

**From:** [Michelle Crocker](#)  
**To:** [Board of Commissioners](#)  
**Cc:** [Chet Janik](#); [Alison Middleton](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Early Childhood Millage  
**Date:** Sunday, September 19, 2021 10:48:11 PM

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Dear Commissioners,  
Please see the public comment below.  
Michelle

-----Original Message-----

From: Deb Kuhn <debkuhn@gmail.com>  
Sent: Sunday, September 19, 2021 10:23 PM  
To: Michelle Crocker <mcrocker@leelanau.gov>  
Subject: Early Childhood Millage

Dear Ms. Crocker,  
Could you please ensure that all Leelanau County Commissioners receive this email on the record.

Dear County Commissioners,  
I would like to share my view of the critical importance of the Early Childhood Millage based upon my personal experience as a home and community-based service provider. During the past thirteen years in my role as a speech-language therapist for Northwest Education Services (formerly TBAISD), I worked with many of our children in the local schools. My most recent position was with the Infant-Toddler age group, working directly in homes with young children and their parents. This work was by far the most meaningful in my career because the positive results of providing direct support to families were so clear. The problem is that not all families in Leelanau County can access these services because by Michigan law, the services are restricted to only those children with demonstrated developmental delays. All Leelanau families deserve the chance to improve outcomes for their children and the Early Childhood Millage funds exactly that.

The issue of service redundancy/overlap has been expressed a number of times. However, I would like to point out that, just like the Infant-Toddler program I work for, services through local agencies are available only for those who meet eligibility criteria. Health Dept services are very important, yet narrow in range, because they focus primarily on the physical health of mother and baby.

The millage, on the other hand, expands access to services to all families with children from 0-6, as well as expanding the scope to address a broader range of issues known to promote overall well being in families. The millage-based services use two best practice models: The Parents As Teachers model - a research based family support and child development curriculum, and The Strengthening Families Approach - a research based family support based on the five protective factors:

- Knowledge of child development and parenting
- Concrete supports in times of need
- Social connections
- Social emotional competence of children
- Parental Resilience

I have seen first hand the value of helping families with “Parents as Teachers” and “Strengthening Families” and therefore I urge you to vote to fully fund the Early Childhood Millage so this critically important work can continue and thereby improve the quality of life for families in our county.

Respectfully,

Deb Kuhn  
Centerville Township