Brain Builder resource fairs aim to strengthen families in low-income, rural, and tribal Montana. Child abuse and neglect is preventable, and the solutions are known. Brain Builder resource fairs help protect against child maltreatment by improving community understanding of early child development and increasing access to preventative health programs.

Brain Builder resource fairs rally local and state partners behind families and facilitate cooperation for better service to Montana’s youngest and most vulnerable citizens.

Below you will find a toolkit to create your own Brain Builder resource fair. The toolkit is divided into five sections:

- Planning Timeline and Donations
- Identifying resource tables
- Brain Builder educational materials, games and activities
- Advertising
- Evaluation

Please contact Ellen Guyer, Montana Children’s Trust Fund AmeriCorps VISTA, at ellen.guyer@mt.gov or 444-6936, with questions and comments.

Tools marked with an asterisk (*) are being developed.

**Planning Timeline and Donations**

**About:** This section of the toolkit includes a sample planning timeline to help chapters organize their event work plan. Also included is sample donation request language if your chapter determines additional funds are needed.

**Tools:**

- **Example Planning Timeline**
- **Donation Request Form Letter**
- **Donation Request Form Email**

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Identifying Resource Tables

About: This section includes tools on how to identify and invite state and local partners to your resource fair. Funded FCCLA chapters agree to invite the state-level organizations listed below to their community resource fair. If a representative of an organization cannot attend the fair in-person, an FCCLA member or other local volunteer must serve as an “ambassador” for the organization and share information about the organization’s services at the fair. Descriptions of the organizations and contact information can be found in the Prospective Partners Guide.

- Montana Children’s Trust Fund
- Montana Parent Partner Program
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana Care Van
- ParentingMontana.org
- Montana Lifespan Respite Coalition
- Montana Legal Services Association
- Montana Afterschool Alliance
- Montana Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Department of Public Health and Human (DPHHS) programs—Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, No Kid Hungry, and Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)
- DPHHS Early Childhood Services Bureau—Best Beginnings Childcare Scholarship, Headstart Collaboration Office, STARS Preschool

In addition, the chapter should have local representatives, where applicable, of the following institutions at their fair. A Community Assessment Guide is included within the Prospective Partners Guide.

- Clinic/Hospital/Health Center
- Child Care Center
- Library
- Youth Organizations (4-H, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Scouts, etc.)
- Higher Education or Job Training Program
- Best Beginnings Coalitions or other early childhood coalition

Tools:

- Prospective Partners Guide
- Sample phone call: invitation to table*
- Sample email: invitation to table*
Brain Builder game and activities

About: This section of the toolkit contains the printable Brain Story educational posters, and a guide for family fun games and activities that support learning of the posters’ concepts.

Brain Builder resource fairs aim to increase understanding of early child and brain development, which helps protect against child abuse and neglect. Often, the science of child development is not intuitive. To address the gap between neuroscience and public understanding of child development, scientists from the Harvard Center on the Developing Child collaborated with communication experts to create a scientific narrative called The Core Story of Child Development. The Core Story uses concrete, mechanistic metaphors that translate complex science into terms familiar to the general public.

Brain Story posters (linked below) must be displayed at funded Brain Builder resource fairs. These research-proven posters improve community understanding of how the brain works, which in turn allows the community to better support children and families.

Tools:

VROOM Brain Building Moments posters

- Brain Building Basics flyer
- Brain Story flyer

Brain Story posters (Alberta Family Wellness Institute)

- Posters
- Learning Cards

Brain Builder Games and Activities Guide
Advertising

About: This section of the toolkit includes a general outreach guide and example advertisements. Advertising enables the families in your community to know about and attend your Brain Builder resource fair!

Tools:
- Outreach Guide*
- Brain Builder Resource Fair editable flyer
- Social media posts*
- Example press release*

Evaluation

About: Tools in this section include an Evaluation Guide and data collection surveys. To ensure Brain Builder resource fairs serve children and families as intended, data must be collected at funded events.

Tools:
- Evaluation Guide*
- Policy Survey
- Attendee Demographics and Perceptions Survey
- Understanding of Child Development Survey*

Thank you for dedicating yourself and your chapter to this project. The time and effort you are investing will contribute to the success of your community’s children and, ultimately, the success of your community.

This toolkit, and the Brain Builder resource fair project, is a work in progress and will be continually updated until re-launching in Spring 2019. Again, please contact Ellen Guyer, Children’s Trust Fund AmeriCorps VISTA, at ellen.guyer@mt.gov with questions and comments.

THANK YOU!