



Montana's Treasures Frequently Asked Questions

What is Montana's Treasures? Montana's Treasures is Montana's Quality Recognition System. It recognizes child care providers through stages connected to licensing, professional growth, program improvement, and identified advanced achievements.

Is Montana's Treasures the same as a rating? No. MTT uses recognition stages rather than a single rating or ranking. Stages highlight progress, strengths, and ongoing work to improve quality.

How does licensing relate to Montana's Treasures? Licensing is the foundation of child care quality, ensuring programs meet basic health and safety requirements. MTT builds on licensing by recognizing additional efforts connected to continuous improvement.

What happened to my STARS level? STARS levels expired September 30, 2025. MTT uses a three-stage quality recognition structure rather than the former STARS levels. Programs that remained throughout the QRS Redesign and were in the QRS Bridge transitioned to a Quality Recognition Stage 2 or 3 based off prior Star level. QRS Bridge providers transitioned to a Stage 2A or Stage 3 starting October 1, 2026, and received email communication and guidance regarding their specific renewal timeframes on 9/24/2026 and 10/2/2026.

Is participation in MTT voluntary? Active, annual participation is voluntary, but all licensed/registered providers will automatically be assigned an MTT Quality Recognition Stage 1 upon successful on-time license/registration renewal. There are no additional quality indicators that must be met for Stage 1 nor an MTT application process. Please refer to the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM [37.96.112](#)) for more information about deadlines.

Can I remain at Stage 1? Programs who meet the on-time successful license/registration renewal, annually, will be automatically assigned thus remaining at an MTT Stage 1.

How do I move to Stage 2? Review the [Montana's Treasures Step by Step Guide](#) on the MTT [website](#) for Stage 2A, 2B, and 2C quality indicators to identify the Quality Recognition Stage that best fits your program. Then confirm requirements and documentation through current MTT resources.

How do I qualify for Stage 3? The step-by-step guide outlines accepted criteria, including specified national accreditation or licensed Head Start/Early Head Start programs in federal good standing. Providers must submit required documentation through the approved process.

Where do I find current information? Use the Montana's Treasures [website](#) for up-to-date provider materials, requirements, announcements, and support links. Providers can also visit the ECFSD Childcare Quality Initiatives [website](#) for additional quality initiatives and support links.

Who can help me decide what to do next?

Contact the current DPHHS or contracted quality partner support listed on the MTT website. Avoid using outdated contact lists. HHSECFSDQualityInitiatives@mt.gov

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