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New Strong Beginnings Preschool for 3-Year-Old Children Expands Pilot Sites
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Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency Office of Innovative Projects (CCRESA OIP) is pleased to announce 2023 grantees for Strong Beginnings, a research and development initiative testing the efficacy and scalability of two years of publicly funded preschool. Funded under Public Act 103 of 2023, the project will pilot twenty-eight classrooms for three-year-old children in ten Intermediate School Districts across the state.

“We are very excited to expand learning opportunities for three-year-old children,” said CCRESA OIP Director Christine Callahan. “Our pilot started in January of 2021; despite the challenges presented by COVID, Strong Beginnings demonstrated promising outcomes for eligible children and families by focusing on developmentally appropriate instruction and supportive family engagement. We are pleased to expand our service capacity and study how to effectively scale the program statewide.”

On July 24, 2023, the Clinton County RESA Board of Education approved funding for ten Intermediate School Districts through a competitive bid process:

Intermediate School District Name	Total number classrooms
Berrien RESA	2
Calhoun ISD	2
Charlevoix-Emmet ISD	2
Eastern Upper Peninsula ISD	2
Heritage Southwest ISD	4
Wayne RESA	6
Midland ESA	2
Oakland Schools	2
Northwest Educational Services	4
St. Clair County RESA	2

Each classroom can accept up to fourteen children and will offer school-day-length programs. Classes will open in fall 2023.

“This grant connects directly to our region’s current strategic plan for increasing access to high-quality early care and education,” said Becky Gorinac, Director of Early Childhood Services for St. Clair County RESA. “Research has shown that high-quality learning experiences during the first five years are critical

to children's success in school and life, especially for children who might have risk factors impacting their educational opportunities. We are thrilled to have been selected and look forward to working with CCRESA OIP, our providers, and families to bring this program to our community."

CCRESA OIP administers Strong Beginnings and is responsible for program design, implementation, administration, monitoring, and oversight of ISD subcontractors. Michigan State University is the contracted evaluator. To learn more please contact the program administrators found on the Strong Beginnings Contacts tab at <http://eotta.ccrea.org>.