

FSSAC QUARTERLY MEETING AGENDA

Date | time May 30, 2025, | 9:00 – 11:30 AM | *Virtual Meeting*

FSSAC Members

New Co-Chair: Nicole Goeddel

Representative Sue Vinton, Breanne Main, Karen Underwood, Kendra Grass, Kali Decker, Laura Christiaens, Susan Wensel, Lucy Beltz, Brandi Loch, Meghan Peel, Mark Douglass, Laura Kneedler, Daylinda Bradley, Thresa Board, Jeanne Massey, and Justine Guthrie

Part C Coordinator: Josh Kendrick Part C Team: Shari Northcott, Liz Wood, and Lynn McHann

Special Education Fact:

Part H to Part C: First authorized in 1986, the early intervention program was known as Part H of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It became Part C with the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997 and continues as Part C to the present day.

9:00 – 9:30

Welcome

Ground Rules, and Agenda Review

Approval of 1-24-2025, minutes

[Karen underwood motions to accept the minutes from the last meeting.](#)

[Laura Christiaens seconds motion.](#)

Introductions and Attendance

Family Story: Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)

[Matthew Leavenworth shares his family's experience with ECI.](#)

Reports from work groups and next steps with timelines:

1) Workforce - Increase multidisciplinary engagement and collaboration; and

2) Coordination - Improve transitions for children and families exiting Part C services and supports.

Update on councilmembers appointment letters for 2024-2026 term

To be intentional and ensure we're meeting in-between each FSSAC meeting, each group will break out into virtual rooms and schedule the remaining work group meetings for the year. If you haven't yet selected a work group to participate in, please select one now.

Chair Nicole
Goeddel

Family Story
introduction
from Christa
Clarke

Work force:
Josh
Kendrick
Coordination:
Shari
Northcott

	Breakout rooms and reports have been moved to the end of the meeting to allocate time for guest speaker Allison Peak.	
9:30 – 10:30	<p>Guest Speaker Allison Peak</p> <p>Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allison outlines the necessity for IECMHC- presentation to be sent out to participants. Montana is facing a critical situation regarding early childhood poverty, health, and mental well-being, compounded by workforce instability. Efforts like the IECMH initiative show a long-term commitment to addressing these challenges through systemic reform, capacity building, and cross-sector collaboration. <p>Key Challenges Facing Young Children in Montana</p> <p>Poverty and Insurance Gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 20% of Montana children under age 5 live below the federal poverty line. 7% of these children are uninsured, highlighting significant health care access issues. <p>Health and Mental Well-being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montana ranks 30th in the U.S. for early childhood health factors. Youth and adolescents show higher-than-average rates of anxiety and depression. <p>Systemic Workforce Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child welfare system has a turnover rate over 40% (as of 2024), indicating instability and staff shortages. <p>Why It Matters</p> <p>To the State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rising child welfare cases. Growing behavioral challenges, particularly in the post-COVID era. <p>To the Workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevated staff turnover and burnout. 	Jill Christensen

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of institutional knowledge due to frequent personnel changes. <p>To the Individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implied personal and societal consequences of ignoring these systemic issues. <p>Montana's Response: IECMH (Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health) Journey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began in 2010 with state consultation and systemic dialogue. • 2016–2017: Expansion through Project LAUNCH grants, addressing home visiting, pediatrics, and early education. • 2019: Workforce development efforts to improve capacity. • 2023: Strategic partnerships formed to create a unified workforce with Mountain Pacific and University of Montana. 	
10:30– 10:40	Break	
10:40-11:15	<p>Part C Coordinator Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part C Grant Application Update- The annual grant application is currently drafted and posted on the website. The extension has been received, and we are currently waiting for HB 2 to be signed. This may potentially impact the budget, but this may be amended if needed. • Josh has switched to the supervisor role since the last meeting. • The annual performance report has been submitted and accepted. We are waiting for final determination from The Office of Special Education. • Great Beginnings Great Families Conference 2025- Coming in August- Part C to host a pre conference • New learning management system- In process of uploading trainings for family support specialists • Pediatrics Comprehensive Care Assistant Information- A new opportunity for parents of children with high medical needs to provide assistance. This has the potential to be expanded upon in the future. • The new Part C Program Specialist will begin on June 30, 2025 	Josh Kendrick
11:15-11:25	FES Updates	Lynn McHann

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting in November the state will begin managing the FES waitlist- Matrix, guidance, and process for managing waitlist enrollment have been established 	
11:20-11:25	Set dates for the next TWO meetings: Dates: August 22, 2025 November 14, 2025	Shari Northcott
11:25 – 11:30	Public Comment: NONE	
	Parking Lot:	

FSSAC Strategic Plan:

Mission: All families are supported to help their children achieve their highest potential.

Vision: We empower families to help their children succeed by advising and assisting Montana Milestones Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Program.

Ground Rules:

- Watch your airtime.
- No axes to grind.
- Follow FSSAC guidelines.
- Respect for all comments – all voices are heard as we work together.
- Assume positive intent and take responsibility for impact.
- Be here now.
- Listen to learn – active form of participation.