

GRANT MONEY

Great Start receives \$60K to help kids

By Tarryl Jackson

tjackson@citpat.com — 768-4941

More than \$60,000 will support local early childhood projects through the Great Start Collaborative of Jackson County, the nonprofit announced Wednesday.

The Great Start Collaborative — an organization that develops ways to care for and nurture children ages 5 and younger — received the grant from the Early Childhood Investment Corp. in Lansing.

The money will allow the collaborative to go beyond planning and laying groundwork and put some more ideas into action, said Director Sheri Butters.

Of the grant, \$55,800 will support a professional development program for early childhood professionals and launch a parent-education

training program for parent-education professionals.

The remaining \$6,000 will help the nonprofit host an annual parenting conference to connect parents to community resources and help them build their parenting and leadership skills.

"They are leaders, and we should support them as leaders in their homes," Butters said.

About 30 Great Start Collaboratives statewide received the grants, totaling \$1 million.

"With the Michigan budget and economy in crisis, it is even more critical to ensure that Michigan has an efficient and accessible early childhood system," Alissa Parks, director of Great Start Collaborative development and assistance for the Early Childhood Investment Corp., said in a news release.