

From: [Courtney Yaple](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Statement for public comment
Date: Saturday, September 18, 2021 5:08:18 PM

This statement is intended to be shared as a public comment regarding the Early Childhood Millage.

To the Board of Commissioners,

I am writing to advocate for keeping the Early Childhood Millage. I am a resident of Leelanau County, a homeowner, a parent raising two young children here, I utilize the services that the millage provides, and I am a professional who works with youth in our county. I strongly disagree with Commissioner Bunek's stance that this millage is not needed, and reducing it to nothing is a disservice to the people you are supposed to represent. You do not represent my needs and values, and I think you should be recalled for attempting to take away funding that was passed by voters. It is astonishing that this is even happening in our county and that young families have to fight to keep funding that benefits the entire community.

I have a 3.5 year old son and a 5 month old daughter. Parenting is hard enough, and we live in a county that is isolating and lacks services for families. Through the millage, services for young families and children were expanded. Parenting Communities is a bright spot in our community and the weekly playgroups were the one thing I felt confident enough to attend as a mother of two adjusting to life as a new mom again, taking care of a toddler and newborn, while I was on maternity leave. It was a respite for me, I felt supported, understood, and safe. I got valuable insight and support from Hollie Anderson, who runs the playgroups, and other parents who attended with their children. Hollie also came for home visits and I was connected to other resources I was in need of, and I felt like I was seen and that my family mattered. My son looked forward to the playgroups and begged to go every day. It is fun for him, I am able to take him and my infant into a comfortable, safe, and supportive environment, and we all enjoy the time with other parents and children we can relate to. I also got lactation support from nurses Autumn and Jenny at the health department and their support was critical while I began breastfeeding both of my children. I enjoy Parenting Communities as an outlet that is safe and aligned with our values - our children are cherished and supported.

Aside from the fact that the Early Childhood millage provides invaluable support and resources to families, the action that this commission is taking feels like an outright attack on Leelanau families with young children. What you're saying to us is that we are not

valued here, and our children do not have a future here. Leelanau voters voiced their opinion in 2019 by passing the millage, which is supposed to go until 2024. Commissioners, I implore you not to remove this funding. If you represent the Leelanau residents, you must keep this millage in place as it was voted in. It is essential for the health of our families and community. Our children are our future. Invest in them, and we will all reap the benefits. I only hope we can allow these services to take place long enough to see the monumental effects they will have on our families and our future community.

Sincerely,

Courtney Yapple