

From: [Chet Janik](#)
To: [Alison Middleton](#)
Subject: FW: Early Childhood Millage
Date: Monday, September 20, 2021 10:21:00 AM

From: Sadie Ingle <sadie.ingle@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 19, 2021 8:34 AM
To: Board of Commissioners <boc@leelanau.gov>
Subject: Early Childhood Millage

Dear Board of Commissioners,

As a relatively new resident to Leelanau County and Bingham Township, my family was thrilled to learn about the support of children and their families through the Early Childhood millage passed by county voters. As parents of two small children (2.5 years and 4 months), we were eager to both find a community of other parents and young children, and also utilize the terrific resources for families provided by the programs the millage dollars support. We have attended multiple events, and our older daughter comes home excited to learn to read, engage with children her age, and experience structured play and learning opportunities. We have been impressed with the quality, competency, and care of the staff and their programming. Because she is too young for school, 4-H, or other similar community activities, and because learning enrichment through pre-school has a very real cost, activities like the Play Groups sponsored by Parenting Communities of Leelanau County is a terrific place for us each to connect and grow.

It was with great surprise, disappointment, and sadness that we learned that these programs may be revoked due to the Leelanau County Board of Commissioners overturning the voter-approved millage. As anyone who has initiated and led a successful organization knows, creating programs from scratch, learning what works and what doesn't, and finding the most effective and efficient use of resources toward the mission of the organization takes iteration, openness to learning and change, and - importantly - time. Unfortunately, the Early Childhood programs were not able to get off the ground until just before the world - and any events involving gatherings of young children and parents - shut down due to COVID. The program staff were creative, thoughtful, and dedicated to the mission of the program, and have worked fervently on awareness, outreach, and education throughout the pandemic. They are open to ways to better reach underserved families, better serve those already connected, and think creatively about how to best equip our children and their families for success through stable communities. As with any successful organization, they need time to iterate, learn, and grow.

It takes a village. The Early Childhood programs enabled by this millage directly create a village that supports and builds the next generation. As anyone who has been in the thick of managing the chaos of life with small children knows, it can be ridiculously challenging and difficult work. Accessibility to quality community resources to help each child and family thrive only betters our community as a whole. We are thrilled to live in a place that supports providing resources to build-up our children and equip their families to do the same. We are saddened to understand that the Board of Commissioners may choose to reverse this voter-approved programming and remove

something so vital in enabling **all** children and families in Leelanau County to flourish.

Sincerely,
Reeve and Sadie Ingle