



STARFISH

FAMILY SERVICES

**IMPACT
REPORT
YEAR 2
FEB 2014**

This report summarizes the impact of our Inkster Early Childhood Strategy. It covers the **reality** in which we're doing this work, our expanding **reach** into the community, the **results** of our impact and the **realizations** that inform our future plans.



INVESTED IN INKSTER

Overview of our Inkster Early Childhood Strategy and Plan

Two years ago, Starfish set out to positively influence the future for children growing up in the metro Detroit community of Inkster, where 57% of children age 5 and under are born into poverty. Our bold vision: **All Inkster Children Start School Ready to Succeed**. Our plan focuses on providing high quality, relevant and accessible services for children, their families, caregivers, and the Inkster community so children grow up in homes, schools, and neighborhoods prepared to provide the best possible early childhood experiences. This Impact Report highlights our successes, challenges, and learning in Year 2 of our project (ending Fall 2013).

REALITY



REALITY:

Year 2 of implementing our Inkster Early Childhood Strategy held some unexpected and significant challenges. Inkster's city government continued to function under a consent agreement with the State of Michigan. Another Inkster social service agency and fellow Head Start preschool provider, the YWCA, closed its doors. And, two months before the 2013/2014 school year began, the State passed legislation leading to the dissolution of the Inkster Public School District, delivering a devastating blow to the community. Inkster's students were divided among four neighboring districts, some of which face their own challenges.

Why it Matters:

How can children be successful when the core structures of their community are fractured or in turmoil? Starfish is working alongside our families and community partners, investing in Inkster to align systems and help fill gaps.

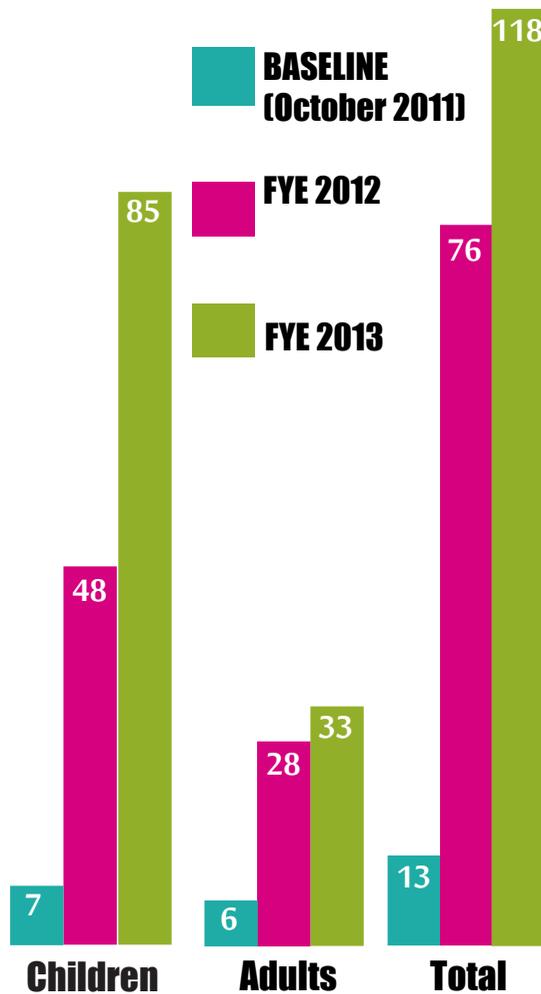
REACH:

In 2013, our concentrated effort in Inkster to strengthen relationships and better meet local needs was effective in expanding our reach to Inkster children, families, and the community despite the disruption to the public education system and local early childhood services.

In total, Starfish connected with 3,235 Inkster residents (unduplicated) through programming and engagement activities in 2013, reaching 1,000 more Inkster residents than in 2012. Not only are more Inkster children and families participating in Starfish services, a significant portion are engaging in multiple activities and programs across the agency.



Inkster: Clients Engaged in Multiple Programs



2013 Reach:

1,912

Inkster children, families & caregivers engaged through learning & outreach activities that provide free children's books, baby diapers, family-friendly learning activities and more

672

of the approximate 1,800 zero-to-five year-olds living in the City of Inkster participated in a Starfish program

279

parents + caregivers of Inkster children received services

118

Inkster children and families who engaged in multiple programs across the agency, an eight-fold increase in the number participating in more than one program at Starfish (since 2011)

503

Inkster 0-5 year-olds enrolled in high-quality Starfish preschool ¹



RESULTS:

With our Inkster Plan, we set out to have a measurable, positive impact on the development of Inkster's children. Each year, we look at how we're doing based on overall improvements in school readiness, parenting, family self-sufficiency, mental and physical well-being and program quality. These are a few indicators of our impact.

Children



of Starfish's Inkster preschoolers leave for kindergarten ready for school success!!²



Inkster children of all ages received behavioral health screenings through our partnership with the local public health center



of children ages 3 to 5 who received our home-based mental health services, improved behaviors, moods, and functioning



Inkster children received intensive, home-based counseling services, contributing to their social and emotional well-being



Inkster 0 to 5-year olds are up-to-date on their immunizations³



Families

- 
60% of young mothers had fewer symptoms of depression after participating in Baby Power, an intensive group curriculum for new moms at high risk for depression
- 
77% of Inkster families who participated in the Inkster Family Literacy Movement program read to their children at least once a week
- 
90% of parenting program participants showed an increase in parenting behaviors that improve their child's cognition and school readiness
- 
93% of Inkster's families improved overall self-sufficiency within 8 months of beginning Center for Family Success services

Teachers/Caregivers

Starfish has the **first HighScope Certified infant/toddler classroom** in the greater Detroit metro area; children in HighScope Certified classrooms show greater improvement across all domains of development.

We offer **11 HighScope Certified** Inkster preschool and infant/toddler teachers who meet a professional standard of excellence for early childhood education.

ALL Starfish Head Start sites are of **exceptional high-quality**, with our Inkster program rating 4.72 on the 5-point quality scale.⁴

RESULTS

DIGGING DEEPER: Head Start Outcomes

- ✓ **The earlier and longer we can get kids into Head Start, the better.** The data show that children who are in the program for the full school year have better outcomes than those who are only enrolled part of the year. And, children who enter the program as three-year olds and stay for 2 years naturally do better.
- ✓ **Inkster's preschoolers still have room for improvement in Language & Literacy and Math & Science.** While Inkster kids have the GREATEST GAINS from beginning-to-end of the school year in these areas — a 73% gain in Language & Literacy and a 84% gain in Math & Science - out of all COR* domains, they still have the lowest mean scores in Language & Literacy (3.69) and Math & Science (3.97) at the end of the school year.
- ✓ **There is a clear connection between program quality and child outcomes.** When teachers made improvements in classroom environments and daily routines, we saw a corresponding gain in children's developmental scores.

* Child Observation Record, a tool used to measure developmental gains for children across 6 categories related to school readiness (Language & Literacy, Social/Emotional Development, etc.)

RESULTS



SPOTLIGHT: Community Impact

Success for Inkster children relies heavily on strengthening and empowering the Inkster community. That's why we've made significant investments in community initiatives as part of our Inkster Early Childhood Plan. This year, Starfish's Inkster Community Engagement team (ICE) began its work by gaining a

deeper understanding of the community's strengths and challenges. The result: over 150 one-on-one conversations and four community focus groups with Inkster residents, parents, teens, civic leaders, teachers, and stakeholders that have united the community around solving some of Inkster's toughest challenges.

One of the challenges the community is taking head-on: illiteracy. A third of Inkster's residents can't read or write at a functional level, jeopardizing children's chances of becoming avid, lifelong readers. The Inkster Family Literacy Movement (IFLM) is working to change that. Facilitated by Starfish, the IFLM is a coalition of Inkster stakeholders who are passionate about literacy. This inaugural year of IFLM demonstrated that Inkster organizations, volunteers, parents and community stakeholders are ready to fight illiteracy in their city, mobilizing 1,200+ Inkster residents through high-energy Reading Rallies and the launching of a public awareness campaign.

We've also helped build capacity in critical partner organizations, including the Inkster Task Force, a collaborative body that includes city residents and stakeholders, united in working toward a strong, healthy, and safe community.



2,750 books distributed to Inkster community residents



Sparked collective action among **150+** Inkster residents, leaders, teachers and parents to make Inkster a community where children come first

REALIZATIONS



REALIZATIONS:

While we are proud of and encouraged by our accomplishments in the second year of our Inkster plan, we also realize that challenges, limitations, and opportunities remain:

- **Inkster continues to face significant socio-economic stresses and an education crisis.**

The dissolution of Inkster Public Schools was a shock that set back the entire community, and further fragmented education for Inkster children. It also adds another level of complexity to our community work, as we forge ahead with building relationships in the four remaining Inkster-serving public districts.

- **In a high-risk community like Inkster, there is an increased need for behavioral and mental health services.** In response, we've embedded mental health professionals in local schools and hospitals serving Inkster children. We've also launched a pediatric integrated health initiative, in partnership with the Western Wayne Family Health Center, to provide behavioral health screenings for Inkster patients during their visits.
- **Outcomes measurement systems and integrated information systems in our sector and at Starfish are limited.** While we can measure and track outcomes at the program level, we lack a sophisticated and centralized data warehouse to adequately measure changes across programs and fully assess the impact of our Inkster Early Childhood Plan. This will be a key priority in Year 3 of our plan, supported by a new Director of Evaluation and Innovation as well as technology investments.

1 Total children enrolled in a Starfish Head Start, Early Head Start, or Great Start Readiness preschool program in 2013.
 2 Among 4-year olds residing in Inkster who are kindergarten-eligible and attending a Starfish Head Start or Great Start Readiness Program.
 3 Among Inkster children enrolled in Starfish's Early Head Start and Head Start programs.
 4 As rated by HighScope's Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tool. Anything above a 4.5 is considered "exceptional quality."



About Us: Starfish Family Services

Founded in 1963, Starfish Family Services is a community-based nonprofit agency serving thousands of children and families annually in metro Detroit. Our passion is early childhood development. We strive every day to prepare young children for a successful start to school and life. And, our programs and services uniquely recognize and respect the important role of parents and other caregivers in the long-term success of children.

Daily, we provide over 1,000 children ages 0 to 5 and their families with an array of services including prenatal support, preschool education, home visits, parent education, access to basic needs and mental health services and supports to help the whole family become self-sufficient. And, our work strongly emphasizes engaging and supporting the Inkster community in strengthening families and helping prepare young children for a successful start to school and life.

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