

Sept. 19, 2021

Dear County Commissioners of Leelanau County:

The parenting community is a unique program that came about after many months of research, discussion, and problem solving by a group of professionals who are well trained in necessary and appropriate programming for parents with young children. It was discovered there are minimal services available for families with children aged birth to three years. Experts in the field know that the crucial years from birth to five are extremely important to add the most value and impact on a child's development. If we provide knowledge and experiential learning plus support to families with children in this age range, it has profound benefits that impact that child for a lifetime! Think of it in dollars and cents: According to James J. Heckman, Professor of Economics at the Univ. of Chicago, multiple studies have shown that early child services for at-risk children, translates into \$48,000 in benefits to the public per child. It is estimated that the return in investment was \$7 for every \$1 invested in such programs! These economic benefits were due to increased school and career achievement, as well as reduced costs in remedial education, health and criminal justice system expenditures. Our community will benefit from well-functioning citizens who gained early childhood skills that decreases the incidents of school drop-out, delinquency and the likelihood of a life of poverty. How can you NOT want that for our communities in our county? Thank you for reconsidering the on-going funding for a program that is based on excellent data from experienced early childhood professionals.

Sincerely,
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