



Great Start Cass County Parent Coalition



Across the state of Michigan, the Office of Great Start and the Great Start Collaboratives have convened a network of Great Start Parent Coalitions (GSPC). Coalitions are groups of parents, caregivers and guardians with children under the age of 12 years old. They serve as advocates, cheerleaders, thought-leaders, teachers, students, coaches and team-members. The number of parents, caregivers and guardians who can join the coalition is unlimited. In Cass County, the parents, caregivers and guardians have formed a strong coalition to lend voice and hand to the beliefs that every child prenatal to third grade deserves a Great Start in life.

Great Start Cass County recognizes the importance of getting an early start to prevent unhealthy and unsafe conditions for children so that their future is brighter. The Cass County Great Start Parent Coalition voluntarily come together monthly to advocate and raise awareness of the importance of investing in a comprehensive early childhood system. This coalition is engaged in the planning and implementing of early childhood services in Cass County. We strive to empower parents to be their best and offer support and resources. Our Collaborative has Workgroups that parents are also encouraged to join.

Purpose of the Cass County Parent Coalition is:

- To assist in improving programs and services for Cass County families with children prenatal to third grade by providing a “customer” perspective for the Great Start Collaborative giving the Collaborative and workgroups means to better understand the desires and needs of parents in our community;
- To educate community member about the importance of early childhood;
- To support the Great Start Collaborative’s work toward achieving Michigan’s early childhood outcomes – that are born healthy, remain healthy, thriving and developmentally on track from birth to third grade, that children are ready to succeed in school at the time of school entry, and that children are ready to succeed in fourth grade and beyond by reading proficiently by the end of third grade; and
- To provide information, education, and resources to parents raising young children.

The Coalition supports the work of the Collaborative but also has the authority to support other work that it deems appropriate and necessary for the good of children and families. The Coalition has a “life of its’ own” and is not governed by the Collaborative.

Members of the Cass County Great Start Parent Coalition are volunteers.

Supports for child care and transportation is provided through onsite childcare when possible, childcare reimbursement when childcare is not available or cannot meet the needs of a child for any reason, and travel reimbursement at the Federal Rate (54.5 cents – 2018)

- All Coalition members are expected to support the full and active participation of other Coalition members.
- All Coalition members are expected to respect the diversity of opinions that emerge in Coalition discussions.
- All Coalition members should assist in the recruitment of additional members and in helping us to “spread the word” about our efforts to other community organizations and community members.

Supports:

Stipends for attending Workgroup meetings will be paid at \$10.0 per hour.

In addition, mileage will be reimbursed at a rate set by the Lewis Cass ISD based on the federal mileage rate. Also, free onsite childcare may be available for Collaborative and Parent Coalition meetings when parents RSVPs in advance of the meeting indicating they need childcare. The parent will be reimbursed at \$6.00 per hour not to exceed \$50/day for outside childcare for Collaborative and Workgroup meetings that do not provide onsite childcare.

Stipends for Parent Representatives attending each Great Start Collaborative meeting is \$50.00 per meeting. The parents must be attending Parent Coalition meeting regularly in order to report about Parent Coalition progress to the Great Start Collaborative and must active participants in guiding the work for the Collaborative by providing a parent perspective to the agency members of the Collaborative.

Benefits of joining the Cass County Great Start Parent Coalition:

- Increases parent to parent communication
- Develops a unified statement of standards and expectations for early childhood services
- Increases parent leadership within the community
- Improves the conditions of young children ages prenatal to third grade in Cass County,

Attached is an application to apply for the Core Parent Member positions the Cass County Great Start Parent Coalition.

Application Process:

Qualified applicants who are interested in becoming a member of the Cass County Parent Coalition should complete the attached application and return it to Stephanie Knepple, Parent Liaison. Applications will be reviewed by the Executive Committee of the Cass County Great Start Collaborative. Payment will be made to selected individuals in honorarium by the Lewis Cass Intermediate School District on behalf of the Cass County Great Start Collaborative.

An honorarium is an amount of money paid to an individual for services performed in a volunteer capacity. Honorariums can be subject to Federal or State Tax.