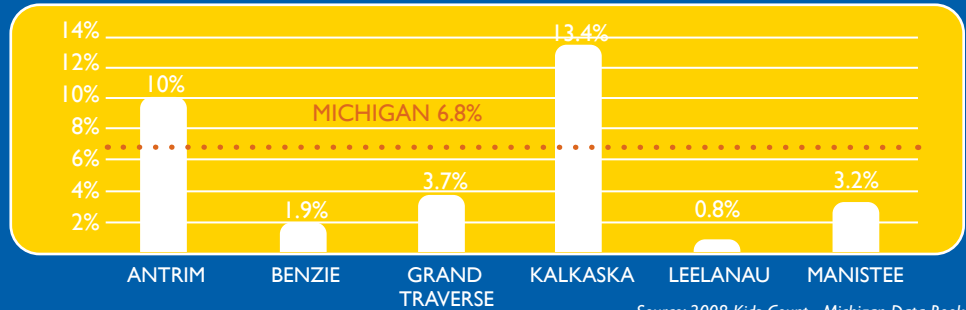
Rene Beyette, Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services, Traverse City

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH

WHAT DO THE NUMBERS TELL US?

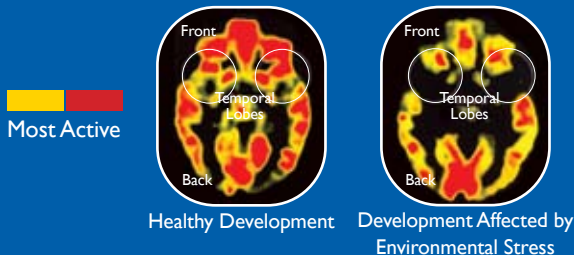
Statewide in 2007, 43.6% of the confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect were under the age of five. 4,203 (32%) of the children under age 5 were less than one year old. These shocking figures clearly illustrate the need for supporting parents during the first months of their child’s life when brain development is so fragile.

Percent of Children in Out of Home Care for Abuse and Neglect by County



Source: 2008 Kids Count –Michigan Data Book

Comparison of the Developing Brain



Toxic Stress Damages Brain Development

Positive Stress A necessary aspect of healthy development that occurs in the context of stable, supportive relationships.

Tolerable Stress Stress; responses that could disrupt brain architecture, but are buffered by supportive relationships.

Toxic Stress Strong, prolonged stress in the absence of adult support can damage developing brain architecture and lead to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health.

Source: Chugani, H.T. Wayne State University

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Families have access to high-quality early care and education. Children are ready to succeed in school and in life.



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Parents are their children's primary caregivers and foremost teachers. With the demands of today's work world, most young children are cared for by someone other than one of their parents prior to entering kindergarten. Over 67% of children in our 6 county region, have all parents working outside the home.

High quality early care and education provides a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for infants and children. It is vitally important that children are with people with whom they can build relationships, experience safety and security, and have consistent opportunities to talk, be read to, play and learn.

Young children who receive high quality early care and education have stronger learning, language and social skills when they enter school.

Children who attend a high quality preschool program in the year or two before kindergarten are better prepared, academically, socially, and emotionally. High quality preschool programs have well-trained staff, small group sizes, and language-rich environments and they actively engage parents in their children's learning.

Michigan voters have a deep, personal understanding of the importance of early childhood programs. **95% say the first five years are vitally important** to a child's learning, growth and development.

Poll conducted by Lake Research Partners, a national public opinion research firm, administered June 11-15, 2009. The margin of error is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

WHAT DO THE NUMBERS TELL US?

The current budget crisis leaves high quality childcare and education in jeopardy. In 2008/2009 over 800 children were served by either Head Start or Michigan's Great Start Readiness Preschool programs in the 6 county region. Programs that allow Michigan families the opportunity to access licensed and regulated daycare are critical.

Number of Children in Full-Time Care

County	Total Population Ages 0-5 (census, 2006)	% of Children Under 6 with All Parents in the Labor Force (census, 2006)	Estimated Number of Children in Child Care
ANTRIM	1,428	63.9	912
BENZIE	1,138	70.3	800
GRAND TRAVERSE	5,784	67.0	3,875
KALKASKA	1,297	65.1	844
LEELANAU	1,129	67.1	758
MANISTEE	1,503	69.5	1,045

Average Cost of Licensed and Regulated Quality Childcare

- **Infants and Toddlers:** \$154/week in Centers, \$117 in Family Homes, \$120 in Group Homes
- **Preschoolers:** \$138/week in Centers, \$113 in a Family Homes, \$115 in Group Homes
- **Yearly cost:** Infant in a Family Home for 50 weeks = \$5,850 which is approximately 40% of a person's yearly gross wages if they earn minimum wage unless they receive state subsidies for childcare.

PARENTING LEADERSHIP

Families support and guide the early learning of their infants and toddlers.



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Family members are the first “teachers” a child encounters and their learning begins within the context of the family. Children thrive in loving, supportive relationships with family members and parents provide the foundation for a child’s earliest growth and development. It is well known that children need a stable, safe and secure family environment to flourish.

Raising young children is challenging for every parent, regardless of income or education. Parents must be caregivers, educators, playmates, role models, providers and protectors. Parents function best when they have a dependable network of people they can turn to for advice and support. All families benefit from access to a community system of services that strengthen and support their parenting and nurturing roles.

“ Kathleen and I participated in **parent education programs** in our area and we know they helped us to be the kind of parents our children deserve. These programs seek to **foster nurturing environments for children** during their most vulnerable and important developmental stages.”

Wayne Schmidt, State Representative 104th District

PARENTING LEADERSHIP

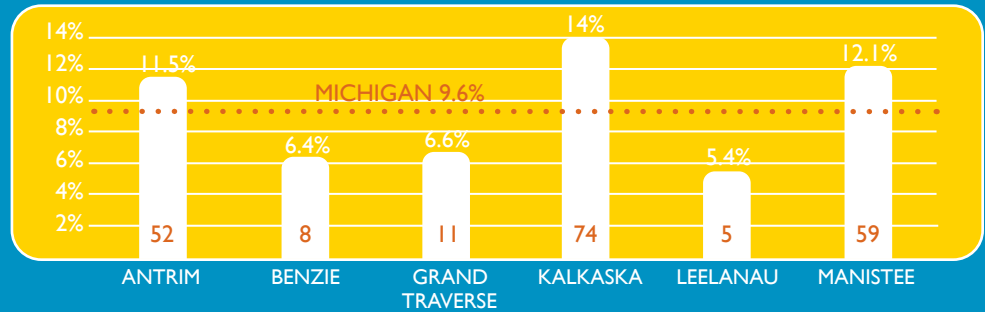
WHAT DO THE NUMBERS TELL US?

The age of parents at the birth of their first child is a predictor of a child’s success. Children born to very young parents are likely to experience financial difficulties, limited educational opportunities, poor health and increased stress. Teenagers who have had academic difficulty and mental health problems are more likely than their peers to give birth before graduating from high school. These young parents often bring to parenthood a history of poverty, abuse, violence, and unresolved grief and loss.

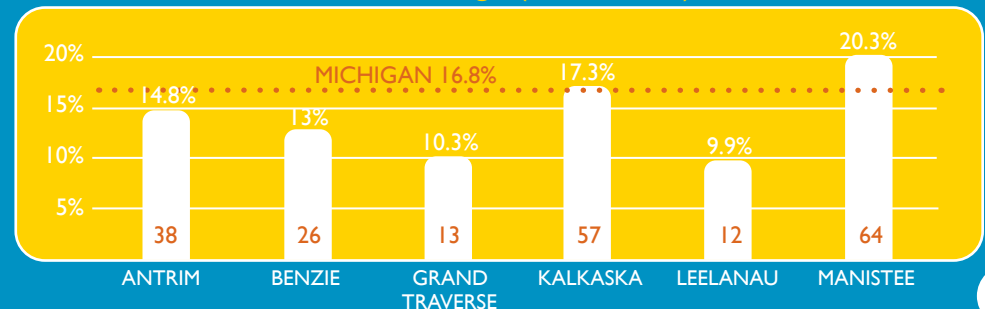
* orange number in bar indicates the county's rank out of Michigan's 83 total counties.

Source: CLIKS –RIGHT START (DCH) 2009

Births to Teens (under age 20) 3 Year Average (2005–2007)



Percent of Mothers with Newborns Without a High School Diploma 3 Year Average (2005–2007)



BASIC NEEDS, SECURITY, SAFETY

Families of infants and young children are economically stable. Infants and young children live in safe families.



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Michigan is experiencing extremely difficult economic times. This translates to economic stress for many families. Young children need a stable, safe, and secure family environment in order to flourish. A lack of sufficient family economic resources can place children's health, development and educational potential at risk. When parents have to focus their full attention on meeting their family's basic needs, enriching activities such as daily reading and play can take a backseat to keeping a roof over the family's head and food on the table. The inability to meet basic needs is one of the most significant barriers to providing effective parenting and caring for children.

Poverty is a strong predictor of challenges for young children. Children who are born into poverty are more likely to die in infancy, have low birth weight, lack healthcare, housing, and adequate food, and receive lower scores in reading and math.

The Children's Defense Fund estimates that for each year that more than 12 million children live in poverty, it will cost our society \$130 billion in future economic output because poor children tend to be less productive and less effective workers as adults.

“ When I became ill and had no health insurance I had to **choose between** taking my child out of **preschool or medical attention** for myself. Unfortunately I had to choose to remove my child from an early start at education.”

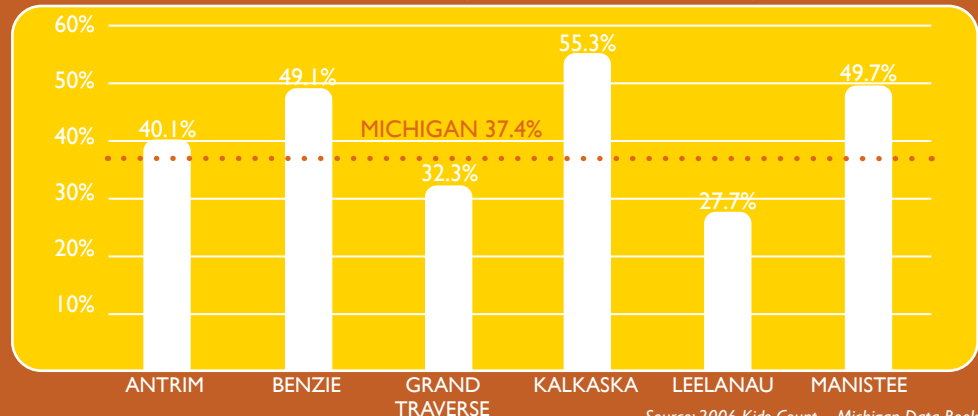
Krystal, mother of children ages 3 and 9, Grand Traverse County

BASIC NEEDS, SECURITY, SAFETY

WHAT DO THE NUMBERS TELL US?

- In Manistee County the average percentage of Medicaid births was 53% through June of 2008. For fiscal year 2009 the percentage has increased to approximately 61%.
- In Benzie County the local Baby Pantry is now serving 80–100 families per month, including Manistee families, to meet increasing need.
- The average percentage of children 0-18 insured by Medicaid for our region is 36% with a high of 49% in Kalkaska and a low of 17.2 % in Leelanau. The state average is 33%.
- The cost of charity care provided by Munson Healthcare System hospitals increased from \$1.2 million in 2005 to \$5.5 million in 2007.

Percent of K-12 Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch in Public School (2007/08 School Year)



- Four of six Northwest Michigan Counties have a higher percentage of children who receive free or reduced lunch than the statewide average. Kalkaska children are nearly 20% more likely than the state average to receive free or reduced lunch.

GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN REPORTED A **242% INCREASE** IN REQUESTS FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE IN THE FIRST HALF OF 2009.

NEXT STEPS

What do we need to do to assure that every young child arrives at kindergarten safe, healthy and eager to succeed in school?



EARLY CHILDHOOD ACTION AGENDA

This report clearly illustrates that our 6 county region has significant work to do on behalf of our young children. With your help and with this report as a starting point, The Traverse Bay/Manistee Great Start Collaborative will lead the way with the development of an Early Childhood Action Agenda.

The Collaborative will be initiating Community Conversations to discuss the following questions:

- Are we as a community content with the future that this information represents?
- Can we as a community do better for our children?
- Why does the data look this way? What are the root causes?

- What community goals/strategies do we need to establish to help our youngest citizens?
- What assets in our community do we have that can help?
- Are there partnerships or systems changes that need to be addressed to make this work more efficiently?

The Early Childhood Action Agenda will include measurable goals, strategies and resources needed for the next three to five years. We urge you to become involved. Only by working together can we assure a strong foundation and a Great Start for every child in our communities.

“It’s simply unacceptable to say that our current status is good enough. My hope is that all sectors of the community will feel called to invest in our children and make them our top priority.”

Erin, mother of children ages 6 and 3, Antrim County

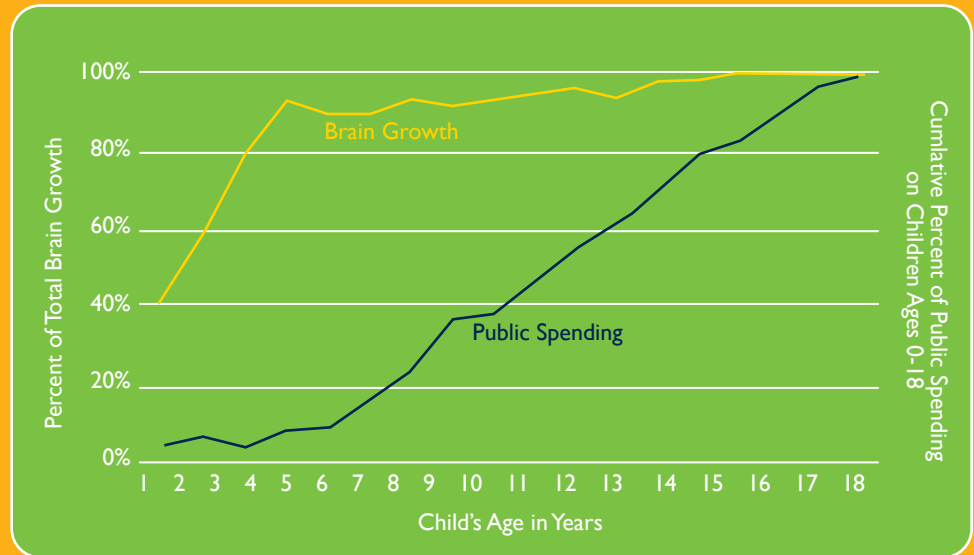
NEXT STEPS

OUR BEST INVESTMENT

“When the Poverty Reduction Initiative was started with the goal to reduce poverty, we were dedicated to removing barriers and helping people exit poverty status. It became obvious that large numbers of children of all ages were living in poverty. We soon learned that poverty reduction is all about poverty prevention. The first and most important prevention step involves early childhood development. That is THE best and most efficient time in a life to set the foundation for poverty prevention.”

– Jim Rowlett, Co-Chair
Traverse Bay Poverty Reduction Initiative

Child Development and Public Expenditures



Source: Rand Corporation

TEN OF THE 15 FASTEST GROWING METROS IN THE UNITED STATES WERE ALSO ON THE LIST OF MOST AMENABLE TO CHILD CARE. *(Early Childhood Education Trend Update, Vol. 1, Issue 2)*



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