Strengthening Montana’s Early Childhood System Project

Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Grant
Grant Project Overview

1 YEAR GRANT (CALENDAR YEAR 2019)

45 STATES AND TERRITORIES FUNDED

FEDERAL SHARE, $4.2 MILLION

FOCUS ON STRENGTHENING EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS

FIVE ACTIVITIES:
1) NEEDS ASSESSMENT
2) STRATEGIC PLANNING
3) MAXIMIZE PARENTAL CHOICE AND KNOWLEDGE
4) SHARE BEST PRACTICES AMONG ECE PROVIDERS
5) IMPROVE OVERALL QUALITY OF ECE
Early Childhood System Overview

Definition and Framework
Defining the Early Childhood System

An early childhood system has been defined as the “… partnerships between interrelated and interdependent agencies and organizations representing physical and mental health, social services, families and caregivers, and early childhood education to develop seamless systems of care for children from birth to kindergarten entry.”

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (https://mchb.hrsa.gov/earlychildhoodcomprehensivesystems)

As a network of distinct but interconnected services and supports, the early childhood system is more than the sum of its parts. When functioning at its best, the system can identify needs across sectors, provide interventions when called for and, as a result, help children and families reach their fullest potential.
Early Childhood System Framework

Children have the skills and knowledge they need to achieve success in learning and reach their full potential in life

Results that a Comprehensive Early Childhood System Should Deliver:

EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: Nurturing relationships, environments, and enriching experiences that foster learning and development.

HEALTH: Comprehensive services that promote children’s physical, developmental, and mental health.

FAMILY LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT: Resources, experiences, and relationships that strengthen families, engage them as leaders, and enhance their capacity to support children’s well being
Key Functions of an Early Childhood System

• Define and coordinate leadership
• Finance strategically
• Enhance and align standards
• Create and support improvement strategies
• Ensure accountability
• Recruit and engage stakeholders
## Early Childhood System Contributions

1. **REACH**  
   Young children and families receive services and supports to meet universal and identified needs.

2. **COORDINATION**  
   Sectors within the system are coordinated to provide seamless services, support quality improvement, and avoid duplication.

3. **COMMITMENT**  
   Communities make early childhood a priority and act to support children’s health, learning, and well-being.

4. **EQUITY**  
   Families are engaged in creating a responsive and equitable early childhood system.
Montana’s Early Childhood System

Overview, and Detailed Map
High-Level Overview of Montana’s Early Childhood System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prenatal</th>
<th>Birth</th>
<th>1 Yr Old</th>
<th>2 Yrs Old</th>
<th>3 Yrs Old</th>
<th>4 Yrs Old</th>
<th>5 Yrs Old</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Montana Partnership to End Childhood Hunger</td>
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Approach to Five Activity Areas
Needs Assessment Approach

• Data collection:
  • Literature review, best practices research (Montana and national, including review of existing needs assessments)
  • Extant/administrative data
  • Surveys
  • Key stakeholder interviews
  • Community forums and focus groups
• Reliance on ECCCs and BBAC to support data collection processes
• Analysis and reporting
Strategic Plan Approach

• Review existing plans
• Conduct regional and statewide workshops (review needs assessment findings, prioritize, define early childhood system priorities (goals, objectives, and strategies))
• Create draft strategic plan for BBAC and local coalition review and input
• Develop implementation plan
• Develop evaluation plan, working collaboratively to define shared outcomes and measures aligned with strategic plan
Family Engagement

• Define family engagement

• Improved, culturally competent information sharing about ECE (outreach campaign and early childhood ‘one-stop-shop’)

• Investing in family engagement coordinators with a focus on school readiness and transitions

• Improving early childhood resource and referral processes

• Universal screening for social-emotional health
Professional Development

• Sharing best practices across early childhood system
• ECE provider professional development
  • Define common coaching competencies and certifications across early childhood system
  • Coordinate training of coaches
  • Targeted PD on:
    • Healthy development of infants and toddlers
    • Parent engagement and partnership
    • American Indian cultural competency

• ECE targeted learning communities
  • Child care small business owners, strengthen business practices, explore shared services, support cost modeling, toolkit)
Quality ECE

• Increasing early childhood system coordination and collaboration based on needs assessment and strategic planning findings/recommendations
• Improving data systems
• Increasing ECE system capacity to improve access and quality for underserved populations and regions
• Improving school readiness and transitions
Research Areas

Needs Assessment
System Coordination and Collaboration

• Cost modeling
• Regulations, governance, policy, and program analysis
• System navigation
• Reach and coordination of developmental and behavioral health screenings and connection to services
• Reach and coordination of early intervention
• Data alignment and sharing for improved service coordination at local and state levels, ability to uniquely identify children, and ability to evaluate impact of interventions on outcomes
• Plan for developing and tracking progress indicators
Family Engagement and Support

• How families receive information about ECE options
• Family engagement best practices
• How and at what level families are engaged as informed participants and partners in the early childhood system
• Reach and impact of home visiting
• Reach and impact of social-emotional health screening
• Referral and intake systems
• Transition supports for children moving within the early childhood system
• Transition supports for children entering school
• Use of trauma-informed approaches
ECE Provider Professional Development

• ECE provider professional development and capacity building best practices
• Level at which MT’s EC system supports PD/capacity building for ECE providers
• PD/capacity building related to children’s development and behavioral support needs
• Implementation of Preschool Program Standards by LEAs
• Use of trauma-informed approaches
• Common coaching competencies and certifications
ECE Quality and Reach

• Availability of ECE through a mixed delivery system, with focus on vulnerable, underserved, and rural populations

• Quality of ECE

• Montana’s QRIS and how it supports ECE mixed delivery system capacity and quality

• Unduplicated number of children served and waiting to be served by ECE programs

• Barriers to the funding and provision of high-quality ECE, and opportunities for more efficient use of resources

• Facility-related issues

• School readiness assessment best practices
Montana Early Childhood System Impacts
## Vision
Children from birth to age five have the skills and knowledge they need to achieve success in learning and reach their full potential in life.

## Goal
Strengthen Montana’s comprehensive early childhood system to enhance early learning and development, health, and family support and engagement.

## Target Population
Underserved children, families, and regions; providers throughout early childhood system (early learning and development, health, and family support)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Inputs/Resources</th>
<th>Strategies and Activities</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Long-Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>DPHHS staff, supplies, and support: ECSB Chief; Grant Coordinator; Family Engagement Coordinator; Data Analyst; other early childhood (EC) programs Education organizations staff, supplies, and support: DPH; MT-PPEC; LEAs Partnering programs staff, supplies and support: Head Start Association; CCRRs; ECP; BBAC Headwaters EC Initiative evaluation and local coalition support Local early childhood coalitions</td>
<td>Maximize family choice, knowledge, and engagement Define continuum of family engagement Develop robust outreach campaign Implement EC one stop shop Increase use of family engagement coordinators at local level Improve EC resource and referral processes Scale universal screening for children’s social-emotional health Improve ECE and EC provider professional development Modify ECE resources for broader EC system stakeholder use Implement learning communities Support skill building in local EC coalitions Define coaching competencies and certifications and coordinate training Expand trauma-informed professional development (PD) Conduct PD focused on family engagement Design/implement Indian early childhood care and education (ECE) for All Increase quality of early childhood system Improve collaboration and coordination in early childhood system (funding, governance, administration, policy, processes) Improve data system and use of data Modify quality rating improvement system (QRIS) to increase participation and improve quality ECE Recruit providers in underserved areas Define and implement school readiness assessment tool and processes</td>
<td>Underserved populations and regions most in need of ECE infrastructure development are identified Families are informed of ECE options and quality considerations Family engagement is increased and enhanced SE health screening increased EC providers receive consistent PD resources EC providers have more opportunities to share best practices EC system issues identified (funding, governance, administration, policy, processes) ECE data availability and quality are identified ECE data are synthesized and uniquely identified QRIS issues identified School readiness tool and process identified</td>
<td>Referral processes are improved Participating providers coordinate support to children and families and avoid duplication Participating providers implement evidence-informed best practices in ECE, including trauma-informed approaches, home-visiting services, parent-mentoring programs, etc. Families are engaged as participants and partners in the ECE system ECE access and family choice for rural and underserved families increased STARS to Quality participation increased ECE program quality improved ECE providers, parents, and program administrators use program data for continuous quality improvement EC system improvement work conducted, creating improved efficiencies and reduced administrative cost</td>
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System Impacts

• Common Client Index to uniquely identify children and families and evaluate impact of interventions on outcomes

• Family engagement
  • Common definition across early childhood system
  • Coordinated EC outreach campaign
  • Website/one-stop-shop for families, providers, and others
  • Local family engagement coordinators supporting transitions within EC system
  • Referral and intake processes
  • Universal SE screening for children across EC system
System Impacts

• Coaching – common definition, competencies, and certification across EC system
• American Indian cultural competency across system
• How EC is organized in DPHHS/Montana in terms of governance, funding, rule-making, policies, and processes
• Cross-division resources
• Local coalitions strengthened
• Strategic, implementation, and evaluation planning
  • Build common EC indicators
  • Will share data collected/aggregated for broader use
Project Organization
Questions