



Frequently Asked Questions about the Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal

1. What is the Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal?

If passed, the Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal will help make sure Kent County children under age 5 have access to vital services that ensure they are healthy and ready to learn by kindergarten. Voting “Yes” on the proposal will provide funding for community-based early childhood programs that are proven to work.

2. When will I have a chance to vote on the early childhood proposal?

The countywide early childhood proposal will appear on the Nov. 6, 2018 General Election ballot. If approved by voters, Kent County will become the first county in Michigan with a dedicated property millage to support early childhood services.

3. How much will the proposal cost homeowners?

A homeowner with an average home value of \$150,000 will pay about \$18.75 per year, or \$1.56 per month. The proposal is for a six-year millage for 0.25 mills that would be included in property tax bills from 2019 through 2024.

4. How much funding will the proposal generate?

The millage will generate approximately \$5.7 million each year and will provide dedicated funding for community-based early childhood programs that are proven to work, ensuring that children and their families have access to vital services.

5. Why is this proposal necessary?

Children who start ahead stay ahead. Every baby and toddler in Kent County deserves to be healthy and ready to learn by kindergarten, yet thousands of children continue to slip through the cracks each year. **A recent gap analysis found thousands of Kent County children under age 5 are not receiving vital early childhood and health care services.** Studies show investing in quality early childhood programs save money and return better outcomes for health, education and employment long term so it's in everyone's best interest to invest early in all Kent County kids.



6. What types of services will be funded through this proposal?

Working together, we can make sure every Kent County child under age 5 has access to community-based programs, such as in-home support, visiting nurses, developmental screenings for all children, early learning and programs that support parents, not replace them.

7. What impact will this proposal have on young kids in Kent County?

Autism, a speech or hearing impairment, a learning disability or disease can happen to anyone, which is why early screening is essential in making sure issues are caught early and children receive the treatment they need and deserve. **Studies conclusively show most of a child's brain develops by his or her third birthday, making these early years a critical time for learning and developing skills.** A healthy childhood and early learning experiences build a strong social, emotional and intellectual foundation for a bright future.

8. How will funds be allocated if the Early Childhood Proposal passes?

Modeled after the successful Kent County Senior Millage, there will be an independent nonprofit organization responsible for oversight and administration. An independent allocation council will be established to distribute funding to community-based organizations that provide early childhood services that are proven to work and address community needs.

9. How will county government and any programs funded by this millage be held accountable?

All millage dollars will be reported and go through an independent financial audit every year to ensure taxpayer funds are spent wisely. Programs and services will be evaluated to measure effectiveness to ensure transparency and accountability.

10. How do I get more information on this proposal?

Additional information on this proposal can be found at www.firststepskent.org/earlychildhoodproposal