

## FOUR KEY THEMES

*Early childhood development is linked to economic development*

*The goal is to **create an integrated, results oriented, cost effective system of services***

*A child's brain is built through an ongoing process **that begins before birth –90% of brain growth occurs before age 5***

***We are all responsible** for ensuring our youngest citizens **a great start in school and in life***



Traverse Bay/Manistee

WORKING  
TOWARD  
GREAT  
FUTURES

### ECONOMIC TALKING POINTS

- Our region's economic future depends on our willingness to invest in early childhood  
The realized return on investment is close to 10%
- Brain plasticity decreases over time. It is less costly to society and individuals to get it right the first time
- A social infrastructure that supports young children and their families is a key component of quality of life in any given area
- We cannot afford to postpone this investment – our ability to compete globally as a region and state depends on our taking action now

### SYSTEM TALKING POINTS

- The goal is to create an integrated, results oriented, cost effective system of services
- If we are more proactive about where and when we spend, we would spend less on social needs overall–90% of the brain is developed by age 5, yet only 4% of public spending is directed toward these crucial early years
- Resources and programs need to be coordinated, locally through private/public partnerships – state funding will continue to vanish
- Collaboration allows for more accessibility, advocacy and a smarter use of resources

### BRAIN/URGENCY TALKING POINTS

- Brains are built upon our earliest experiences – Skill begets skill
- Brain plasticity decreases over time. It is less costly to society and individuals to get it right the first time
- 90% of Brain growth occurs by age 5. We do not get those years back
- “Toxic stress” damages the developing brain and leads to learning difficulties

### WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE TALKING POINTS

- In 2007, 43% of confirmed victims of child abuse were under age 5; of those, the majority were under age 1– this is unacceptable
- No job is more important to our nation's future than that of parent and ALL parents benefit from programs that support them in their role
- 95% of Michigan voters agree that the first 5 years are vitally important
- We are all responsible for ensuring our youngest citizens a great start in school and in life

