

# VISIONS



**OUR LITTLE ONES ARE  
THE FUTURE - WHAT WE  
DO TO MAKE IT BRIGHT**

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## VISIONS

A publication of Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency published three times yearly.

The newsletter is a vehicle to communicate to our educational partners current information and activities as they relate to the support of our Mission Statement.

CCRESA constituents include: Bath, DeWitt, Fowler, Ovid-Elsie, Pewamo-Westphalia, St. Johns, charter and non-public schools.

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CCRESA is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

## CCRESA Vision

It is the vision of CCRESA to create an environment where everyone is continually learning.

In pursuit of this vision, CCRESA will:

- Deliver high quality educational programming and support
- Lead the pursuit of educational opportunities for learners of all ages
- Model and encourage lifelong learning
- Continually challenge the status quo

## Mission Statement

It is the mission of CCRESA to lead and support learning.

In pursuit of this mission, CCRESA will:

- Prepare learners to be successful in a competitive, global economy
- Continually enhance student achievement
- Employ a competent, enthusiastic staff that provides exemplary customer service
- Collaborate with schools and other agencies
- Continually assess the effectiveness and efficiency of CCRESA programs and services

It is the policy of the Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency (CCRESA) that no discriminatory practices based on gender, race, religion, color, age, national origin, disability, height, weight, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliations and beliefs, or any other status covered by federal, state or local law be allowed in providing instructional opportunities, programs, services, job placement assistance, employment or in policies governing student conduct and attendance. Any person suspecting a discriminatory practice should contact the Director of Special Education, 1013 South US-27, St. Johns, MI 48879, or call 989.224.6831.



# SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

## Childhood Events that Impact Bright Tomorrows



**Wayne Petroelje**

Have you ever thought about what you remember about your childhood? Do you remember that special feeling you had about a surprise birthday party, a parent helping you learn to ride a new bicycle, playing ball with your friends in the back yard, telling scary stories and catching fire flies by a campfire, watching fireworks with your family, fishing with your uncle, almost getting in trouble for something, that special teacher that made you just feel great? I was talking to a dear friend on the phone the other night and we were reminiscing about our shared childhood memories. He told me how much he enjoyed talking about those precious memories.

What do you remember about day care, pre-school, kindergarten and elementary school? How can the experiences that happened due to early identification of special needs, early intervention services and good quality educational programming impact a child? Think about how detecting and treating speech, language and hearing disorders prior to starting school can help lead to better outcomes and a brighter future. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association has designated May as "Better Hearing and Speech Month" and is focusing on the concept that "Communications Disorders are Treatable." Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency (CCRESA) serves about nine birth to eight year old children with hearing disabilities, over 290 birth to eight aged children with Speech and Language needs and provides many other special education services to over 125 birth to eight year old children in Clinton County. We also provide a variety of early intervention services to 277 birth to three year old children through *Early On*® (based on the Fall 2013 count including active and exited children in the last 12 months). Early childhood center-based programs are also available for children with Moderate or Severe Cognitive Impairments needing special educational services.

Clinton County Great Start has been working hard to improve the birth to eight early childhood system, be more responsive to the community and help meet parent identified needs. According

## SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER CONT.

to the state-wide Evaluation of the Great Start Initiative, "More parents and providers of early childhood services think a greater number of young children have gained access to education, child care and physical and social-emotional health services ...and that parents are playing a larger role in making sure those services are available." Over 132 children/88 families are currently participating in Great Parents Great Start Play Groups and 318 parents have attended parent education events. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library, with support from our local districts, provides children aged birth to five who live within CCRESA boundaries one age appropriate book per month until their fifth birthday. Over 605 children are receiving books each month. The Great Start Readiness Program provides quality pre-school programming to over 189 children in Clinton County.

In the early elementary grades CCRESA Instructional Services staff assist local districts with building level school improvement, assessment, Common Core professional development, transition from preschool to kindergarten, planning for Multi-Tiered System of Supports implementation and building specific needs to insure student achievement.

Please take time to read about some of these programs and services highlighted in this issue where CCRESA staff are working hard to make a difference in the lives of young children. In closing, an unknown author reminds us that truly "100 years from now it will not matter what job I had, what kind of car I drove, or how much money was in my bank account, but that I made a DIFFERENCE in the life of a CHILD."

## INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

### **Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) (as an example of data tool)**

Early childhood is a critical time for the development of many skill sets. Within the realm of academics, educators are particularly concerned with building a strong foundation for early literacy and early numeracy skills from kindergarten through 3rd grade. So, how do we work to ensure systems and procedures to provide all children with the opportunity to build these foundational skills?

Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) is a framework to provide *all* students (from preschool to secondary level) with the best opportunities to succeed academically and behaviorally in school. MTSS focuses on providing high quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress and using data to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals. Data are used to allocate resources to improve student learning and support staff implementation of effective practice. A related term, Response to Intervention (RtI) is often used interchangeably with MTSS. However, the term "intervention" may lead one to think about a reactive system of support; MTSS aids in our focus and intention to build a comprehensive system of *preventative* and *proactive* supports for *all* students.

One example of data used with students in grades K-6 is Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). DIBELS is used for both universal screening (administered

three times per year to all students) and progress-monitoring (more frequent assessment of some students). DIBELS assesses students' early literacy skills in the "Big Five" areas of reading: phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency with text, vocabulary and comprehension (as outlined by the National Reading Panel). Analysis of this data can assist in allocating instructional supports to individual students *and* in examining overall program/instructional effectiveness.

CCRESA is committed to providing a variety of supports for local districts to build internal capacity as they implement an integrated academic and behavioral MTSS framework with fidelity. This will be accomplished through the development of effective organizational structure including policy, competent practices and procedures to ensure sustainability over time. To this end, we are committed to the reliable use of best practices and data based decision making and we look forward to the opportunity to work collaboratively with local districts in support of MTSS.



# INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

## Michigan Lawmakers Considering a Reading Retention Policy for Third Grade Students

Information provided by the Michigan House Fiscal Agency

Recently, Michigan legislators have been exploring potential legislation, HB 5111 and a complementary bill, HB 5144, designed to help ensure all children complete third grade reading at grade level. House Bill 5111 (H-3) would amend the Revised School Code to specify that, beginning with students enrolled in grade one in the 2014-2015 school year, a student could not enroll in grade four without passing the grade three state reading assessment. Specifically, the bill says that if a student who was enrolled in grade three in a school district or public school academy did not achieve a score of at least proficient in reading on the grade three state assessment, then the board of the school district or the board of directors for the charter school would have to ensure that the student was not enrolled in grade four until proficiency on the grade three assessment was achieved. Also, under the bill, if a child sought to enroll for the first time in a school district or charter school in grade four, then school officials would be required to prohibit enrollment unless the student had achieved at least a proficient score in reading on the grade three state assessment. However, House Bill 5111 specifies that if the superintendent of a student's school district or the chief administrator of a student's charter school granted a good cause exemption, then the student could enroll in grade four without meeting the grade three reading proficiency requirements.

In addition, HB5133 would amend the Revised School Code to require the Michigan Department of Education to adopt policies and programs that enable more Michigan children

to attain proficiency in reading by the end of the third grade. The bill would require the Michigan Department of Education to help ensure more students achieve a proficient score on the grade three state reading assessment. To that end, the Department would be required, not later than April 1, 2014, to submit to the standing Education committees of the House and Senate a report identifying reading programs that have been demonstrated to be successful in helping low-performing elementary school child to become more proficient in reading. Then, not later than June 1, 2014, the Department of Education would be required to recommend or to develop one or more reading programs that would allow students to achieve reading proficiency on the grade three state reading assessment. The programs would be required to focus on diagnostic evaluation, early intervention, tutoring and mentoring. Then, for the 2014-2015 school year, the Department of Education would be required to implement a pilot program serving up to 400 K-three students in up to four school districts or charter schools, at least one of which must be located in an urban area. In addition, the Department of Education would be required to develop a process that enables third graders to retake the grade three reading assessment. More information on these bills can be found at:

<https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2013-2014/billanalysis/House/pdf/2013-HLA-5111-OF1C4A2F.pdf>

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

### The Great Start Readiness Program



The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) is a State funded preschool program for four-year-old children (age four on or before October 1, 2014) with factors which may place them at risk of educational failure and make it more difficult for them to succeed in school and in life. Income is one of those factors; children up to 300% of poverty (\$71,550 for a family of four) are eligible. Other risk factors such as a developmental delay, challenging behavior, English as a second language, parent/guardian with low educational attainment, abuse/neglect of child or parent or environmental risk may also be considered for eligibility. GSRP is a regulated program and the State provides guidelines on teacher qualifications, class size, curriculum, student screening and

assessment, parent involvement/participation and home visiting. Students attend school day (seven hours) programs Monday – Thursday. The GSRP served 189 four-year-old children in Clinton County during the 2013-14 school year (see table).

School District	Number of Four-year-old Students Served
Bath Community Schools	18
DeWitt Public Schools	17
Fowler Public & Pewamo-Westphalia Community Schools	18
Ovid-Elsie Area Schools	72
St. Johns Public Schools	64

For additional information or to complete an interest form online go to: [www.ClintonPreschool.org](http://www.ClintonPreschool.org) or call 855.644.7735.

# EARLY CHILDHOOD

## Clinton Great Start Early Childhood Programs

The Michigan Department of Education - Office of Great Start charged Intermediate School Districts with ensuring that all children birth to age eight, especially those in highest need, have access to high-quality early learning and development programs and enter kindergarten prepared for success. The Governor outlined a single set of early childhood outcomes against which all public investments will be assessed:

- Children born healthy;
- Children healthy, thriving and developmentally on track from birth to third grade;
- Children developmentally ready to succeed in school at the time of school entry; and
- Children prepared to succeed in fourth grade and beyond by reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

The Clinton County Great Start Collaborative (GSC) developed a plan to support the above early childhood outcomes.

The GSC is a partnership of community leaders, business owners, charitable and faith-based organizations, health and human service agencies, educators and parents from the Great Start Parent Coalition.



The GSC is collaborating with the Mid Michigan District Health Department on the first two outcomes by promoting and distributing information about pre-conception, pre-natal health information and care and the importance of timely childhood immunizations in the community. In addition, the following programs and activities are offered to support all four outcomes: free parent education classes, childcare provider/parent conference, literacy activities/events, home visiting programs and community playgroups. For additional information on programs and activities offered in Clinton County visit: [www.clintongreatstart.org](http://www.clintongreatstart.org) or call Karen Black, Great Start Director at 989.224.6831.

# EARLY CHILDHOOD & SPECIAL EDUCATION

## Early Speech & Language Making a Difference

Did you know that May is Better Speech and Hearing Month? The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association designates May as a time to reach out to the community to increase awareness of speech-language and hearing disorders in children and adults. CCRESA provides support and intervention to children ages birth-26. School-based services begin once a child enters kindergarten. Prior to that, children identified with a speech-language delay can be served through *Early On*® (ages birth to three) and then through Early Childhood Special Education. Children identified with delays in communication through *Early On* can receive home-based services with a focus on improving communication skills through their daily activities and routines. Children found eligible for Michigan Special Education services in the areas of articulation, language, voice or fluency after the age of three may receive intervention through Early Childhood Special Education preschool programs or through their local school district. The important thing to remember is that early intervention is the key to remediating speech difficulties that may be impacting a child's ability to communicate with parents and peers. At CCRESA we are committed to the early detection and intervention of children with speech-language difficulties.

### Tips for encouraging speech and language development:

- Imitate your child's vocalizations and play routines and encourage them to imitate yours.
- Teach your child finger plays and songs - like The Itsy Bitsy Spider, Old MacDonald, The Wheels on the Bus.
- Talk as you bathe, feed, and dress your baby. Talk about what you are doing, where you are going, what you will do when you arrive and who and what you will see.
- Encourage making choices throughout the day.
- Use speech that is simple and easy for your child to imitate during daily routines.

- Expand vocabulary. Name body parts and identify what you do with them. "This is my nose. I can smell flowers, brownies, popcorn and soap."
- Read to your child daily - naming and pointing vocabulary.
- Encourage use of action words.
- Following simple one and two step directions.

**For more ideas check out: [www.asha.org/public/speech/development/parent-stim-activities.htm#sthash.04yRvFnY.dpuf](http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/parent-stim-activities.htm#sthash.04yRvFnY.dpuf)**

### In children, parents should watch for the following signs of speech and language disorders:

- Does not interact socially (infancy and older)
- Does not follow or understand what you say (starting at one year)

- Says only a few sounds or words or makes only a few gestures (18 months to two years)
- Says words that are not easily understood (18 months to two years)
- Does not combine words (starting at two years)
- Struggles to say sounds or words (three to four years)

If you have concerns about a child's speech and language development you can make a referral by contacting *Early On*® (children ages birth to three) at 1-800-*Early-On* or [www.1800earlyon.org](http://www.1800earlyon.org) or make a referral to Early Childhood Special Education (children ages three to five) by calling CCRESA at 989.224.6831.

## TECHNOLOGY

# iPads & Young Children

Technology can be an amazing vehicle for educators as we look to deliver engaging, thought-provoking and relevant material. One key element for technology at the youngest grade levels is the interaction between the student and the content. This makes device selection critical to ensuring the technology itself becomes transparent to the user and the educator. Several schools in Clinton County have selected the iPad at the younger

grade levels as a device that is durable, easy-to-use and interactive. This touch-based device allows the user to interact with the content with their own hands and creates an experience that brings the material to life. With thousands of educational apps available, the iPad is quickly becoming one of the favorite technology tools with educators of young children across the county, state and nation.

## CCRESA New Website Goes Live!

Dan Mullett, Web Designer and Julie Banfield, Consultant are pleased to announce that the new CCRESA Website has gone live! Do visit <http://www.ccreesa.org> and check out the new, more colorful and dynamic CCRESA Website. The Administrative Team and Technology Department have worked with Dan and Julie several months on the development of this user friendly site that shares color and logo branding with the updated *Visions* Newsletter. Much of the content from our old site has been updated thanks to review by the Administrative and User Teams. The site has a new Search function thanks to Dan and a Staff Directory thanks to the Technology Department and Steve Cameron's hard work. Department Directors/Designees and Designated Users have been identified in each department for posting/editing rights and approval authorization. These individuals have been trained and are ready to post new information about CCRESA programs and services as it develops. Come check us out!

## INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

# *Early On*<sup>®</sup> Center for Higher Education

The *Early On* (EO) Center for Higher Education, an Innovative Project of CCRESA supports faculty in the development of students in diverse disciplines whose future work will be with infants and toddlers, birth to age three, with disabilities or special needs and their families. The EO Center is pleased to announce two exciting projects that are recently underway.

Each year the EO Center invites faculty from Michigan's two and four year colleges and universities to submit applications for mini-grants to support research in the field of early childhood intervention and its practical application in Michigan. On April 14th, the CCRESA Board of Education approved the proposal submitted by Kalli Decker, Ph.D. Candidate, Human Development and Family Studies, at Michigan State University, entitled, *Understanding the Influence of Early Intervention on Parents and Young Children: Information Parents Receive and Utilize to Support the Language Development of Infants and Toddlers with Hearing Loss*. This is the seventh year of issuance of the award and the EO Center is delighted to have received several high quality applications and to fund this proposal.

The EO Center also hosts a Faculty Colloquium which is an annual event for faculty and other key stakeholders to enhance the knowledge of early intervention and the Part C system of

IDEA. This year the EO Center presents the *2014 Early On Faculty Colloquium: Supporting the Preservice Preparation of Personnel for Family-Centered, Transdisciplinary Practices in Natural Environments*. The Colloquium will be held on Monday, June 2, 2014 at Grand Valley State University with keynote speaker, Dr. Robin McWilliam, Director of the Siskin Center for Child and Family Research, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Dr. McWilliam will discuss various tools and practices to prepare students for home visiting, functional outcomes and how they come from functional assessments and effective ways to prepare students for a working world involving other disciplines.



# INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

## Build Up Michigan

The Office of Innovative Projects has funding by the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education to develop and implement an outreach campaign to inform parents, care-givers and the public about the availability of early childhood special education services for children ages three through five. This campaign is called *Build Up Michigan* and will begin with a “soft” launch in areas throughout the state in May with full implementation in August.

The initial campaign will include the website (BuildUpMI.org) and a Facebook page. In the fall, media advertising will

include daily and community newspapers, parent publications, billboards and public television programming for children in select districts throughout Michigan. Also, there will be digital ads that will appear on desktops, laptops and mobile devices.

All of the ads will direct parents and caregivers of three to five-year-old children to the new BuildUpMI.org website or to call the Michigan Special Education Information Line (1.888.320.8384) if they see developmental delays. Brochures and posters will be made available to partners and school districts.

## CAREER PREPARATION EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



**Students Plan and Host a Party for Children in Local Community**

The Career Connections Early Childhood Education Program offers a unique experience for high school students to learn about how children develop from birth to age eight. This course is offered through CCRESA and Lansing Community College. Students have the opportunity to earn up to five free college credits in the child development field while earning their required credits towards high school graduation.

During the course, students focus on and learn the knowledge and skills necessary in early childhood care and education programs such as kindergarten, preschools, childcare centers, family childcare homes and before and after school programs. Students learn how these careers require professionals who understand how children grow and learn, can develop caring relationships with young children and have skills to plan and implement a program that meets the specific characteristics of young children. Course content includes child development, health and safety, self-esteem, interaction with children, positive guidance/discipline skills, professionalism and activity/development design.

Housed in the CCRESA Education Center, enrolled students have constant interaction with children of all ages. In addition to content work, the first semester includes early childhood center visits, curriculum studies and observations in different settings of the K-12 system. During the second semester, students participate in a regular field placement two days per week in an early childhood education/care program within the community. Students are placed in a local preschool, childcare, kindergarten, special education, or infant/toddler classroom. This gives them a hands-on opportunity to observe, participate and interact in order to learn all aspects of an early childhood setting.

Previous students have included many future teachers, therapists, social workers, health professionals and child caretakers. As the importance of the early childhood education field comes to light, this program offers students an introduction to many exciting occupations, while providing a strong start to their college career.



**Making Penguins for Residents at a Local Adult Care Center**



**Students Practicing Activities Using a Parachute**



**Field Trip to Spartan Child Development Center in East Lansing**



1013 S. US 27, Suite A  
St. Johns, MI 48879-2423

## BOOKS FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE

***Design for Living and Learning: Transforming Early Childhood Environments*** by Debbie Curtis and Margie Carter, published by Redleaf Press, May, 2003. The author outlines numerous ways to create healthy and interesting physical, social and emotional environments for children in child care.

***A Child's Work: The Importance of Fantasy Play*** by Vivian Gussin Paley, published by University of Chicago Press, May, 2005. The author goes inside classrooms to capture the original language of children in role-playing and storytelling. The author discusses how natural learning helps children to construct meaning in their world proving how play is really the work of children.

***Constructivism across the Curriculum in Early Childhood Classrooms: Big Ideas as Inspiration*** by Christine Chaille, published by Allyn and Bacon, June, 2007. The author

includes numerous ideas for early childhood curriculum approaches that are respectful of children's natural curiosity. The book outlines seven big ideas about light, cause and effect, in and out, transformation, upside down and more and includes examples of activities.

***They Don't Like Me: Lessons on Bullying and Teasing from a Preschool Classroom*** by Jane Katch, published by Beacon Press, August, 2004. The author explores problems of bullying, teasing and exclusion in relationship to four and five year olds.

***The Goodness of Rain: Developing an Ecological Identity in Young People*** by Ann Pelo and Marty Noble, published by Exchange Press Inc., 2013. The author outlines her year-long journey as she nurtures the ecological identity of a toddler and tries to live in a thoughtful relationship with the natural world.