

Early Childhood Investment Corporation

Candidate Interview Guide

2010

Purpose

This guide is intended to assist local Great Start Parent Coalition participants to brief/interview candidates for state house or state senate.

The purpose of the briefing/interview process is to:

- Educate candidates about early childhood issues, the Great Start Collaborative and Great Start Parent Coalition in your community,
- Begin to identify champions among potentially elected officials with whom you can continue to have a dialogue about early childhood policy and budget priorities.

Instructions:

1. It is important to have two people attend the interview. One person can ask the questions and the other person can take notes on the Candidate Interview Form.

Candidate Interview Form

Please complete this form electronically and return within one week of the interview to
Bryn Fortune - bfortune@ecic4kids.org

Background Information on Candidate

(Complete as much as possible before the interview using the internet, media clippings---verify the accuracy of the information with the candidate campaign office.)

Candidate's Name: _____

Party: _____

District: _____

Address: (Home or Headquarters, please specify):

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____

Website: _____

Facebook/Twitter: _____

Occupation: _____

Other elected offices held and approximate dates: _____

Experiences with children (Parent, grandparents, volunteer, employment):

Interview date: _____

Place: _____

County: _____

GSPC Representatives:

Phone/Fax/Email:

Record of Response to Interviews:

Section 1.

How familiar are you with the current research on young children's brain development?
How familiar are you with the economic development research on the impact of investment in young children by leading economists from the Minnesota Federal Reserve Bank, the University of Chicago (Heckman) or the work right here in Michigan of Tim Bartik at the Upjohn Employment Institute?
How familiar are you with Michigan's return on its early education (pre-kindergarten aka Great Start School Readiness) investment?

Section 2

We did some polling earlier this year and discovered that Michigan voters strongly support early childhood. Did you see that poll? We want to help you respond to a voter who says he/she will vote based upon your position on early childhood investments.

Section 3

What we really want is for you to start thinking about the state and local issues related to children birth-age 5 so they are ready for school when they hit the kindergarten door.

Section 4

Do you have any other comments or questions? We would like to help you and your campaign with anything we talked about today or any ideas you will be pushing related to early childhood. We would like to invite you to attend one of our Great Start Parent Coalition meetings (timing). Would you or your staff like any additional information on the issues we discussed today or a childrens issues you are concerned about? If we have parents who want to get involved with your campaign who should they contact and what ways can they get involved?

Candidate 2010 Interview Script

Introductions and Background Information

- Thank you for meeting with us today to talk about the school readiness of young children and how important that is to our state's economic future and to having a high quality, world class workforce in Michigan. We want you to understand that we are part of a non-partisan educational effort to educate candidates. We will not endorse candidates.
- My name is <<name>> and this is <<name>>. We are both parents who are involved with (name county(ties)) Great Start Parent Coalition. Our Great Start Parent Coalition is a group of parents who volunteer to help educate parents, community leaders and folks like you about what young children need to be ready for school in our county(ties). (Add two examples of your own local work on advocacy and public education.)
- Our Great Start Parent Coalition is a part of the Great Start Collaborative in XX county(ties). The Great Start Collaborative brings together, around a single table, all the key decision makers in our area. They have been working together – business people and local government people – parents and our community foundation – United Way and our Chamber of Commerce – lay out the steps it's going to take to make sure that every child in our county(ties) is ready for school success when they enter kindergarten.
- We and our Great Start Collaborative are in a partnership with the Early Childhood Investment Corporation. The Early Childhood Investment Corporation brings together federal, state and private dollars to help support our county(ties) to “do what it takes” to make sure kids are ready for school. The funding our county(ties) receives from ECIC has made a real difference in bringing our community together to invest in young children.
- We know there is no silver bullet answer to how we make sure every child is ready for school. That is why Great Start looks at what we need to do for young children's physical and mental health, on track development and early learning and early care, and parenting leadership. Only by getting everybody working together – parents, doctors, child care homes and centers, preschools, and other community organizations - can we make sure that no children slip through the cracks and every child has a chance to reach his or her full potential!! What we are trying to do is especially important for children who have more than the usual risks in their lives – really poor children, children who are neglected or abused and children with special needs.

Section 1

How familiar are you with the current research on young children's brain development? (Partner records answer on record form for each question.)

How familiar are you with the economic development research published by leading economists (from the Minnesota Federal Reserve Bank, the University of Chicago (James Heckman) and the Upjohn Institute (in Michigan) that shows the unprecedented "return on investment" the public achieves through investment in young children's school readiness?

How familiar are you with Michigan's return on its early education (pre-kindergarten aka Great Start School Readiness) investment?

Brain Science

- Gold standard research on the human brain has shown that children's earliest experiences – whether they are good or bad – can actually alter the architecture of their brains. Ongoing bad experiences and toxic stress, can permanently affect children's health, learning, and development.
- In fact, 90% of the intellectual and emotional wiring -the lasting architecture of the brain- is place by the time a child is four.
- If we do not invest early, especially in the most vulnerable children – children who are poor, are experiencing neglect or abuse, have chronic health or mental health conditions or have development problems, we will pay more later – in increased costs for special education, school retention, juvenile justice, prison or mental health treatment.
- The earlier we intervene, the better return we receive on our investment in Michigan's future workforce and citizenry

Return on Investment (ROI)

- The return that is achieved through investment in high quality early childhood programs has come to the attention of leading national economists and business groups.
- These economists reviewed research on a number of high quality early childhood programs, including the High Scope/Perry Preschool Program which occurred right here in Ypsilanti, Michigan, and saw that for every \$1 invested in this program, for low-income children, a return of over \$7 - \$17 was reaped. These were benefits that both came to the adult who was more successful in school, got a better job and stayed out of prison but also to society who pays for failure.
- James Heckman, a Nobel Laureate in economics at the University of Chicago has found that investments in early learning bring far higher returns than investments later in the life span. The nature of compounding returns.
- National business leaders agree that in their world an investment that produced these types of returns would be a "no-brainer."

Michigan's ROI for Great Start School Readiness

- The Early Childhood Investment Corporation commissioned a report by Wilder Research that was published in January of this year to calculate the benefit of investing in early childhood programs on schools, taxpayers, the public, and the economy.
- Michigan began making investments in fully preparing young children for school in the 1980's. The cost savings and revenues realized in 2009 due to these investments in school readiness over the past 25 years are estimated at \$1.15 billion.
- The on-going cost burden of not investing in school readiness for all disadvantaged children is an estimated \$598 million annually.
- Leading economists agree that any strategies to enhance long-term growth in Michigan must include maintaining and upgrading the quality of its workforce. As you can hear, this begins way before high school or college!!

Section 2

We did some polling earlier this year and discovered that Michigan voters strongly support early childhood. Did you see that poll? We want to help you respond to a voter who says he/she will vote based upon your position on early childhood investments.

Public Support for Early Childhood Investment

- A 2009 poll commissioned by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation, of registered Michigan voters, showed that 83% of those surveyed, see early childhood development and education programs as an absolute necessity for their communities.
- 74% of voters polled favor making the funding investments necessary to ensure that all children arrive at school ready to learn—even if it increases their taxes.
- Over 50% of voters indicated they would cast their vote based on a candidate's positions on early childhood investments.

Section 3

What we really want is for you to start thinking about the state and local issues related to children birth-age 5 so they are ready for school when they hit the kindergarten door.(This is your lead in to present your local data from your community---your individual story.)

Current Reality

- Hopefully you know that Michigan has a history of bi-partisan support for public and private investments in programs that help children and families get ready for school success.
- Unfortunately, our on-going economic and budget crisis have placed more children at risk, further eroding our basic safety net for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.
- Because of the way Michigan's state budget is structured, a majority of the cuts adopted by the legislature for this fiscal year 2010 came at the expense of services to children including: a 50% cut to the state's Great Start Readiness Preschool Program (competitive portion); a cut of \$113 million in child care subsidies; a cut in the funding to

home visitation programs and services (such as 0-3 Secondary Prevention and Nurse Family Partnership), an 8% cut in Medicaid provider rates for preventive primary care to 54% of Michigan's children under the age of one; 12% cut of the Great Start Collaborative network – which means Parent Coalitions too.

- If you are elected, we need you to put investment in early childhood at the top of your priorities. We want a state where there is an economic future for our kids, where there is enough opportunity that our kids will want to stay here and not leave Michigan. We hope you want the same things for your children.

Section 4

Do you have any other comments or questions? We would like to help you and your campaign with anything we talked about today or any ideas you will be pushing related to early childhood. We would like to invite you to attend one of our Great Start Parent Coalition meetings (timing). Would you or your staff like any additional information on the issues we discussed today or a children's issue you are concerned about? If we have parents who want to get involved with you campaign who should they contact and what ways can they get involved?

Closing

- Here is a packet of background information on the Great Start Collaborative and Parent Coalition in <<county>>.
- None of the information you shared with us today will be published. It will be used to help us identify opportunities to educate candidates in the coming months and identify champions once elected.
- We will be following up with you in the future to schedule a <<candidate forum/event>>.
- We appreciate your time and look forward to working with you.
- We hope to be a resource to you as you craft your platform and positions on economic development and children's issues during your campaign.
- Thank you again for taking this time to meet with us and discuss the importance of school readiness and Michigan's future.