

PRESS RELEASE

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Sidebar: A step-by-step guide to your baby's growth.

Logos: Available upon request.

Those worried about a child's progress urged to seek help now

MUSKEGON: Don't worry, but don't wait. Call today. This is the advice given to parents, aunts and uncles, grandparents, friends or neighbors who may be worried about a child's progress. Two free services exist in Muskegon County to help children who may not seem to be growing, developing, or learning at the same pace as others their age. Those concerned about these issues or a child's behavior, speech/language, physical impairments, or delays are urged to visit www.1800EarlyOn.org or, for children over three-years-old, www.ProjectFindMichigan.org. Early On and Project Find of Muskegon can be reached by phone as well at **231-767-7253**. These state and federally funded programs offer answers to questions parents may have, and when needed, deliver services and support to children who qualify.

Last year in Muskegon County, Early On staff provided services and support to **366** infants and toddlers up to age 3. The process may begin with a telephone call from a parent, referral from a physician, or a visit in the hospital when a child is born. It may lead to a visit at the child's home to learn more about the child's needs. If the child needs help, Early On staff will tell parents how to get that help at little or no cost. Infants or toddlers up to three years old may qualify for speech services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, or other support. Many times services are delivered directly to the child at home. Parents and caregivers are also given tips and support on how to assist the child. Last year Early On conducted 1,484 home visits in Muskegon County. Louanne Utzinger, Early On Coordinator, said, "Our Early On team is made up of friendly and supportive staff who listen carefully to what parents have to say. We offer suggestions and help parents help their children be successful."

Project Find's goal is to locate, identify, and refer young people from birth to 26 years of age who have physical, social, emotional, or learning conditions that prevent them from doing well in school. These young people may be eligible for free educational services provided by Michigan Public Schools. Utzinger said, "We want to refer children who need support as early as possible so they may be more successful in the classroom and in life."

Early On is a federally-funded system of early intervention services under Part C of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Project Find is funded under Part B of the same act through a grant from the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services. Both programs are coordinated by the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District (MAISD).

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Logos:



Side Bar:

A step-by-step guide to your baby's growth.

By 3 Months

Does your baby...

- Roll from side to side?
- Play with her hands?
- Laugh out loud?
- Look at a rattle?

By 6 Months

Does your baby...

- Pass things from one hand to the other?
- Look at herself in the mirror?
- Sit up with little support?
- Roll over?

By 12 Months

Does your baby...

- Wave good-bye?
- Drink from a cup without help?
- Stand alone for at least two seconds?
- Use a few short words like "mama?"

By 24 Months

Does your toddler...

- Walk and run well?
- Handle a spoon well?
- Ask for things by name?
- Use two or three words together?