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# Michigan Child Care Expulsion Prevention Program

## Collaboration with Michigan Child Care Coordinating Council, MSU Extension, and the Great Start Collaborative

Survey Summary No. 8 • August 2008

### Introduction

In February and March 2008, 29 Michigan Child Care Expulsion Prevention Program (CCEP) consultants from 16 CCEP programs across Michigan participated in a survey administered by the Michigan State University evaluation team.

Consultants were asked about their collaboration with three of the primary local organizations with whom they might work for the benefit of children, families, and providers: Michigan State University Extension (MSU-E), Michigan Child Care Coordinating Council (4C), and the Great Start Collaborative. They described the extent of collaboration, how helpful they found collaboration, and the benefits and challenges of collaboration with these organizations.

**This summary provides information on:**

- Level of collaboration with MSU-E, 4C, and the Great Start Collaborative
- Benefits and challenges of collaboration
- Hardest part of collaboration

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### Glossary

4C	Michigan Child Care Coordinating Council. A statewide organization that has regional offices.
Great Start Collaborative	County-based collaborative sponsored by the state- and foundation-funded public corporation known as Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC)
MSU-E	Michigan State University Extension. U.S. Department of Agriculture and state funded organization that has county offices.

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### Level of Collaboration

MSU Extension and the Michigan Child Care Coordinating Council and CCEP/MDCH are state partners. These three entities have a written agreement to collaborate on training for parents and service providers. CCEP consultants must collaborate with MSU-E and 4C at the local level and are strongly encouraged to

collaborate with the local Great Start Collaborative as well. Involvement can be considered as a four-level continuum, including:

- **Networking:** We know about each other. We don't share information, resources, or decision-making.
- **Cooperation:** We share information with each other. We made decisions independently about how to reach our goals.
- **Coordination:** We share information and resources. We make some decisions together about how to meet our goals.
- **Collaboration:** We are really one system. We share information, resources, and ideas. We make most decisions together and reach consensus about how to reach our goals.

Consultants were asked to report on the degree to which they collaborated with MSU-E, 4C, and the Great Start Collaborative on the scale described above. As shown in Table 1:

- **Michigan Child Care Coordinating Council.** Involvement with 4C was strongest, with 36% of consultants reporting Collaboration (the highest level possible) and an additional 36% reporting Coordination, the next highest level. This means that most consultants worked with 4C to share information, resources, and make at least some decisions together. Many consultants considered their CCEP work and 4C to really be one system.
- **MSU Extension.** Collaboration with MSU-E tended to fall in the middle levels: Cooperation and Coordination. This means that most consultants had a relationship with MSU-E that included information sharing, but that they may or may not have worked together to make decisions about how to reach goals. A quarter of consultants reported the lowest level of collaboration with MSU-E (Networking)—they know of each other but don't share information, resources, or decision-making.
- **Great Start Collaborative.** Collaboration with the Great Start Collaborative was on the lower end of the continuum, but ranged from Networking to Coordination. Few consultants reported a strong Collaboration relationship with Great Start, and some communities did not have a Great Start Collaborative at the time of the survey.

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Networking</i>	<i>Cooperation</i>	<i>Coordination</i>	<i>Collaboration</i>	<i>Organization not available</i>
MSU- E	25%	36%	36%	4%	0%
4C	4%	25%	36%	36%	0%
Great Start Collaborative	32%	36%	23%	9%	21%

Note. N for each item = 28 consultants responding; Percent reported is out of those consultants responding. Involvement levels for the Great Start Collaborative are reported only for consultants who reported it was available.

Involvement is strongest with 4Cs, with about a third of consultants reporting true collaboration with shared decision-making and efforts to meet goals. Involvement with MSU Extension is moderate in most cases, but minimal in about a quarter of cases. Involvement with the Great Start Collaborative is lowest, and at the time of the survey, not all consultants were in counties with a Great Start Collaborative.

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## Benefits of Collaboration

### *Was Collaboration Helpful?*

Consultants reported on whether collaborating with MSU-E, 4C, and the Great Start Collaborative had been helpful. Out of the consultants who responded (N = 23 to 27):

- 96% reported that collaborating with 4C had been helpful.
- 63% reported that collaborating with MSU-E had been helpful.
- 57% reported that collaboration with the Great Start Collaborative had been helpful.

### *How was Collaboration Helpful?*

#### 4C

- **Promote each other's organization.** Several consultants mentioned that the local 4C helped publicize the CCEP service through their trainings and “have helped inform providers of services and trainings.” The local 4C referred parents and providers to CCEP. Consultants wrote, “It has been a good source of referrals” and that “this is so beneficial” to their program's success. Consultants also helped promote local 4C resources and refer children to them as needed.
- **Conduct and coordinate trainings.** Consultants described that they shared training information with 4C, coordinated training schedules to avoid conflicts, and worked together to conduct the trainings for providers. Generally, consultants had “wonderful working relationships with 4C”
- **Participate in advisory meetings.** Several consultants reported that the local 4C had played an active role on their advisory boards and at director meetings.
- **Share resources and support each other.** Consultants had a wealth of resources, mailing, and ideas to share with 4C, which “has allowed a creation of an excellent team that's advocating for children.” They assisted each other's cases to meet the needs of the childcare providers. One consultant also mentioned that they participated on Great Start Collaborative together with 4C.
- **Provide support to childcare providers.** Consultants indicated that in some cases, 4C consultants and CCEP consultants worked together to meet providers' needs in their counties.

#### MSU-E

Although some consultants reported that they haven't begun the collaboration or that it was still in the beginning stages and not productive, several consultants described successful experiences in collaborating with MSU-E::

- **Providing training information and opportunities.** Consultants mentioned that MSU-E had the ability to train more providers than CCEP alone. They shared training information and coordinate training schedules.
- **Sharing resources and referrals.** Consultants said they had “a solid relationship ...in sharing resources, trainings, scheduling and outreach” and worked together to avoid duplicating services. In addition, because together they have multiple perspective about service provision, “expertise in multi(ple) areas increases the likelihood of well-rounded services for families/children.”
- **Participation in advisory council by MSU-E staff.** One consultant mentioned that MSU-E staff sat on the CCEP advisory council.

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## Great Start Collaborative

Several consultants said that their county did not have a Great Start Collaborative, they were not involved, or collaboration was just beginning. Others mentioned some benefits:

- **Participate in each other's meetings.** Consultants reported attending every Great Start Collaborative meeting and felt that the CCEP Advisory Committee was welcomed to be integrated within the Great Start meetings. In another case, the Great Start Collaborative coordinator was on the CCEP advisory group, which "has proven to be very helpful in identifying community resources, opportunities for collaboration and networking." Some consultants also participated in workgroups and community events organized by the state-level parent body of the Great Start Collaborative.
- **Share information and support each other.** Collaboration with the Great Start Collaborative increased the access to resources and information. Consultants were "kept informed about early childhood issues" and community needs. They thought together "about ways to reach and support informal providers."
- **Disseminate information about CCEP services and provide referrals.** In some cases, consultants were able to spread information about CCEP services through the Great Start Collaborative and obtain referrals.

Nearly all consultants found collaboration with 4C to be helpful and in a variety of ways: promoting and referring to each other's organizations, coordinating trainings, sharing resources, and providing services to providers. Over half reported that collaboration with MS-E was helpful, particularly by sharing training information as well as resources and referrals. Over half also reported collaboration with the Great Start Collaborative was helpful, taking the form of information-sharing, networking, and referrals.

## Hardest Part of Collaboration

- **Time constraints.** Consultants felt that it was hard for them to devote the amount of time needed to collaborate and meet with other organizations on a regular basis.
- **Finding the right person for collaboration.** Some consultant reported that it was hard to know "the correct person and location" to get the right information. They would have liked to collaborate with people who could really understand their services, "not only hear...but see how it could benefit...families." In some cases, the turnover of staff in the organizations also made collaboration difficult.
- **Rivalry between groups.** Some consultants pointed out that rivalry between organizations could present a barrier to collaboration. "There is some history between the programs and a sense of competition which is hard to overcome even when the supervisor is present and able to schedule meetings with the different groups".
- **Lack of knowledge about other organizations.** Consultants wanted to know more about the collaborative organizations so that they could consider how to assist each other in most beneficial ways. However, consultants felt that the organizations were sometimes protective of their information.
- **Organizations not wanting to do the actual work.** One consultant mentioned that "most organizations enjoy meetings, but not getting out there and doing the work. Another consultant: "it seems we have wonderful brochures with little to back up the services offered."

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- **Organizations working within their own “silo.”** One consultant referred to the “silo effect,” with “everyone doing their own thing in the same area and not paying any attention to each other.” Sometimes the philosophical differences between organizations made the collaboration hard; for example, one consultant mentioned that they had different philosophy from Great Start Collaborative.

Barriers to collaboration included both personal and organizational barriers. Lack of time and knowledge of whom to connect to were cited as important challenges.

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The views expressed are solely those of the authors. For more information about this report, contact Laurie Van Egeren at the above address or phone number, or email: [vanegere@msu.edu](mailto:vanegere@msu.edu)

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