



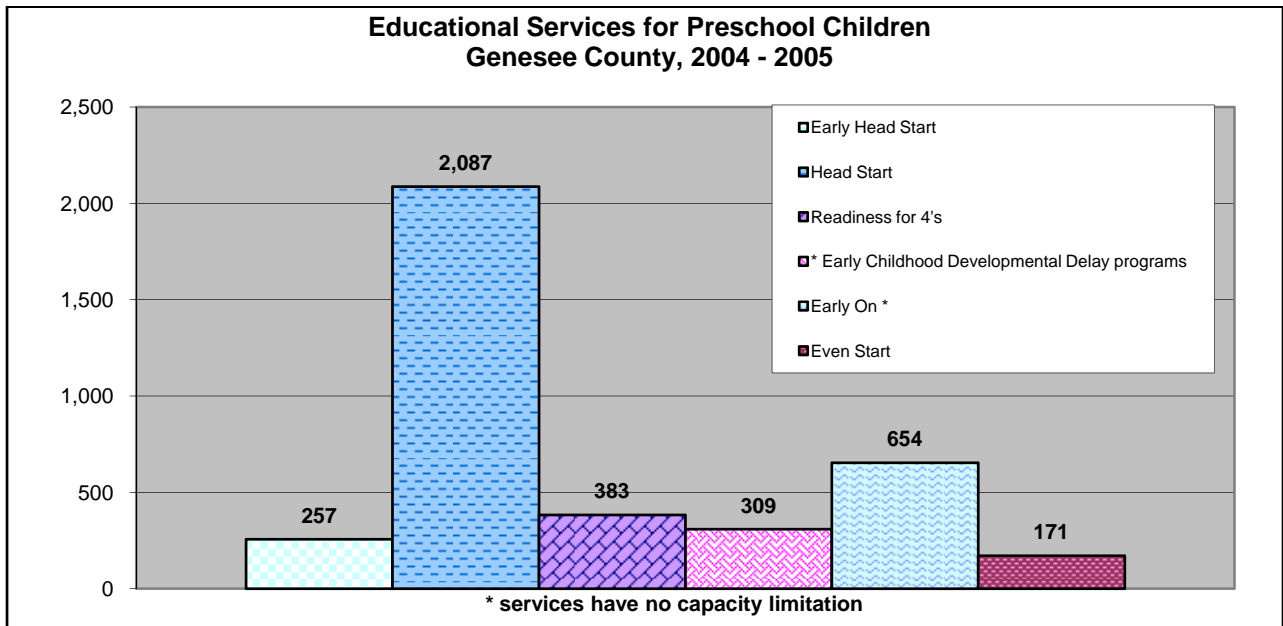
Mission: To improve the quality of life for children and families in Genesee County through assessment, awareness, advocacy and action.

Fact Sheet 3.2

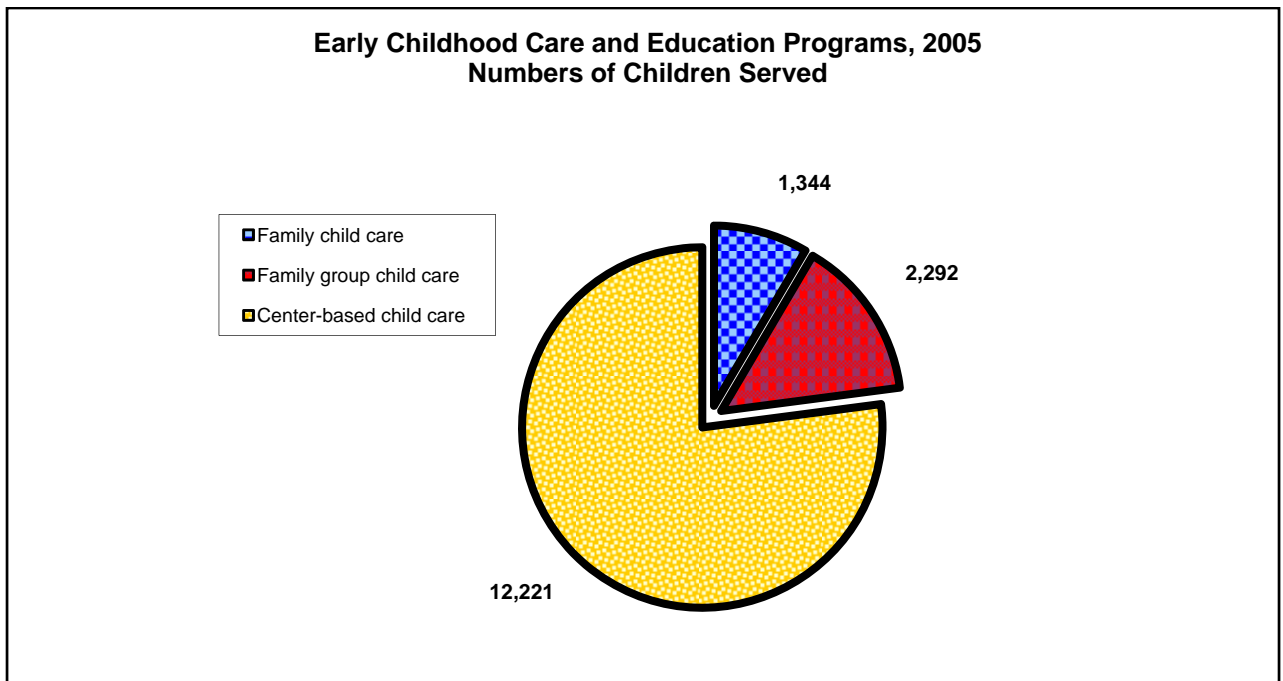
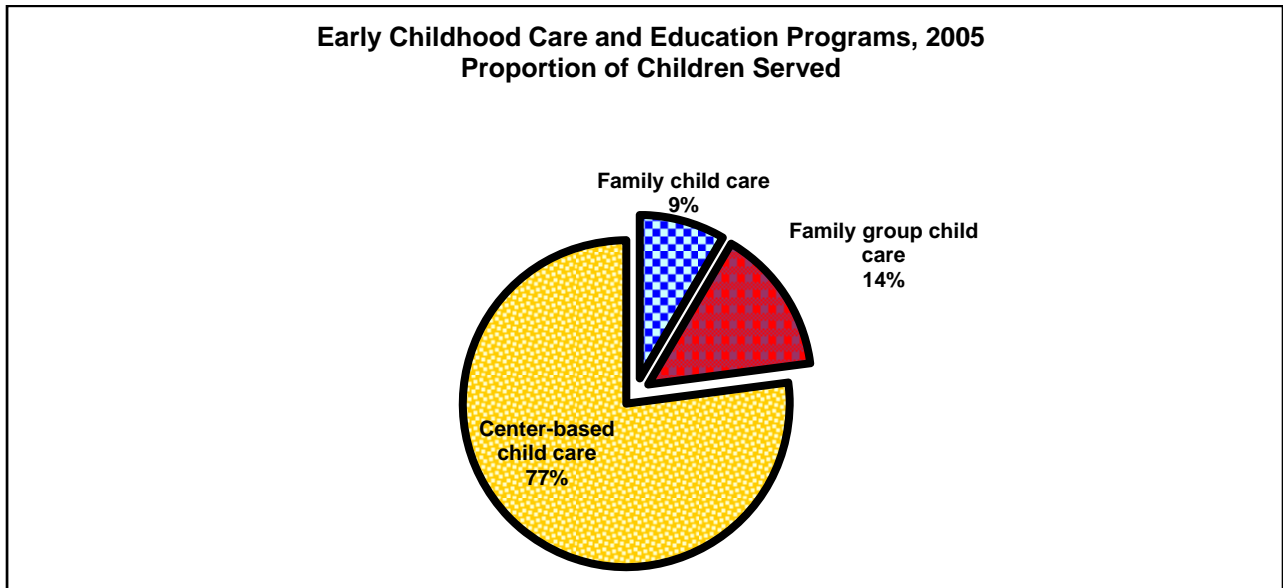
Early Educational Services for Young Children

The National Educational Goals panel, a bipartisan group of federal and state officials established in 1990, has recommended, “all children...have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help them prepare for school.” Childcare centers also generally contain some very basic educational components. Rather than being focused on providing day care in a safe and stimulating environment, these early childhood services are designed to address some condition or circumstance that is anticipated to be educationally handicapping without such intervention.

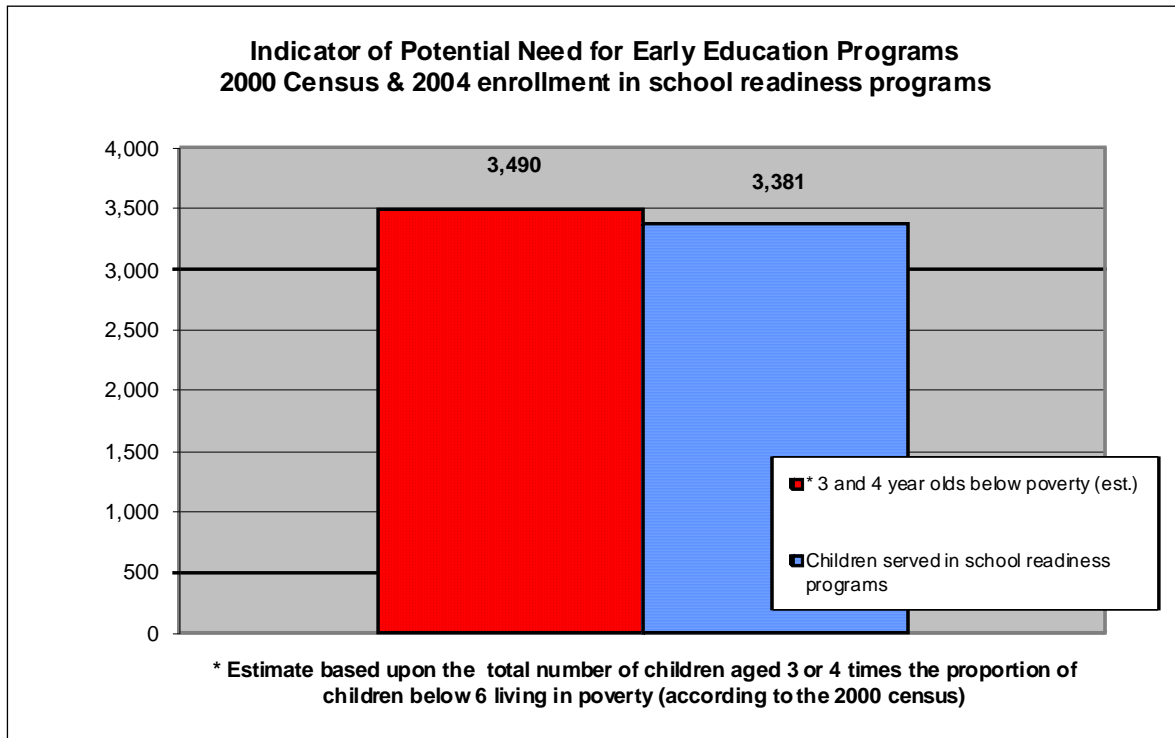
Some children are potentially handicapped in school because of the accumulated destructive effects of poverty and social disadvantage. Eligibility for these services is usually determined by the family’s poverty status, along with other factors. For a family of four in 2004 this means that the family income would have to have been \$19,223 or less.



Fact Sheet 3.2: Early Educational Services for Young Children continued...



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SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAMS

The Michigan Department of Education estimates that nearly 66,700 four-year-old children have factors affecting their ability to become successful in school. In Genesee County, the families of an estimated 3,490 three and four year old children have incomes below the poverty level and might be assumed to be in need of a school readiness program of some sort.

Even Start is a grant program of the Michigan Department of Education that seeks to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the nation's low-income families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program. Funding is through federal Title I. Eligible families must have a child aged 0-7 years and a parent/guardian who is eligible for adult basic education or is functionally illiterate.

- In 2004 in Genesee County, 171 children were served in Even Start programs.

Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child development programs that serve children from birth to age 5, pregnant women, and their families. They are child-focused programs and have the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families. They serve far more children than the other school readiness programs. In 2004, 35,124 Michigan children were enrolled in Head Start.

The Head Start program is administered by the Head Start Bureau, the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

- 257 children in Early Head Start and 2,087 in Head Start were served in Genesee County in 2004.

Fact Sheet 3.2: Early Educational Services for Young Children continued...

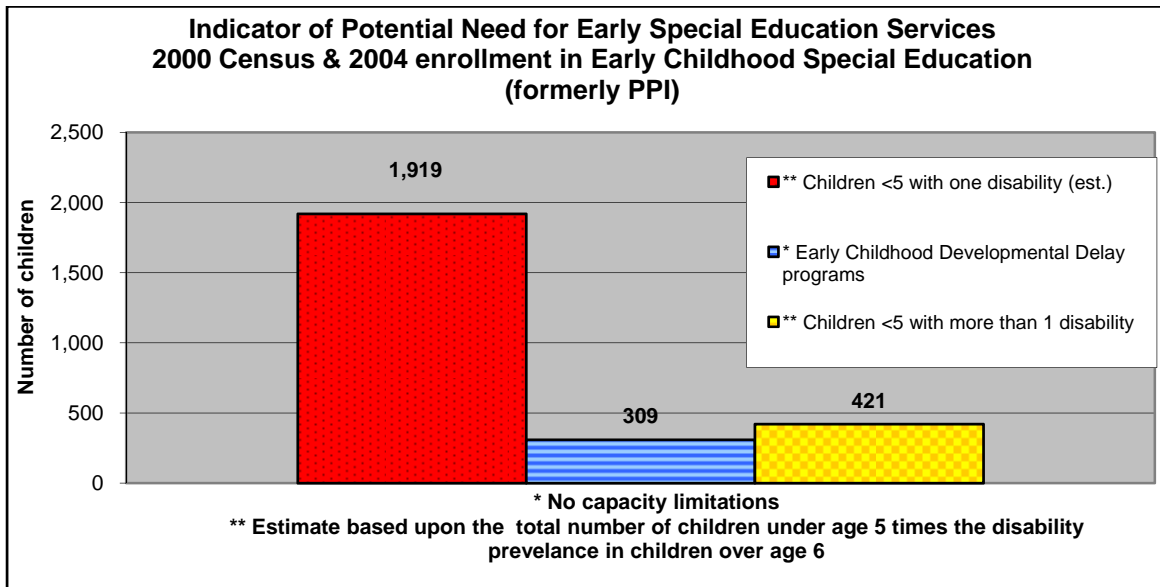
The Michigan School Readiness Program is for four-year-old children who may be "at risk" of school failure. (These programs may be known by a variety of names in local areas.) MSRP helps children get ready for school, increases attendance and has been demonstrated to reduce the number of children who repeat a grade by almost one-half. Each child must have two of the 25 identified risk factors; more than 50% of the children must be low income.¹ Both center-based and home-based models are available. All programs must provide strong family involvement/parent education components as well as preschool education.

- 383 Genesee County children were served in the Readiness for Fours program in 2004.
- In 2004, a total of 3,381 Genesee County children were served in school readiness programs. This is 97% of the number of preschool-aged children at or below the poverty level.

Preschool Services to Identify or Address Developmental Delays (of all sorts)

Some children have special educational needs as a result of a disabling or potentially disabling condition. Early specialized educational services help to reduce the actual functional disability that might otherwise have been experienced by these children without such services. Eligibility for these services is dependent upon the presence of a particular physical or mental condition together with the expectation that the condition will result in some impairment of the child's ability to make adequate progress in the regular school environment. These services were formerly called preprimary impaired services (or PPI), but are now referred to as Early Childhood Developmental Delay programs (ECDD).

There was no census survey that identified very young children with disabilities (and who therefore have been in need of early special education services). The census did, however, obtain data on the prevalence of disabilities in children between the ages of 5 and 15. Since disabilities are the result of a persistent if not permanent condition and since many of these conditions exist before the age of 5, this data may be useful to attempt to obtain a working estimate the need for early special education services among young children. This can be done by multiplying the number young children in the population by the prevalence of disabilities in older children. The proportion of children with a single disability might yield an estimate of the highest number of children who might need early special education, while the proportion of children with two or more disabilities might yield an estimate of the lowest number that might be in need of early special education. (This is because the likelihood of functional impairment is greater in those who have more than one disability.)



- In Genesee County, it is estimated that there were as many as approximately 1,919 children under five years of age who possess at least one sensory, physical, or mental disability. It is estimated that there may have been 421 children below the age of 5 who had more than one such disability. This means that if the true need for early special education services is being met, between 36% and 52% more children would probably need to be served in such programs.

Fact Sheet 3.2: Early Educational Services for Young Children continued...

Early On is a program involving the Michigan Department of Education, county health department, and Department of Human Services that evaluates and treats children that are not developing at the same rate as other children. This can include physical, mental, social or emotional development.

- In 2004, 171 Genesee County young children were served in Early On.

Children up to the age of six with particular conditions are eligible for special education services. These children comprise 11.3% of all children in Michigan who receive special education services. Some services for particular conditions may be provided through the local intermediate school district instead, but 96% of special education services to Michigan children of all ages are provided through the local school districts.

Services to these young children are now referred to as early childhood special education programs (formerly Preprimary Impaired services.) These children may have significant cognitive developmental delays, serious sensory deficits, delayed or impaired speech, or serious physical problems that require early educational interventions.

- In 2004, 309 Genesee County young children were provided with early childhood special education services.
- In total, 480 county young children were served in either Even Start or early childhood special education programs compared with as many as 1,919 disabled young children.

BEYOND THE NUMBERS

We have learned so much! Early efforts to simply give children a “label” to identify their individual abilities have been thwarted by what we have learned about the range and variety of conditions that impact their development. Examples: “Autism” is now considered a spectrum of disorders, and “cerebral palsy” covers a broad range of conditions occurring at birth.

EXAMPLES OF INTERVENTION EFFORTS

The services described in the fact sheet are interventions. Our challenge is to make sure services are available and accessible to all who need them. There is always a danger that a child or family might fall through the cracks due to age, income, insurance, etc.

Project SKIP and Skip to a Great Start - Examples of programs which may be center or home-based and reach out to families to provide services from ages 0-7 years old. Parenting, parent-child activities, adult education and early childhood education are examples of program activities.

Sources: 4C Childcare Unlimited; Genesee Intermediate School District; Flint Community Schools, Clio Community Schools, Flushing Community Schools; Montrose Community Schools; Michigan Department of Education; US Department of Health and Human Services

Notes: ¹ In 2005, according to federal poverty guideline the poverty threshold for a family of 4 was \$19,350. In 2004, it was \$19,223.

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