



Operating Guidelines

2008

Montcalm Area Great Start Collaborative

Operating Guidelines

Vision:

*All children will enter kindergarten safe, healthy,
and eager to succeed in school and in life.*

Mission Statement:

The purpose of the Montcalm Area Great Start is to assure a coordinated system of community resources and supports to help families provide a great start for their children 0-5years old.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this collaborative is the Montcalm Area Great Start Collaborative, hereafter referenced as the GSC.

ARTICLE II: AFFILIATION

Under the direction and guidance of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation – (ECIC) this is the official collaborative for the Montcalm Area. We are engaged in the infrastructure planning and enhancement of early childhood programs, care and parenting services throughout the Montcalm Area.

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE

The purpose of this collaborative committee is to:

- A. Participate in the on-going process of making decisions about the nature and operation of early childhood-related programs and services in the Montcalm Area.
- B. Assist the local GSC Director in accomplishing early childhood-related tasks, goals and objectives to improve the local system.
- C. Assist in the development and implementation of a local early childhood and parenting services action plan.
- D. Initiate suggestions for local systems improvement.
- E. Elicit parent participation.

- F. Assist in recruiting volunteer efforts and local support, including philanthropic, faith-based, public and private support.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

An initial membership list has been developed, and is based on requirements developed by the ECIC.

Required members (16), which represent the diversity of the county, are as follows:

- Parents (a minimum of 20% or 4 whichever is greater, with no maximum of parent representatives)
- Business leaders
- Philanthropic and charitable organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Intermediate School District
- County Commissioner
- Local publicly funded health, mental health, and human services agencies
- Managed care health plans and health care providers
- Family court and juvenile court
- *Early On* Michigan and preschool special education
- Early care and education professional development providers, including Community Coordinated Child Care (4Cs)
- Head Start
- Great Start Readiness Program
- Child care providers
- The K-16 education community, including the local education agencies and community colleges
- Local policy makers, and other elected officials from municipal government

Other membership requirements:

- Parents (birth, adoptive, foster, non-custodial or legal guardian) must constitute at least 20 percent of the total membership; be reflective of the area's diversity and be parenting children age 12 or younger. Parent members can receive financial reimbursement for expenses incurred as a member, and have access to professional development and mentoring opportunities.
- Members may represent only one agency / organization despite affiliation with multiple organizations.
- Whenever possible, the members of the collaborative, with the exception of parents, will have authority to commit funds, staff and/or other resources on behalf of their organization. Representatives of organizations, unable to commit, are expected to follow through within their agency to secure requested commitment/s.

Other members may be included on the Great Start Collaborative to further the work of the collaborative. Members complete a Memorandum of Understanding agreement and receive an orientation packet to insure an understanding and commitment to the mission of the collaborative. Updated membership lists will be provided to members as necessary at regularly scheduled meetings.

ARTICLE V: Membership Responsibilities

It is crucial to the success of the Montcalm Area GSC to have an active and engaged membership. ECIC requires that 75 percent of the GSC members attend scheduled meetings. There will be a minimum of six collaborative meetings held per year. The membership provides overall direction in the governance and operations of the collaborative, appoints committees to undertake specific functions of the collaborative, and assures accountability for commitments made within the collaborative and the community.

Membership duties include but are not limited to:

- A commitment to attend meetings or send a designee
- Appoint committees, and/or workgroups for specific tasks
- Provide direction, resources and support for committees and workgroups
- Cooperate with providing necessary statistical and other information needed by the collaborative.
- Review progress, and ensure coordination throughout the assessment and strategic planning process
- Assure accountability for commitments made within the collaborative and the community
- Keep the Director informed of any changes in membership, contact information, or availability of time and resources
- Participate in and/or provide for professional development and mentoring opportunities when necessary
- Make a good faith effort to contribute toward fulfilling the mission and purposes of the Montcalm Area- Great Start Collaborative

ARTICLE VI: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

This organization shall democratically elect the following officers from the membership of the Great Start Collaborative. If necessary, the Executive Committee may conduct any business not acted on at a regular scheduled meeting to respond to unforeseen deadlines such as, but not limited to, grant responses.

Executive Committee elections will be held in October of each year, with each position being one year in length. The Executive Committee shall consist of the following members,

- Past Chairperson
- Chairperson
- Vice-Chairperson – to become chairperson
- Great Start Director (Non voting: staff assistance to the GSC)
- Parent Liaison (Non voting: staff assistance to the GSC)
- Chairperson from each standing committee
- Recording Secretary

Responsibilities of officers are as follows:

Past Chairperson

- Provides continuum of practice
- Consultative assistance to executive team

Chairperson:

- Preside at GSC meetings
- Consult with the GSC Director prior to meetings
- Provide a collaborative leadership style
- Appoint members to committees and workgroups when necessary
- Act as the spokesperson for the GSC when requested by the Great Start Director

Vice-Chairperson:

- Will serve as the Chair Elect
- Preside over meetings in the absence of the Chair
- Fulfill the duties of the Chair in the event the Chair is unable to do so for any reason
- Serve out the term of the Chair in the event that he/she is unable to complete the term of office
- Notify the GSC Director in advance in the event that neither the Chair or Vice-Chair will be present and able to preside at a scheduled meeting

Recording Secretary:

- Shall take notes at GSC meetings, noting: attendance, actions taken, next steps
- Will provide the GSC director with the notes for distribution to GSC members

Standing Committee Chairpersons:

- Preside over Committee meetings to conduct assigned duties
- Note attendance, actions taken and next steps of Committee

A. The total number of meetings scheduled annually will be at least six. Members or a representative (of choice), are required to attend a minimum of 4.

B. Vacancies: If an officer has three (3) unexplained absences from meetings, the Executive

Committee will review their membership, and they may be replaced by the membership at the next meeting.

- C. A member or member agency with absences greater than 2 per year may be sent a letter, from the Chair regarding attendance.
- D. Officers will be elected by a majority vote of the members present and will take office at the first Collaborative meeting that follows the election.
- E. Offices will be held for one (1) years-with the opportunity to serve a second term based on membership vote. The Vice Chairperson will serve as Chair Elect. No officer will be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms.
- F. Members will serve on committees as needed.

ARTICLE VII: MEMBERS

- A. Members of the Great Start Collaborative, in cooperation with the Great Start Collaborative Director, will determine by majority, the frequency, location and time of meetings.
- B. Members will receive notification of meetings at least one week before the meeting is scheduled.
- C. Business decisions regarding the collaborative will be made by majority vote of those present at the collaborative meeting.
- D. The GSC will use the "one agency, one vote" rule as a guideline for voting purposes. Although our GSC partners can have a designee to attend meetings, only one person in attendance is able to vote on their agency's behalf.
- E. Each parent representative has a vote.
- F. The GSC director and parent liaison do not have a vote at GSC meetings.

ARTICLE VIII: COMMITTEES

The GSC will undertake specific tasks, accomplishing the detailed work of these tasks and processes via the use of committees and workgroups. Additional committees may be established as needed. Standing committees for the planning year of the GSC project will include:

- **Executive Committee:** Share administrative oversight

- **Communications Committee:** Design a community communications plan that will promote early childhood initiatives as a priority for Montcalm Area Great Start Collaborative.
- **Strategic Assessment and Planning:** Mapping existing early childhood supports and services. Provide analysis of existing resources. Identifying possible 'holes'. Create report of findings with an action plan for improvement.

ARTICLE IX: QUORUM

Twelve members present or linked via telecommunications constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE X: VOTING

Each collaborative agency will have one vote. If an interested party sends more than one representative to the GSC meeting, the voting representative must be identified. No representative shall cast a vote for more than one agency at any meeting. A simple majority will make decisions.

ARTICLE XI: PROCEDURES

- A. Roberts Rules of Order will be followed in all cases where they are consistent with GSC By-Laws.
- B. Conflict Resolution:
The GSC values and encourages the injection of new perspectives. The GSC recognizes 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 Discussions model:
 - 1. Areas of Conflict and Disagreement will be addressed within the GSC meeting by:
 - a. Exploring impasses.
 - 1) Identifying the areas of agreement.
 - 2) Clarifying the points of disagreement.
 - Exploring the Facts: What is the data and what does it tell us?
 - Exploring Methods: How should we do what we need to do?
 - Reviewing Goals: What is our objective?
 - Reviewing Values: Why do we think it must be done in a particular way? What do we, as the GSC, believe in?
 - b. Reaching group consensus so that the GSC can move ahead on the areas of agreement?

- c. Continuing to address the points of disagreement as the project develops.
2. When areas of conflict and disagreement cannot be resolved or impede the process within the GSC, the assistance of a consultant or mediator will be obtained.
 3. Funding Decisions:
 - a. A prioritized list of needs will be developed and used for future funding decisions. Members will vote on the priority list of needs to be addressed (time permitting) at a regularly scheduled GSC meeting. The prioritized list will be reviewed at the semi-annual strategic planning meetings and then forwarded to the Executive Committee.
 - b. Whenever possible, all members will be notified when grant funds are available. This could be accomplished via email, fax, special meetings, and regularly scheduled meetings, time permitting.
 - c. When funds become available, the Executive Committee will meet to determine if the goals of the new funding fit with the GSC strategic plan. If it is determined that there is a good fit, the Executive Committee will use the GSC strategic plan and priority list to develop a recommendation for funding. The Executive Committee will present their recommendations to the GSC membership. This could be done via email, fax, and special meetings, if time permits. The membership will vote on Executive Committee's recommendations at the next regularly scheduled meeting (time permitting), or a special meeting will be called for this purpose. In extenuating circumstances, such as short deadlines, the Executive Committee's recommendations will be adopted; otherwise, recommendations will be presented at the next regularly scheduled GSC meeting.

ARTICLE XII: AMENDING OPERATING GUIDELINES

These operating guidelines will be reviewed annually, and may be amended by a majority vote of the GSC members. Recommendations to change or amend these guidelines may be made by any member of the collaborative by submitting the proposed changes to the Executive Committee for review and formal presentation to the membership.

The first draft of proposed amendments will be prepared by the Director based on relevant available documents as provided by the ECIC as part of the request for proposal and grant award process. The draft will be reviewed and refined by the members. A revised draft will be presented at the next collaborative meeting. The Montcalm Area GSC membership will vote on the adoption of the revised draft. The procedures and amendments clause will become effective upon adoption of the revised draft.

