Strengthening Montana’s Early Childhood System Project

Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Grant: Project Updates
Activity 1: Needs Assessment
Needs assessment structure

- **Access**: ECE capacity for all children, with focus on underserved/vulnerable populations and regions
- **Quality**: QRIS and licensing
- **Workforce**: Professional development
- **Coordination**: Screening, family navigation, social determinants of health referrals, provider coordination, transitions (kindergarten and others), and data
- **Family Engagement**: Definition, implementation, implicit bias
- **Commitment**: Public understanding and investment in early childhood
- **Governance**: Structure, policy, funding
Activity 2: Strategic planning
Strategic planning

• Conducted regional workshops in Missoula, Billings, Helena, Great Falls, and Bozeman
• Held targeted conversations: tribal consultation and school transitions
• Consolidated feedback and presented to DPHHS
• Held planning session 7/22
• Plan will outline request for subsequent grant funding
• Planned submission on August 9th
Strategic planning – DRAFT focal areas

1. **Access and quality.** Access to and participation in high quality ECE across a mixed delivery system.

2. **Workforce.** Effective early childhood workforce (may combine with quality)

3. **Coordination.** System coordinated to support effective family assessment, system navigation, care coordination, and use of data.

4. **Engagement.** Families engaged and valued.

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

6. **Governance.** System is structured to support policy alignment, strategic financing, continuous improvement, and accountability.
Activity 3: Family engagement
Family engagement

• Operationalization of family engagement definition – ongoing, broader scope.
• Contracted with parentingmontana.org to extend infrastructure to include 0-4 year olds.
• Contracted with Head Start to conduct professional development on family engagement.
• Begun work on ECE portal within DPHHS to centralize and improve delivery of state-based data.
• Six family engagement coordinators hired through early childhood community coalitions.
• Contracted with CCRR Network to lead marketing work.
• Resource and referral process improvements will begin to be defined.
• The state will define how to extend use of ASQ/ASQ-SE.
Activity 4: ECE professional development
Professional development

• Hired a coaching specialist to support definition of coaching competencies and credentials; work ongoing.

• CCRR agencies have begun work to develop learning communities as well as targeted supports for home-based child care providers.

• Needs assessment and strategic planning include a significant focus on the need for mental health consultation expansion. The state will begin work to scale/increase infant early childhood mental health consultation.

• Tribal consultation included a focus on developing cultural competency training. Work with 7 Montana tribes is continuing to define cultural competency materials. Work will incorporate other early childhood stakeholders to include broader expertise/experience.
Activity 5: ECE quality improvement

Status, next steps
Quality improvement

• Work related to determining approach to de-duplicate data to uniquely identify children and families progressed and will continue.

• Local coalitions are connecting to school districts to understand and better define local kindergarten transition processes. Strategic planning work will guide next steps regarding kindergarten transition work.

• Decisions regarding QRIS will be made based on the needs assessment, strategic planning, and national technical assistance.
Next grant opportunity
Notice of funding opportunity

• PDG B-5 Renewal Grant
• HHS-2019-ACF-OCC-TP-1567
• Estimated post date: September 1, 2019
• Estimated due date: October 31, 2019
• Expected awards: 23
• $5 - $15 million/annually
Questions

https://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/montanaearlychildhoodsystem