



## JUMPSTART

# EARLY LEARNING

"Good preschool has to be a priority."

-James, Wayne County

## THE ROAD AHEAD

To help kids get the educational foundation they need, Michigan must make sure that:



All children in families with lower and moderate incomes can attend high-quality preschools.



Infants and toddlers with developmental delays have the services they need to ultimately succeed in school and life.



## TIME FOR A TUNE-UP

Early education is a foundation for success in school, including reading by third grade. With Michigan's Read by Grade Three law set to take effect in the 2019-2020 school year, Michigan has no time to lose in continuing to expand preschool education as part of a prenatal through third grade (P-3) continuum, along with focusing on the needs of infants and toddlers who are already showing signs of developmental delays.



## ABOUT THE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR MICHIGAN

We all agree Michigan needs a major tune up. And like the real vehicles we all depend on, it takes a lot of components and tools to make our state go. Without good jobs and training, reliable healthcare, quality education, strong families, and a safe environment, our state can't run properly. That's why we've created a clear and comprehensive plan to help lawmakers on the road ahead—the Owner's Manual for Michigan.

# REPAIRING THE PROBLEM:



## HOW TO IMPROVE EARLY LEARNING

- 1. Ensure that all children have access to a preschool education.** Evaluations of Michigan's state-funded preschool program, the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), show that children who participate score higher on early literacy and math assessments in both urban and rural areas of the state. Preschool programs affect two generations of Michiganders by providing children with the experiences they need while making it easier for parents to work to support their families.

Michigan ranks well nationally in its enrollment of 4-year-olds, but 3-year-olds are still not eligible for the GSRP. In 2016, of the 43 states with state-funded preschool programs, only 15—including Michigan—did not enroll 3-year-olds. The science is clear: learning begins at birth and more needs to be done to integrate early childhood into an educational path from cradle to career. Michigan should ensure that all children have access to a high-quality preschool education, with state funds used initially for children from families with low and moderate incomes.

- 2. Fund *Early On* services statewide.** Since passage of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C program in 1986, Michigan has relied primarily on federal funds for its *Early On* program, which is intended to identify and serve children from birth to age 3 who have developmental delays or disabilities. In the 2019 budget year, the Michigan Legislature approved the first state funding for *Early On*—a total of \$5 million statewide—which falls far below the estimated need of \$70 million. It's time to provide enough funding to give young children the services they need.

## SHARING THE ROAD

**Equity is of utmost importance when it comes to building a better Michigan.** Access to a high-quality early education, and the early identification of children with disabilities and delays, are both important tools for eliminating deep disparities in education for children based on race, ethnicity and income. Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to experience developmental delays, and very high percentages of young children of color are economically disadvantaged. In addition, access to a preschool education is more limited for children whose parents have low incomes, and 59% of 3- and 4-year-old Latinx children are not in preschool.

