



The Great Start Collaborative of Livingston County (GSC) Operating Guidelines

Article I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the Great Start Collaborative of Livingston County, sometimes referred to as GSC.

Article II: Vision Statement

A great start for every child in Livingston County: safe, healthy and eager to succeed in school and in life.

Article III: Mission Statement

To assure a coordinated system of community resources and supports to assist all Livingston County families providing a great start for children from prenatal through kindergarten entry.

Article IV: Affiliation

Under the direction and guidance of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC), this is the official collaborative committee engaged in the planning and enhancement of the Livingston County early education system.

Article V: Purpose

The purpose of this collaborative committee is to:

1. Participate in the on-going process of making decisions about the nature and operation of early childhood-related programs and services in Livingston County.
2. Assist the local Great Start Collaborative Director in accomplishing early childhood-related tasks, goals and objectives to improve the local system.
3. Assist in the development and implementation of a local Early Childhood Action Agenda.
4. Initiate suggestions for local systems improvement.
5. Encourage parent participation.
6. Assist in recruiting volunteer efforts and local engagement, including philanthropic, faith-based, public and private support.

Article VI: Great Start Livingston

There are three key organizational components of Great Start Livingston:

1. Great Start Collaborative Livingston County (GSC)
2. Great Start Parent Coalition Livingston County (GSPC)
3. Great Start Livingston Subcommittees and Ad Hoc Committees (Workgroups)

Organizational Structure: see attachment

Article VII: Membership Composition

General GSC Membership:

In accordance with guidelines from the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC), the Great Start Collaborative of Livingston County shall consist of representative from the following groups:

- Parents (requirements defined below)
- Business Leaders
- Philanthropic and Charitable Organizations
- Faith Based Organizations
- Organization that provides services on behalf of minority populations
- Intermediate School District
- Local publicly funded health, mental health and human services agencies (DHS, local public health and community mental health)
- Hospital, health care system, managed care health plans and/or health care providers
- Family and juvenile court
- Early On and preschool special education
- Parenting education or family support program not administered by local ISD
- Early care and education professional development providers, including Child Care Connect/4C's
- Head Start
- Great Start School Readiness Program
- Child Care Providers
- Elementary School Principal
- Local policy makers or elected officials

Additional organizations or individuals may apply for voting membership to the GSC. Written application for membership is submitted to the GSC Executive Committee, which makes a recommendation to the full membership for vote. Any community member is invited to attend and participate in public GSC meetings. Voting is reserved for approved members.

Article VIII: Parent Member Requirements and Reimbursement Procedures

Requirements:

Parents (birth, adoptive, foster, non-custodial or legal guardian) must: constitute at least 20 percent of the total required memberships of the GSC; be reflective of the ethnic and racial makeup of the community; and be parenting; children aged 12 or younger. Parent members are recommended to the GSC by GSC Member organizations or from the active membership of the Parent Coalition. Parent members may serve for no more than two (2) consecutive two (2) year terms. Election of new parent members will take place biennially in November at the regularly scheduled GSC meeting.

Parent Reimbursement Procedures:

Parent members of the GSC are to receive financial reimbursement for expenses incurred as a member and access to professional development and mentoring opportunities. Parent

members of the GSC will receive a stipend for their participation in regularly scheduled GSC meetings. Parent members serving on GSC convened subcommittees will be eligible to receive a stipend for their participation in the subcommittee of their choice.

Article IX: Membership Responsibilities

The members provide oversight, direction and support to the work of the Great Start Livingston Collaborative as follows:

- Regularly attend GSC Meetings and attend subcommittee meetings as needed. See Article X for attendance and alternate requirements.
- Design and appoint workgroups
- Participate in the review and approval of workgroup deliverables, recommendations and Action Plans
- Support workgroup activities, recommendations and requests for support
- Actively support the implementation of the Strategic Plan and Action Plans through commitment to infrastructure building, service system integration and shared responsibility, accountability and standards
- Initiate and support appropriate implementation steps
- Assure input and participation of diverse segments within Livingston County
- Identify and utilize funding sources to implement services
- Additional duties as agreed to by the collaborative
- Provide ongoing public support/advocacy for the advancement of early childhood programs and services in Livingston County consistent with the vision and mission

The Collaborative member must have the authority to commit funds, staff, and other resources on behalf of his/her organization.

Conflict of Interest:

No member of GSC shall vote on any matter, which would provide direct financial benefit to that member or member's organization. Members must declare potential conflicts of interest before discussing or voting on items before GSC. The member should immediately disclose the potential conflict. The staff person will facilitate if both chair and vice chair abstain.

Subsequent discovery of any undisclosed actual or perceived conflict regarding a matter in which the member participated in either discussion or voting shall invalidate GSC action on the matter.

Article X: Attendance and Alternates

Attendance:

It is expected that the individual appointed to serve on the GSC will be the person attending the meeting. To remain on the GSC as a voting member, members must attend at least 50% of the regularly scheduled meetings in any given calendar year. If a member misses three (3) consecutive, regularly scheduled meetings of the GSC without a satisfactory explanation, they may be removed from the GSC voting membership. A letter will be sent to the individual, making them aware of their failure to meet the attendance requirement and urging them to designate a replacement from their organization. Voting rights will be reinstated once regular

attendance is established. Removal of any voting member will be brought to the GSC for a vote. A member is not considered absent if his/her alternate is in attendance.

Alternates:

Members may designate a permanent alternate for those times when they are unable to attend a meeting. This person will be appointed by name in writing, by and under the signature of the member, to the GSC Executive Committee. The permanent alternate is given full authority to speak for his/her organization and can vote, only in absence of the member. The appointed GSC member is required to attend at least two (2) GSC meetings per calendar year.

Article XI: Member Term of Service

There is no limit to the term of service for agency/business/faith based representatives.

Parent representatives serving on the GSC are limited no more than two (2) consecutive two (2) year terms. New parent members will be recommended to the GSC by the active membership of the Parent Coalition or GSC Member organizations as needed to maintain the required minimum of 20%, but no more than 30%, parent membership of the GSC. New parent members will be selected biennially in November.

Article XII: Meetings, Quorum, Voting Procedures and Finance

Frequency of Meetings

The Great Start Collaborative shall meet a minimum of six (6) annually on alternate months. *Special meetings* may be called by a Co-Chairperson, by written request to the Chair by one-third of GSC, or by a majority vote of the Steering Committee. Members shall be given a minimum of three (3) day written notice (email) of special meetings, including the date, time, meeting place and purpose of the meeting.

Subcommittees shall meet a minimum of four (4) times per year. Subcommittee meetings may be called by a Co-Chairperson, the Executive Committee, or the GSC Director. Members of each specific subcommittee shall be given a minimum of three (3) days written notice of all meetings, including the date, time, meeting place and purpose of the meeting.

Notice of Regular Meetings

Notice of all regular meetings, including an agenda and minutes of the previous meetings shall be given to all members at least three (3) days prior to the scheduled meeting date either via mail or email.

Agenda Items

Additions and/or amendments to the agenda may be suggested by anyone in attendance and will be considered by the Chairpersons at the onset of each GSC meeting.

Parliamentary Procedures

Roberts Rules of Order, newly revised, shall govern the GSC in all cases to which they are applicable.

Quorum

A quorum shall consist of 50% of the Great Start Collaborative. If however, such members shall not be present, business shall be conducted and the Co-Chairperson(s) will decide if issues requiring action will be brought to vote.

Voting Rights

At each meeting of the GSC, each voting member present shall have one (1) vote. Members who have not had regular attendance as described in Article X will be notified prior to the scheduled vote of their loss of voting rights. Organizations with more than one person in attendance shall receive one (1) vote. All issues which require a vote will be listed in the agenda and distributed to members at least one week before the meeting. The members may, by a majority vote, decide to take action on an item not previously listed on the agenda.

All issues requiring a vote will be, as time allows, reviewed by the Executive Committee and recommendations will be presented to the Collaborative for final approval.

Decision Making

The preferred decision making process shall be consensus. Consensus is defined as: A decision, which every member of the group can support even if the decision is not every member's preference. If consensus cannot be obtained or is not appropriate, Robert's Rules of Order shall guide a formal vote. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the members of GSL.

Finances

The Livingston Educational Service Agency must be the fiscal agent for any ECIC funds from the state of Michigan. When a GSC project is jointly funded, one organization will be designated as the fiscal agent for the project. The Executive Committee and Finance and Fundraising Subcommittee will provide oversight to all financial aspects of the Great Start System through review of annual audits and quarterly financial statements. Funding requests outside of the approved GSC budget, or those that will result in a variance of 20% in any line item will be brought to the GSC Executive Committee for review.

Article XIII: Leadership

The members of the GSC will elect two Co-Chairs, representing different sectors, biennially. To address successful transitions and allow sufficient time for the mentoring of incoming Co-Chairs, of the current Co-Chairpersons serving in 2010, one term will expire in October of 2011, the remaining Co-Chairperson's term will expire in October of 2012. Elections will occur at the regularly scheduled meeting in September. Co-Chairs can serve no more than two consecutive two year terms. Co-Chairs of the Great Start Collaborative are required members of the Executive Committee and are required to attend all Executive and GSC Committee Meetings where voting will take place.

Duties of Co-Chairs:

- Review and approve agendas for Steering Committee and Collaborative meetings
- Preside at GSC meetings

- Sign correspondence and letters of support
- Act as spokesperson for the GSC as needed
- Review and approve annual reports
- Establish and appoint members to committees and work groups
- Mentoring of incoming Co-Chairperson
- Consult with the GSC staff person on a regular basis

Incoming Co-Chairperson(s):

Recommendations for incoming Co-Chair will be made by the Steering Committee to the full GSC no less than six (6) months prior to elections (March). A vote of the GSC is required to elect an incoming Co-Chairperson.

The incoming Co-Chairperson shall serve as a member of the GSC and Steering Committee during the six month transition phase to allow sufficient time for mentoring by the current Co-Chairperson(s).

Duties of Incoming Co-Chairperson:

- Regularly attend GSC meetings, including regularly scheduled GSC meetings, Steering Committee meetings, and subcommittee meetings as able
- Participate in mentoring activities with the current Co-Chairperson(s) during the six month transition phase prior to elections
- Support the work of the GSC by attending GSC events and advocating on behalf of early childhood and the work of the GSC.

Past Co-Chairperson(s):

Each Co-Chairperson(s) shall serve as a member of the Steering Committee for one year following the end of their term in October to assist with successful transition of incoming Co-Chairperson.

Duties of Past Co-Chairperson(s):

- Serve as a member of the Steering Committee for one year
- Support the work of the GSC by attending GSC events and advocating on behalf of early childhood and the work of the GSC.
- Serve as mentor to the current Co-Chairperson(s)

Article XIV: Committees / Work Groups

The purpose of each subcommittee is to advance the work of the GSC Strategic Plan by implementing the strategies and obtaining the objectives outlined in the Action Agendas.

Responsibilities: Members' participation is in support of systems building initiatives identified in vision and mission as follows:

- Attend meetings on a regular basis
- Actively participate in the development, review and implementation of Livingston County Early Childhood Systems Assessment, Infrastructure Review, Report to the

Community, Community Conversations, Strategic Plan, and Action Plan an ongoing annual updates of these activities

- Recommend, develop and secure resources needed to fill gaps in existing services.
- Plan, implement and evaluate the appropriate use of additional resources
- Eliminate fragmentation and duplication of services, allow for more effective utilization of personnel and resources, and ensure the provision of a full array of services within the community
- Identify necessary committees both ongoing and ad-hoc
- Design, appoint, and support committee work
- Decide on appropriate support or implementation of services in the community.
- Support early childhood grant applications
- Provide expertise on issues that impact early childhood
- Promote early childhood in policy decisions through local and statewide advocacy.
- Select appropriate fiduciary for collaborative funds/initiatives
- Build community support for early childhood initiative and services
- Support regional initiatives of which Livingston is a part of including the Child Care Network regional resource

New Member Orientation: All new members will receive background information, a copy of the operating guidelines, a membership list of the GSC and a MOU which will need to be signed. A member of the GSC will be appointed as a mentor to the new member, answering questions and providing background information where needed.

Standing GSC subcommittees will consist of:

- Child Care & Early Education
- Pediatric & Family Health
- Family Support
- Social & Emotional Health
- Parenting Leadership (Parent Coalition)

Each subcommittee shall assist in the implementation of the work plan/scope of work required by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation grant. Additional efforts/modifications for local adaptation as determined by the Steering Committee to meet the vision and mission in Livingston County may be implemented. These committees will be lead by a chairperson who is a Collaborative member. This chairperson will represent the committee on the Steering Committee to ensure coordination and support of work plan implementation.

Chairperson's responsibilities:

- Understand the requirements of the work plan and communicate those requirements to all committee members
- Share information/resources/knowledge/tools in a collaborative fashion with all committee members to advance the work plan activities.

- Coordinate committee meetings on a regular basis, in a manner that makes the most efficient use of member time and advances the committee’s work together and the work of the Great Start Collaborative as a whole.

Additional subcommittees:

- Steering Committee

Responsibilities:

- Be governing body for Great Start Livingston.
- Annual review of goals, objectives, and the work plan
- Provide review of committee work and feedback where appropriate
- Prioritize action items as appropriate and present recommendations to GSC
- General oversight of funding and operations
- Act as a sounding board for the GSC Coordinator
- Participate in annual staff evaluation
- Act on behalf of the GSC between meetings as necessary

The committee will consist of the Chairperson, Vice Chair, the Chairs of each standing committee, the Parent Liaison, and the Great Start Collaborative Coordinator. All members of the Steering Committee must be active members of the Collaborative, regularly attending scheduled meetings. The GSC Executive Committee will have the authority to make decisions based on recommendations from the Collaborative body.

The Steering Committee will be staffed by the GSC Coordinator. The GS Parent Liaison will attend as able to maintain a strong connection with the work of the Great Start Parent Coalition.

Meetings and Attendance: The Great Start Livingston Steering Committee meets up to eleven (11) times annually. The calendar of meeting dates is established in the 4th quarter for the year in advance. Members are expected to attend at least 75% of the meetings. If a member misses three (3) consecutive, regularly scheduled meetings without delivering a satisfactory explanation in writing or in person, a representative of GSL will contact the member and ascertain their continued interest in membership.

- Inter-Agency Coordinating Council (ICC)

Members serve to bring together community agencies to share expertise and resources to provide the best and most effective early childhood service delivery system for the community. The work of the ICC incorporates numerous components of early intervention programs, services, and resources such as Early On, Infant Mental Health, Public Health Department, and others. Members will advise the larger group about family needs and organizational resources.

- Finance and Fundraising

Members are responsible to evaluate and make recommendations to leverage public and private funds in support of the strategic plan. Members will review community

funding, link between the GSL and HSCB on funding issues, seek out alternative grants/income sources supporting the strategic plan, consult with Phase One grantees and develop creative funding strategies reflective of the economic reality of the county.

Ad Hoc workgroups:

Ad Hoc workgroups shall be established on an as-needed basis, with a specific purpose for a specific length of time. Ad hoc workgroups operate within a charge approved by GSC. Chairs of ad hoc workgroups are elected by the workgroup.

- **Communications Committee**

Members will be responsible for supporting the designated communications activities outlined in the GSC work plan and Communications Plan including recruitment, the development and execution of an annual communications plan, marketing, advertising, event planning, publications support, press releases, advocacy and other communications related activities. The Communications Liaison will serve as the project manager in this effort with the support of the Communications Chair and in coordination with Great Start Collaborative Coordinator and Parent Liaison.

ARTICLE XV: Public Comment

Individuals who are not GSC members or designated alternates may speak to GSC in accordance with the following procedures:

- Any person wishing to address GSC shall be recognized by the GSC Co-Chair(s)
- After being recognized by the Chair, he/she must state his/her name and identify the topic on which he/she wishes to address the Board
- Persons may address matters or issues that are determined relevant to GSC business
- Comments shall be limited to no more than three minutes per individual/organization and at the times designated in the agenda, except where extended privileges are granted by the chairperson

ARTICLE XVI: Amendments

The Steering Committee will address any amendments or revisions as needed. A draft will be presented to the Collaborative body for approval upon completion. The Operating Guidelines may be amended by a majority vote of the membership present at a regular or special meeting, or by a majority vote of the entire board, providing that notice of the meeting shall include notice of the proposed amendments.

ARTICLE XVII: Conflict Resolution

The GSC values and encourages the sharing of ideas and new perspectives. It is recognized that in collaborative decision making, areas of conflict and disagreement may arise. The GSC believes that who is right or wrong is not of concern. The exchange of perspectives and points of view – not the selling of them – is the issue. Therefore, the GSC will address areas of conflict and disagreement by implementation of a Skillful Discussion model:

These issues shall be addressed within the GSC by:

- 1) Exploring impasses.
 - a. Identifying the areas of agreement.
 - b. Clarifying the points of disagreement.

1. Exploring the facts: What is the data and what does it tell us?
 2. Exploring Methods: How should we do what we need to do?
 3. Reviewing Goals: What is our objective?
 4. Reviewing Values: Why do we think it must be done a particular way, what do we, as the GSC, believe in?
- c. Reaching group consensus so that the GSC can move ahead on the areas of agreement.
 - d. Continuing to address the points of disagreement as the project develops.

2) When areas of conflict and disagreement cannot be resolved or impede the progress within the GSC, the assistance of a mediator shall be obtained.

Attachments