



A PROJECT OF THE GREAT START COLLABORATIVE OF TRAVERSE BAY, MICHIGAN



5toONE Project

GOALS:

1) Kindergarten Readiness

Children healthy, thriving and developmentally ready to succeed in school and life

2) Childcare

Access to affordable, high quality early care and learning

3) Strengthen Families

Reduce incidence of child abuse and neglect

5toONE Project

COMPONENTS:

1) Neighborhood Centers

2) Network

3) Hub

5toONE Project

PARTNERS:

TraverseCONNECT 



EARLY CHILDHOOD, MAKE IT COUNT!

5toOne: Creating Support for Children and Families in Rural Communities

In 2010, a group of partners from rural Northern Michigan conducted an economic impact study on the role of early childhood (the first 5 years of life) in helping or hindering the region’s economic growth. The group—consisting of Traverse CONNECT, the local intermediate school district and dozens of area businesses, social service agencies and others—discovered that the **region could realize more than \$40 million per year** in savings from decreased use of public services, increased worker productivity, on-time graduation, and improved health outcomes.

“Supporting families to get early childhood ‘right’ pays huge dividends. We can reduce the cost of social services, increase graduation rates, and raise up the next generation of great workers, business leaders and entrepreneurs.”—Doug Luciani, Traverse CONNECT

The partners set out to create a strong system of support for young children. It needed to be based on parent input and it needed to be sustainable. A survey of hundreds of local parents revealed the hallmarks of an effective rural system:

- 1) Use fun activities to bring families together.** Rural families feel isolated, especially in the winter months; nearly all parents are looking for “things to do with kids.”
- 2) Provide supports in local communities.** Because of limited time and access to transportation, parents of young children are able to travel no more than 10 miles to participate in programs and services.
- 3) Use existing community gathering spots and make them kid and family friendly.** Parents were much more comfortable bringing kids to places like libraries, schools and churches.

And so the 5toOne initiative was born!

- The group hosts playgroups in existing community gathering places—libraries, a church, a bowling alley, a school.
- Service providers such as local health departments can connect with families—giving presentations and health screenings.
- Parent leaders are actively involved in leading groups and activities, making each 5toOne center both unique and sustainable.
- 5toOne Neighborhood Centers are creating new partnerships and new momentum, for example to create better options for affordable quality child care.

Traverse CONNECT is now in the process of conducting a new regional economic impact study to measure progress and to identify new opportunities for investment in early childhood. Results are expected in Fall of 2016.



ENGAGE - INNOVATE - SUSTAIN

5toONE is an innovative project of the Great Start Collaborative of Traverse Bay, Michigan, that brings together families and local partners to ensure that all children reach their highest potential.

5toONE Neighborhood Centers

5toONE Neighborhood Centers are places in communities where families gather for relationship-focused activities in welcoming, playful environments.

5toONE Host Organizations

5toONE Neighborhood Centers are developed and located within host organizations that already exist in communities such as churches, libraries, schools, and businesses. Community champions step forward to work with us to make 5toONE Neighborhood Centers a reality.

The 5toONE Network

5toONE Neighborhood Centers are networked to each other and to many local and regional resources that serve families with young children.

5 Strengths All Families Need

5toONE uses the Strengthening Families framework to talk about what's right within families and to build the 5 Strengths in all families. Think of the 5 Strengths as the opposite of risk factors—having these 5 Strengths helps your family thrive, even during times of stress.

- Parent Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development
- Concrete Support
- Social-Emotional Competence

The Importance of Play

Play is learning. When children are engaged in meaningful activities while at play they gain new skills and expand their understanding of how the world works. 5toONE playgroups are designed as playful, child-led explorations that nurture adult-child relationships and promote growth of the whole child.

Contact Information

Mary Manner
Great Start Coordinator
(231) 995-7114 Tel
Mary@VentureNorthFunding.org

Missy Smith
Great Start Parent Liaison
(231) 342-5433 Tel
Missy@GreatStartKids.com

