

2024-25 Strong Beginnings Director Survey Results: **STATEWIDE**



The Strong Beginnings pilot is undergoing an external evaluation led by Community Evaluation Programs at Michigan State University's (MSU) Office of University Outreach and Engagement, in partnership with Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency (CCRESA) and Michigan's Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP). In May 2025, a survey was sent by the Strong Beginnings program directors to learn about day-to-day operations of Michigan's pilot PreK program for low-income three-year-olds. **The report is broken down into five sections: survey demographics (p. 2), ISD indicators at a glance (p. 2), general operations (p. 3), program staffing (p. 3), and program successes and challenges (p. 4).** For confidentiality, site-level data is unavailable.

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

25 program leads responded to the survey for all 28 sites; one director represented four sites. 12% identified as African American or Black, 4% as Asian, 4% as Middle Eastern or North African, and 76% as White; 4% preferred not to answer. The respondents' highest level of education greatly varied with 4% reporting having some college credits, 8% an associate's degree, 8% a bachelor's degree, and 56% a master's degree. 12% reported having a post-master's degree, 4% are working on a Ph.D., and 8% completed a Ph.D. Respondents averaged 12 years of experience as a program director (maximum: 30 years; minimum: 0 years). In comparison, they averaged 2.5 years of experience as a Strong Beginnings program director (maximum: five years; minimum: 0 years). The first Strong Beginnings sites opened on September 3, 2024, and the latest on September 23, 2024. In comparison, the first site closed on April 30, 2025, and the last on June 26, 2025. On average, most programs opened around September 7 and closed around May 30.

ISD INDICATORS AT A GLANCE

The three graphs below map the average scores across all ISDs for the following prompts:

- The level of support needed by Strong Beginnings children and families,
- The overall satisfaction with the Strong Beginnings staff (i.e., an average of scores for the family liaison, early childhood specialist, early childhood contact, and teachers),
- The level of difficulty finding and keeping teaching staff.

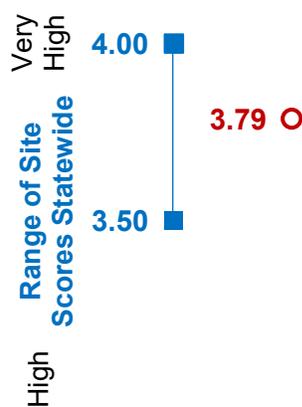
Respondents were able to choose "Very Low", "Low", "High", and "Very High." Responses of "I don't know" were also not included in the analysis. These responses were translated into scores with "Very High" as a 4 and "Very Low" as a 1. The **blue squares** represent the lowest and highest scores from ISDs across the state. The **red/white circle** shows the average score of all ISDs.

○ Average Score Across All ISDs ■ Lowest/Highest ISD Scores Statewide

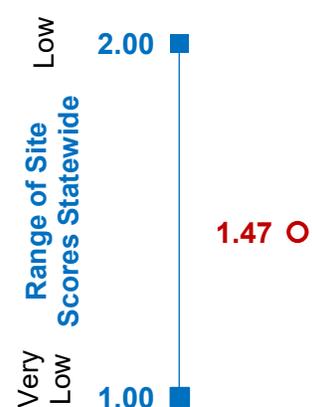
1. Level of Support Needed by Children/Families



2. Satisfaction with Teaching Staff



3. Difficulty Finding and Keeping Teaching Staff



Survey Theme		Average of All ISD Scores Statewide	Lowest ISD Score Statewide	Highest ISD Score Statewide
GENERAL OPERATIONS	Level of support needed by children and families (1 = "Very Low" to 4 "Very High")	2.63	2.00	3.00
	Funding was adequate for all associated Strong Beginnings expenses (percent of sites in an ISD agreeing)			
	Adequate funding	72%	0%	100%
	Inadequate funding for program expenses	15%	0%	100%
	Inadequate funding for administrative/salary expenses	23%	0%	100%
	Causes of program closures (percent of sites in an ISD agreeing)			
	Difficulty with staff absences/insufficient staffing	18%	0%	50%
	Difficulty with district problems/infrastructure	3%	0%	25%
	Difficulty with weather	33%	0%	100%
No reported closures	55%	0%	100%	
PROGRAM STAFFING	Level of difficulty finding/keeping teaching staff (1 = "Very Low" to 4 "Very High")	1.47	1.00	2.00
	Level of satisfaction with the amount of time/quality of support from staff (1 = "Strongly Dissatisfied" to 4 "Strongly Satisfied")			
	Early childhood contact (ECC)	3.73	3.00	4.00
	Early childhood specialist (ECS)	3.78	3.00	4.00
	Family liaison (FL)	3.88	3.50	4.00
	Teachers	3.76	3.50	4.00
	Overall average for ECC, ECS, FL, and teachers	3.79	3.50	4.00
	Staff hired on a compliance plan (percent of sites in an ISD agreeing)			
	No lead teachers on compliance	73%	0%	100%
	One lead teacher on compliance plan	25%	0%	100%
	Two lead teachers on compliance	2%	0%	17%
	No associate teachers on compliance	65%	50%	100%
	One associate teacher on compliance	35%	0%	50%
	Two associate teachers on compliance	0%	0%	0%
	Retention of family liaisons (percent of sites in an ISD agreeing)			
	Hired more than one person	0%	0%	0%
	Left before the program ended	0%	0%	0%
	Started after the program started	2%	0%	17%
	Stayed the entire year	98%	83%	100%
	Retention of lead teachers (percent of sites in an ISD agreeing)			
Hired more than one person	2%	0%	17%	
Left before the program ended	0%	0%	0%	
Started after the program started	0%	0%	0%	

Survey Theme		Average of All ISD Scores Statewide	Lowest ISD Score Statewide	Highest ISD Score Statewide
	Stayed the entire year	98%	83%	100
	Retention of associate teachers (percent of sites in an ISD agreeing)			
	Hired more than one person	9%	0%	50
	Left before the program ended	5%	0%	50
	Started after the program started	0%	0%	0
	Stayed the entire year	86%	50%	100
PROGRAM SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES	Successes for teaching staff (percent of sites in an ISD agreeing)			
	Addition of third teacher	46%	0%	100%
	Continuity of staff	71%	0%	100%
	Early childhood specialist support	85%	0%	100%
	Effective staff training opportunities	88%	0%	100%
	Family liaison support	93%	50%	100%
	Frequent interactions with families	93%	50%	100%
	Other: High program standards/compliance plans	10%	0%	100%
	Other: Miscellaneous staff support	24%	0%	100%
	Plentiful teaching materials	90%	50%	100%
	Positive staff relationships	85%	0%	100%
	Staff meeting training qualifications	63%	0%	100%
	Challenges for teaching staff (percent of sites in an ISD agreeing)			
	Difficult staff relationships	19%	0%	50%
	Hiring staff without necessary training	28%	0%	100%
	Infrequent interactions with families	5%	0%	50%
	Lack of third teacher	17%	0%	50%
	Limited staff training opportunities	7%	0%	50%
	Little support from the early childhood specialist	0%	0%	0%
	Little support from the family liaison	0%	0%	0%
	Minimal teaching materials	0%	0%	0%
	Other: Child attendance issues	22%	0%	50%
	Other: Children/families needing more support	30%	0%	50%
	Other: Potty training difficulties	10%	0%	50%
	Other: Third teacher still earning their CDA	15%	0%	50%
	Staff turnover	28%	0%	50%