

2024

Focus on Five

Family and Early Child Well-being in Flint & Genesee County

A Flint & Genesee Literacy Network
State of Literacy Spotlight Report





2024

Focus on Five

Family and Early Child Well-being in
Flint & Genesee County



Acknowledgements

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*Special thanks to Troy Rosencrats and the GIS Center of
UM-Flint for technical and mapping support.*

Introduction & Key Takeaways



Introduction

In the spring of 2024, Flint & Genesee Literacy Network (FGLN) undertook a comprehensive canvassing, data collection, and analytic process designed to inform strategy and assess the present state of early childhood and family well-being in Flint & Genesee County. This report lays out the results of that process, focusing on the first five years of kids' lives in Flint & Genesee County. It includes metrics, analysis, survey results, and research intended to paint a comprehensive data portrait of the state of early childhood education, as well as overall family and early childhood well-being, in Flint and Genesee County.

Insights and analysis found in this report have been designed to align with the Annie E. Casey Kids Count Index, a nationally recognized source on child wellbeing (Mather & Dupuis, 2012).



Report Highlights

Bright Spots

Disability Services

The percentage of Genesee County kids receiving special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) prior to enrolling in kindergarten has increased by **29%** since 2018 (pg. 13).

Poverty

The percentage of Genesee County kids under 5 living in poverty has declined by **37%** since 2018 (pg. 10).

Moreover, poverty disparities persisting between Michigan and Genesee County kids under 5 have narrowed by **34%**, while disparities between Michigan and Flint kids under 5 have narrowed by a more modest **13%** over the same period (pg. 10).

Health Insurance

Genesee County kids age 0-5 are **36%** less likely to be uninsured than kids statewide (pg. 17).

Challenges

Population

The # of kids under 5 living in Genesee County has declined **13.5%** since 2013. Overall youth population (ages 0-17) has declined **16.8%** over the same period (pg. 8).

Environmental & Economic Distress

50% of Genesee County kids under 5 live within environmentally distressed census tracts (pg. 18).

44% of Genesee County kids under 5 live within economically distressed zip codes (pg. 20).

Preschool Enrollment

Despite significant gains prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, preschool enrollment among kids age 3-4 has declined **17%** since 2020 (pg. 12).



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Key Indicators of Child Well-being by Annie E. Casey

Kids Count Index Domain - Michigan & Genesee County

Economic Well-Being

	Michigan	Genesee County	
Children under 5 in poverty MI 109,522; GC 5,938	20.1%	26.2%	Worse
Children under 6 whose parents lack secure employment MI 51,849; GC 3,087	8.0%	11.8%	Worse
Families living in households with a high housing cost burden MI 1,046,988; GC 47,461	26.1%	28.6%	Worse
Teens not in school and not working MI 37,458; GC 1,581	7.1%	7.8%	Worse

Education

	Michigan	Genesee County	
Young children (ages 3 and 4) not in school MI 129,372; GC 5,486	55.7%	56.3%	Worse
Fourth graders not proficient in reading MI 53,346; GC 2,504	55.2%	60.9%	Worse
Eighth-graders not proficient in math MI 29,484; GC 1,483	29.8%	35.3%	Worse
High school students not graduating on time MI 22,385; GC 1,045	19.0%	21.6%	Worse

Health

	Michigan	Genesee County	
Low birth-weight babies MI 9,089; GC 429	9.0%	10.1%	Worse
Children under 6 without health insurance MI 18,722; GC 453	2.8%	1.6%	Better
Child and teen deaths per 100,000 MI 619; GC, 37	27.0	38.9	Worse
Children ages birth to 4 receiving WIC program benefits MI 266,806; GC 14,766	48.7%	64.6%	Worse

Family and Community

	Michigan	Genesee County	
Children in single-parent families MI 701,944; GC 39,080	33.3%	44.4%	Worse
Children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma MI 10,129; GC 531	10.0%	12.5%	Worse
Children under 5 below the poverty level MI 109,522; GC, 5,938	20.1%	26.2%	Worse
Children under 5 living within economically distressed zip codes MI 119,945; GC 10,931	21.4%	44.1%	Worse
Births to teen parents under age 20 MI 4,127; GC 244	4.1%	5.7%	Worse

Family & Community



Population Change & Homelessness

Total population in Genesee County has declined in the past decade. According to data from the U.S. Census Department, Genesee County experienced a **3.9%** loss in population between 2013 and 2022. As evidenced by Figure 1, this population loss was even higher for youth populations, with Genesee County experiencing a **13.5%** and **16.8%** loss in population for children under 5 and children age 0-17, respectively. This loss in youth population is consistent with statewide trends over the same period. However, as in other areas, significant disparities exist between statewide and countywide outcomes, with Michigan losing only **5.2%** of children under 5 and **8.6%** of children age 0-17 as compared with **13.5%** and **16.8%** in Genesee County.

As evidenced by Figure 3, significant racial disparities exist in K-12 student homelessness according to Michigan Department of Education data from the 2022-23 academic year. In total, between **894-974** K-12 students in Genesee County experienced homelessness. Of these, Black/African American K-12 students were the most likely to experience homelessness. As the data shows, White K-12 students comprised between **29-52%** of the total K-12 homeless population in Genesee County despite comprising **65%** of the total population age 0-17. *(continued on next page)*

Genesee County				State of Michigan			
	2013	2022	% Change		2013	2022	% Change
Population under 5	26,559	22,965	-13.5%	Population under 5	583,280	552,803	-5.2%
Population age 0-17	103,707	90,266	-16.8%	Population age 0-17	2,352,906	2,149,464	-8.6%
Total Population	421,575	405,280	-3.9%	Total Population	9,886,095	10,057,921	+1.7%

Figure 1 – Source: U.S. Census Department



Family & Community

Homelessness (continued)

By contrast to shares of white K-12 student homelessness, Black/African American K-12 students comprised between **35-60%** of the total K-12 homeless population in Genesee County despite comprising only **23%** of the total population age 0-17.

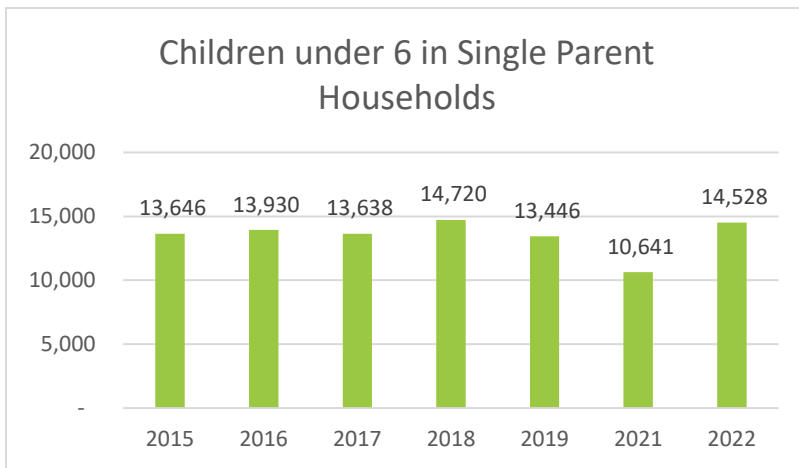


Figure 2 – Source: U.S. Census Department

Genesee County Kids Quick Facts: 2022

- 22,965** Kids under 5
- 5,938** Live in poverty
- 2,104** entered kindergarten w/o any Pre-K education
- At least **894** K-12 kids experienced homelessness
- 247** out of home due to abuse/neglect
- 661** confirmed victims of abuse/neglect
- 429** babies born at low birth weight (less than 5 lbs. 8 oz.)

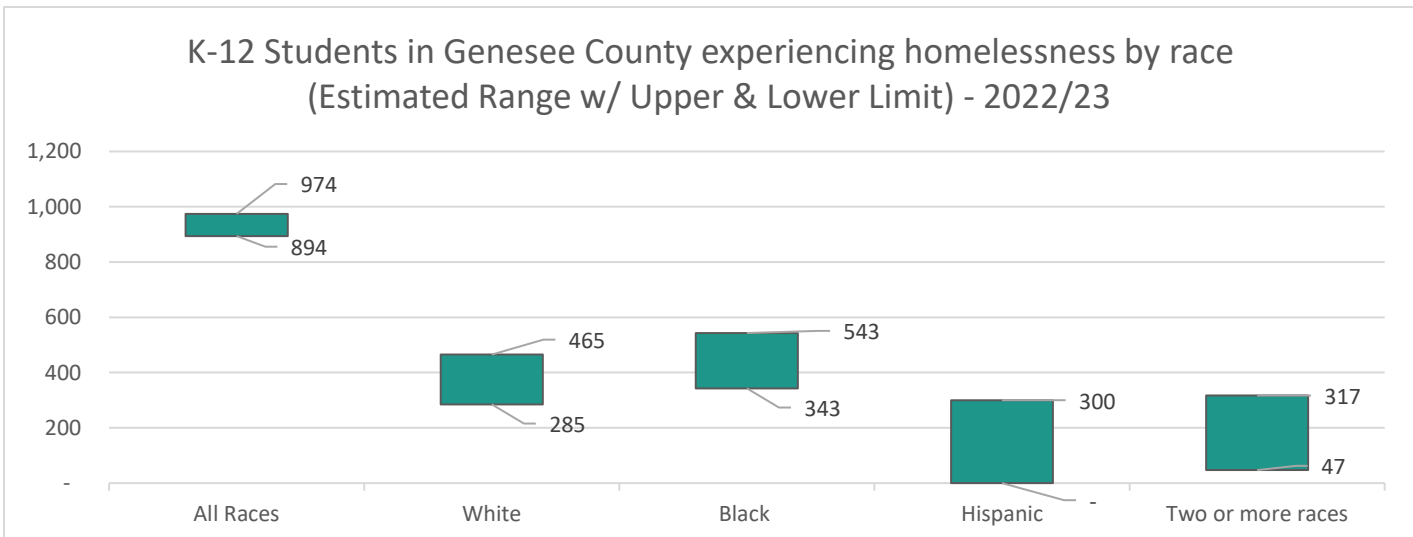


Figure 3 – Source: Michigan Department of Education

Economic Well-Being



Child & Family Poverty

As evidenced by Figures 4 & 5, children and families in Genesee County face significant disparities when it comes to poverty and family income. Compared with children under the age of 5 statewide, Genesee County children under the age of 5 are **30%** more likely to experience poverty in 2022. These disparities were even wider for children under the age of 5 in the City of Flint, who were **137%** more likely to experience poverty. Moreover, as evidenced by Figure 5, these disparities were most sharply felt by Black/African American and multi-racial families with children under 5. In 2022, families with a Black/African American head of household and kids under 5 were **77%** more likely to experience poverty than those of a White head of household with kids under 5.

Despite the persistence of such geographic and racial/ethnic disparities, as evidenced by Figures 4 & 5, chronological trends show positive economic gains being made by families with children in Flint and Genesee County. Since 2016, the percentage of children under 5 living in poverty in Genesee County has declined by **37%**. Moreover, poverty disparities persisting between Michigan and Genesee County kids under 5 have narrowed by **34%**, while disparities between Michigan and Flint kids under 5 have narrowed by a more modest **13%**. Similar disparities between families with Black/African American householders with kids under 5 and those of White householders have narrowed by **48%**.

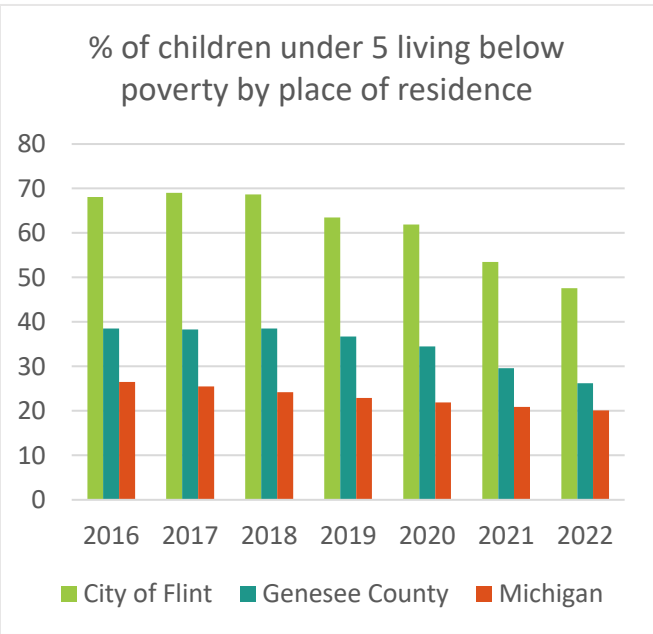


Figure 4 – Source: U.S. Census Department

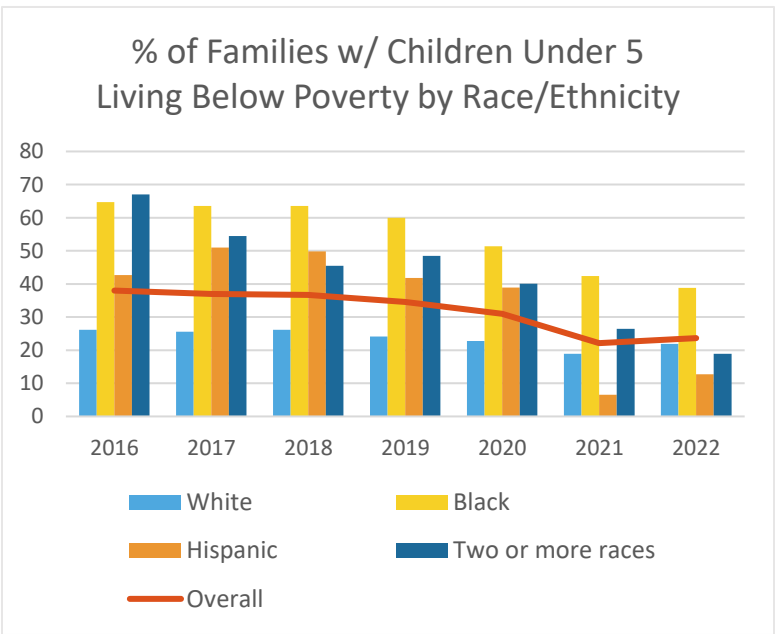


Figure 5 – Source: U.S. Census Department



Economic Well-Being

Housing Costs & Maternal Education

In addition to persistent poverty gaps, Genesee County kids face additional gaps in maternal education and family housing cost burden. According to 2021 data from the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, kids born in Genesee were **25%** more likely to be born to a mother with no diploma or GED. Moreover, this disparity reflects a **64%** increase as compared with vital records data from 2020, suggesting that Genesee County kids may be losing ground as compared with kids statewide.

In addition, according to 2022 five-year estimates from the U.S. Census Department’s American Community Survey, **28.6%** of Genesee County families face high housing cost burdens (housing payments > 30% of family income), making Genesee County families **10%** more likely to face such burdens than families statewide.

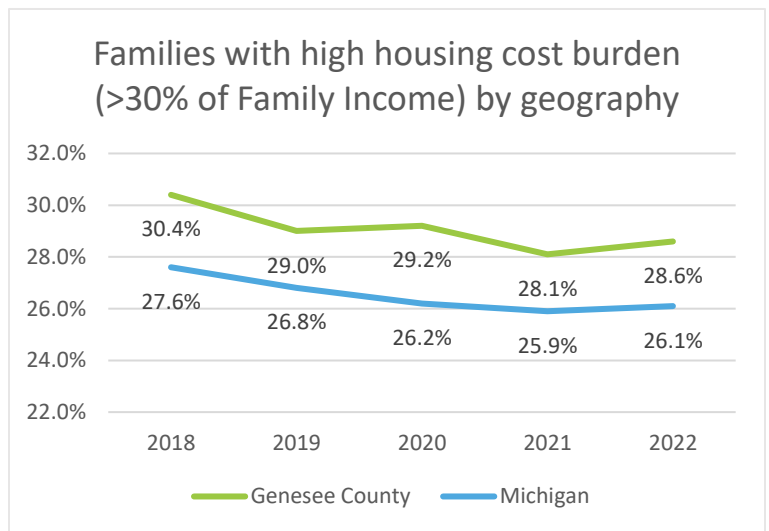


Figure 6 – Source: U.S. Census Department

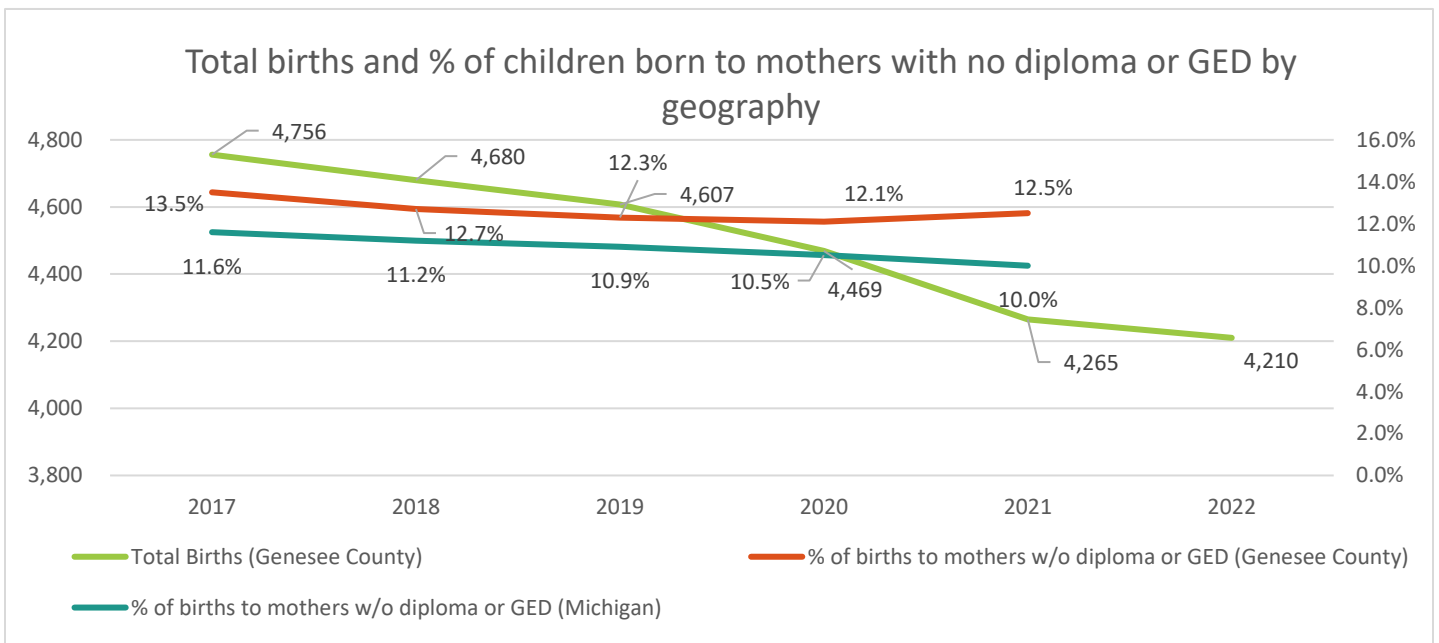


Figure 7 – Source: Kids Count Data Center

Education



Preschool Enrollment & Educational Testing

As shown in Figure 8, time differentiated analysis of preschool enrollment data and subsequent testing scores on the 3rd grade English Language Arts M-STEP suggest that recent investments in expanded access to subsidized early childhood education (ECE) in Genesee County may have helped halt a 5 year trend of decline in the percentage of Genesee County third graders testing proficient or higher on the 3rd ELA M-STEP. According to data from the Michigan Department of Education, the percentage of Genesee County kids receiving subsidized ECE rose by **55%** following significant investments in early childhood education programs, such as *Educare* and *Cummings Great Expectations*. Five years later the percentage of students testing proficient or higher on the 2023 3rd grade ELA M-Step stabilized in Genesee County for the first time in more than 5 years. This stabilization coincided with the same period in which students enrolled in subsidized ECE programs during the 2018 expansion year would have been expected to take the 3rd ELA M-STEP, suggesting that, despite learning losses associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, previous investments in ECE in Genesee County may have produced improved educational outcomes for Genesee County kids.

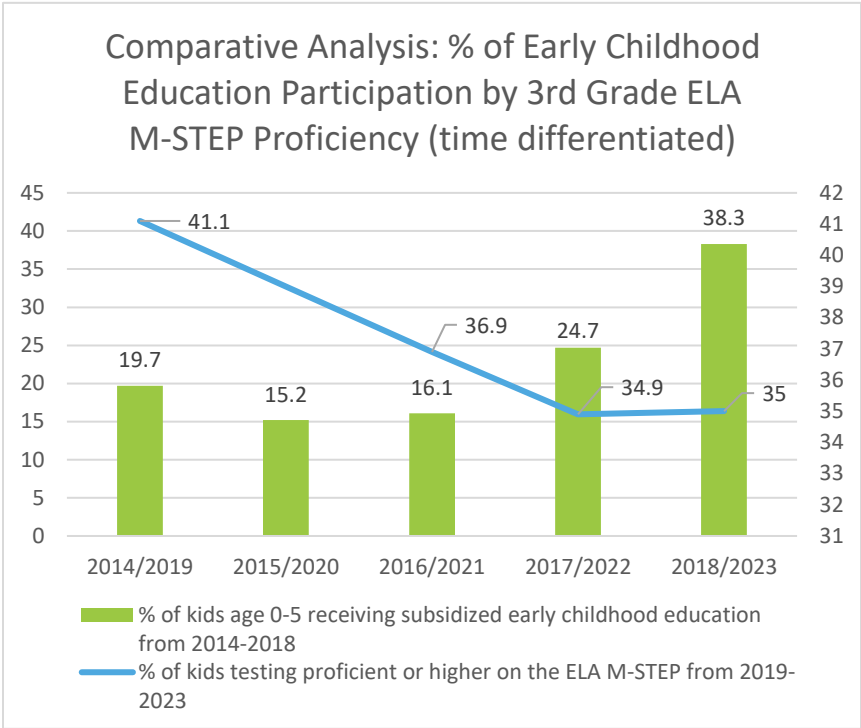


Figure 8 – Source: Michigan Department of Education

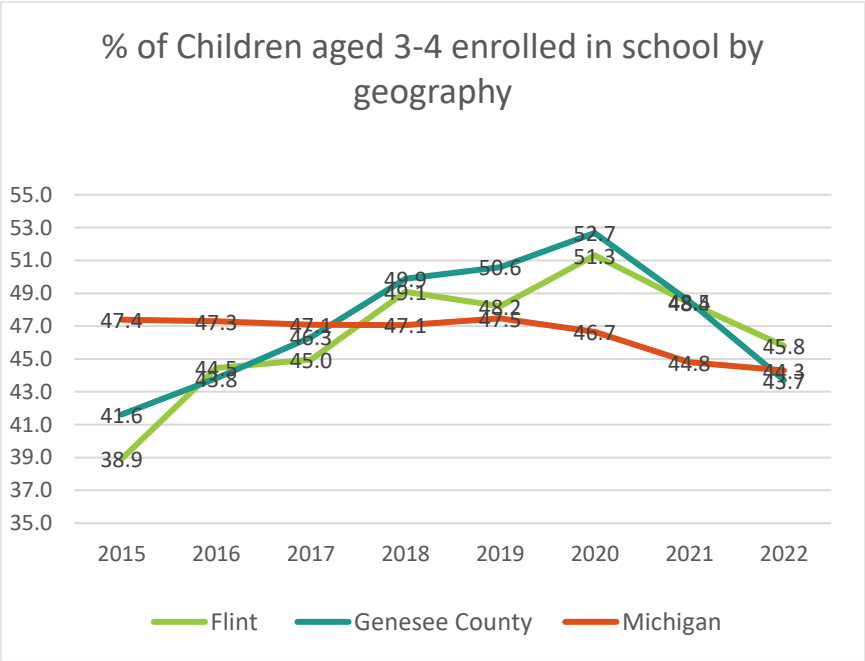


Figure 9 – Source: U.S. Census Department



Education

Disability Services

Since 2018, the percentage of children in Genesee County receiving special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) prior to enrolling in kindergarten has increased **29%**, while the percentage of children first receiving services prior to kindergarten enrollment has declined by **16%**. Over the same period, the number of children receiving continuous services has remained relatively stable comparatively, as evidenced by Figure 12. While the causes for such differing trends are not clear, the disparity nonetheless suggests that Genesee County kids are receiving necessary special education services earlier, suggesting successful early intervention for childhood disability services. This is further suggested by Figure 11 which shows that Genesee County kids are **32%** more likely to receive special education services prior to kindergarten enrollment than kids statewide.

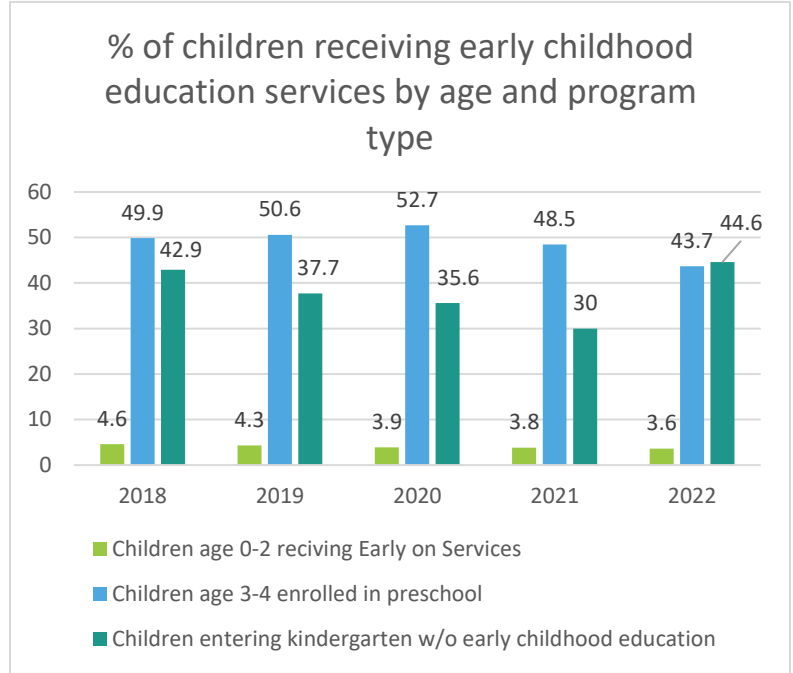


Figure 10 – Source: Michigan Department of Education

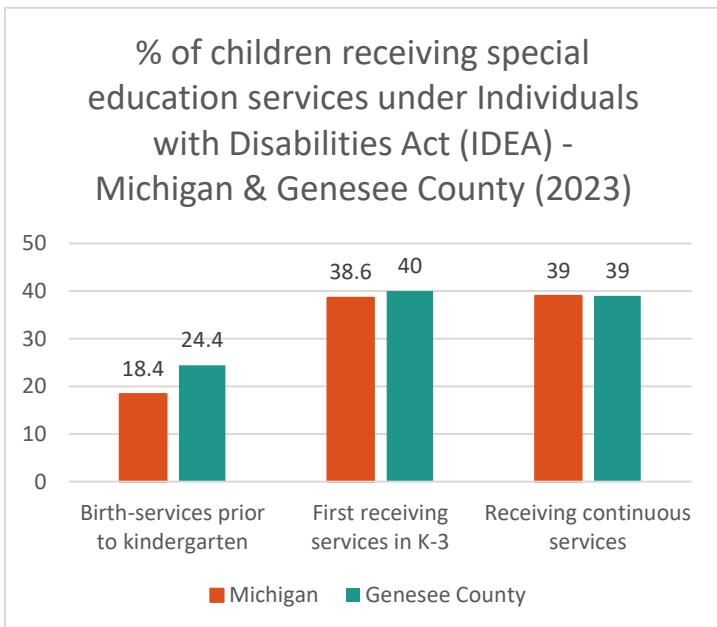


Figure 11 – Source: Michigan Department of Education

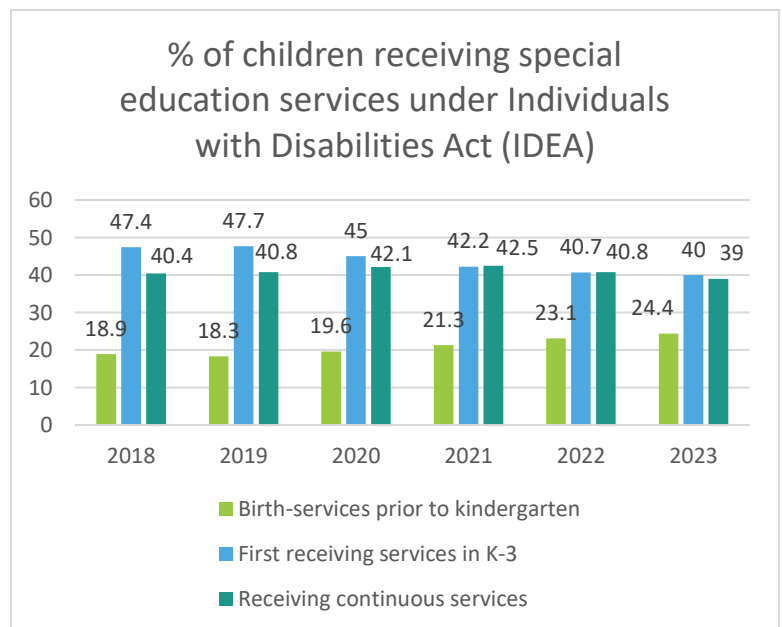


Figure 12 – Source: Michigan Department of Education

Countywide Trends in Student Enrollment

The table below shows countywide enrollment trends over the past 10 academic years for students of all grade levels (Pre-K through 12) in Genesee County, as well as those of public and public-charter school districts in Genesee County. School districts experiencing a decline in student enrollment over the last 10 academic years are shown in **RED**, while those experiencing overall growth in student enrollment over the same period are shown in **BLUE**.

School District Enrollment	Student Enrollment 2014-2015 Academic Year	Student Enrollment 2023-2024 Academic Year	% Change
	Public School Districts		
Genesee Intermediate School District <i>(countywide baseline)</i>	68,546	58,436	-14.7%
Atherton Community Schools	902	692	-23.3%
Beecher Community Schools	1,073	581	-45.9%
Bendle Public Schools	1,252	1,032	-17.6%
Bentley Community Schools	885	718	-18.9%
Carman-Ainsworth Community Schools	5,162	3,722	-27.3%
Clio Area School District	3,208	2,537	-20.9%
Davison Community Schools	5,617	5,470	-2.6%
Fenton Area Public Schools	3,414	3,014	-11.7%
Flint Community Schools	6,533	2,888	-55.8%
Flushing Community Schools	3,988	4,099	+2.8%
Genesee School District	740	685	-7.4%
Goodrich Area Schools	2,055	1,917	-6.7%
Grand Blanc Community Schools	8,505	7,571	-11.0%
Kearsley Community School District	3,182	2,863	-10.0%
Lake Fenton Community Schools	2,032	2,003	-1.4%
LakeVille Community School District	1,324	1,041	-21.4%
Linden Community Schools	2,879	2,391	-17.0%
Montrose Community Schools	1,423	1,470	+3.2%

School District Enrollment	2014-2015 Academic Year	2023-2024 Academic Year	Change
Mt Morris Consolidated Schools	2,033	1,480	-27.2%
Swartz Creek Community Schools	3,965	3,485	-12.1%
Westwood Heights Schools	2,306	1,509	-34.6%
Public Charter Schools			
Eagle’s Nest Academy	0	198	--
Flint Cultural Center Academy	0	624	--
Grand Blanc Academy	366	332	-9.3%
International Academy of Flint	1,126	859	-23.7%
Madison Academy	518	571	+10.2%
Richfield Public School Academy	694	604	-13.0%
The New Standard Academy	619	785	+26.8%
WAY Academy - Flint	250	100	-60.0%
Woodland Park Academy	420	227	-46.0%

Figure 13 – Source: Michigan Department of Education

Countywide Trends in Student Enrollment (continued)

As the table shows, student enrollment has declined at all but four school districts in Genesee County since the 2014-2015 school year. The list below provides a further breakdown of which school districts experienced growth or enrollment declines below those of the county overall and those which experienced enrollment decline levels in excess of those of the countywide baseline.

Growth or Low Decline Districts

Davison Community Schools
 Fenton Area Public Schools
 Flushing Community Schools
 Genesee School District
 Grand Blanc Community Schools
 Kearsley Community School District
 Lake Fenton Community Schools
 Montrose Community Schools
 Swartz Creek Community Schools

Grand Blanc Academy
 Madison Academy
 Richfield Public School Academy
 The New Standard Academy

High Decline Districts

Atherton Community Schools
 Beecher Community Schools
 Bendle Public Schools
 Bentley Community Schools

Carman-Ainsworth Community Schools
 Clio Area School District
 Flint Community Schools
 Lakeville Community School District
 Linden Community Schools
 Mt Morris Consolidated Schools
 Westwood Heights Schools
 International Academy of Flint
 WAY Academy
 Woodland Park Academy

Health



Nutrition & Food Insecurity

Despite the availability and high enrollment of programs such as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Food Assistance Program (FAP), and Family Independence Program (FIP) in Genesee County, Genesee County kids are significantly more likely than kids statewide to experience food insecurity. According to 2021 data from Feeding America and Map the Meal Gap, Genesee County kids age 0-17 were **40%** more likely to experience food insecurity than kids statewide. Moreover, as evidenced by Figure 14 despite modest improvements overall, the disparity between Genesee County and Michigan has **more than doubled** since 2016, suggesting that statewide gains in supporting child food security have left Genesee County kids largely behind.

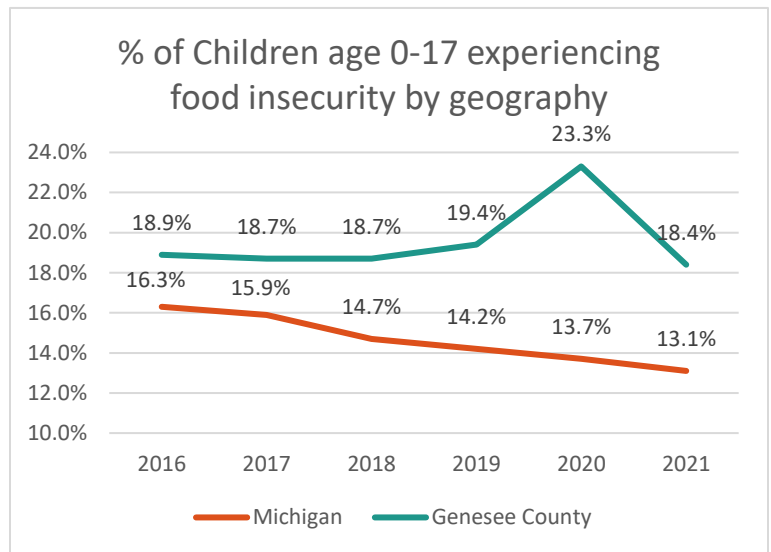


Figure 14 – Source: Feeding America and Map the Meal Gap

Genesee County Children under 5 Receiving Women, Infants & Children (WIC), Family Independence Program (FIP), and Food Assistance Program (FAP) Benefits

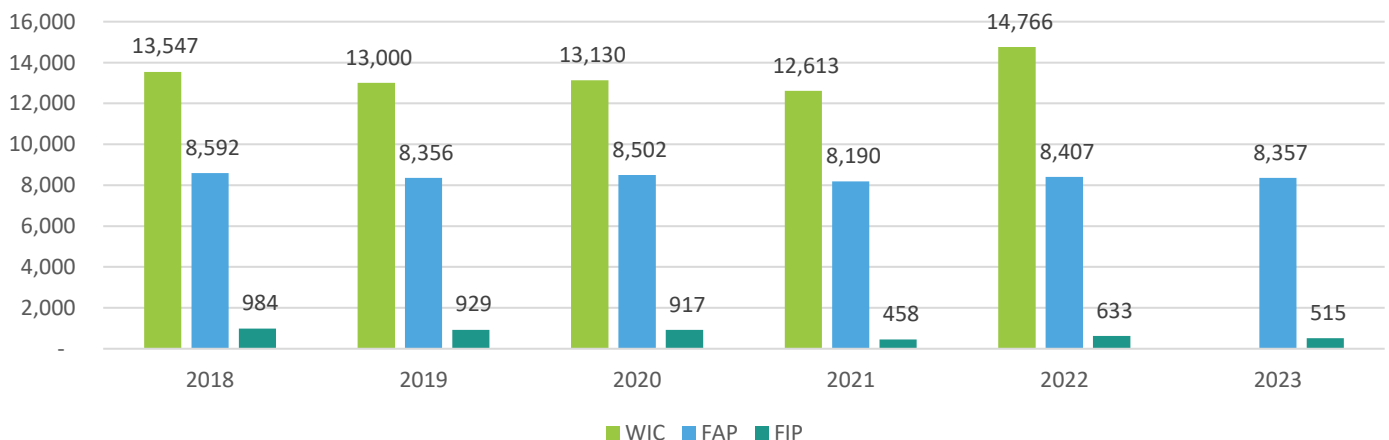
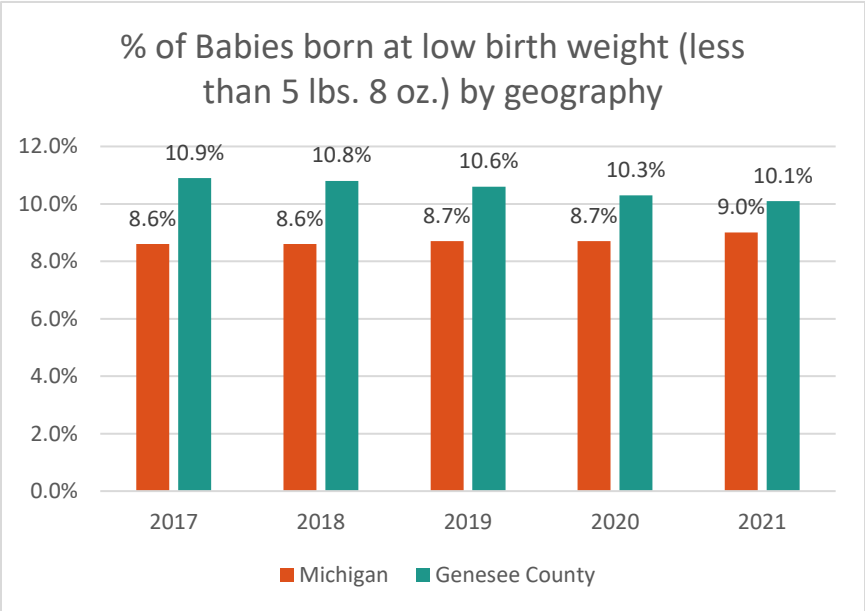


Figure 15 – Source: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services



Health



Insurance & Low Weight Births

As evidenced by Figure 15, Genesee County babies were **12%** more likely to be born at low birth weight (< 5 lbs. 8 oz.) than babies born statewide, according to 2021 data from the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services Department of Vital Records. This disparity has narrowed over time, down from **28%** in 2017. While it is not clear what factors have contributed to this decline, it nonetheless suggests that Genesee County may be experiencing some gains in improving neonatal health outcomes.

Figure 16 – Source: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

A key area where outcomes for Genesee County kids age 0-5 outperform those of kids age 0-5 statewide is in health care access as measured by the percentage of uninsured kids. As can be seen in Figure 16, according to 2022 data from the U.S. Census department, Genesee County kids age 0-5 are **36%** less likely to be uninsured than kids statewide.

Moreover, despite a sharp increase in the percent of uninsured kids age 0-5 in Genesee County in 2019 and 2020 – years in which the advantage gap between Genesee County and Michigan kids narrowed to as little as **8%** - this gap has since widened once again to reflect uninsured levels which persisted prior to 2019 and 2020.

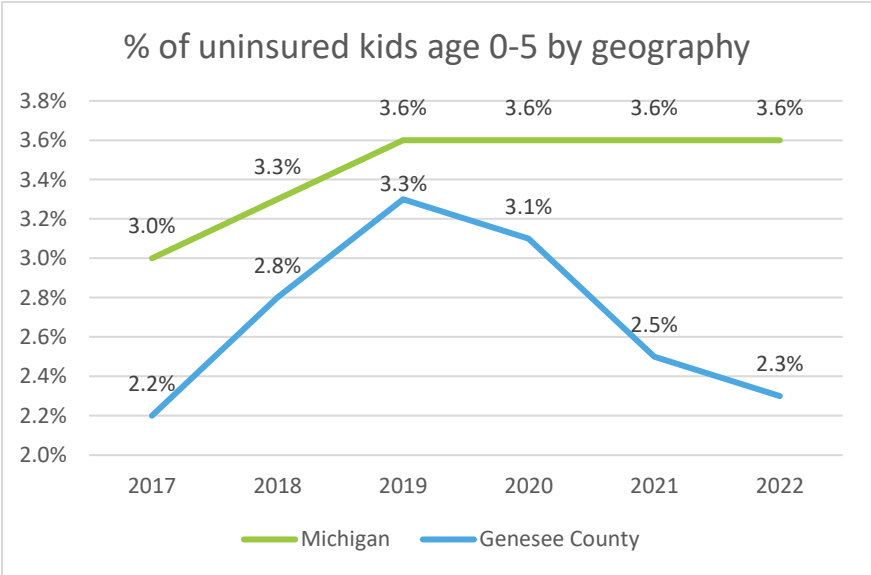
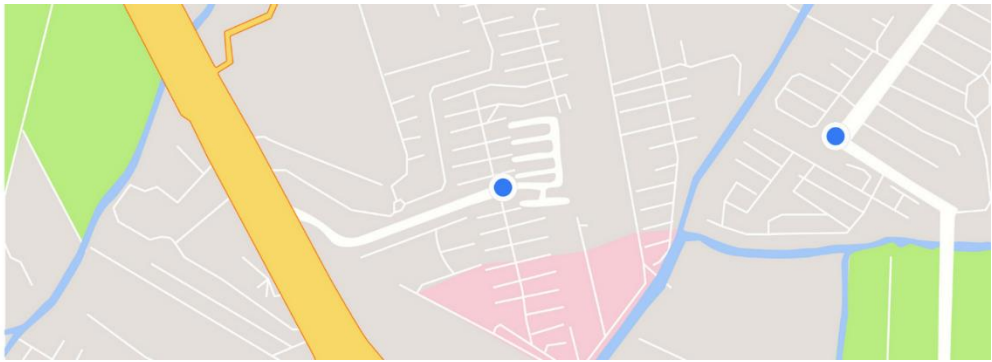


Figure 17 – Source: U.S. Census Department

Genesee County: Geography of Distress



Environmental Distress & Early Childhood

50% of Genesee County kids under the age of 5 live within census tracts of high environmental distressed, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Center for Disease Control’s Environmental Justice Index. An additional **21%** live within census tracts of moderate-high environmental distress.

Racial/Ethnic Disparities

Race and ethnicity produce significant disparities in environmental distress and adverse health indicators for kids under 5 in Genesee County. Despite comprising only **21.1%** of the total population under 5 in Genesee County, Black/African American kids make up **41.0%** of kids under 5 living within environmentally distressed census tracts.

In Genesee County, **28.6%** of White kids under 5 live in environmentally distressed census tracts, as compared with **61.4%** of Hispanic or Latino kids and **87.3%** of Black/African American kids.

Why It Matters

Kids who grow up in neighborhoods or census tracts of concentrated environmental distress experience reduced educational outcomes and cognitive/behavioral development (Wodtke, Ramaj, & Schachner, 2022). Prolonged exposure to environmental distress in early childhood produces adverse health and educational outcomes which can persist across a child’s lifetime (Maitre, et al., 2021).

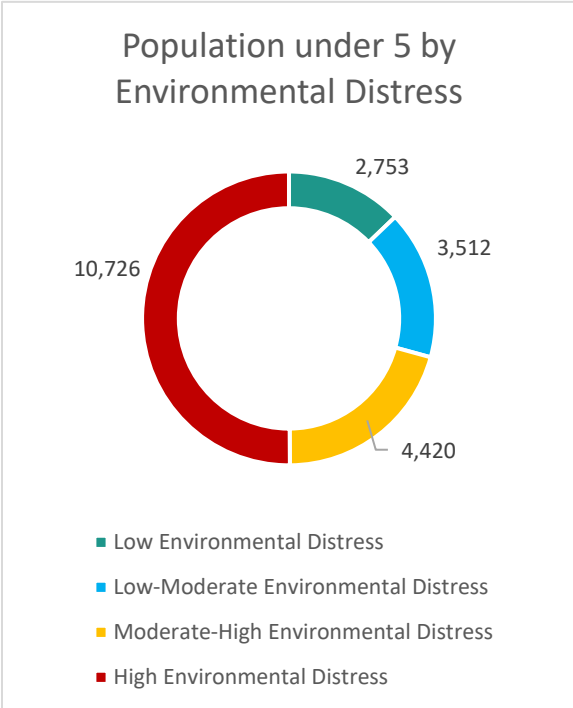


Figure 18 – Source: Center for Disease Control & U.S. Census Department

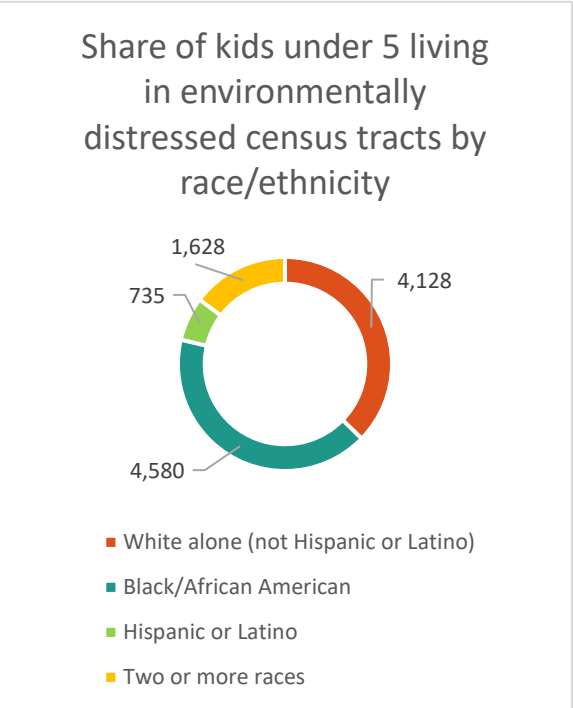
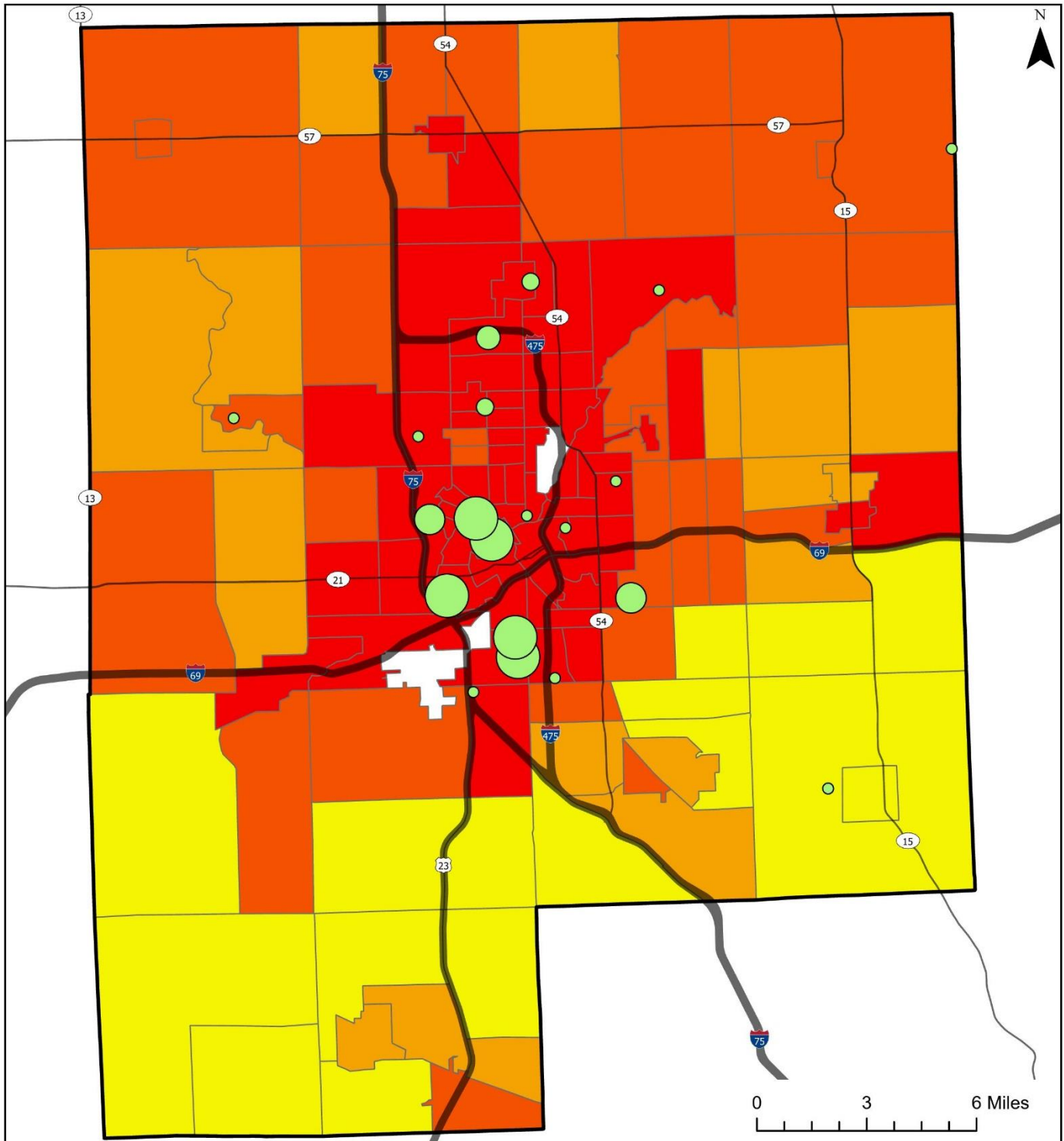


Figure 19 – Source: Center for Disease Control & U.S. Census Department

Availability of GISD Early Childhood Education Classroom Space by Level of Neighborhood Environmental Distress



CDC Environmental Justice Index Quartile by Census Tract

- Low
- Low-Mid
- Mid-High
- High

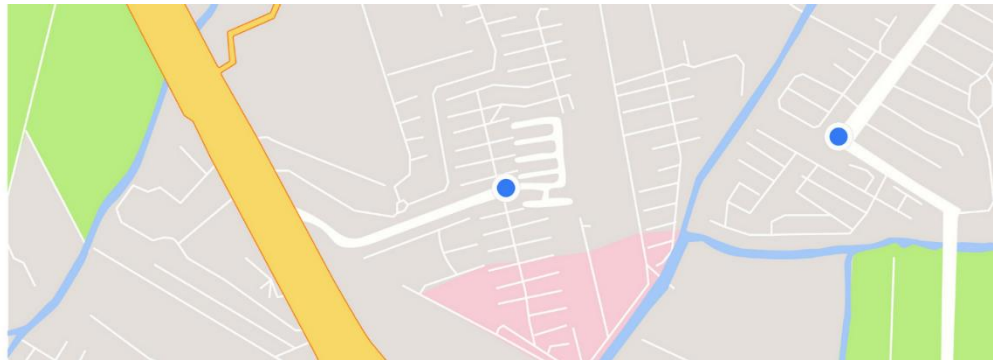
Classroom Availability by # of Classroom Spots

- < 50
- 51 - 75
- 76 - 100
- 101 - 125
- > 125



Environmental Justice Index is a product of the Center for Disease Control. Classroom availability is from the Genesee Intermediate School District.

Genesee County: Geography of Distress



Community Economic Distress & Early Childhood

44% of Genesee County kids under the age of 5 live within economically distressed zip codes, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Economic Innovation Group’s [Distressed Communities Index](#). An additional **8%** live within at-risk zip codes.

Racial/Ethnic Disparities

Race and ethnicity produce significant disparities in early childhood poverty and exposure in Genesee County. Despite comprising only **21.1%** of the total population under 5 in Genesee County, Black/African American kids make up **44.1%** of kids under 5 living within economically distressed zip codes.

In Genesee County, **26.0%** of White kids under 5 live in economically distressed zip codes, as compared with **59.9%** of Hispanic or Latino kids and **92.0%** of Black/African American kids.

Why It Matters

Regardless of individual family income, kids who grow up in neighborhoods or zip codes of concentrated economic distress experience reduced vocabulary skills and cognitive development (Wodtke, Ramaj, & Schachner, 2022). Concentrated poverty produces achievement and learning gaps which take root before children entering kindergarten and persist throughout a child’s academic career (Vinopal & Morrissey, 2020).

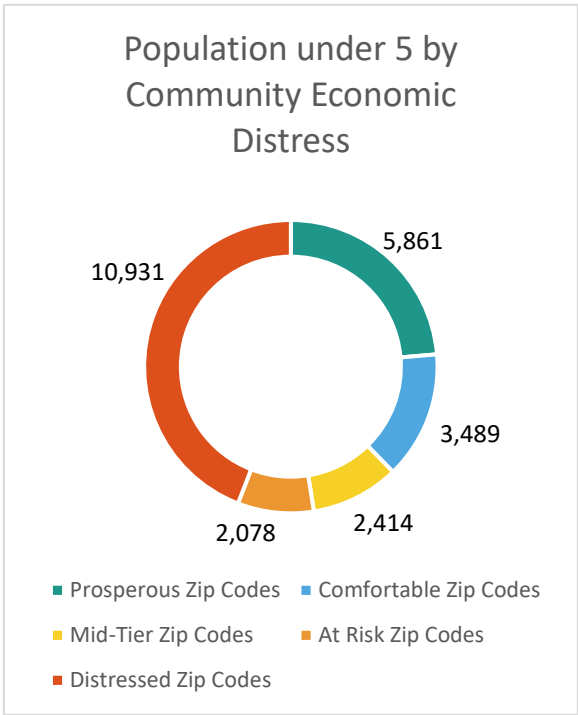


Figure 20 – Source: Economic Innovation Group & U.S. Census Department

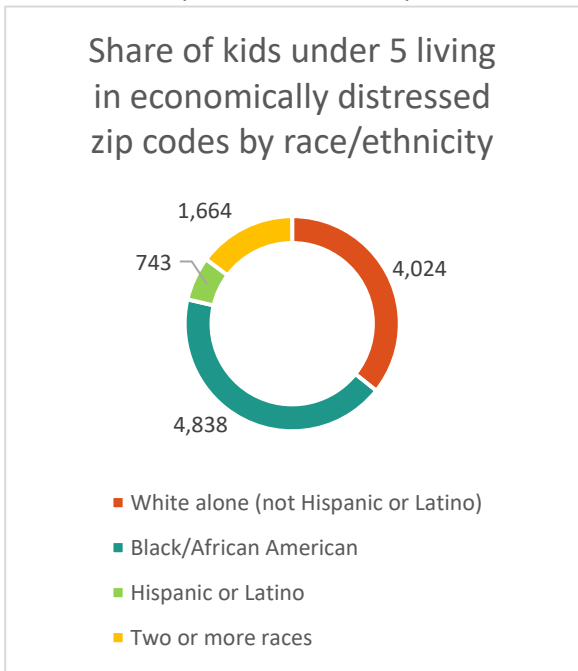
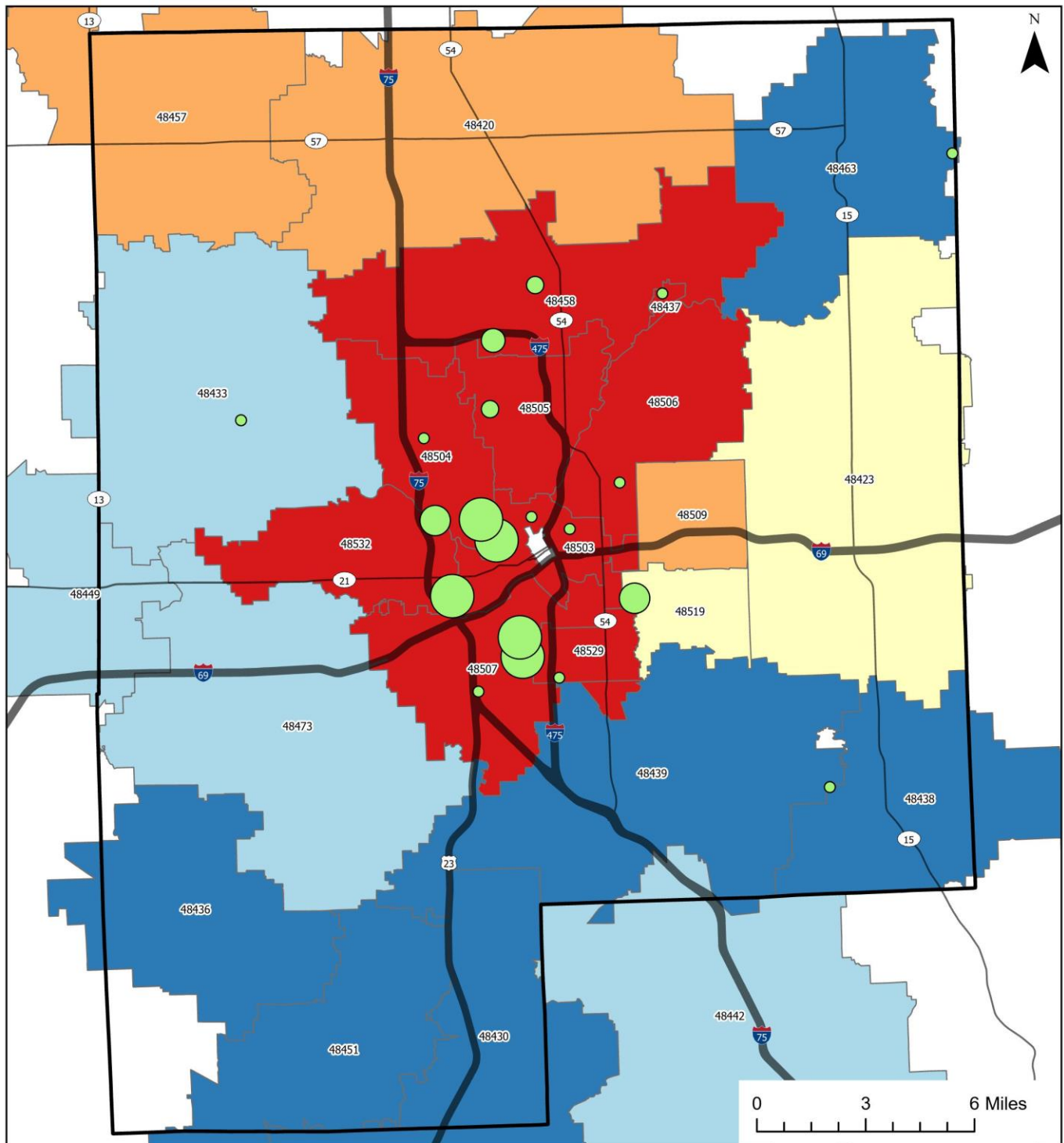


Figure 21 – Source: Economic Innovation Group & U.S. Census Department

Availability of GISD Early Childhood Education Classroom Space by Level of Community Economic Distress



Distressed Community Index Ranking by Zip Code

- Prosperous
- At Risk
- Comfortable
- Distressed
- Mid-tier

Classroom Availability by # of Classroom Spots

- < 50
- 51 - 75
- 76 - 100
- 101 - 125
- > 125



Distressed Community Index is a product from the Economic Innovation Group. Classroom availability is from the Genesee Intermediate School District.

Community Perceptions Survey



Introduction & Survey Methodology

To gain a better understanding of community support for early childhood education, barriers facing families in accessing early childhood education services, and household reading habits, Flint & Genesee Literacy Network conducted a comprehensive Community Perceptions Survey to residents of Flint & Genesee County. Surveys were primarily administered through a combination of digital outreach (email, social media, and newsletters) and in person canvassing at community events. In total, surveys were administered to **151** individuals.

A complete demographic and geographic breakdown of survey respondents can be found in Figures 22-25. An overwhelming majority of respondents were female (**91%**). Geographically, City of Flint zip codes were among the best represented, with 48503, 48504, and 48507 sharing the highest concentration of survey responses, followed by Grand Blanc (48439), Flint Township (48532), and Flushing (48433), respectively. **45%** of survey respondents identified as White, followed by **41%** who identified as Black/African American, **9%** who identified as Two or more races, **3%** who identified as Hispanic or Latino, and **1%** who identified as Asian or American Indian/Native American.

Survey Respondents by Zip Code

48313	1
48423	4
48430	5
48433	10
48438	3
48439	12
48440	1
48442	1
48451	2
48457	4
48458	6
48463	2
48473	2
48502	1
48503	20
48504	25
48505	5
48506	7
48507	15
48519	5
48529	3
48532	11

Survey Respondents by Race/Ethnicity

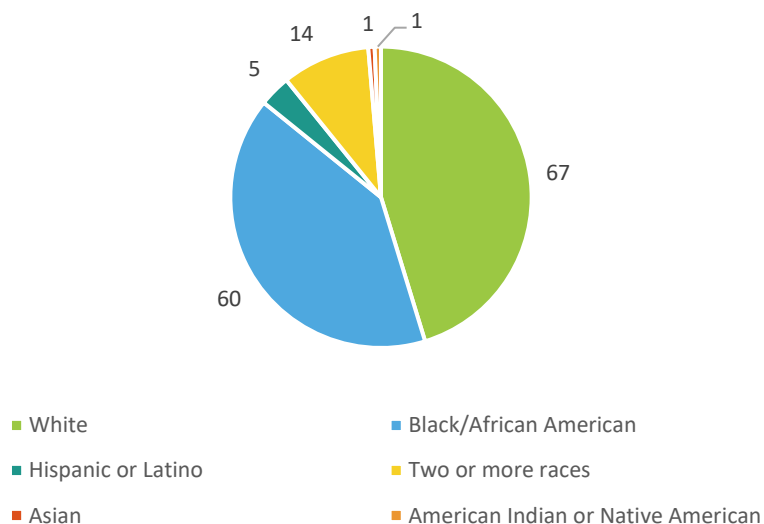


Figure 22

Figure 23



Community Perceptions Survey

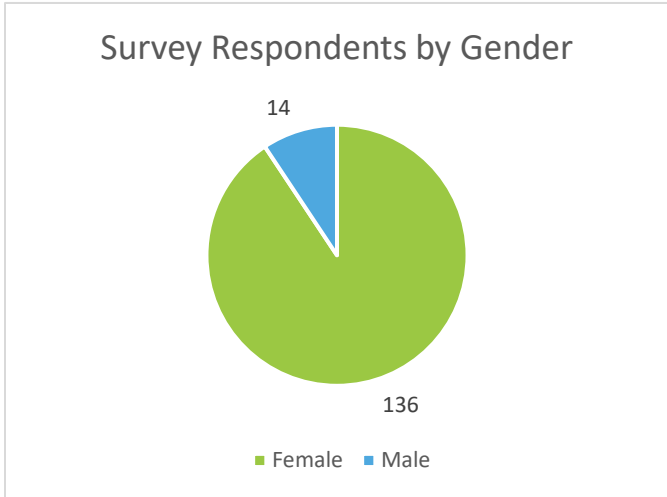


Figure 24

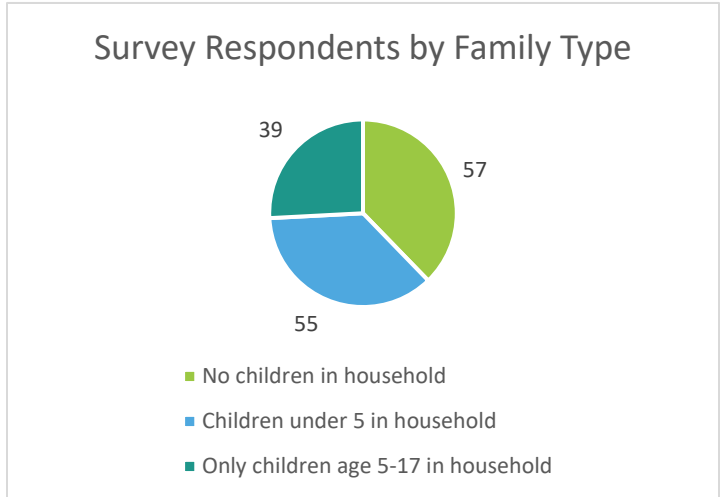


Figure 25

Family Literacy

Overall, survey respondents voiced a strong belief in the importance of family reading time (defined as time in which children and parents/caregivers/siblings read together). When asked to rate how important family reading time was for a child's lifelong development, **88%** voiced a belief that family reading time was very important, while an additional **11%** indicated that it was important. Among those surveyed, no respondents voiced a belief that family reading time was unimportant or not very important.

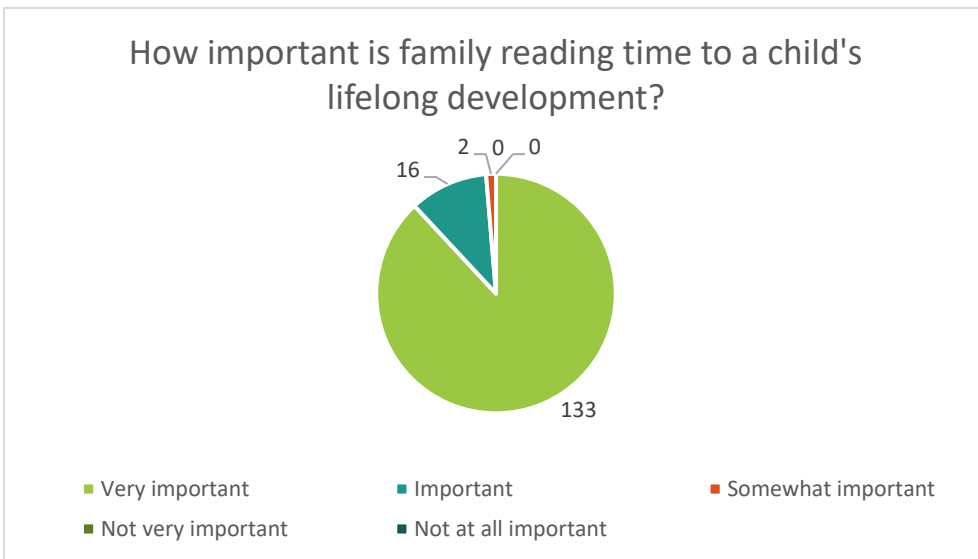


Figure 26

2.6

Hours/Week

Average time surveyed families reported spending reading with their young children.

Community Perceptions Survey



Early Childhood Education – Perceptions & Barriers

As with Family Literacy, survey respondents also voiced a strong belief in the importance of early childhood education. When asked to rate how important early childhood education was for a child’s lifelong development, **89%** voiced a belief that early childhood education was very important. As evidenced by Figure 28, among the top responses given when survey respondents were asked to identify the most significant barrier families face accessing early childhood education, **34%** said that “families don’t know what’s available,” **22%** said “it’s too expensive, and **13%** said that there was “not enough classroom space available.” However, these results differ when controlling for the presence of young children in a household. Among survey respondents with young children, **24%** identified high costs as the most significant barrier families face accessing early childhood education, followed by **22%** for lack of knowledge about available services and **20%** for lack of available classroom space.

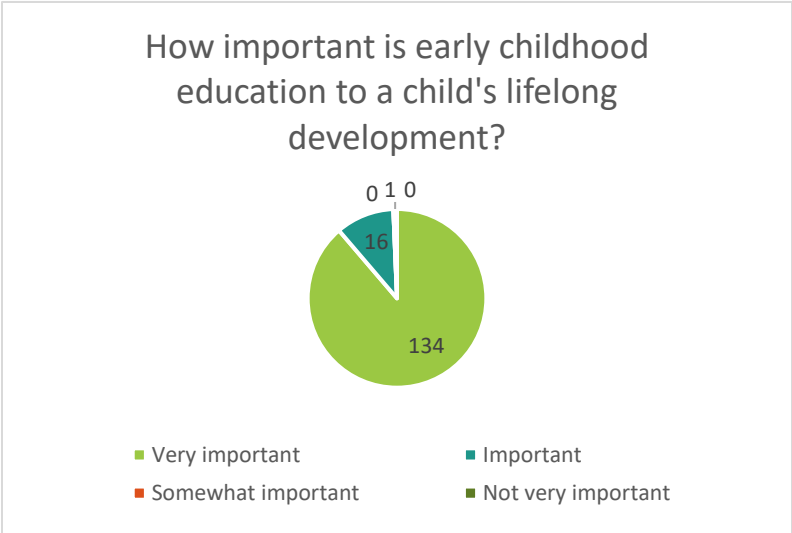


Figure 27

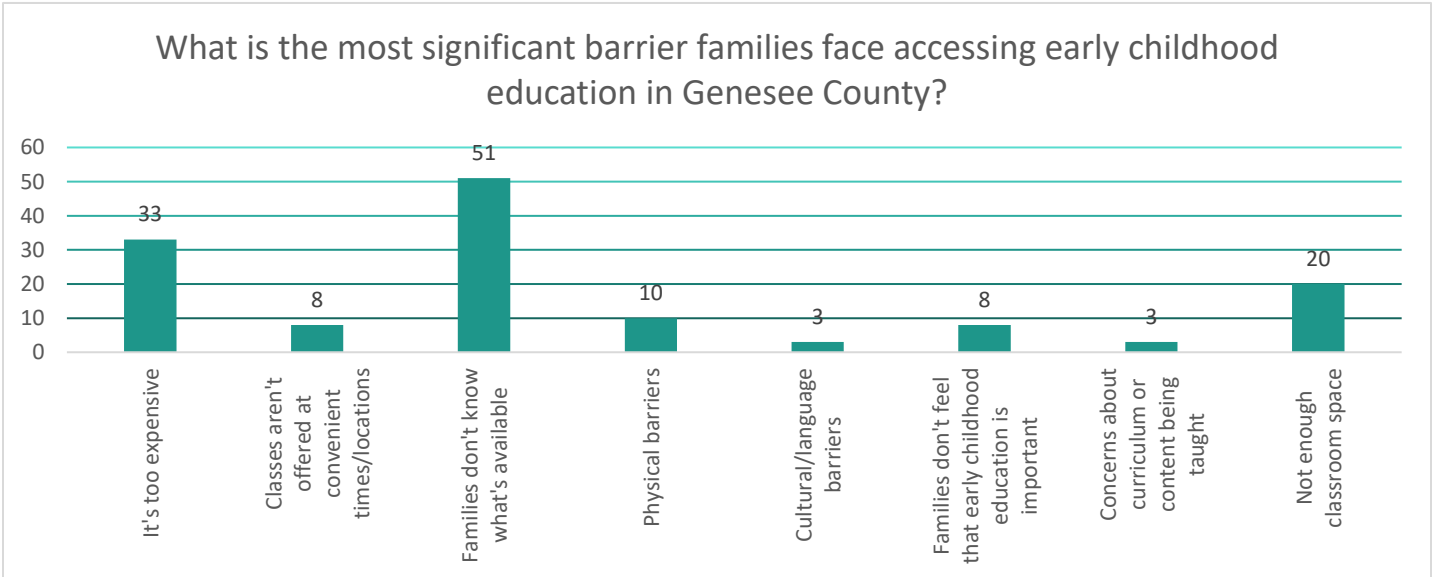


Figure 28



Early Childhood Education: Market Analysis

Teacher Wages & Childcare Costs

According to 2022 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, educators in the Flint Metropolitan Area earn only slightly less on average than their counterparts statewide. The only exception being special education teachers at the kindergarten/elementary level who, on average, earn **5%** more than their counterparts statewide. At both the local and statewide level, much larger disparities exist in the wage levels of preschool educators and their colleagues in K-12 education. In 2022, preschool educators in the Flint Metropolitan Area earned **45%** less than their colleagues in K-12 education. Related studies have found that, even when controlling for education level, early childhood educators in Michigan are paid **21.5%** less than their colleagues in K-12 education and are **7x** more likely to live in poverty (Gould, Whitebook, & Austin, 2020).

Despite such wage gaps, early childhood education and childcare represent a significant cost for families in Michigan and Genesee County as evidenced by Figure 43. According to 2023 estimates from the U.S. Labor Department, while childcare costs in Genesee County are slightly lower than those of Michigan, these costs nonetheless make up a larger share of total family income as compared with costs statewide.

Educator Wages: Michigan & Flint Metropolitan Area (2022)

	Flint Metropolitan Area	Michigan
Teacher Wages (except special education)		
Teaching Assistants	\$30,400	\$30,780
Preschool	\$36,440	\$36,660
Kindergarten	--	\$61,980
Elementary	\$65,720	\$66,130
Special Education Wages		
Special Education (Preschool)	--	\$65,710
Special Education (Kindergarten & Elementary)	\$68,210	\$64,910

-- Signifies that data is unavailable at this geographic level

Figure 43 – Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Childcare Costs: Genesee County & Michigan (2023)

Genesee County

	Median Yearly Cost	Share of Family Income
Infant/Toddler Center-Based	\$10,265	14.9%
Preschool Center-Based	\$8,982	13.0%
Preschool Home-Based	\$5,598	9.6%

State of Michigan

	Median Yearly Cost	Share of Family Income
Infant/Toddler Center-Based	\$11,942	13.9%
Preschool Center-Based	\$10,450	12.1%
Preschool Home-Based	\$7,631	8.9%

Figure 44 – Source: U.S. Department of Labor

Early Childhood Education: Market Analysis



Employment & Wage Trends by Education Sector

Finally, to gain a better understanding of ongoing trends and stresses within the early childhood education labor market, Flint & Genesee Literacy Network to conducted an analysis of publicly available market data. This analysis included a comparative review of total employment levels for both preschool and K-12 teachers. This was supplemented with a review of wage trends for each of these occupations both in nominal and real, inflation-adjusted dollars.

Total Employment

As evidenced by Figure 45 and Table 2, the total number of individuals employed as preschool teachers in the Flint Metropolitan Area has risen by **229%** over the past 10 years, according to 2023 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Moreover, as Figure 45 demonstrates, this growth in total employment for preschool teachers is the product of a trend which has been taking place with relative consistency since the outset of the Flint Water Crisis in 2014.

By contrast, total employment levels for teachers in K-12 education have been marked by greater year-to-year fluctuation since 2014. Nonetheless, total employment levels across an aggregate of all four K-12 occupational categories remain relatively consistent with 2014 employment levels, declining by only **4.3%** over the same period.

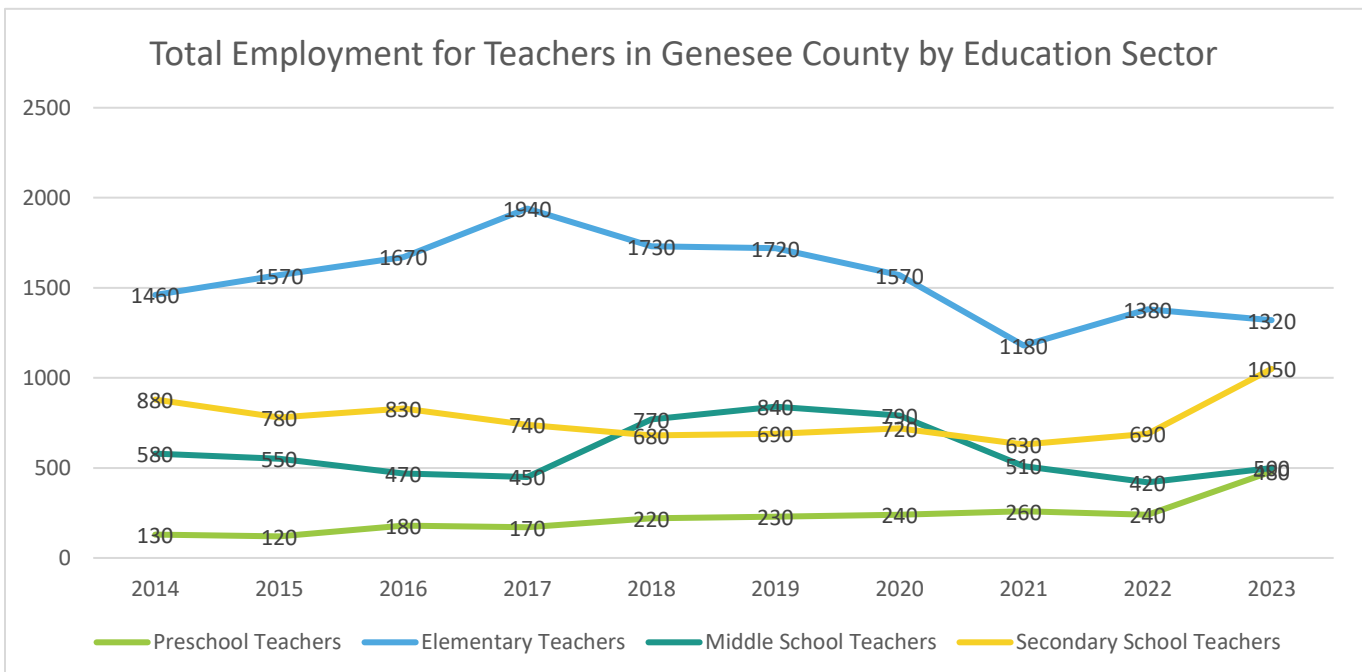


Figure 45 – Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



Early Childhood Education: Market Analysis

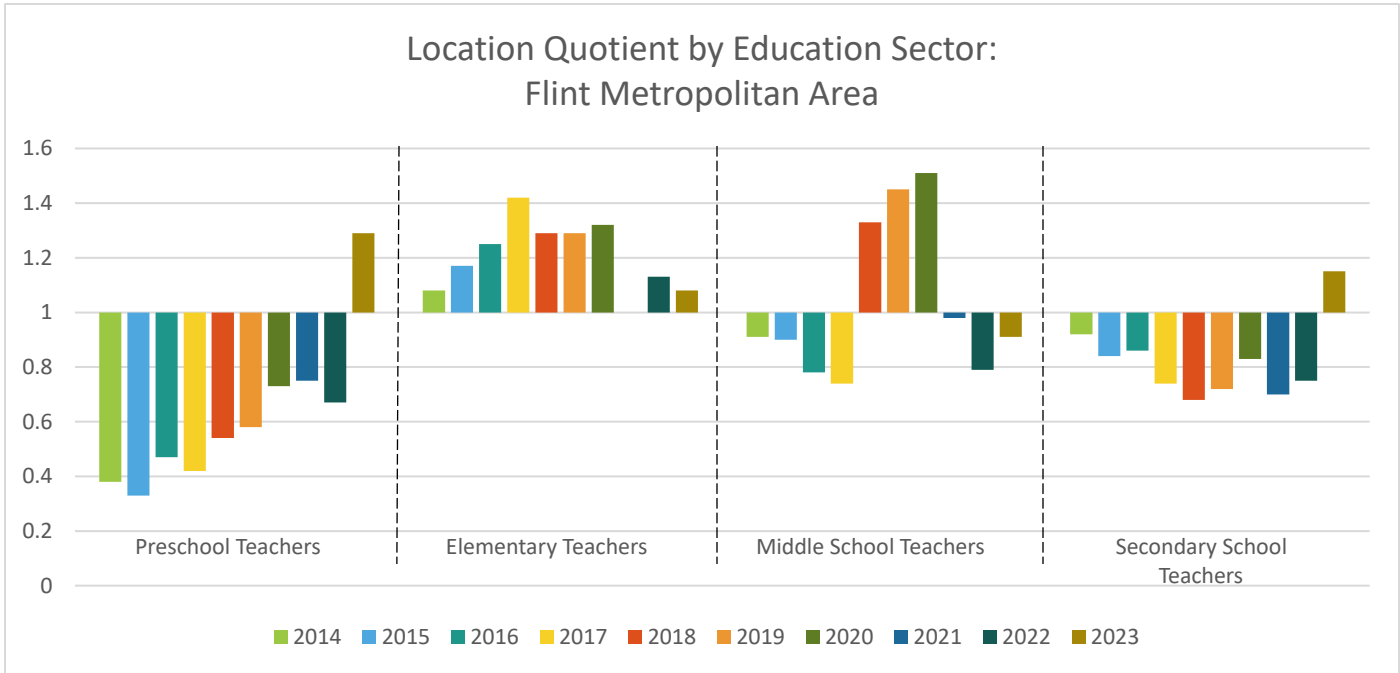


Figure 46 – Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Location Quotient – Employment Concentration

Another measure of overall demand and employment trends in labor markets is the location quotient for a given occupation within a region or metropolitan area. Calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the location quotient for a given area is designed to quantify the concentration of individuals employed within a given occupation as compared with nationwide totals. It is a comparative metric which captures the ratio of an occupation’s share of employment in a given area to that occupation’s share of employment in the U.S. as a whole. For example, an occupation that makes up 10 percent of employment in a specific metropolitan area, compared with 2 percent of U.S. employment, would have a location quotient of 5 for the area in question.

A comparative representation of location quotient data across education fields can be seen in Figure 46. Consistent with the recent growth in total employment for preschool teachers in the Flint metropolitan area, the area’s concentration of employment of preschool teachers, as measured by its location quotient, has risen by **239%** since 2014. Moreover, while preschool teachers, as a share of the overall workforce in the Flint metropolitan area, lagged nationwide shares by **62%** in 2014, this disparity reversed in 2023 with preschool teachers as a share of the overall workforce in the Flint metropolitan area now outpacing nationwide shares by **29%**.

Early Childhood Education: Market Analysis



Wages

To gain a better understanding of overall health in the early childhood education labor market, FGLN also analyzed trends in occupational wages for teachers in preschool and K-12 education. In the first stage of our analysis, we compared wage trends for preschool teachers to those of teachers in K-12 education, as well as the average of all occupations. As evidenced by Table 2, nominal wages (without adjusting for inflation) have risen modestly over the past ten years for most educational occupations, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Since 2014, nominal wages for preschool teachers have risen **4.6%**, as compared with an increase of **5.2%**, **15.3%**, and **14.1%** for elementary teachers, secondary school teachers, and kindergarten and elementary special education teachers, respectively. The only education occupation that experienced a decline in nominal wages was middle school teachers, who experienced an average decline of **2.2%** in nominal wages. By comparison, nominal wages for all occupations have risen by **32.3%** over the same period.

Table 2: Labor Market Trends: Flint Metropolitan Area	2014	2023	% Change
<i>Total Employment</i>			
Preschool Teachers	130	480	+229.2%
Elementary Teachers	1,460	1,320	-9.6%
Middle School Teachers	580	500	-13.8%
Secondary School Teachers	880	1,050	+19.3%
Special Education, Kindergarten and Elementary	200	100	-50.0%
<i>Nominal Wages (without inflation)</i>			
Preschool Teachers	\$33,730	\$35,280	+4.6%
Elementary Teachers	\$62,260	\$65,510	+5.2%
Middle School Teachers	\$66,360	\$64,890	-2.2%
Secondary School Teachers	\$58,990	\$68,040	+15.3%
Special Education, Kindergarten and Elementary	\$59,800	\$68,240	+14.1%
All Occupations	\$41,740	\$55,230	+32.3%

	Real Wages (adjusted for inflation)		
Preschool Teachers	\$33,730	\$27,637	-18.1%
Elementary Teachers	\$62,260	\$51,318	-17.6%
Middle School Teachers	\$66,360	\$50,832	-23.4%
Secondary School Teachers	\$58,990	\$53,299	-11.3%
Special Education, Kindergarten and Elementary	\$59,800	\$53,457	-9.6%
All Occupations	\$41,740	\$43,265	+3.7%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics - Wage & Employment Data (<https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>)

Real Wages/Inflation data derived from 12-month Consumer Price Index (CPI) Measures for Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint area using August 2014 as a baseline (*Bureau of Labor Statistics*; 2014 - https://www.bls.gov/regions/midwest/news-release/2014/consumerpriceindex_detroit_20140917.htm 2023 - https://www.bls.gov/regions/midwest/news-release/consumerpriceindex_detroit.htm)

Wages (continued)

A more accurate picture of wage trends within a given occupation can be drawn from analyzing real wages for that occupation. Unlike nominal wages, real wages refer to wages that have been adjusted for inflation using a ratio of the consumer price index for a given year, as compared with the consumer price index for a past year as a baseline. In this case, FGLN used the consumer price index for the Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint area in 2014 as a baseline against which to calculate the current real wage of occupations in inflation-adjusted dollars for 2023.

In doing so, FGLN found that wages for all educational occupations have declined in terms of real, inflation-adjusted dollars. As evidenced by Table 2, when adjusted for inflation, real wages for preschool teachers have declined by **18.1%** over the past ten years. Over the same period, real, inflation-adjusted wages for elementary teachers, middle school teachers, secondary school teachers, and kindergarten and elementary special education teachers have declined by **17.6%**, **23.4%**, **11.3%**, and **9.6%**, respectively. This suggests that, despite modest growth in nominal wages for educational occupations, this wage growth has not kept pace with inflation and has thus led to a reduction in the spending power of individual teachers' income in terms of real dollars.

This decline in real wages is all the more striking when one considers that, over the same period, real, inflation-adjusted wages for all occupation rose by **3.7%**. The disparity between educational occupations and the overall workforce in real, inflation-adjusted wages represents a significant opportunity cost for workers considering employment in either education or non-education occupations. In the face of this disparity, educational employers will likely face greater competition from non-education employers in recruiting skilled workers.

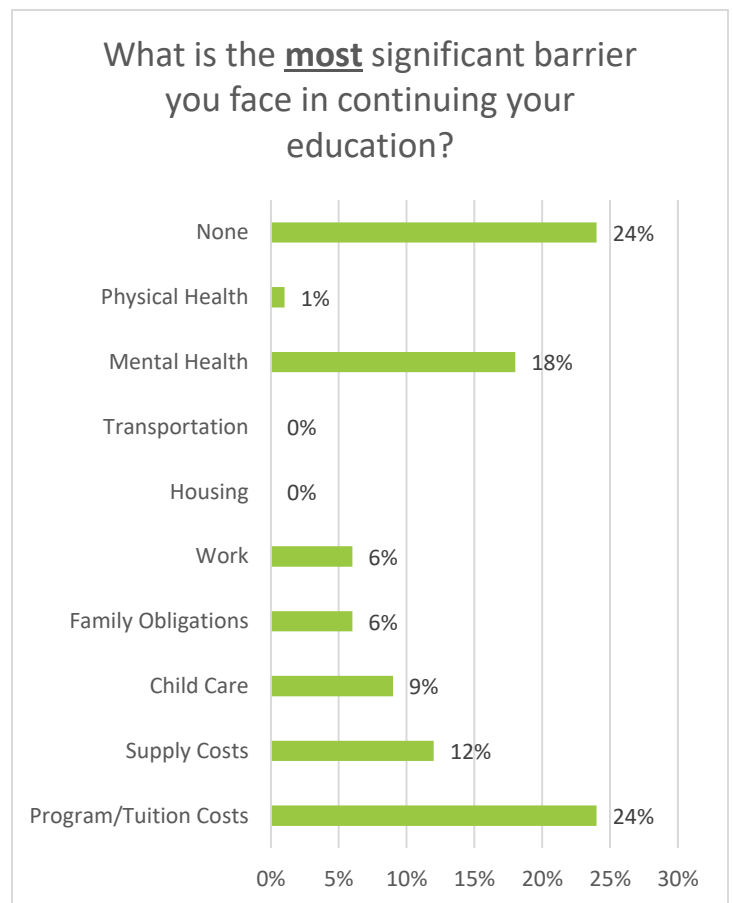
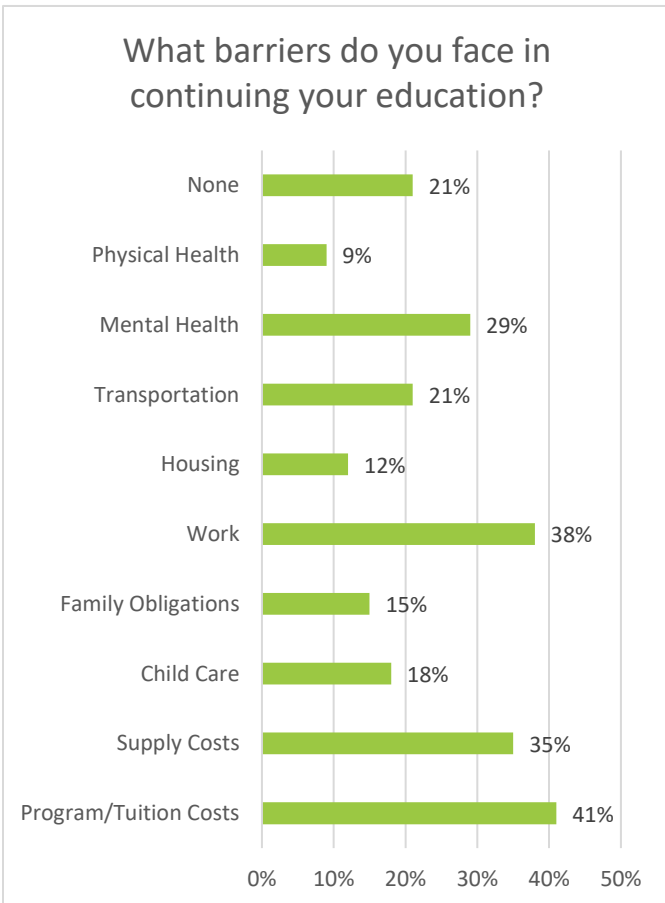
Early Childhood Education: Market Analysis



Student Perceptions/Expectations Survey

FGLN’s analysis of public labor market data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics was supplemented with a market perceptions/expectations survey administered to college/vocational students currently enrolled in early childhood education certification/degree programs at Mott Community College and Child Care Network. In total, 34 students were surveyed, 20 of whom were enrolled in Child Care Network’s Child Development Associate’s (CDA) program and 14 of whom were enrolled in Mott’s Early Childhood Education, Associate of Applied Sciences degree program. This survey asked about student’s expectations for the labor market following graduation from their respective programs. Students were also asked about the barriers that they faced in continuing their education.

As evidenced by Figures 47, when asked to identify the various barriers students faced in continuing their education, program/tuition costs, school supply costs, and/or work were the most cited barriers. However, when asked to identify the single most significant barrier they faced, students most frequently cited program/tuition costs, none, or mental health/emotional wellbeing.



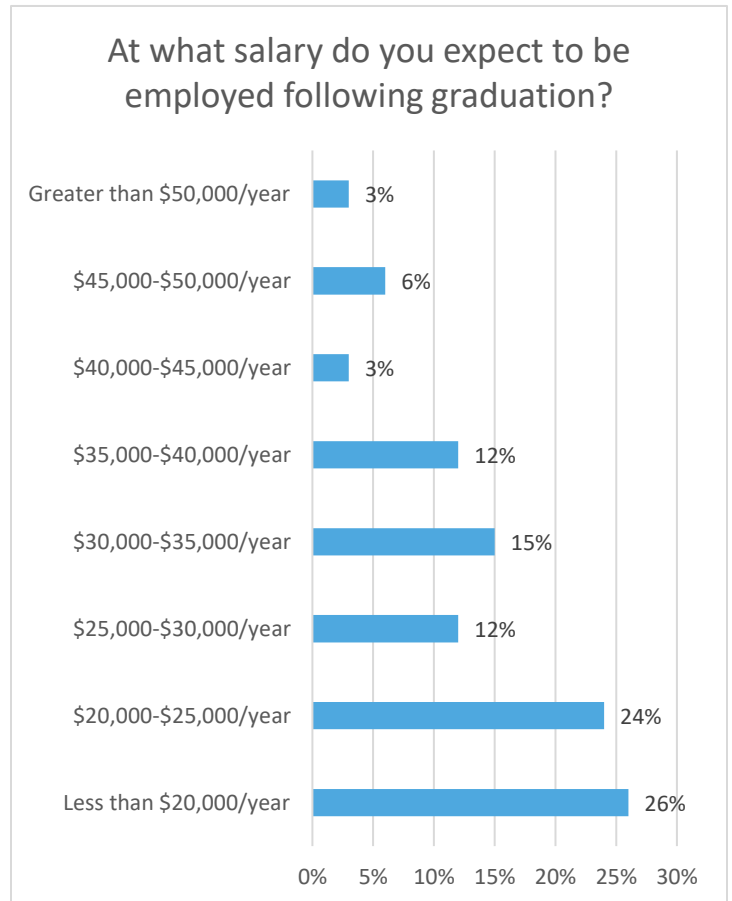
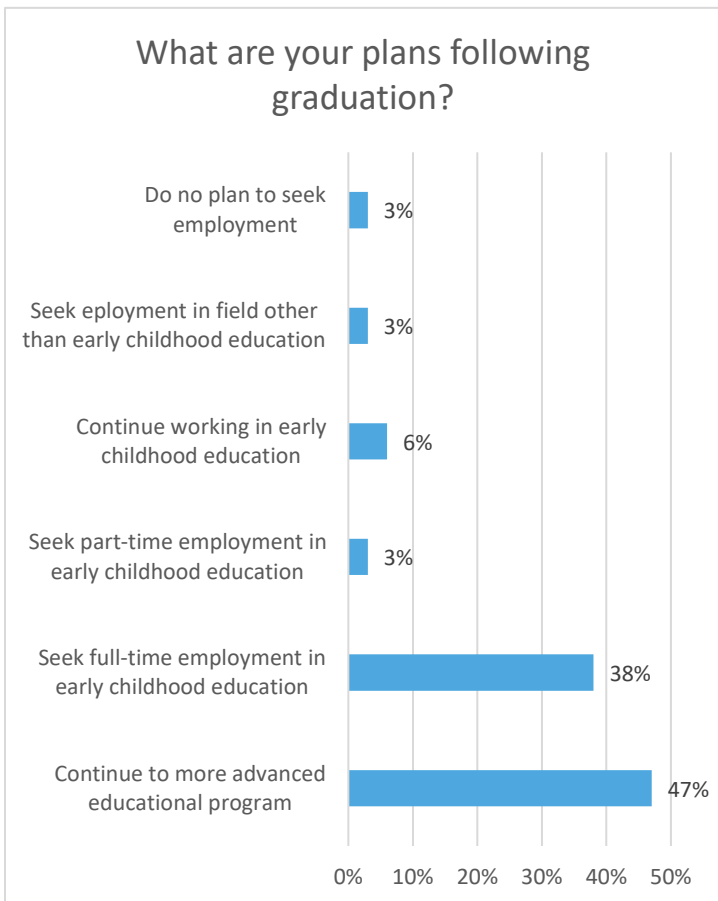


Early Childhood Education: Market Analysis

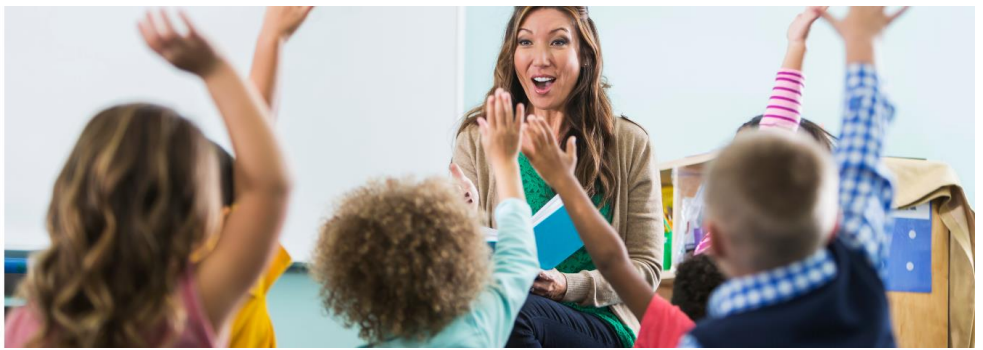
Student Perceptions/Expectations Survey

On the whole, students expressed modest expectations for salary/wages following graduation from their respective programs. When asked what salary they expected to earn following graduation from their programs, 26% of students indicated that they planned to receive less than \$20,000/year, while 24% indicated that they planned to receive between \$20,000-\$25,000/year. Overall, 88% of students expressed an expectation of earning less than \$40,000/year following graduation from their respective programs. This is consistent with current nominal and real wage levels for preschool teachers as discussed previously and highlighted in Table 2.

When asked about their plans following graduation, 47% of students indicated that they planned to continue to a more advanced educational program. Another 38% indicated that they planned to seek full-time employment following graduation.



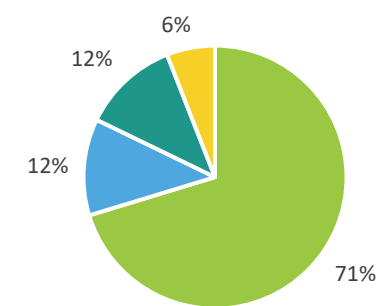
Early Childhood Education: Market Analysis



When asked about which factors will most influence their decision on where to work following graduation, a majority of students (68%) cited salary/wages as a factor, while 53% of students cited a belief that their work makes a difference. When asked which factor would be the single most important influence on their decision, 47% cited salary/wages and another 27% cited the belief that their work makes a difference. Such feedback suggests that, in the absence of financial resources to raise individual teacher salaries, early childhood education employers seeking to attract qualified applicants would be best served by emphasizing the impact of their programs on individuals, families, and the community.

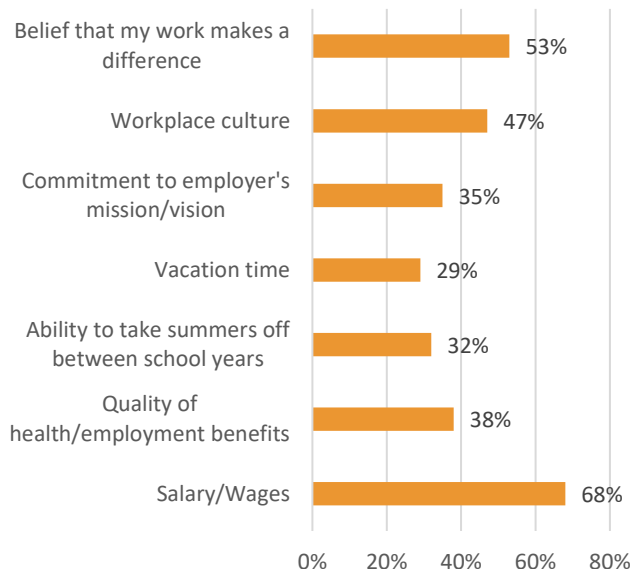
Finally, when asked if they planned to remain in Genesee County when seeking employment following graduation, 71% indicated that it was very likely that they would do so, with another 12% indicating that they were somewhat likely to remain.

How likely are you to remain in Genesee County when seeking employment following graduation?

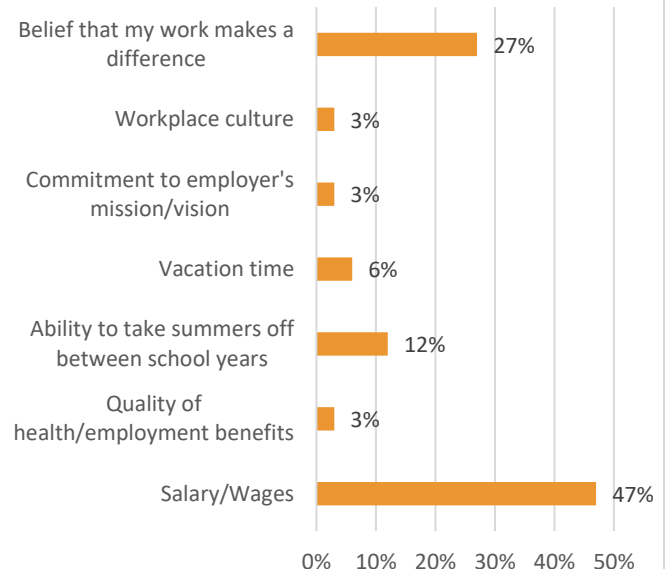


■ Very likely ■ Somewhat likely
■ Somewhat unlikely ■ Very unlikely

What factors will influence your decision on where to work following graduation?



What will be the **most** important factor influencing your decision of workplace following graduation?



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Focus on Five is a spotlight report of Flint & Genesee Literacy Network's *State of Literacy* initiative. Full reports and community data dashboards can be found on our website

<https://flintliteracynetwork.org>

