



MINNESOTA EARLY CHILDHOOD



INITIATIVE

a campaign for our youngest children



Giving our children the best possible start in life

All young children need a healthy start in life to grow into strong, productive adults.

Quite frankly, if our children don't thrive, our nation won't either.

Evidence shows that the United States is under-investing in early childhood development, which actually diminishes our nation's ability to compete in the global marketplace. Research confirms the huge long-term economic payoffs from investments in quality early childhood development programs.

That's why the six Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIFs) developed the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative: to strengthen early care and education for young children and their families.

It's the most important investment communities can make for the future.

It all started in 2001, when the MIFs began to collaborate on a joint public policy initiative that focused on early childhood. In 2003, thanks to a \$3.2 million grant from The McKnight Foundation, the MIFs were able to launch the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative. The grant leveraged funding from others and was followed by additional \$3 million grant awards from McKnight in 2006 and 2008.

The Initiative works to ensure that every young child has the best possible start toward a healthy life of learning, achieving and succeeding.

Building nurturing communities of thriving children

The Early Childhood Initiative's overarching goal is to work with communities and counties throughout Greater Minnesota to develop Initiative coalitions. These teams of local citizens and organizations have more than 3,000 members representing diverse sectors, from early care and education providers and K-12 educators to business and civic leaders.

To date, the Initiative has developed 66 early childhood

coalitions, with plans for 12-15 new coalitions in the next three years.

These coalitions encompass over 170 communities and 52 of the 80 Greater Minnesota counties.

Each coalition is led by a coordinator who facilitates the process of identifying, planning and implementing strategies specific to helping their communities become more nurturing places for young children and their families.

FAST FACTS

- *Fewer than half of Minnesota's children enter kindergarten fully prepared—a fact that has dire consequences for the future of our state.*
- *Kids can't wait to learn. Between birth and age five the brain develops at a faster rate than at any other time in a person's life. We know that children with high-quality early care and education have a better chance of succeeding in school and later in life.*
- *Quality early care and education is an important economic sector. With nearly a million providers and teachers, another 2 million family members, friends and neighbors who provide care, and other after-school and summer enrichment programs, the total revenues would likely exceed \$100 billion.*
- *Strong early childhood programs help attract better workers and support working parents.*



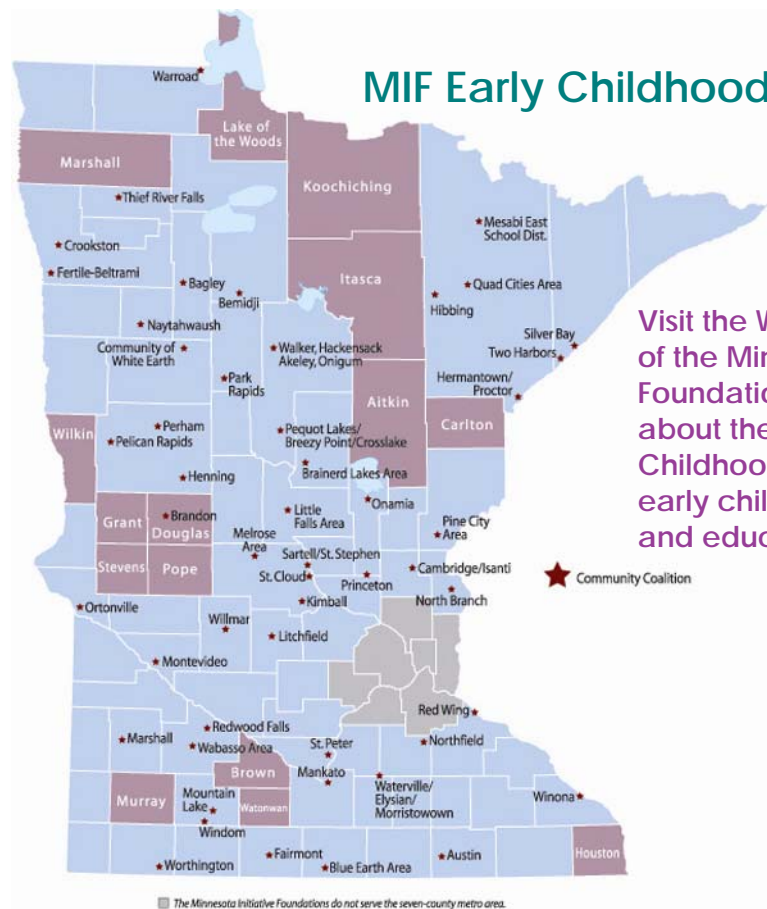
Hundreds of early childhood development ideas for your community!

Since 2003, more than 400 projects, programs and activities have been implemented by early childhood coalitions to strengthen local early care and education. Examples include:

- Community literacy programs to increase reading in the homes of families with young children, regardless of income.
- Home visits for new parents and their babies.
- Professional associations for licensed family child care providers to share resources and connect with the local early childhood community.
- An Early Childhood Dental Network that promotes dental care education and increases dental access for children of low income families.
- Kindergarten transition and school readiness projects.
- Media campaigns and meetings with local legislators and community members to increase awareness of early care and education.

See them all at any of the MIF Web sites.

MIF Early Childhood Coalitions



Visit the Web sites of any of the Minnesota Initiative Foundations to learn more about the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative and early childhood early care and education.

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Southern Minnesota

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