



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **COMMUNITY PARTNERS DONATE TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS OF ESSENTIAL WORKERS**

**Holland, MI-** Ottawa Area ISD and local community groups recently donated toys, cleaning products, and other items to 40 child care providers throughout Ottawa County who answered the call to care for children of essential workers in response to Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 2020-16 issued on March 18.

OAISD, in cooperation with state and local partners, is working to support the Executive Order through [Help Me Grow-Ottawa](#), a collaboration between Ottawa Area ISD and multiple other local child care resources.

Tami Mannes, Ph.D., Director of Early Childhood Services for OAISD, said the district is working closely with the child care providers to identify needs and seek resources.

"They shared they were struggling to get basic supplies such as latex gloves and disinfecting wipes. At the same time, local organizations were contacting us to see how they could help. It just came together organically," Mannes said.

Over the past two weeks, partnering child care providers received toys donated by Teeny Tiny Toy Store, and \$5 coupons from Crazy Horse Steakhouse and Saloon as a thank you for their continued work during this time. The non-profit group MOVEMENT West Michigan reached out to help connect child care providers and churches to provide meals, supplies, and more. Ottawa Area ISD also donated sanitizing wipes, latex gloves, homemade masks, and hand sanitizer.

Ottawa Area ISD Early Childhood program employees delivered the donations to the front doors of providers throughout Ottawa County.

Ethie Haworth, Teeny Tiny Toy Store owner, said, "We feel so fortunate to be able to help. There is nothing more fun than giving stuff away!"

"These donations were a way to support, honor, and thank child care providers for all they do for our community, not just during a pandemic, but every single day," Mannes said. "High-quality child care settings do more than care for children; they educate, teach social-emotional skills, and foster brain development during the most critical time of child development."

Essential workers in need of child care can apply through the [Help Me Grow-Ottawa website](https://www.helpmegrowottawa.org/) at [helpmegrowottawa.org/](https://www.helpmegrowottawa.org/) . Additionally, a call center is open from 6:00 am-8:00 pm. Services are available in both English and Spanish.

Child care cost is the responsibility of the family, but there is no additional cost for services that help match the families with child care providers.

Anyone interested in donating toys or supplies to child care providers of essential workers may contact Tami Mannes at [tmannes@oaisd.org](mailto:tmannes@oaisd.org) or 616-738-8940 x 4133.

### **Ottawa Area Intermediate School District**

Ottawa Area Intermediate School District works collaboratively with schools and communities to meet the educational needs of students of all ages in the Ottawa area. By pooling resources and providing services regionally, Ottawa Area ISD provides important programs and services to local K-12 school districts, charter, parochial and private schools and adults in the most cost-effective ways possible. To learn more about Ottawa Area ISD visit [www.oaisd.org](http://www.oaisd.org)

### **Help Me Grow-Ottawa**

[Help Me Grow](https://www.helpmegrowottawa.org/) connects families with children birth through age five to free local resources helping children grow up healthy and ready to succeed in school. [Help Me Grow-Ottawa](https://www.helpmegrowottawa.org/) is funded through the Great Start Collaborative from the Michigan Department of Education Office of Great Start and in-kind support from local partners.

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*Photos attached to email*