



Heat, wildfire smoke affecting blueberry farmers near Holland

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Lansing State Journal

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Julissa Garcia Milukhin, a lead Great Start Readiness Program teacher, watches a student throw a paper airplane during a class at the Early Impressions Vandercook Lake program inside Townsend Elementary School in Jackson on April 21.

DAVID RODRIGUEZ MUÑOZ/DETROIT FREE PRESS

2027 state budget tackles early childhood education

Beki San Martin

Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Wondering about the future of free pre-K in Michigan? Or if your local parenting group that ended after state cuts to early childhood funding last budget season is coming back?

Or how much the state is investing in early intervention services meant to detect developmental delays in your toddler?

As the Legislature's final budget for fiscal year 2027 awaits Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's signature, let's take a look at the funding highlights families with kids under 5-years-old should know about.

Bump for early intervention services still falls short

Early On is the state of Michigan's early intervention service for infants and toddlers to get evaluated for developmental delays and disabilities. It serves over 26,000 kids annually.

The program's tagline is "Don't worry. But don't wait," meaning parents who are uncertain whether their child is meeting developmental milestones can get a referral to Early On to get their child assessed for things like issues with speech delays, gross or fine motor skills, or emotional regulation.



Families and kids at a Sing. Say. Point. Play. literacy event held by the Oakland County Great Start Collaborative in Southfield.

PROVIDED BY OAKLAND COUNTY GREAT START COLLABORATIVE

The final state budget increases funds for the Early On program by \$2.4 million for a total of \$26.1 million.

A recent American Institutes for Research study carried out in Michigan calculated that giving every child in the state who needs it access to a high-quality early intervention system would cost around \$230 million annually.

Pediatricians and early childhood experts say Early On has been underfunded for decades in Michigan to the detriment of the state's youngest kids who need developmental support during the most critical years for brain development.

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BWL proposes modest rate hikes

Would be 5th straight year of increases

Susan Vela

Lansing State Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

LANSING — The Lansing Board of Water & Light is proposing some of its smallest rate hikes in years, but the utility's customers will still get a chance to weigh in.

BWL, a municipally-owned utility, has scheduled two hearings for 10 a.m. Aug. 1 and 5:30 p.m. Aug. 4 at its REO Depot location, 1201 S. Washington Ave. Commissioners are scheduled to vote Aug. 11 on the proposed increases that spokeswoman Amy Adamy said should equate to a few more dollars a month.

The potential hikes are 2.1% — or an average of \$2 per month — for residential electric customers and 2.39% to 3.34% depending on average usage — or around \$1 a month — for residential water customers. If approved, the rate increases would take effect in October.

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U-M AD Manuel out at end of year

Tony Garcia and Dave Boucher

Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Warde Manuel will step down as the University of Michigan athletic director at the end of the year and a search for his replacement will be conducted, officials announced on Monday, July 20.

The announcement comes on the heels of a slew of lawsuits and investigations, including one conducted by Jenner & Block for over \$12 million dollars. The firm was brought on shortly after the firing of former Michigan football coach Sherrone Moore for cause for an alleged "inappropriate relationship" with his executive assistant, Paige Shiver, and expanded into a more wide-ranging look at the athletic department culture as a whole.

Michigan also released what it

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