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Michigan educators launch statewide program today to help parents ensure their preschoolers aren't missing key developmental milestones

Thrive From Home is Michigan's new initiative designed to help parents identify potential learning delays while sheltering at home

As the pandemic lingers and many children are obliged to remain home, Michigan early childhood educators today launched a new statewide program to help preschool parents gauge if their 3- to 5-year-olds are meeting important developmental milestones.

The new Thrive From Home program is a partnership between [Build Up Michigan](#) and PBS Kids that combines educational video programming with at-home activities that stimulate preschoolers' intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.

"There are lots of things that families can do together," said Teri Rink, director of the Office of Special Education at the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). "Something as simple as the two of you moving across the living room pretending you're dinosaurs or frogs is engaging to children because they can physically get involved and it gives them intellectual stimulation – and it can also really strengthen the bond between parents and children."

The program includes an eight-week series of video lessons airing weekdays statewide during PBS preschooler favorites like "Sesame Street," "Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood" and "Wild Kratts." All videos and additional skill-building activities are also available at [BuildUpMi.org/Thrive](#).

While all children grow and develop at different rates, most will reach several important milestones for ages 3 through 5. Developmental milestones such as dressing themselves or identifying letter sounds can help identify when a child is struggling. Children who are not meeting milestones may need additional support to help them succeed in school.

With many Michigan child care and preschool programs closed to stop the spread of COVID-19, educators are unable to detect if a child is falling behind. That's why Build Up Michigan this summer gathered a statewide panel of early childhood educators and developmental experts to formulate the Thrive From Home skill-building curriculum for parents.

"While you can't replace the interaction that kids have with teachers and friends at day care or preschool, this initiative offers parents and caregivers activities to do at home and information about how children are typically developing," said Christy Callahan, director of the Office of Innovative Projects at Clinton County RESA, which administers Build Up Michigan for MDE.

Build Up Michigan aims to ensure children 3 to 5 are prepared for kindergarten. If parents detect developmental delays in their preschooler, Build Up Michigan specialists can connect parents with educational support in local school districts.

“We believe Thrive From Home is an important tool to help preschoolers – and parents – on their learning journey,” Callahan said.

Have questions? More information and help are available at BuildUpMi.org/Thrive.

To access the media kit with photo and video assets, please [click here](#).

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