



BYLAWS OF THE MONTANA EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCOUNT BOARD

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Montana Early Childhood Account (MECA) Board is to provide governance and oversight of the MECA fund, ensuring alignment with legislative intent and state priorities. Established under House Bill 924 (2025), the Board directs up to \$10 million annually to support early care and education initiatives that strengthen quality, workforce capacity, affordability, access, and innovation across Montana, without supplanting existing funding.

MISSION STATEMENT

Strengthening Montana’s early childhood system to support young children, families, and communities statewide.

Our Purpose

The Montana Early Childhood Account exists to improve outcomes for Montana’s children from birth through early childhood by investing in a strong, coordinated early care and education system that supports families, providers, and communities.

Our Vision

Montana envisions a future where:

- **Young children** grow up in safe, stable, and nurturing environments with access to high-quality early care and education that supports their healthy development.
- **Families** can easily access affordable early childhood services, are supported by a skilled workforce, and can navigate systems with confidence.
- **Communities** recognize early childhood as a shared responsibility, promote innovation, coordinate resources effectively, and use data and collaboration to improve outcomes for children and families.

ARTICLE I. OFFICES

The principal office of the Board shall be located at the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Director’s Office Prevention Resource Center, PO Box 4210, Helena, Montana 59604-4210.



ARTICLE II. BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. General Powers: The affairs of the Board shall be managed by the Board members in compliance with Title 52, [Ch. 2, Part 10], MCA. Board members must be residents of the State of Montana.

Section 2. Members: In accordance with [52-2-100?], the Board shall be composed of ten members appointed by the Governor, each serving a three-year term. Of these 10 members, five must represent state agencies. The agency representation shall include one member each from the following:

- Department of Labor and Industry
- Office of Public Instruction
- Department of Commerce
- Two members from DPHHS, with one representing the division responsible for American Indian Health, and one representing the Early Childhood and Family Support Division

Section 3. Voting: Each Board member shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the Board. Proxy votes are not permitted.

Section 4. Resignation: Any Board member may resign by submitting a Letter of Resignation to the Governor, with a copy to the Chair. The resignation is effective upon receipt by the Governor, unless another date is specified in the letter.

Section 5. Non-Discrimination: The Board shall not take actions that discriminate based on race, color, sex, disability, national origin, marital status, age, political beliefs, religion, or creed.

Section 6. Regular Meetings: At the annual meeting of the Board, the Board members shall set the time and place of the regular meetings of the Board through the next annual meeting. The Board members may alter the schedule at a subsequent meeting if determined to be in the best interests of the Board.

(a) *Annual Meeting*. The first meeting of the calendar year shall be designated as the annual meeting, at which the officers of the Board shall be elected annually by the Board members. Unless otherwise excused, personal attendance at the annual meeting is required of Board members.

Section 7. Compensation: Board members shall not receive any stated salaries for their services. Board members shall be reimbursed at the state rate for expenses of



attendance at any regular or special meeting of the Board as provided for in 2-18-501 through 2-18-503, MCA.

Section 8. Board Meetings by Electronic Means: If authorized by the Chair, the Board or any designated committee of the Board may participate in a Board or committee meeting by electronic means, provided all persons entitled to participate in the meeting received proper notice of the meeting, and provided all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. A board member participating in a meeting by electronic means is deemed present in person at the meeting. The Chair of the meeting may establish reasonable rules for conducting the meeting by electronic means.

Section 9. Special Meetings: Special meetings of the Board may be called by or at the request of the Chair or any two (2) Board members and shall be held at the place set by the Chair.

(a) *Notice.* The Chair or Board staff shall give to each Board member either oral or written notice (including written notice via email or other electronic means) of any special meeting at least 3 days before the meeting. The notice shall include the meeting place, day, hour, and the purpose of the meeting.

Section 10. Public Participation and Right to Know; Minutes. The Board shall facilitate public participation in its meetings and comply with the public notice and participation requirements of Title 2, Chapter 3, MCA. The Board shall keep written minutes of its meetings pursuant to 2-3-212, MCA.

Section 11. Quorum: A majority of the Board members, excluding vacancies, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any Board meeting.

Section 12. Voting: The act of a majority of the Board members present and casting a vote at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board. If no quorum is present at a meeting of the Board, the Board members may not take action on any Board matter other than to adjourn the meeting to a later date.

Section 13. Conduct of Board Meetings: The Chair, or in the Chair's absence, the Vice-Chair, or in their absence, any person chosen by the Board members present shall call the meeting of the Board to order and shall act as the Chair of the meeting. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, all Board business will be conducted pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 14. Conflict of Interest: A Board member shall disclose any conflict of interest implicated by a proposed Board vote or action. No Board member may participate in the discussion of or a vote for a direct award of funds to any entity or agency over which the Board member has authority or in which the Board member



either has substantial financial interest or is engaged as counsel, consultant, representative, or agent.

Section 15. Unexcused Absences. If a Board member has more than two consecutive unexcused absences from regular meetings, the Board members, by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present and casting a vote, may recommend removal of the Board member to the Governor. The Governor, on the Governor's own initiative, may also remove a Board member for more than two consecutive unexcused absences at regular meetings or for other reasonable cause.

ARTICLE III. OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers: The officers of the Board shall be a Chair and a Vice Chair.

Section 2. Election and Term of Office: The officers of the Board shall be elected annually by the Board members at the annual meeting of the Board. If the election of officers is not held at such meeting, such election shall be held as soon thereafter as is convenient. Each officer shall hold office until a successor has been duly elected and qualified. No officer may be elected for more than two consecutive terms.

Section 3. Removal: Any officer elected or appointed by the Board may be removed from the officer position by a vote of two-thirds of the Board members present and casting a vote if, in their judgment, the best interest of the Board would be served thereby.

Section 4. Vacancies: A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or otherwise, may be filled by the Board for the unexpired portion of the term.

ARTICLE IV. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Creation of Committees: The Board Chair is authorized to create or terminate Special Committees as reasonably needed or upon the specific recommendations of the Board.

Section 2. Number on Committee: As determined by the Board Chair, a committee may consist of any number necessary to accomplish the designated purpose.

Section 3. Chair to Appoint Members and Chairperson: The Board Chair shall appoint the Committee members and shall designate the Committee Chairperson except as otherwise required by law.



Section 4. Chair Authority Over Committees: All Committee members shall serve at the pleasure of the Board Chair.

Section 5. Chair as Ex-Officio Committee Member: Unless otherwise appointed to a committee, the Board Chair may serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of any committee.

Section 6. Committee Reports and Recommendations: Active Committees shall report at each Board meeting and make any appropriate recommendations to the Board. Reports and recommendations may be oral unless the Chair requests a written report.

Section 7. Committee Termination: Upon submission and acceptance of the final report or recommendations of any Special Committee, the Committee shall automatically terminate.

Section 8. Grant Application Evaluation Committee: A Special Committee will serve as the Grant Application Evaluation Committee for the applicable Grants and make recommendations to the full Board regarding applications and funding.

ARTICLE V. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed, and new Bylaws may be adopted by a majority vote of the Board members present at any regular meeting or at any special meeting.

CERTIFICATION OF ADOPTION

These Bylaws, as revised, were adopted by a majority vote of the membership of the Board on this 3rd day of February 2026 and are effective immediately.

Chair: Lisa Malmquist
Vice Chair: Caitlin Jensen