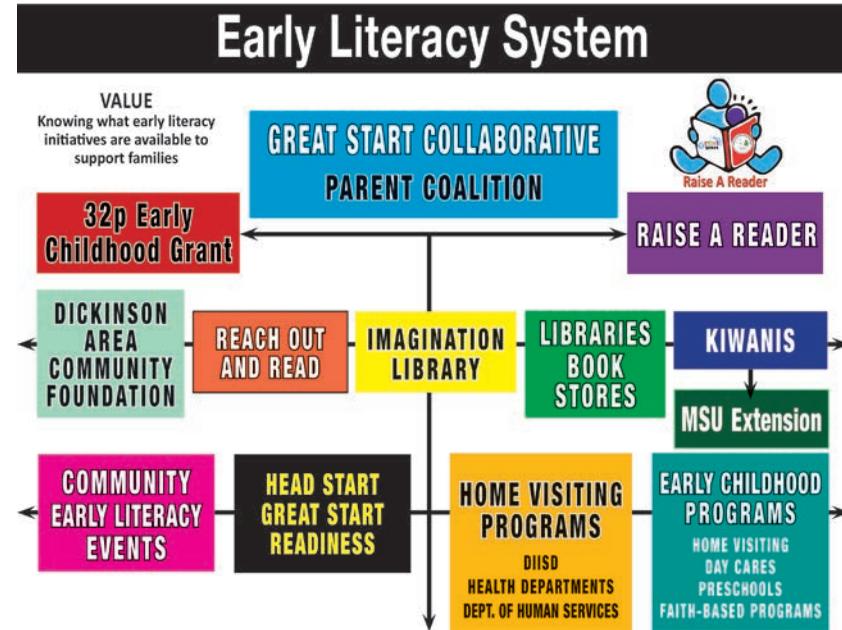


# GREAT START ACTIVITIES

The single most important activity to prepare children for lifelong learning is for families to read together daily. Children reading at home 10 to 15 minutes a day have more school success. Eight years ago Dickinson-Iron Great Start (DIGSC) implemented an Early Literacy System consisting of 12 Great Start partners supporting families, community partners, stakeholders, schools and businesses. The Great Start Early Literacy System has significantly impacted children's reading skills.



Over the past ten years, two nationally recognized early literacy programs have been centerpieces of Great Start's Early Literacy System: **The Imagination Library and Reach Out and Read**. Both of these exceptional early literacy programs have been instrumental in promoting a culture of reading for children in Dickinson and Iron Counties. Over the past decade, Great Start has distributed and put a range of 10,000 to 40,000 books annually in the hands of children. Book drives are happening each month as community partners, especially parent leaders, drop off boxes of gently-used books. Imagination Library Community Coordinator Maria Johns, is proud of the ongoing positive response of children being enrolled in the Imagination Library. Over the past two years 1,200 children a month are mailed books to their homes. Currently, 10 medical staff, especially pediatricians are giving out Reach Out and Read books to children ages birth to five when they finish their 'well checks'. DIGSC was one of the first collaboratives in Michigan to implement a comprehensive early literacy model consisting of 12 early literacy programs.

DIGSC works very closely with the Great Start to Quality UP Resource Center. Each year members of the Child Care Action Team make multiple visits to connect with the 40 local childcare providers. Quality childcare is very available in Dickinson and Iron Counties with many childcare providers valuing the Star Rating System.

DIGSC believes in celebrating successes. Celebration events are held annually to recognize outstanding leaders and community partners. In 2020, DIGSC will be highlighting 35 initiatives to be completed by September 30, 2021.



## GREAT START COLLABORATIVE DICKINSON - IRON COUNTIES

The Dickinson-Iron Great Start Collaborative is a coordinated system that provides services, support, resources and education for parents and community agencies resulting in early learning opportunities and school readiness for children ages birth to 8.



Director Barb Reisner, M.S., M.Ed.  
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# MISSION – GOALS – OUTCOMES

Great Start promotes programs, services and resources supporting parent leadership and early learning for all young children. We are proud to be part of the early childhood movement with Michigan’s Office of Great Start and Department of Education, both recognized as national leaders.

Great Start leaders ensure local coordination and programming to support high-quality early childhood and childcare programs that contribute positive outcomes for children. Through collaboration, coordination and system building with community partners, Great Start’s mission and vision of school readiness for all children has become a realistic and valued goal. We strongly believe children who are successful in school and in life need to grow up in environments that develop self confidence, leadership, positive social and emotional skills, early literacy and a strong desire to learn.



To ensure school readiness for ALL children in Michigan, Great Start leaders focus on 4 key outcomes when planning initiatives and goals to be accomplished as described in annual work plans:



- (1) Children are born healthy;
- (2) Children are healthy, thriving and developmentally on track from birth to third grade;
- (3) Children are developmentally ready to succeed in school at the time of school entry;
- and (4) Children are prepared to succeed in fourth grade and beyond by reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

## It Is All About The Children!

The Dickinson-Iron Great Start Collaborative appreciates community partnerships and requires the convening of meetings to ensure coordination and expansion of local early childhood infrastructure and programs to make recommendations about community services and provide early childhood programming to support annual work plan initiatives and Multi-Year Strategic Plans. **6 KEY GREAT START PARTNERS** are identified in Michigan to help Great Start **MAKE A COLLECTIVE IMPACT:**



- DICKINSON-IRON HEALTH DEPARTMENT
- DICKINSON-IRON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
- DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
- NORTHPOINTE BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE
- GREAT START TO QUALITY UP RESOURCE CENTER
- GREAT START PARENT COALITION

# GREAT START LEADERSHIP

## Great Start Action Teams

Child Care & Social-Emotional Health

Communication & Fund Development

Early Literacy & Early Learning

Parent Leadership & Family Support

Pediatric & Family Health

School Readiness Advisory Team



**Great Start Action Teams** take on similar leadership models as committees with the primary purpose of deciding how to take action to create programs, resources, events, activities and media communications that align with desired early childhood outcomes.

Great Start leaders focus on system building to identify community partners who have similar goals and tasks to join and work together to achieve positive results for children. Historically, Great Start most often implements family events and early childhood programs with community partners.

Dickinson and Iron Counties have amazing community leaders who are dedicated, compassion and committed to help children and families. Dickinson Iron Great Start leaders have very positive working relationships with the Dickinson Iron Intermediate School District (DIISD) under the outstanding leadership of Superintendent Wendy Warmuth and Early Childhood Director Casey McCormick. Both the DIISD and DIGSC are Michigan leaders in the early childhood movement. Leadership loyalty and dedication have been significant in expanding early childhood efforts and starting new ventures for children and families.

**2020 GREAT START ACTION TEAM LEADERS** who have been instrumental in starting new endeavors for children and families in Dickinson and Iron Counties:

- |             |                 |                      |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Jenny Baker | Maria Johns     | Sara Pericolosi      |
| Megan Buck  | Misty Lefebvre  | Trisha Peterson      |
| Cherie Fila | Ruth Manier     | Sherry Smith-LaBrash |
| Janice Gray | Casey McCormick | Curtis VanDusen      |
| Peg James   | Becky Nord      | Kim Webb             |