

U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202-5335



APPLICATION FOR GRANTS
UNDER THE

Preschool Development Grants - Development

CFDA # 84.419A

PR/Award # S419A150015

Grants.gov Tracking#: GRANT11769478

OMB No. 1810-0717, Expiration Date: 02/28/2015

Closing Date: Oct 24, 2014

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This application was generated using the PDF functionality. The PDF functionality automatically numbers the pages in this application. Some pages/sections of this application may contain 2 sets of page numbers, one set created by the applicant and the other set created by e-Application's PDF functionality. Page numbers created by the e-Application PDF functionality will be preceded by the letter e (for example, e1, e2, e3, etc.).

Non Responsive

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

* 1. Type of Submission:

- ☐ Preapplication
☒ Application
☐ Changed/Corrected Application

* 2. Type of Application:

- ☒ New
☐ Continuation
☐ Revision

* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):

* Other (Specify):

* 3. Date Received:

10/23/2014

4. Applicant Identifier:

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:

5b. Federal Award Identifier:

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State:

7. State Application Identifier:

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

* a. Legal Name: Montana Office of Public Instruction

* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):

81-0302402

* c. Organizational DUNS:

8095887000000

d. Address:

* Street1:

1227 11th Avenue

Street2:

P.O. Box 202501

* City:

Helena

County/Parish:

* State:

MT: Montana

Province:

* Country:

USA: UNITED STATES

* Zip / Postal Code:

59620-251

e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name:

Division Name:

f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix:

* First Name:

Debbie

Middle Name:

* Last Name:

Dunsaker

Suffix:

Title:

Organizational Affiliation:

* Telephone Number: 406-444-0733

Fax Number: 406-444-1373

* Email: ddunsaker@mt.gov

PR/Award # S419A150015

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Application for Federal Assistance SF-424*** 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:**

A: State Government

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

* Other (specify):

*** 10. Name of Federal Agency:**

U.S. Department of Education

11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

S4.419

CFDA Title:

Preschool Development Grants

*** 12. Funding Opportunity Number:**

ED-GRANTS-102314-001

* Title:

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE): Preschool Development Grants: Development Grants CFDA Number S4.419A

13. Competition Identification Number:

S4 419A2015 1

Title:

14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.): [Add Attachment](#) *** 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:**

Montana Preschool Development Program

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

[Add Attachments](#)

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**16. Congressional Districts Of:*** a. Applicant * b. Program/Project

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

 17. Proposed Project:* a. Start Date: * b. End Date: **18. Estimated Funding (\$):*** a. Federal * b. Applicant * c. State * d. Local * e. Other * f. Program Income * g. TOTAL *** 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**☐ a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on ☐ b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.☒ c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.*** 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**☐ Yes ☒ No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)**

☒ ** I AGREE

** The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

Authorized Representative:Prefix: * First Name: Middle Name: * Last Name: Suffix: * Title: * Telephone Number: Fax Number: * Email: * Signature of Authorized Representative: * Date Signed:

ASSURANCES - NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0348-0040), Washington, DC 20503.

PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET. SEND IT TO THE ADDRESS PROVIDED BY THE SPONSORING AGENCY.

NOTE: Certain of these assurances may not be applicable to your project or program. If you have questions, please contact the awarding agency. Further, certain Federal awarding agencies may require applicants to certify to additional assurances. If such is the case, you will be notified.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant:

1. Has the legal authority to apply for Federal assistance and the institutional, managerial and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the non-Federal share of project cost) to ensure proper planning, management and completion of the project described in this application.
2. Will give the awarding agency, the Comptroller General of the United States and, if appropriate, the State, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the award; and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards or agency directives.
3. Will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or presents the appearance of personal or organizational conflict of interest, or personal gain.
4. Will initiate and complete the work within the applicable time frame after receipt of approval of the awarding agency.
5. Will comply with the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. §§4728-4763) relating to prescribed standards for merit systems for programs funded under one of the 19 statutes or regulations specified in Appendix A of OPM's Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration (5 C.F.R. 900, Subpart F).
6. Will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include, but are not limited to: (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin; (b) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C. §§1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; (c) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. §794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; (d) the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§6101-6107), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; (e) the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-255), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of drug abuse; (f) the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-616), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of alcohol abuse or alcoholism; (g) §§523 and 527 of the Public Health Service Act of 1912 (42 U.S.C. §§290 dd-3 and 290 ee- 3), as amended, relating to confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records; (h) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. §3601 et seq.), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing; (i) any other nondiscrimination provisions in the specific statute(s) under which application for Federal assistance is being made; and, (j) the requirements of any other nondiscrimination statute(s) which may apply to the application.
7. Will comply, or has already complied, with the requirements of Titles II and III of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646) which provide for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced or whose property is acquired as a result of Federal or federally-assisted programs. These requirements apply to all interests in real property acquired for project purposes regardless of Federal participation in purchases.
8. Will comply, as applicable, with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§1501-1508 and 7324-7328) which limit the political activities of employees whose principal employment activities are funded in whole or in part with Federal funds.

9. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. §§276a to 276a-7), the Copeland Act (40 U.S.C. §276c and 18 U.S.C. §874), and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. §§327-333), regarding labor standards for federally-assisted construction subagreements.
10. Will comply, if applicable, with flood insurance purchase requirements of Section 102(a) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-234) which requires recipients in a special flood hazard area to participate in the program and to purchase flood insurance if the total cost of insurable construction and acquisition is \$10,000 or more.
11. Will comply with environmental standards which may be prescribed pursuant to the following: (a) institution of environmental quality control measures under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) and Executive Order (EO) 11514; (b) notification of violating facilities pursuant to EO 11738; (c) protection of wetlands pursuant to EO 11990; (d) evaluation of flood hazards in floodplains in accordance with EO 11988; (e) assurance of project consistency with the approved State management program developed under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. §§1451 et seq.); (f) conformity of Federal actions to State (Clean Air) Implementation Plans under Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act of 1955, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§7401 et seq.); (g) protection of underground sources of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended (P.L. 93-523); and, (h) protection of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (P.L. 93-205).
12. Will comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. §§1271 et seq.) related to protecting components or potential components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.
13. Will assist the awarding agency in assuring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. §470), EO 11593 (identification and protection of historic properties), and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. §§469a-1 et seq.).
14. Will comply with P.L. 93-348 regarding the protection of human subjects involved in research, development, and related activities supported by this award of assistance.
15. Will comply with the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-544, as amended, 7 U.S.C. §§2131 et seq.) pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of warm blooded animals held for research, teaching, or other activities supported by this award of assistance.
16. Will comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. §§4801 et seq.) which prohibits the use of lead-based paint in construction or rehabilitation of residence structures.
17. Will cause to be performed the required financial and compliance audits in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and OMB Circular No. A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations."
18. Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies governing this program.
19. Will comply with the requirements of Section 106(g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, as amended (22 U.S.C. 7104) which prohibits grant award recipients or a sub-recipient from (1) Engaging in severe forms of trafficking in persons during the period of time that the award is in effect (2) Procuring a commercial sex act during the period of time that the award is in effect or (3) Using forced labor in the performance of the award or subawards under the award.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED CERTIFYING OFFICIAL	TITLE
Jay Phillips	Superintendent of Public Instruction
APPLICANT ORGANIZATION	DATE SUBMITTED
Montana Office of Public Instruction	10/23/2014

Standard Form 424B (Rev. 7-97) Back

DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

Complete this form to disclose lobbying activities pursuant to 31 U.S.C.1352

Approved by OMB

0348-0046

1. * Type of Federal Action: <input type="checkbox"/> a. contract <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> b. grant <input type="checkbox"/> c. cooperative agreement <input type="checkbox"/> d. loan <input type="checkbox"/> e. loan guarantee <input type="checkbox"/> f. loan insurance	2. * Status of Federal Action: <input type="checkbox"/> a. bid/offer/application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> b. initial award <input type="checkbox"/> c. post-award	3. * Report Type: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a. initial filing <input type="checkbox"/> b. material change
4. Name and Address of Reporting Entity: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prime <input type="checkbox"/> SubAwardee * Name <input type="text" value="Office of Public Instruction"/> * Street 1 <input type="text" value="1227 11th Avenue"/> Street 2 <input type="text" value="P.O. Box 202501"/> * City <input type="text" value="Helena"/> State <input type="text" value="MT - Montana"/> Zip <input type="text" value="59620 2501"/> Congressional District, if known: <input type="text"/>		
6. * Federal Department/Agency: <input type="text" value="US Department of Education and DHEC"/> 7. * Federal Program Name/Description: <input type="text" value="Elemental Development Grants"/> CFDA Number, if applicable: <input type="text" value="84.409"/>		
8. Federal Action Number, if known: <input type="text"/> 9. Award Amount, if known: \$ <input type="text"/>		
10. a. Name and Address of Lobbying Registrant: Prefix <input type="text"/> * First Name <input type="text" value="Denise"/> Middle Name <input type="text"/> * Last Name <input type="text" value="Judeau"/> Suffix <input type="text"/> * Street 1 <input type="text"/> Street 2 <input type="text"/> * City <input type="text"/> State <input type="text"/> Zip <input type="text"/>		
b. Individual Performing Services (including address if different from No. 10a) Prefix <input type="text"/> * First Name <input type="text" value="Denise"/> Middle Name <input type="text"/> * Last Name <input type="text" value="Judeau"/> Suffix <input type="text"/> * Street 1 <input type="text"/> Street 2 <input type="text"/> * City <input type="text"/> State <input type="text"/> Zip <input type="text"/>		
11. Information requested through this form is authorized by title 31 U.S.C. section 1352. This disclosure of lobbying activities is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed by the tier above when the transaction was made or entered into. This disclosure is required pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1352. This information will be reported to the Congress semi-annually and will be available for public inspection. Any person who fails to file the required disclosure shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure. * Signature: <input type="text" value="Gay Phillips"/> * Name: Prefix <input type="text"/> * First Name <input type="text" value="Denise"/> Middle Name <input type="text"/> * Last Name <input type="text" value="Judeau"/> Suffix <input type="text"/> Title: <input type="text"/> Telephone No.: <input type="text"/> Date: <input type="text" value="07/11/2014"/>		
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PR/Award # S419A150015

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NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

To Whom Does This Provision Apply?

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

What Does This Provision Require?

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct

description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve to high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.

(1) An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.

(2) An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.

(3) An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.

Estimated Burden Statement for GEPA Requirements

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.5 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Public Law 103-382). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC, 20210-4537 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0005.

Optional - You may attach 1 file to this page.

	Add Attachment	
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CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

* APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION

Montana Office of Public Instruction

* PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

Prefix: * First Name: Denise Middle Name:
* Last Name: Teneau Suffix:
* Title: Superintendent of Public Instruction

* SIGNATURE: Jay Phillips

* DATE: 10/23/2014

Abstract

The abstract narrative must not exceed one page and should use language that will be understood by a range of audiences. For all projects, include the project title (if applicable), goals, expected outcomes and contributions for research, policy, practice, etc. Include population to be served, as appropriate. For research applications, also include the following:

- Theoretical and conceptual background of the study (i.e., prior research that this investigation builds upon and that provides a compelling rationale for this study)
- Research issues, hypotheses and questions being addressed
- Study design including a brief description of the sample including sample size, methods, principals dependent, independent, and control variables, and the approach to data analysis.

[Note: For a non-electronic submission, include the name and address of your organization and the name, phone number and e-mail address of the contact person for this project.]

You may now Close the Form

You have attached 1 file to this page, no more files may be added. To add a different file, you must first delete the existing file.

* Attachment:

Montana Preschool Development Grant

Applicant: The State of Montana

Project Overview

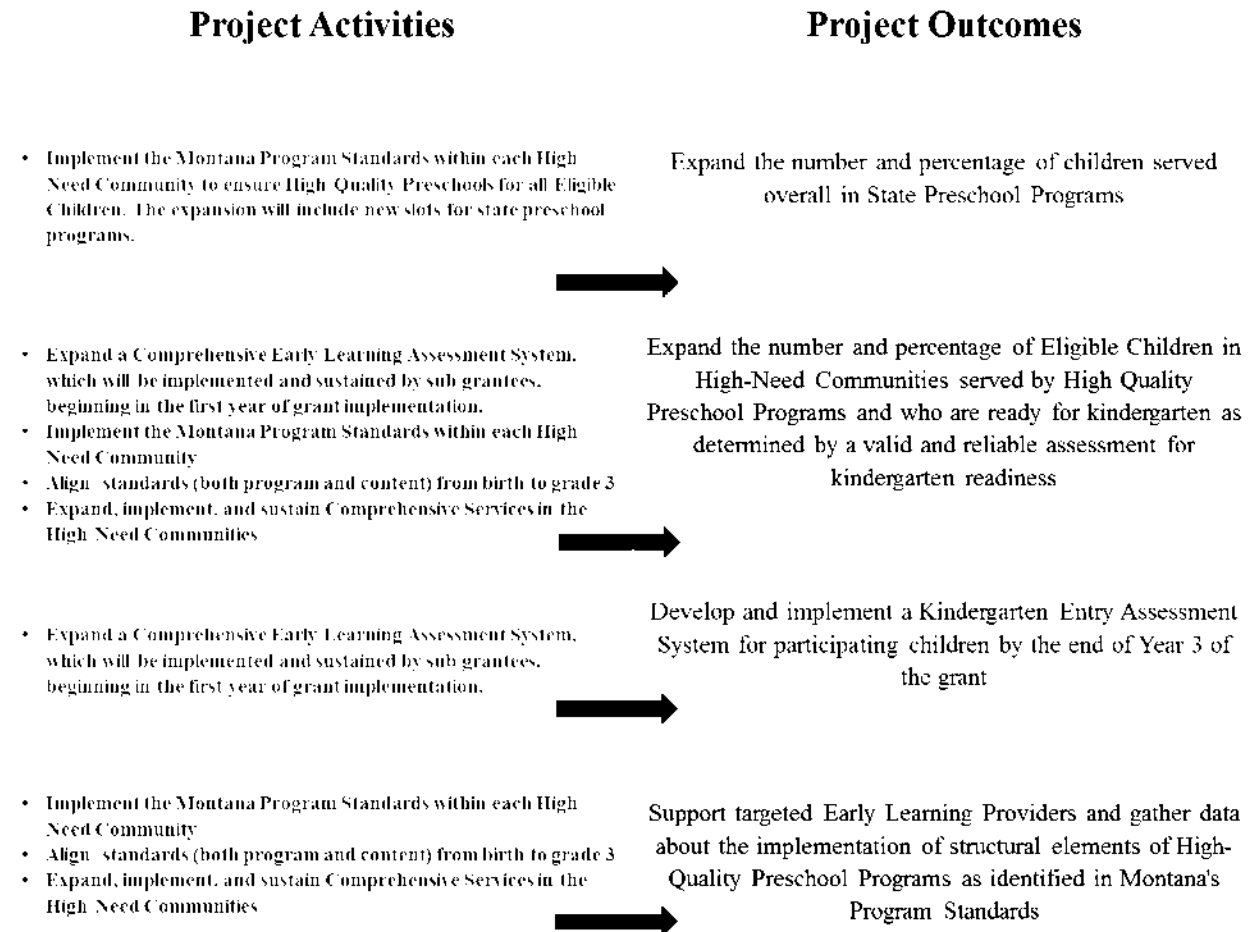
Montana is focused on increasing high-quality preschool for children throughout the state as evidenced by Governor Bullock's Early Edge Preschool Initiative which would provide \$37 million in state funds for preschool education, new program and accreditation standards for state-funded preschool, and revised education requirements and licensure qualifications for public preschool teachers. These are critical steps to ensuring a quality education for Montana's youngest learners, but the state also faces some challenges. Montana is geographically vast with a sparse population. Nearly half of Montana children live at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

This grant will help Montana improve access to high quality preschool education in 16 high needs communities, eight of which are on Indian lands. The Governor's Office, The Office of Instruction, and The Department of Health and Human Services will implement the grant. Montana has instituted successful early literacy programs in high needs communities and these programs will serve as models and mentors for new programs that are added each year of the grant.

The Subgrantees have been categorized in Cohorts. Cohort I consists of Early Learning Providers that have been part of the Montana Striving Readers Project (MSRP) and have already begun to implement many of the components of Montana's Program Standards. Cohort II consists of Early Learning Providers who are in districts that are implementing a MSRP. Cohort III consists of Head Starts on Indian Reservations that do not have schools participating in the MSRP. Cohort I will serve as a mentor to Cohorts II and III through ongoing collaboration and site visits facilitated by the State Implementation Team.

Proposed Project Activities and Objectives

The State will accomplish the project activities and objectives in phases: Phase 1: Developing, Phase 2: Expanding, Phase 3: Implementing, and Phase 4: Sustaining. All activities will ultimately lead to the sustaining phase. The State has four primary ambitious and achievable outcomes, which will be measured by our external evaluator Education Northwest. See table below for project activities and outcomes.



Other Organizations

The State proposes to work in collaboration with the following organizations: 1) the three Cohorts of Early Learning Providers and LEAs, including Head Starts and Tribal Head Starts, 2) the Divisions within the OPI, including Title I, Special Education, Accreditation, and Indian Education For All, 3) the Divisions and bureaus within the DPHHS including Children's Mental Health Bureau, Child and Family Services Division, Family and Community Health Bureau which includes home visiting, and the Human and Community Services Division which includes the Early Childhood Services Bureau and Public Assistance Programs targeting low income vulnerable Montanans, 4) The Governor's Best Beginnings Advisory Council, 5) the Early Childhood Project through Montana State University and the Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium, and 6) Montana's Public Libraries.

Project Narrative File(s)

* **Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename:** Narrative A-G and Competitive Priorities_Final.pdf

[Delete Mandatory Project Narrative File](#)

[View Mandatory Project Narrative File](#)

To add more Project Narrative File attachments, please use the attachment buttons below.

[Add Optional Project Narrative File](#)

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK
GOVERNOR



JOHN WALSH
LT. GOVERNOR

October 14, 2014

Preschool Development Grant
The Honorable Arne Duncan
The Honorable Sylvia M. Burwell
400 Maryland Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan and Secretary Burwell:

As a father of three young children, I believe that our most important responsibility as a state is to ensure that the next generation has every opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential.

We know that when all children arrive at kindergarten ready to learn, it allows them to hit the ground running in their educational career, and it also helps to reduce disciplinary challenges, so teachers can focus on teaching, instead of dealing with behavioral issues. This means that all children will get the attention and focus that they deserve in the classroom.

We have made early childhood education a top priority in this state and over the last two years, and are improving access to and opportunity for high-quality early learning experiences.

- Funding from the 2013 Legislature into STARS to Quality (Montana's QRIS) allowed for an expansion that doubled the number of programs on the road to quality while substantially increasing the number of children receiving high-quality services.
- The Board of Public Education has begun their work to develop content and accreditation standards and qualifications for teachers of preschool programs in or attached to public schools. These standards, which I anticipate will be adopted prior to the end of this calendar year, ensure that preschool classrooms are geared toward student success, and have the qualified educators necessary to support student learning. The standards are aligned with exiting measures of quality including STARS, Head Start standards and NAEYC accreditation.
- My FY16-17 Executive Budget Proposal will include (b)(4) for "Early Edge MT Block Grants" to support high-quality, voluntary preschool for four-year-olds across the state.
- Teachers and caregivers across the state, business leaders who convened in May to learn about the importance of early childhood education, school administrators and community leaders, legislators and editorial boards have all joined the conversation about how we can better support Montana's youngest learners.

While we have made progress, we still have a long way to go. Montana's unique geography and sparse population across most of the state pose unique challenges for access to many services, including high-quality early childhood programs. Our seven sovereign Indian Reservations are some of our highest need areas, and are generally far from large population centers. This grant presents an incredible

opportunity to give children in some of these high-need areas across the state access to high-quality preschool programs and a chance at success that they would not otherwise have. .

Superintendent Denise Juneau, Department of Health and Human Services Director Richard Opper and I are honored to submit this application, which compliments and enhances what we are doing and will be able to do with state resources. Our proposal employs a cross-sector approach to early childhood that keeps the child and family at the center. Our proposal will support both new and expanded high-quality preschool slots where they are the most needed and will have the highest impact, specifically, Montana's reservation communities.

Thank you for your commitment to early childhood and for the opportunity to enhance and expand opportunities for Montana's children. It is the most important and exciting investment we can make.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

STEVE BULLOCK
Governor



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

Office of Public Instruction
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October 14, 2014

The Honorable Arne Duncan
The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
400 Maryland Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan and Secretary Burwell:

The Office of Public Instruction will be the lead agency for the Montana's Preschool Development Grant. This grant represents a great opportunity to move our state closer to providing high quality preschool for all Montana's children.

In the past year, I have recommended new standards to the Montana Board of Public Education that will ensure Montana's children receive a high quality preschool education. These new standards are set for adoption in November 2014 and will be part of Administrative Rule for the state of Montana. The recommendations include:

- program and accreditation standards for preschools funded with state dollars;
- licensure requirements for educators working in accredited preschools, and
- program requirements for institutions of higher education that offer a credential in Early Childhood Education.

While Montana is laying the groundwork for expanded preschool opportunities, many of the children in this state, particularly in high needs communities and on Indian lands, do not have access to high-quality early learning to help them reach their full potential. Research consistently shows that access to quality preschool education benefits all children and particularly those from low-income families.

This proposal builds on the strong collaboration of community leaders, early childhood educators, K-12 education higher education, and local and tribal Head Start programs to ensure that our most vulnerable children gain the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for kindergarten. The Office of Public Instruction has experience working on early childhood learning through its Montana Striving Readers, Early Reading First and the Indian Education Division's curriculum and professional development resources for early childhood programs.

In addition, the agency has the infrastructure capacity to administer and monitor grants, track longitudinal data, and oversee a multi-faceted project with many community and state level stakeholders.

Governor Steve Bullock and I share the commitment to expand high quality preschool education in our state. Investing in our youngest learners will greatly benefit Montana's future. I urge your support of Montana's Preschool Development Grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denise Juneau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Denise Juneau
Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction

A. Executive Summary

(A)(1) The State's Progress to Date

Montana is building a strong foundation for implementing High-Quality Preschool Programs so that all young children, especially those with high needs, have the best opportunity for development of the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in school. (See Appendix, p. 126 for list of General Reference documents.) The State has increased collaboration among the Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS), the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), and the Governor's Office to provide a continuum of quality services for birth through grade 3.

Montana has:

- Updated the Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS) to help ensure children birth to age five develop the skills and knowledge they need to be prepared for kindergarten;
- Established Preschool Standards of Accreditation (Montana Preschool Program Standards);
- Amended Educator Preparation Program Standards to prepare early childhood educators;
- Added new licensure opportunities for Early Childhood Educators.

Early Edge Montana initiative is the Governor's proposed plan to provide state funding for High-Quality Preschool Programs for four-year-olds, guaranteeing that every child in Montana has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. The Governor's Office has also established the Best Beginnings Advisory Council, a broad group of early childhood stakeholders to improve collaboration and coordination across the spectrum of governmental and nonprofit organizations providing early childhood services.

Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS)

Coming from the Early Learning Content Standards described in the Montana Preschool Program Standards, the Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS) are organized according to four core domains: emotional/social, physical, communication, and cognition. These core domains cover the Essential Domains of School Readiness (Table 1). They are universally designed and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate. (See Appendix, pp. 20-41)

Table 1: Comparison of Essential Domains of School Readiness and Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS)	
Essential Domains of School Readiness	Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS)
Language and Literacy	Core Domain 3: Communication
Cognition and General Knowledge (Early Mathematics and Scientific Development)	Core Domain 4: Cognition
Approaches Toward Learning	Core Domain 4: Cognition
Physical Well-being and Motor Development	Core Domain 2: Physical
Social and Emotional Development	Core Domain 1: Emotional and Social

The MELS outlines a set of expectations, guidelines, or developmental milestones that describe what all children from birth to kindergarten entry should know and be able to do. The standards can be described as broad categories, or dimensions, reflective of children’s learning and development, which provide a continuum of benchmarks and indicators without listing specific ages; each child’s development can be identified and observed over time on the continuum.

Montana Preschool Program Standards

The State is in the process of establishing new Preschool Standards of Accreditation. These Montana Preschool Program Standards are found in Chapter 63 of the Administrative Rule of Montana (Appendix, pp. 53-63). These standards were developed through cross-sector collaboration of a thorough crosswalk of the NAEYC Accreditation Standards, Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base, Montana OPI Chapter 55 Accreditation Standards for K-12, and Head Start Performance Standards, and reflect best practices for High-Quality Preschool Programs.

Educator Preparation Program Standards

The State is amending the Educator Preparation Program Standards found in Chapter 58 of the Administrative Rule of Montana. These standards are used by institutions of higher education to prepare early childhood educators. They will also be used to design early childhood programs of study; assess student’s knowledge, skills, and dispositions; and determine an early childhood higher education program’s effectiveness. See Appendix (pp. 10-13) for additional information about Educator Preparation Program Standards.

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Teacher Education and Licensure Requirements

The State is upgrading preschool teacher education and licensure requirements, which are found in Chapter 57 of the Administrative Rule, which includes educator licensure rules that govern the types of licenses and endorsements available and how teachers can apply for and renew their licenses. (See Appendix (pp. 8-9) for additional information about Endorsements.

Governor's Early Edge Montana Initiative

Governor Bullock has proposed the Early Edge Montana initiative to ensure each child in Montana the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. During the 2015 legislative session, Governor Bullock will bring forward a funding proposal for voluntary, preschool that is open to all four-year-olds. The plan calls for \$(b)(4) over the next biennium. The funds will be block-granted to school districts that apply and meet the criteria for High-Quality Preschool Programs as defined by Montana Preschool Program Standards.

Best Beginnings Advisory Council

The Governor's Office has established the Best Beginnings Advisory Council, a broad group of early childhood stakeholders to improve collaboration and coordination across the spectrum of governmental and nonprofit organizations providing early childhood services. In addition, local Best Beginnings Coalitions have been created to support community efforts. These Coalitions are located in High-Need Communities covering much of the state. Along with engaging local communities, the formation of the coalitions has also allowed Montana to build system capacity for delivering services to high-need families such as evidence-based maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting services. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council will coordinate with the State Implementation Team to support Subgrantees in the implementation of High-Quality Preschool Programs. Local Best Beginnings Coalitions will be instrumental in collaborating with Subgrantees in High-Need Communities to ensure Eligible Children have the services and supports to attain the essential kindergarten readiness skills outlined in the Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS).

(A)(2) Provide High-Quality Preschool Programs in One or More High-Need Communities

This grant will fund three cohorts of Subgrantees who will assure that our High-Need Communities have enhanced opportunities to support school readiness for Eligible Children. Cohort I consists of Early Learning Providers that have been part of the Montana Striving Readers Project (MSRP) and have already begun to implement many of the components of the

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Montana Preschool Program Standards. Cohort II consists of additional Early Learning Providers who are in districts that are implementing the MSRP. Cohort III consists of Head Starts on Indian Reservations that do not have schools participating in the MSRP. Cohort I will serve as a mentor to Cohorts II and III through ongoing collaboration and site visits facilitated by the State Implementation Team.

(A)(3) Increase the Number and Percentage of Eligible Children Served in High-Quality Preschool Programs.

The State will increase the number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs during each year of the grant period through the creation of new, and the improvement of existing, State Preschool Program slots. In the first year of the grant, the number for improved Preschool Slots will be 248 children. This number will increase during the second, third, and fourth years. In the first year of the grant, the number for new Preschool Slots will be 1,138 children. This number will increase to 1,613 children in the second, third, and fourth years. See Table A (Excel Spreadsheets) for the number of Eligible Children to be served each year of the grant and the number and percentage of State Preschool Program slots.

(A)(4) Characteristics of High-Quality Preschool Programs

The Montana Preschool Program Standards have all the characteristics, or structural elements, specified in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

Staff Qualifications

Teachers must have a bachelor's degree and must be licensed and endorsed in accordance with state statutes and Montana Board of Public Education rules. Early childhood paraprofessionals must have:

- (a) completed two years of study at an institution of higher education; or
- (b) obtained an associate (or higher) degree; or
- (c) obtained a high school diploma and be able to demonstrate the knowledge and the ability to assist in the instruction, and program delivery to support students' development of the knowledge and skills outlined in the MELS.

Subgrantees have committed to guaranteeing that instructional staff salaries are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff. Additional information on staff qualifications is detailed in criterion (C)(1)(e) and (C)(1)(f), in accordance with Montana Board of Public Education Administrative Rule.

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Child-to-Instructional Staff Ratio and Class Size

Subgrantees will comply with Montana Preschool Program Standards of Accreditation, or Chapter 63 (Appendix, pp. 53-63), which states that there must be one appropriately licensed and endorsed teacher for every 10 children. In classrooms having over 10 children, there must be an early childhood paraprofessional for up to no more than 18 total children in a classroom with two adults. A class size of 18 preschoolers is the maximum number of children, regardless of the number of staff.

Full-Day Program

Subgrantees will be required to provide full-day programs of no less than five hours per day and will include children with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELL) who will have access to and full participation in all learning opportunities. Subgrantees will also comply with evidence-based health and safety standards outlined in Chapter 55, Accreditation Standards for K-12. Additional information on program standards is detailed in criterion (C)(1)(b).

High-Quality Professional Development

The State Implementation Team (Table 2) will coordinate with the State Leadership Team to provide ongoing professional development to Subgrantees through on-site support and annual summer institutes. Participating Early Learning Providers will learn how to provide High-Quality Preschool Programs that are developmentally appropriate, and culturally and linguistically responsive, through the delivery of evidence-based curricula and learning environments that are aligned with the Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS). Staff will receive training for providing individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities. Refer to the rigorous Plan for Professional Development, which is outlined in the Appendix (pp. 90-111).

Continuous Improvement of High-Quality Preschool Programs

The State will measure preschool quality through the Plan for Continuous Improvement of High-Quality Preschool Programs which outlines systemic processes for planning, implementing, and evaluating the success of a High-Quality Preschool Programs Program through a Continuous Improvement Cycle. Two times a year, Subgrantees will be required to complete the Montana Program Needs Assessment, which guides Early Learning Providers in implementing the Montana Preschool Program Standards. The State will utilize this information combined with student outcome measures, Measures of Environmental Quality, and Measures of the Quality of

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Adult-Child Interactions to guide its decision making. This data will also be analyzed by an external evaluator, Education Northwest, to evaluate program effectiveness and direct state and local continuous improvement efforts.

Family Engagement

Subgrantees will be required to hire a Family Engagement Coordinator who provides on-site parental support services and community engagement activities to include comprehensive services that promote children's learning and development. The Family Engagement Coordinators will also work with the Best Beginning Coalitions to ensure families receive comprehensive services by providing professional development to participating Early Learning Providers on strategies for engaging families. Additional information on family engagement is detailed in criterion (C)(1)(i), (C)(1)(j), and criterion F.

(A)(5) Set Expectations for School Readiness

The State will implement a Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment System by expanding the current inventory of assessments that are currently being used. This expansion will include valid and reliable screening and formative assessments for measuring outcomes of participating children across the Essential Domains of School Readiness. The results of these assessments will be used to attain the skills and knowledge in the Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS), and to ensure successful transition from preschool to kindergarten. By the end of the second year of the grant, the State will also implement a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) to be used by all participating Early Learning Providers. The KEA will allow the Subgrantees and elementary schools to measure outcomes of participating children across the Essential Domains of School Readiness during the first few months of their admission into kindergarten. Subgrantee feeder kindergarten classrooms will administer the assessments in the fall of year three of the grant. This plan is communicated in goal three of the Plan for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment (Appendix, pp. 69-76). Results of the assessment will be used to inform efforts to close the school-readiness gap at kindergarten entry, to inform instruction in the early elementary school grades, to inform parents about their children's status, and to involve parents in decisions about their children's education. Additional information on the development of expectations for the school readiness of children upon kindergarten entry can be found in (C)(3) and in the Plan for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment in the Appendix (pp. 69-76).

(A)(6) Supported by a Broad Group of Stakeholders

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The Governor's Office, the Office of Public Instruction, the Department of Public Health and Human Services will work together to implement the State's plan. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is the Governor's advisory group for early childhood. This group of stakeholders includes numerous early childhood advocates, service providers, reference and referral agencies, public health and safety agencies, and many others. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council focuses on the multiple systems for impacting young children and families, particularly those with high needs. The goal of the group is to improve collaboration and coordination across the spectrum of governmental and nonprofit organizations providing early childhood services, including health and mental health services, family support and parent education, and early care and education.

The State will form a State Leadership Team that will oversee the implementation of the State's grant. Team Members will include representatives from Montana's Governor's Office, Office of Public Instruction (OPI), and Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS). The State Leadership Team will meet three times a year; these meetings will be scheduled at the same time as meetings of the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. At these meetings, current data from the State will be reviewed, and work groups will be formed to provide critical information and professional learning opportunities for the State Implementation Team. Table 2 outlines the plan for the State Leadership Team in supporting the State's grant application.

Table 2: STATE LEADERSHIP TEAM	
Team Members	Roles and Responsibilities
State Governor's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Align existing OPI and DPHHS systems and services• Develop a Preschool Guidance Document.• Review State data and make recommendations to the State Implementation Team.• Work with Best Beginnings Advisory Council and Best Beginnings Coalitions
State Office of Public Instruction (OPI)	
State Department Health and Human Services (DPHHS)	

The State has support from a broad group of stakeholders. See Appendix (p. 67) for Best Beginnings Advisory Council Members, which include Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and state and local early learning councils. See also Letters of Support and Letters of Intent from Subgrantees.

(A)(7) Allocate Funds Between—

(A)(7)(a) Activities to Build or Enhance Infrastructure Using No More than 35% of Funds

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The State will allocate funds to build or enhance State Preschool Program infrastructure using no more than 35 percent of its federal grant funds. Activities include monitoring and evaluation and other quality-enhancing activities to improve the delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children. The State will use \$3,500,000 per year for State Level Infrastructure. Refer to Table A (Excel Spreadsheets) for the number of Eligible Children to be served each year of the grant and the number and percentage of State Preschool Slots.

(A)(7)(b) Subgrants Using at Least 65% of Funds

(A)(7)(b)(i) State will provide High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children no later than the end of year two of the grant period. Cohort I will begin implementation by August 2015. Refer to Table A (Excel Spreadsheets) for the number of Eligible Children to be served each year of the grant and the number and percentage of State Preschool Slots. The State will implement High-Quality Preschool Programs as defined by the Montana Preschool Program Standards, for Eligible Children in 16 High-Need Communities, including 8 communities located on Indian Lands.

(A)(7)(b)(ii) The State will subgrant at least 65 percent of its Federal grant funds to its Subgrantees over the grant period as evidenced in Table A (Excel Spreadsheets). The State will allocate \$6,500,000, annually, which is 65 percent of the funds to Subgrantees over the grant period. In the first year of the grant, the State will serve 1,138 eligible children. In the second, third, and fourth years, the State will serve 1,613 children. See Table A (Excel Spreadsheets), Part III, 3A for evidence of number of children that will be served by grant funds and State (Governor Bullock's Early Edge Montana initiative) funds. See Table A (Excel Spreadsheets), 2C, 2D, 2H, and 2I for number of children that will be served in New Preschool Slots and Improved Preschool Slots.

(A)(7)(b)(iii) The State will support each Subgrantee in culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and communication efforts in order to ensure that all families, including those who are isolated or otherwise hard to reach, are informed of the opportunity and encouraged to enroll their children in available programs. This outreach is particularly important in our communities on Indian lands. As evidenced in criterion (F) and Plan for Professional Development (Appendix, pp. 90-111), the Subgrantees and Best Beginnings Coalitions will conduct a Community Needs Assessment to work with families to ensure eligible children are encouraged to enroll in High-Quality Preschool Programs. See also information contained in Table A (Excel Spreadsheets) for

the number of Eligible Children to be served each year of the grant and the number and percentage of state preschool program slots.

B. Commitment to High-Quality Preschool Programs

(B)(1) Early Learning and Development Standards

Montana's Early Learning Guidelines for Children 3 to 5 (2004) and Montana's Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers (2009) were incorporated into one document that represents a continuum of growth and development for children from birth to age 5. This integrated document is called the 2014 Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS) (See Appendix, pp. 20-41).

The MELS outlines a set of expectations, guidelines, or developmental milestones that describe what all children from birth to kindergarten entry should know and be able to do. The standards can be described as broad categories, or dimensions, reflective of children's learning and development, which provide a continuum of benchmarks and indicators without listing specific ages; each child's development can be identified and observed over time on the continuum. The MELS reflect current evidence-based research for English Language Learners and children with disabilities particularly in the areas of brain development, the effects of traumatic stress, and cultural and linguistic diversity, including significant and meaningful inclusions of Montana Indian Education for All (IEFA) resources. The MELS were reviewed and modified by a task force of early childhood leaders and experts from across the state, including higher education, the Montana Early Childhood Project, Child Care Plus (inclusion experts), Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), Head Start Collaboration Office, Head Start representatives, resource and referral agencies, and preschool directors. Montana's plan is to establish a review process of these standards every five years to ensure they are informed by the newest and best evidence-based practices for working with children and establishing curriculum goals.

The MELS guides the work of early childhood professionals to ensure that children from birth to age five have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful when they enter kindergarten. It describes what all children from birth to kindergarten entry should know and be able to do and their dispositions toward learning. The MELS is organized according to four core domains: emotional and social, physical, communication, and cognition. These domains thoroughly cover the Essential Domains of School Readiness and are universally designed and developmentally,

culturally, and linguistically appropriate.

Table 3: Comparison of Essential Domains of School Readiness and Montana Early Learning Standards	
Essential Domains of School Readiness	Montana Early Learning Standard (MELS)
Language and Literacy	Core Domain 3: Communication
Cognition and General Knowledge (Early Mathematics and Scientific Development)	Core Domain 4: Cognition
Approaches Toward Learning	Core Domain 4: Cognition
Physical Well-being and Motor Development	Core Domain 2: Physical
Social and Emotional Development	Core Domain 1: Emotional and Social

(B)(2) State's Financial Investment

For the 2014 biennium, the Governor included funding for the Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program for the 2014 biennium. The Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program is a voluntary, tiered quality improvement system comprised of set but achievable criteria designed to support early childhood programs in improving the quality of their educational and support services for young children. The State Legislature has identified one-time only funds through a (b)(4). Governor Bullock's budget request for the 2016 biennium includes \$ (b)(4) in State funds to continue to improve early childhood settings for community based providers in 2014-2015. An additional \$ (b)(4) has been requested in the 2015 legislative session for each year of the 2016 biennium. See Tables A and B in the Excel Spreadsheets for evidence of funding in 2014.

(B)(3) Enacted or Pending Legislation, Policies, and/or Practices

Montana currently does not have a state preschool program. However, the State has demonstrated its current and future commitment to increasing access to High-Quality Preschool Programs for Eligible Children through the following enacted and pending legislation, policies, or practices: 1) Governor Bullock's Early Edge Montana block grants; 2) Montana Preschool Program Standards; 3) Achievement in Montana (AIM) Longitudinal Data System; and 4) Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program. Here is the evidence:

1. Governor Bullock's Early Edge Montana Block Grants

During the 2015 legislative session, Governor Steve Bullock will bring forward a proposal for voluntary, preschool that is open to all four-year-olds. The plan calls for (b)(4) over the

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next biennium. The funds will be block-granted to school districts that apply and meet the criteria for High-Quality Preschool Programs as defined by Montana Preschool Program Standards. The OPI will send out the request for proposal, review the grants, and oversee the distribution of the funds. School districts may subcontract with community-based preschools and local Head Starts that meet the requirements for quality preschool under Montana Board of Education, ARM Title 10, Chapter 63, Preschool Standards of Accreditation. Montana Preschool Program Standards include provisions for:

- Highly qualified teachers and staff;
- Safe and nurturing learning environments;
- Family engagement and wrap-around services; and
- Developmentally appropriate curriculum that aligns with what children will learn in kindergarten.

The funding will be allocated as follows: School districts will receive (b)(4) for the first (b)(4) students. Districts will receive an additional (b)(4) for each additional (b)(4) students (no class will be larger than (b)(4) students). For example, if a district has (b)(4) preschool students, the district will receive (b)(4). If a district has (b)(4) students, the district will receive (b)(4).

This grant will fund three cohorts of Subgrantees, who will also implement the Montana Preschool Program Standards and will assure that our High-Need Communities have enhanced opportunities to support school readiness for children. The State expects that the Subgrantees that are LEAs will also apply for the Early Edge Montana block grants, and that Head Starts will collaborate with LEAs to receive block grant funding, too. Therefore, the State is expecting each Subgrantee that is an LEA to receive a block grant award each grant year, ranging from (b)(4) to (b)(4). The State is expecting a Head Start to collaborate with the LEA, who will receive the block grants, and will allocate (b)(4) of the block grants to the Head Starts in their communities. Based on a recent survey with principals and superintendents, we know that (b)(4) percent of the block grants will be used for new state preschool slots and (b)(4) percent will be used to improve existing slots. These funds will serve as part of the State's match to the Preschool Development Grant, pending approval by the state legislature, and will help to maximize the impact of both the Federal Preschool Grant and Governor Bullocks block grants. The estimated amount of the Governor's block grants is (b)(4) in Year 1, (b)(4) in Years 2-4. However, the amount we are estimating for Subgrantees is (b)(4) per year, which is the

match for the grant. Refer to Table A (Excel Spreadsheets) for evidence of High-Quality Preschool Programs Program funds.

2. Montana Preschool Program Standards

The Montana Preschool Program Standards are found in Chapter 63, Preschool Standards of Accreditation (See Appendix, pp. 53-63). This policy has been given pending approval by the Montana Board of Public Education and will be up for formal adoption in November 2014. In May 2014, the OPI invited a group of stakeholders to make recommendations for accreditation and content standards for preschool education. The stakeholders included:

- School administrators
- Head Start
- Childcare associations
- Higher education
- Indian education
- MEA-MFT, the teacher's union
- Montana Association for the Education of Young Children
- Governor Bullock's office
- Special Education
- School districts that provide preschool

The stakeholder committee met as a whole twice and as separate work groups over the course of the summer to develop draft recommendations for Chapter 63. Superintendent Denise Juneau and the OPI legal counsel made revisions to the stakeholder draft recommendations and submitted Chapter 63 to the Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council (CSPAC) on August 19, 2014. CSPAC approved sending the standards to the Board of Public Education. Superintendent Juneau presented the standards to the Board of Public Education on September 11, 2014. The Board of Public Education will vote on formal adoption at the November 2014 meeting. State investment for the process is (b)(4) and is reflected in Table A in the Excel Spreadsheets.

3. Achievement in Montana (AIM) Longitudinal Data System

The State plans to expand its current AIM Longitudinal Data System to link preschool and elementary and secondary school data. The AIM System has the capacity to assign a unique

identifier to children enrolled in preschool programs. The unique identifier is used to link assessment data and other data in the System, which can be used to track student progress over time. The OPI can easily assign identifiers to new program sites so that Early Learning Providers can be added. The State will increase the number of early childhood programs utilizing the AIM System, which will allow data to be analyzed for the purpose of informing efforts to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry. It is important to note that individual level data will not be used to make high-stakes decisions. This data will simply be used to improve instruction that will better support the strengths and address the needs of Eligible Children and, thereby, help close the school readiness gap. The State investment is (b)(4) annually and is reflected in Table A (Excel Spreadsheets).

4. Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program

The Governor included funding for the Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program for the 2014 biennium. The Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program is a voluntary, tiered quality improvement system comprised of set but achievable criteria, designed to support early childhood programs in improving the quality of their educational and support services for young children. The State Legislature identified one-time only funds through a performance bonus to support STARS to Quality Program. Governor Bullock's budget request for the 2016 biennium includes (b)(4) in state funds to continue to improve early childhood settings for community-based providers for 2014-2015. An additional (b)(4) has been requested in the 2015 legislative session for each year of the 2016 biennium. The Governor's Early Edge Montana block grants will go to High-Quality Preschool Programs that earn a STAR 3 or better in the STARS to Quality Program. The state investment is (b)(4) per year and is reflected in Table A, Part II, 2A, State-Level Infrastructure in the Excel Spreadsheets.

(B)(4) Quality of Existing Early Learning Programs

The State is committed to developing or enhancing existing early learning programs as evidenced by policies and program data that demonstrate its commitment to compliance with Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program and Montana Preschool Program Standards (Appendix, pp. 53-63). The State will use the Montana Program Needs Assessment (Appendix, pp. 42-52) to ensure the implementation of High-Quality Preschool Programs in both grant-funded and state-funded preschools. Subgrantees have already filled out the Needs Assessment to assess their status in meeting all of the components of the Montana Preschool Program

Standards. The Montana Program Needs Assessment and the Montana Preschool Program Standards completely align and have three main categories: 1) Program Leadership and Administration; 2) Early Learning Content Standards and Developmental Domains; and 3) Preschool Program Delivery Standards. See Table 4 below for additional details of alignment.

Table 4: Alignment of Montana Preschool Program Standards and Needs Assessment	
PRESCHOOL PROGRAM STANDARDS	PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT
Program Leadership and Administration	Program Leadership and Administration
10.63.201 Leadership	Leadership
10.63.202 Teacher Assignments and Qualifications	Teacher Assignments and Qualifications
10.63.203 Early Childhood Paraprofessional Qualifications	Early Childhood Paraprofessional Qualifications
10.63.204 Early Childhood Paraprofessional Supervision	Early Childhood Paraprofessional Supervision
10.63.205 Class Size	Class Size
10.63.206 Aggregate Hours	Aggregate Hours
10.63.207 Enrollment Eligibility	Enrollment Eligibility
Early Learning Content Standards Developmental Domains	Early Learning Content Standards Developmental Domains
10.63.301 Early Learning Content Standards Development Domains	Early Learning Content Standards Development Domains
10.63.302 Curriculum and Assessment	Curriculum and Assessment
10.63.303 Instruction	Instruction
Preschool Program Delivery Standards	Preschool Program Delivery Standards
10.63.401 Physical and Learning Environment	10.63.401 Physical and Learning Environment
10.63.402 Child Guidance	10.63.402 Child Guidance
10.63.404 Family and Community Engagement	10.63.404 Family and Community Engagement

(B)(5) Coordination of Preschool Programs and Services

Montana has a culture of collaboration and strong state systems in place that make it well positioned to implement the State's grant. State leaders have demonstrated a high level of commitment to improving the State's coordination of preschool programs and services with other state and federal resources that may be used to serve preschool-aged children by: (1) Expanding Best Beginnings Coalitions; (2) Bringing universal PreK to the State of Montana through the

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Governor's Early Edge Montana initiative; and (3) Implementing High-Quality Preschool Programs to improve kindergarten readiness.

(1) The Best Beginnings Advisory Council and Coalitions are key pieces of the State's plan to support Subgrantees in implementing and ultimately sustaining the Montana Preschool Program Standards. In 2010, Montana received a State Advisory Council grant from the Administration on Children and Families to enhance and expand upon the work of the Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council. This allowed the State to expand the scope of this statewide council from advising only on the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) to a broader focus on the multiple systems impacting young children and families, particularly those with high needs. Renamed the Best Beginnings Advisory Council, its goal is to improve collaboration and coordination across the spectrum of governmental and nonprofit organizations providing early childhood services, including health and mental health services, family support and parent education, and early care and education. The State also used this grant to create Best Beginnings Coalitions that were charged with conducting community needs assessments, creating local strategic plans, and implementing projects to improve coordination and address service gaps of early childhood at the local level. The coalitions' focus on systems change, and each coalition includes a diverse membership including parents, early educators, health care providers, Part C providers, child care resource and referral agencies, local government, school districts, and other fields.

The original seven coalitions have now grown to 20 Best Beginnings Coalitions, which are located in High-Need Communities covering much of the state. Along with engaging local communities, the formation of the coalitions has also allowed Montana to build system capacity for delivering evidence-based Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) services to high-need families. Home visiting services are available in 19 communities throughout the state (e.g., 17 counties and two tribal communities). The MIECHV anticipates serving at least 1,000 clients throughout the state each year, once all programs are fully established. The success of the Best Beginnings Coalitions has positioned themselves to receive funds for community-level projects, including funding through the Child and Family Services Division to host family forums to promote family engagement.

(2) Governor Bullock strongly supports efforts to coordinate services and has made the Early Edge Montana initiative a central priority. The Early Edge Montana initiative is the governor's initiative to bring universal preschool to the State of Montana. .

(3) Superintendent Juneau and the OPI are ready to replicate successful literacy efforts, like its federal MSRP and ERF programs, by implementing public preschool to improve kindergarten readiness.

(B)(6) Role in Promoting Coordination of Preschool Programs with Other Sectors

State leaders have demonstrated a high level of commitment to improving the State's role in promoting coordination of preschool programs and services at the state and local levels with other sectors that support the early learning and development of children, including comprehensive services such as child health, mental health, family support, nutrition, child welfare, and adult education and training sectors by: (1) delegating the Department of Public Health and Human Services to lead several quality improvement initiatives over the past few years and (2) supporting innovative workforce development strategies developed by the Early Childhood Project.

1. The Department of Public Health and Human Services has coordinated several quality improvement initiatives over the past few years, including the Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program, and building local capacity and engagement through the Best Beginnings Advisory Council, Best Beginnings Coalitions, and other efforts.

2. The Early Childhood Project has supported innovative workforce development strategies designed to expand professional development and higher education degree opportunities in Montana, following the Montana Career Path for students in secondary through postsecondary education. See Appendix (pp. 18-19) for comprehensive information about the Montana Career Path.

C. Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs

(C)(1) Use No More than 35% of Funds for Infrastructure and Quality Improvements

Montana OPI, DPHHS, and the Governor's Office will jointly implement the State's plan and all parties intend to use no more than 35 percent of the funds received over the grant period for State Preschool Program infrastructure and quality improvements at the state level as outlined in Table A in the Excel Spreadsheets. The State Implementation Team will provide on-site support to

ensure quality in all Preschool Programs. See Appendix (pp. 90-111) for more comprehensive information about the Plan for Professional Development.

Table 5: State Implementation Team On-Site Support			
Number of Classrooms	# of On-site Support Days per month from DPHHS Implementation Team Member	# of On-site Support Days per Month from OPI Implementation Team Member (August-June)	# of On-site Support Days per Month from Instructional Consultant (August-June)
2 to 4	1	1	3
5 to 8	2	2	4
9 to 12	3	3	5
13+	4	4	6

(C)(1)(a) The State has already begun ensuring program quality by updating the Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS), which are also found in the Montana Preschool Program Standards, to cover the Essential Domains of School Readiness. The new MELS include the entire age spectrum from birth to age five and align with the Essential Domains of School Readiness as well as the Montana Common Core Standards for Kindergarten through Grade 3. The MELS are made up of broad categories or dimensions reflective of children’s learning and development, providing a continuum of benchmarks and indicators. The MELS are organized within four domains: social and emotional, physical, communication, and cognition. These core domains thoroughly cover the Essential Domains of School Readiness and are universally designed and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and will be expanded and used with all Early Learning Providers.

(C)(1)(b) The State Implementation Team plans to deliver professional development, training, and technical assistance to the Subgrantees so that they, in turn, can implement the MELS and Montana Preschool Program Standards, which are consistent with High-Quality Preschool Programs. These Standards were developed through cross-sector collaboration of a thorough crosswalk of the NAEYC Accreditation Standards, Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base, Montana Chapter 55 Accreditation Standards for K-12, Head Start Performance Standards, and the Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program.

Key Activity: Provide professional development and technical support during summer institutes and monthly on-site support in the implementation and continuous improvement of MELS and Montana Preschool Program Standards.

Montana Preschool Development Grant

Rationale: To ensure children are participating and teachers are providing High-Quality Preschool Programs.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Summer institutes, on-site support days See Appendix (pp. 90-111) for number of on-site support days in the Plan for Professional Development.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** External evaluation, on-site support days and evaluations at summer institutes.

See Appendix (pp. 90-111) for more comprehensive information about the Plan for Professional Development.

(C)(1)(c) The State plans to support Early Learning Providers, in meeting the needs of children with disabilities and English Language Learners/Limited English Proficient (ELL/LEP) by providing professional development and on-site support and by working with the Early Childhood Project to expand workforce development.

Key Activity: The State will provide professional development in meeting the needs of children with disabilities to ensure each child has the right to the supports, resources, and services he or she needs to participate actively and meaningfully in the early childhood setting. For additional information on the content for professional development for children with disabilities, see Appendix (pp. 2-7) Additional Supports for Eligible Children.

Rationale: Ensure that Early Learning Providers have the skills to support the needs of children with disabilities.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Summer institutes and on-site support days
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Annual External Evaluation Report showing increase in scores on all school readiness measures of ELL/LEP children.

Key Activity: The majority of English Language Learners/Limited English Proficiency children in the High-Need Communities are American Indian children. The Indian Education Division at the OPI will support the State in gathering data using a Home Language Survey that will indicate if another language is spoken at home and then the Program Leadership Teams (PLTs) will screen children for possible identification of ELL/LEP. For additional information on the content for professional development for ELL/LEP, see Appendix (pp. 2-7) Additional Supports for Eligible Children.

Montana Preschool Development Grant

Rationale: Ensure that Early Learning Providers have the correct information to know which children are identified as ELL/LEP.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Summer institutes and on-site support days.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Surveys and screenings completed.

Key Activity: The State will provide professional development to Early Learning Providers in meeting the needs of ELL/LEP through the use of an evidence-based culturally appropriate survey and language observation checklist.

Rationale: Ensure that Early Learning Providers have the skills to support the needs of English Language learners and limited English Proficient learners.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Summer institutes and on-site support days See Appendix (pp. 90-111) for number of on-site support days in the Plan for Professional Development.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Annual External Evaluation Report showing increase in scores on all school readiness measures of ELL/LEP children.

Key Activity: The State will work with the Early Childhood Project to ensure course work in Montana universities and colleges contains strategies for meeting the needs of children with disabilities and ELL/LEP.

Rationale: Ensure course work provides teachers with the strategies and skills to support the needs of children with disabilities and ELL/LEP.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team and Early Childhood Project.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** January – June of 2015 and then yearly.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Meeting notes and course work syllabus.

(C)(1)(d) The State will support Subgrantees in working with the Best Beginning Coalitions to ensure collaborative support for families and communities.

Key Activity: Subgrantees and Best Beginning Advisory Coalitions will conduct a Community Needs Assessment to identify if all Eligible Children are enrolled in a High-Quality Preschool Programs and to determine the current availability of Preschool Programs.

Rationale: To determine if additional classrooms are needed for all Eligible Children to have an opportunity to attend a High-Quality Preschool Programs Program.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team and State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Cohort I: 2015 – Community Needs Assessment conducted.
 - Cohort I: January -March 2016 - PLTs identify need for additional classrooms.
 - Cohort I: January-June 2016 - Families contacted about enrolling children.
 - Cohort I: August 2016 - Children enrolled.
 - Cohort II: 2016 - Community Needs Assessment conducted.
 - Cohort II: January-March 2017 - PLTs identify need for additional classrooms.
 - Cohort II: January-June 2017 - Families contacted about enrolling children.
 - Cohort II: August 2016 - Children enrolled.
 - Cohort III: 2017 - Community Needs Assessment conducted.
 - Cohort III: January-March 2018 - PLTs identify need for additional classrooms.
 - Cohort III: January-June 2018 - Families contacted about enrolling children.
 - Cohort III: August 2018 - Children enrolled.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Community Needs Assessments completed.

(C)(1)(e) The State has upgraded preschool teacher education and licensure requirements as defined in Chapter 57 of the Administrative Rule of Montana, which includes preschool educator licensure rules that govern the types of licenses and endorsements available and how teachers can apply for and renew their licenses. Chapter 57 assists higher education programs by providing direction on rules, such as the number of weeks of student teaching required. It is currently under review by the Montana Board of Public Education, and is expected to be adopted by December 1, 2014. See Appendix (pp. 8-9, Chapter 57) for additional information about preschool licensure requirements.

(C)(1)(f) The State plans to improve teacher and administrator early education training programs and professional development by adhering to a recently revised version of Chapter 58, Educator Preparation Programs and Standards, which is currently under review by the Montana Board of Public Education, and is expected to be adopted December 1, 2014. These standards are used by higher education institutions to prepare early childhood teachers. They are also used to design early childhood programs of study; assess student's knowledge, skills, and dispositions; and to determine the early childhood higher education program's effectiveness. See Appendix (pp. 10-

13, Chapter 58) for additional information about Preschool Educator Preparation Programs and Standards.

The State will improve teacher and administrator early education training programs and professional development by (1) working with the Higher Education Early Childhood Group to ensure course work aligns with MELS and Montana Preschool Program Standards (2) providing full scholarships through the Early Childhood Project, which will be paid upfront to the Montana university systems, and (3) to provide additional support for Early Learning Providers enrolled in the Early Childhood Project to complete their coursework. Three Montana university systems currently offer a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education. The Early Childhood Project uses Career Path levels to identify educational and work experience. Early Learning Providers registered on the Career Path receive monetary incentives for upgrading preschool teacher education and licensure requirements.

Key Activity: The State will work with the Higher Education Early Childhood Group to ensure course work in Montana universities and colleges aligns with the MELS and Montana Preschool Program Standards.

Rationale: Ensuring course work provides teachers with the knowledge to implement MELS and the Montana Preschool Program Standards to ensure High-Quality Preschool Programs for all Eligible Children.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team and Higher Education Early Childhood Group, and the Early Childhood Project
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - January-March 2015 - Data collection and report are completed to guide the work.
 - March 2015 – State Implementation Team facilitates meetings with Higher Education Early Childhood Group on coursework.
 - Collaborate on most effective ways to deliver professional development and higher education to provide alignment with the MELS and Montana Preschool Program Standards.
 - March-May 2015 – Meet to examine data and ways to redesign programs.
 - May 2015-December 2016 - Each institution redesigns their program and seeks necessary approvals from the Board of Public Education.

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- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Redesigned higher education programs that meet state and national standards.

Key Activity: Expand the State's work with the Higher Education Early Childhood Group to provide full scholarships to educators in Cohort I, Cohort II, and Cohort III.

Rationale: Ensure that educators in High-Need Communities receive full scholarships to advance their careers and become more qualified to teach Eligible Children. Ensure that Early Learning Providers hire more highly qualified teachers.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** Higher Education Early Childhood Group and State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - January 2015-August 2016 - Distribute funds to Early Childhood Project for scholarships.
 - January 2015-August 2016 - Inform Subgrantees of scholarship opportunities and partnering with Early Childhood Project and the Higher Education Early Childhood Group.
 - September 2015 - Offer scholarships to interested early childhood providers.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** The external evaluator will track the number of staff meeting high staff qualifications throughout this grant to determine if the numbers are increasing and the scholarship money is being utilized. See Early Childhood Project Scholarships in budget narrative, Table G2, for amount of scholarships.

Key Activity: The State will work in coordination with Higher Education Childhood Group to provide additional support to Early Learning Providers enrolled in the Early Childhood Project in Cohorts I, II, and III.

Rationale: Ensure educators finish their coursework and advance their careers to become highly qualified to support all Eligible Children.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** Higher Education Early Childhood and the OPI Team
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Training Schedules for the Best Beginnings Coalitions and completion of coursework, which will be documented in the external evaluation.

(C)(1)(g) As referenced in Selection Criteria B, the State plans to expand the current Achievement in Montana (AIM) Longitudinal Data System to implement data from Early

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Learning Providers. This implementation will allow the State to link preschool and elementary and secondary school data to see the growth of a child from 4-years-old through grade 12. The AIM System has the capacity to assign a unique identifier to students enrolled in preschool programs. The State will increase the number of preschool programs in the AIM System, which will allow data to be analyzed for the purpose of informing efforts to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry. It is important to note that individual level data will not be used to make high-stakes decisions and that data will be used to improve instruction to better support the strengths and address the needs of individual student and, thereby, help close the school readiness gap.

Key Activity: Expand the AIM Longitudinal Data System by adding information from Subgrantees. See Appendix (pp. 64-65) for additional information about the essential data elements in the AIM System.

Rationale: To ensure the State has the data to guide instruction and program improvement for successful transitions from preschool to kindergarten.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** By August 2015.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Data entered into AIM System.

(C)(1)(h) The State will implement a Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment System by (1) expanding the inventory of screening and formative assessments to include a valid and reliable assessment for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness, Measures of Environmental Quality, and Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions, (2) providing professional development to Subgrantees on implementing these assessments, and (3) developing a plan to identify a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) and to implement it through professional development.

Key Activity: Coordinate with State Leadership Team to research, evaluate, and make recommendations on new valid and reliable 1) formative and screening assessments to be used by Subgrantees for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness, 2) Measures of Environmental Quality, and 3) Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions.

Rationale: To expand inventory of valid and reliable assessments for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness, Measures of Environmental Quality, and Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** The State Leadership Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Work groups from the Governor’s Best Beginnings Advisory Council will meet January, February, and March of 2015 to research, evaluate and make recommendations to the State Implementation Team.
 - State Implementation Team will receive training on the recommended assessments in April and May 2015.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documented evidence by an external evaluation showing that assessments are valid and reliable.

Key Activity: Provide professional development to Subgrantees about the purpose of the identified comprehensive early learning assessments, how to appropriately administer them, and how to interpret the results to make informed instructional decisions.

Rationale: Assessment results will be implemented with fidelity to ensure validity, reliability, and usefulness to inform decision-making regarding individual student need.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** The State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Training for Program Leadership Teams (PLTs) in June of each year.
 - Summer Institute in July of each year.
 - On-site support from State Implementation Team. See Appendix (pp. 90-111) for number of on-site support days in the Plan for Professional Development.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Calendar of on-site support days, agendas, and meeting notes. These processes and child assessment results will be documented in the external evaluation.

Key Activity: Coordinate with State Leadership Team to research and evaluate common Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) and make recommendations.

Rationale: Rely on work groups from the Best Beginnings Advisory Council to make recommendations on a valid and reliable KEA.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** The State Leadership Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** The State Leadership Team work group will make recommendation by end of year one. See Appendix (pp. 90-111) for additional details on the work groups in the Plan for Professional Development.

- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documented evidence that recommended assessments are valid and reliable.

Table 6: Montana KEA Plan	
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Leadership Team will assemble a KEA work group that will research other KEAs and develop a KEA that will work best for the culture of Montana. • KEA work group will make recommendations to the State Implementation Team and Superintendent Denise Juneau.
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Implementation Team will receive training on the implementation of the KEA. • Program Leadership Teams (PLTs) and their feeder schools will receive training on the KEA.
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subgrantees will coordinate with feeder schools to implement the KEA in kindergarten classrooms in the fall.
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subgrantees will coordinate with feeder schools to implement the KEA in kindergarten classrooms in the fall.

Key Activity: Provide professional development to Subgrantees about the purpose of the KEA, how to appropriately administer the KEA, and how to interpret the results they receive to make informed instructional decisions.

Rationale: Assessment results will be implemented with fidelity to ensure validity, reliability, and usefulness to inform decision-making regarding individual student need.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** The State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Training for Program Leadership Teams (PLTs) in Year 3 of the grant.
 - Summer Institute in Year 3 of the grant and on-site support.
 - On-site support from State Implementation team. See Appendix (pp. 90-111) for number of on-site support days in the Plan for Professional Development.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** KEA will be in place and documented in the external evaluation.

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(C)(1)(i) The State will build Subgrantee's capacity to engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development by 1) ensuring every Subgrantee has a Family Engagement Coordinator, 2) developing a Preschool Guidance Document, 3) expanding a DPHHS State Team to support Family Engagement Coordinators and Early Learning Providers, 4) providing professional development for Family Engagement Coordinators on best strategies for building capacity to engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development, and 4) having the Family Engagement Coordinator provide training to Early Learning Providers on best strategies for engaging parents in decisions about their children.

Key Activity: The State Implementation Team will ensure each LEA and Head Start has a Family Engagement Coordinator whose job it is to engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development, help families build protective factors, and help parents support their children's learning at home.

Rationale: To ensure each Early Learning Provider has a Family Engagement Coordinator.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timeline and Milestones:**
 - February through May 2015.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Materials used for professional development of Family Engagement Coordinators.

Key Activity: The State will develop a Preschool Program Guidance Document to be used by the State Implementation Team (i.e. Family Engagement Coordinator) to provide explicit information on the implementation of evidence-based best practices necessary for meeting the Montana Preschool Program Standards.

Rationale: An explicit, easy-to-understand document will provide clear guidance, tools, and steps for exploring, implementing, and fully sustaining the components within the Montana Preschool Program Standards (Leadership, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Environments, Child Guidance, and Family and Community Engagement).

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team Work Group.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - January 2015-April 2015: The State Leadership Team Work Group will develop a draft of the guidance document

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- April 2015-May 2015: The draft of the Guidance Document will be shared with the Best Beginnings Advisory Council and the Early Learning Providers for comments and revisions.
- June and July 2015: Changes to the Guidance Document will be made by the State Leadership Team Work Group.
- August 2015: The Guidance Document will be published for use by Early Learning Providers.

- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Preschool Program Guidance Document

Key Activity: Expand a State DPHHS Team consisting of six regional staff who will coordinate family services, and provide professional development and technical assistance about the Montana Preschool Program Standards in the categories of Physical and Learning Environments, Child Guidance, and Family and Community Engagement to support the Family Engagement Coordinator in supporting families.

Rationale: To ensure Family Engagement Coordinators are able to effectively engage families using effective strategies and supports.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** DPHHS.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - January and February 2015: Develop state team by hiring a DPHHS employee and five regional support employees who will provide professional development and technical assistance to Subgrantees.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Teams are in place and carrying out their roles.

Key Activity: DPHHS State Team will develop professional development for Family Engagement Coordinators on family engagement and coordination of community-based services for children and their families.

Rationale: Ensure Family Engagement Coordinators have the skills and knowledge to meaningfully engage families and coordinate community-based services for children and their families. See Appendix (pp. 82-87) for engagement strategies that the State has in place and will be utilized in the Plan for Family Engagement.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timeline and Milestones:**

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- February through May 2015.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Professional Development Materials including Preschool Guidance Document, and current Family Engagement strategies currently used by the State.

Key Activity: Family Engagement Coordinators will provide professional development to PLTs, and instructional staff on family engagement and coordination of community-based services for children and their families.

Rationale: Ensure Family Engagement Coordinators have the skills and knowledge to meaningfully engage families and coordinate community-based services for children and their families.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team, PLTs, Family Engagement Coordinator.
- **Timeline and Milestones:**
 - June and July of each grant year: Professional Development for Subgrantees.
 - September through May of each grant year: Monthly on-site Technical Assistance from DPHHS State Team Member and Instructional Consultant.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Training and meeting agendas, staff attendance at trainings and meetings, and use of Preschool Guidance Document.

(C)(1)(j) The State will enhance state- and community-level support for High-Quality Preschool Programs through systemic linkages to other early learning programs and resources to support families through collaboration with local Best Beginnings Coalitions, which include representatives from libraries, businesses, child care providers, family support specialists, resource and referral agencies, education associations, child care associations, mental health providers, nutritionists, state personnel, and public health personnel.

Key Activity: The State Leadership Team will collaborate with the local Best Beginnings Coalitions to continue to build state- and community-level support for High-Quality Preschool Programs through systemic linkages to other early learning programs and resources to support families, such as child health, mental health, family support, nutrition, child welfare, and adult education and training sectors.

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Rationale: To enhance systematic linkages within the early childhood system to promote High-Quality Preschool Programs which support children and families so that children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team, Best Beginnings Coalitions.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Throughout the grant to begin January 2015.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Meeting minutes and reports.

(C)(1)(k) The State plans to support the delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children by providing professional development to Subgrantees on how to support children's social, emotional, and cultural development.

Key Activity: The State Implementation Team will provide professional development to Early Learning Providers using CSEFEL Pyramid Model, Montana Behavior Initiative, and the coaching model of professional development to provide comprehensive evidence-based methods for training teachers to support children's social emotional development.

Rationale: To support the delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children through evidence-based strategies and programs.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team and Subgrantees.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Summer Institutes and on-site support.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Summer Institute Agendas and on-site support documentation, such as meeting agendas, calendars, and continuous improvement processes identified in C2.

(C)(2) Implement a System for Monitoring

The State has a clear plan for monitoring and supporting continuous improvement that the OPI has been using for the ERF and MSRP and has been identified in our external evaluation as an effective practice for monitoring continuous improvement of Head Starts and LEAs.

Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC)

The Continuous Improvement Cycle outlines the systemic processes for planning, implementing, and evaluating the success of each Early Learning Provider to implement the Montana Preschool Program Standards to ensure High-Quality Preschool Programs through a Continuous Improvement Cycle. Continuous improvement is a multifaceted system that combines infrastructure with intentionality that promotes responsibility and commitment for supporting action through data-based decision making. Each educational setting is unique so working

through this process should be a starting point for important conversations for capitalizing on the resources distinctive to your educational setting.

Table 7: Continuous Improvement Cycle	
Continuous Improvement Components (CIC)	<pre> graph TD A[Assess Current Status] --> B[Develop a Plan of Change] B --> C[Implement the Plan] C --> D[Monitor the Plan] D --> E[Monitor the Impact of the Plan] E --> F[Review New Data] F --> G[Revise and Refine the Plan] G --> A </pre>
Leadership and Administration	
Early Learning and Development Standards	
Curriculum	
Assessment	
Instruction	
Physical and Learning Environment	
Child Guidance	
Family and Community Engagement	

The continuous improvement cycle is a problem-solving model that converts decisions into data-informed action steps. Although the process is conceptualized as a sequential pattern because each step serves as a logical basis for the next, the process is also cyclical. The cyclical pattern begins with the development of a decision strategy that includes deliberate, purposeful action goals and moves through implementation and appraisal of results (Litchfield, 1956). The cycle includes the following steps: 1) Assess the current situation, 2) Develop a plan of change, 3) Implement the plan, 4) Monitor the plan, 5) Monitor the impact of the plan, 6) Review new data, and 7) Revise and refine the plan. Many decision-making action cycles may be occurring simultaneously.

Programs may find themselves at various stages of implementation of the sub-components of the CICs beginning with exploring, moving toward implementation, and finally reaching the sustaining phase, which indicates that the component is sustained into daily practice within the district or school.

Exploring: A CIC sub-component that is in the exploring stage is still in the planning stages of execution. These sub-components are just being investigated by personnel and further action is needed.

Implementing: A CIC sub-component that has been introduced and is being utilized in many ways across the system may be in the implementation phase. These sub-components are sometimes being implemented by some staff, but not by all staff, and further action is needed.

Sustaining: A CIC sub-component that is at the sustaining phase of implementation has become part of the regular routine and protocols used across the organization and have been embraced by all educational stakeholders involved within the educational system.

Montana Program Needs Assessment

The Montana Program Needs Assessment is designed to be used by programs to assess the current level of implementation for each of the CICs proven to be effective indicators of a High-Quality Preschool Programs Program. See Appendix (pp. 42-52) for Montana Program Needs Assessment and for all of the Montana CIC sub-components. .

Action Planning

The CIC components are defined through key sub-components within the Montana Program Needs Assessment. When these sub-components are sustained processes within a program, they are proven to effectively support children and families. Program Leadership Teams are encouraged to identify the current implementation phase of the sub-components and decide which areas are in further need of action.

Consider the following questions when planning action steps for the continuous improvement components for improving student literacy outcomes.

1. What current practices or processes will be adjusted and how?
2. What new practices, processes, or strategies will strengthen our current implementation?

Table 8 provides an example of the steps a program would take as they work through the continuous improvement cycle.

Table 8: Continuous Improvement Cycle	
Cycle Component	Action
Assess Current Situation	Conduct Needs Assessment.
Develop a Plan of Action	Identify Needs of Children Ages 3-5.
	Write Action Goals for each of the areas of need identified
	Identify action steps for each goal that defines who is responsible, resources needed, and timeline for each step as needed.
Implement the Plan	Complete action steps for each goal in the identified timeline.
Monitor the Plan	Identify a regularly scheduled meeting time for the Program Leadership Team to meet. Track progress toward the identified action steps and adjust who is responsible, resources needed, and timeline for each step as needed.

Table 8: Continuous Improvement Cycle	
Monitor the Impact of the Plan	Identify key factors to measure progress toward the goals. Child outcome measures are a key indicator for program success.
Review New Data	Identify specific benchmark timeframes for reviewing key factors to measure progress toward goals.
Revise and Refine the Plan	Review progress toward goals. Review measures of progress. Identify if goals have been met. If they have not been met, revise action plan and action steps. If they have been met discuss strategies for sustaining the goal and identify a new goal. Conduct needs assessment again to identify new priorities.

Key Activity: The State Leadership Team and Subgrantees will use the Continuous Improvement Cycle combined with student outcome measures, Measures of Environmental Quality, and Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions data to measure preschool quality and provide performance feedback to inform and drive state and local continuous program improvement efforts.

Rationale: To inform and drive state and local continuous program improvement efforts to support the delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs to eligible children.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team and Subgrantees.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Subgrantees will follow the timelines in the Plan for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment (Appendix, pp. 69-76).
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** External Evaluation Report and training agendas.

Key Activity: Subgrantees will conduct annual surveys involving all stakeholders, including parents, to inform local program improvement efforts.

Rationale: To inform and drive local continuous program improvement efforts.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team and Subgrantees.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Spring of Each Grant Year.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Survey results in external evaluation.

(C)(2)(b) The State will use the current Achievement in Montana (AIM) Longitudinal Data System to track student progress from preschool through third grade.

Key Activity: Subgrantees will administer the assessments recommended by the State Leadership Team Work Group and will enter the data into the AIM System which will be able to track student progress from preschool through third grade.

Rationale: The State and Subgrantees will use the data to guide instruction and program improvements.

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- **Party or Parties Responsible:** Subgrantees.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Data entered into the AIM System.

Key Activity: Use the AIM Longitudinal Data System with each Early Learning Provider and feeder elementary schools to ensure necessary supports for each child.

Rationale: To ensure the data is being used to guide instruction and program improvements for successful transitions from preschool to kindergarten and continued progress through their K-12 career.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team and Feeder Elementary Schools.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Data meetings January and May of each year.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Data entered into the AIM System.

(C)(2)(c) The State has identified the measureable outcomes to be achieved by the State Implementation Team. They are listed below and align with the Federal Preschool Development Grants GPRA goals.

1. To expand the number and percentage of Eligible Children served by High-Quality Preschool Programs,
2. To expand the number and percentage of children served overall in State Preschool Slots.
3. To expand the number and percentage of Eligible Children in High-Need Communities who are ready for kindergarten as determined by a valid and reliable assessment for kindergarten readiness.
4. To develop and implement a Kindergarten Entry Assessment system for participating children by the end of Year 3 of the grant.
5. To support Early Learning Providers and gather data about the implementation of the structural elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs as identified in Montana's Program Standards.

The State will define which assessment will be used to measure each outcome by summer 2015. Table 9 shows which types of data and assessments will be used to determine if each outcome was met. For example, child assessment data will be used to determine if outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 5 were met. Education Northwest, a non-profit educational research organization, will conduct an independent evaluation of the State's Plan. The independent evaluation includes professional

researchers with expertise in formative and summative evaluation, experience in the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, and over a decade of experience evaluating literacy initiatives in Montana (Reading Excellence Act, Reading First, Early Reading First, and Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy) and other states. Education Northwest will analyze all assessments and identify the progress of meeting each outcome through an annual evaluation.

Table 9: Measurable Outcomes					
EVALUATION ACTIVITIES	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	Outcome 5
Student Assessment Data and Analyses for School Readiness	X	X	X		X
Document Review, including Continuous Improvement Processes				X	X
State Implementation Team Interviews				X	X
Measures of Environmental Quality and Quality of Adult-Child Interactions			X	X	X
Montana Needs Assessment Data Analyses					X
Subgrantee Staff Survey					X
Parent Survey					X

The evaluation will employ a comprehensive mixed-method design, using quantitative and qualitative data. The methods are detailed below. While Education Northwest will conduct the evaluation independently of the State, their evaluation team will collaborate with state staff members throughout the grant period to ensure instruments have content validity and provide valuable formative feedback.

(C)(3) Measure Outcomes of Participating Children

By the end of year one, the State will implement a plan for measuring outcomes of participating children across the Essential Domains of School Readiness during the first few months of their admission into kindergarten to achieve the purposes for which the assessment was developed and to conform with the recommendations of the National Research Council report on early childhood assessments, as identified in Table 10. Assessment systems currently in use within the

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State will be analyzed by the Best Beginnings Advisory Council workgroups to determine if they will be used for the State plan or if new measures need to be identified to measure student progress toward the Essential Domains of School Readiness: Language and Literacy

Development, Cognition and General Knowledge, Approaches toward Learning, Physical Well-being and Motor Development, and Social and Emotional Development.

Table 10: 2014 Inventory of Current Assessments Being Used in the Essential Domains of School Readiness					
ASSESSMENTS	ESSENTIAL DOMAINS OF SCHOOL READINESS				
	Language and Literacy Development	Cognition and General Knowledge	Approaches toward Learning	Physical Well-being and Motor Development	Social and Emotional Development
Screening Measures	PALS: •Uppercase Letter Identification •Lowercase Letter Identification •Name Writing IGDI- Picture Naming PPVT TOPEL	<u>Math</u> OWL Measures	DIAL Get Ready to Read	DIAL	ASQ:SE
Formative Assessments	PALS: Uppercase Letter Identification, Lowercase Letter Identification, and Name Writing IGDI- Picture Naming PPVT	<u>Math</u> OWL Measure			ASQ:SE

By the end of year three, all Early Learning Providers and feeder schools will be using a KEA. Subgrantee feeder kindergarten classrooms will administer the assessments in fall of year three

of the grant. This plan is communicated in goal three of the Plan for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment (Appendix, pp. 69-76). Results of the assessment will be used to inform efforts to close the school-readiness gap at kindergarten entry, to inform instruction in the early elementary school grades, and to inform parents about their children's status and involve them in decisions about their children's education. This assessment will not be used to prevent children's entry into kindergarten or as a single measure for high-stakes decisions.

D. Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs in Each High-Need Community

The State will expand the number of Subgrantee preschool slots from 1,138 to 1,613 by the end of year 4 by increasing the number of Early Learning Providers through each Cohort and expanding half-day programs to full day programs. The State will also expand the number of state funded preschool slots from (b)(4) by the end of year 4, and add (b)(4) new preschool slots by the end of year 4 through the state funded and grant funded money. See Table A in Excel Spreadsheet for evidence.

(D)(1)(a) How the State Has Selected each High-Need Community

The State has selected the High-Need Communities using the following criteria: (1) Is the High-Need Community in a tribal area that has a Head Start Program and (2) Is the High-Need Community in an area in which a school district is currently a MSRP Subgrantee.

Key Activity 1: The State selected criteria to determine the High-Need Communities

Rationale: To ensure a variety of criteria was used to determine High-Need Communities.

1. Head Start on an Indian reservation, or
2. Current district in the MSRP. See Appendix (p. 14) for Criteria for Determining High-Need Communities in our MSRP.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** The State will have a Subgrantee in 16 High-Need Communities (including 8 Indian reservations, or tribal areas) by year three of the grant. See Appendix (pp. 15-17, High-Need Communities Information) for a description of each High-Need Community.

(D)(2) How Each High-Need Community is Currently Underserved

In each selected High-Need Community, the number and percentage of 4-year-olds in publicly funded preschools varies. Existing publicly funded state preschool programs are either Head Start Programs or optional public school preschools, which are typically funded through a blend

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of Special Education and Title I grants. In 2013-2014, 20 Montana Head Start Programs provided preschool education to 5,193 children.

Montana does not currently collect information on *all* 4-year-olds in Montana. However, Table 11 provides the information that we do have about the number of 4-year-olds who were enrolled in 2013-2014 in publicly funded preschools in the High-Need Communities that have been selected to participate in this State Grant. We have numbers of other Eligible Children who are enrolled in Public School Preschools because of their involvement with Early Reading First (ERF) or the Montana Striving Reader's Project (MSRP).

Table 11: Four-Year-Olds Enrolled in Publicly Funded Preschools (2013-2014)			
HIGH-NEED COMMUNITY		PUBLICILY FUNDED PRESCHOOL	
		Head Start	LEA
Cohort I	Great Falls	0	62
	Hardin	0	59
	Lewistown	116	0
	Helena	236	0
	Bozeman	168	0
Cohort II	Wolf Point	0	0
	Browning	0	0
	Anaconda	0	0
	Crow Agency	0	0
	Libby	59	0
Cohort III	Kalispell	0	0
	Butte	0	0
	Box Elder	0	0
	Lame Deer	0	2
	Rocky Boy	0	3
	Pablo/Ronan	0	6

Table 12 shows the number of publicly funded preschools. In Montana, there are approximately 12,000 four-year-olds and 45 percent are below 200 percent poverty level. Here is the historical data on the participation of zero-to-five-year-old children with High-Needs in Early Learning and Development Programs across the State.

Table 12: Historical data on the participation of Children with High-Needs in Early Learning and Development Programs in the State <i>Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.</i>					
Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Total number of Children with High-Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years ¹⁷				
Year	2009	2010	2011 ¹⁸	2012 ¹⁷	2013 ¹⁷
State Funded preschool <i>(annual census count; October 1)</i>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Early Head Start and Head Start¹⁹ <i>(funded enrollment) PIR data</i>	4,600	4,781	4,801	4,790	4,790
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 <i>Part B: Annual December 1 count</i> <i>Part C Annual Performance Report FFY 2011</i>	Part C: 731 Part B: 1,871	Part C: 649 Part B: 2,205	Part C: 723 Part B: 2,474	Part C: 728 Part B: 2,646	Part C: 886 Part B: 2,565
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>Total number of children who receive Title I services annually, as reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report</i>	616	759	1,024	965	995
Programs receiving CCDF funds <i>(average monthly served)</i>	5,324	5,896	5,850	5,446	4,619
Other: MIECHV <i>Program began implementation in 2011</i> <i>Annual Program Report 2013</i>	NA	NA	NA	NA	137
Other: Early Reading First <i>Education Northwest Evaluation 2013</i>	335	400	460	480	450
Other: Striving Readers <i>Program began operation in 2011</i> <i>Education Northwest Evaluation 2013</i>	NA	NA	475	483	452
<i>Montana does not currently have a public funded preschool option, outside of preschool funded with special education dollars.</i> <i>Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619.</i>					

¹⁷Include all Children with High-Needs served with both Federal dollars and State supplemental dollars.

¹⁸Note to Reviewers: The number of children served reflects a mix of Federal, State, and local spending.

Head Start, IDEA, and CCDF all received additional Federal funding under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which may be reflected in increased numbers of children served in 2009-2011.

¹⁹Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

(D)(3) How the State Will Conduct Outreach to Potential Subgrantees

The State has conducted outreach to potential Subgrantees about the grant opportunity, the process for selecting each Subgrantee, and other commitments or requirements. These activities include: (1) holding an informational conference call for Subgrantees; (2) personally contacting Head Starts and LEAs to provide an overview of grant; (3) developing a webinar to inform Subgrantees about grant commitments and requirements; and (4) inviting Subgrantees to view the recorded webinar and to submit evidence about their programs.

The Office of Public Instruction has existing relationships with all of the High-Need Communities through the ERF, MSRP, and Indian Education For All outreach. DPHHS has existing relationships with Head Start Programs. These existing relationships have made for effective communication with potential Subgrantees.

The following activities describe four steps that have been taken to extend an invitation for High-Need Communities to participate in the grant. Their pledge to participate is evidenced in the Letters of Intent.

Key Activity: To conduct outreach, the State Implementation Team held a conference call with Head Start directors, the Best Beginnings Advisory Council, Tribal Head Start leaders, and LEA administration to provide an overview of this grant and its commitments/requirements and to notify them about an upcoming, recorded webinar

Rationale: To ensure that all Subgrantees understood the purpose and commitments/requirements of this grant.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Calls were conducted the week of September 15 and 22, 2014.
- **Evidence by Montana:** Documentation of calls and attendees.

Key Activity: To conduct outreach, the State Implementation Team contacted each Head Start and LEA in Cohort I and Cohort II as identified in the High-Need Communities Information (Appendix, pp. 15-17).

Rationale: To ensure all Subgrantees understand the commitments/requirements and the urgent need to view the recorded webinar.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Calls were conducted September 29 and 30, 2014.

- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documentation of calls on calling chart with Subgrantee information.

Key Activity: To conduct outreach, the State Implementation Team developed and recorded a webinar detailing all of the evidence required on the part of the Subgrantee. See Appendix (pp. 117-122) for the Subgrantee Evidence Form.

Rationale: To ensure the Subgrantee provide evidence that they will implement the State commitments/requirements.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Webinar was developed and recorded September 29, 2014, and the link for the webinar and the Subgrantee Evidence documents were sent out October 1, 2014.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Subgrantee Evidence Form and recorded webinar link. For additional information see Subgrantee Evidence Form. See Appendix (pp. 117-122) for the Subgrantee Evidence Form.

Key Activity: To conduct outreach, the State Implementation Team asked Subgrantees to view webinar and submit State Subgrant Evidence Form about their programs and, as noted in Table (D)(4) in Excel spreadsheet, to synthesize and incorporate into the State grant application.

Rationale: To ensure the Subgrantees are committed to implementing the State's commitments and requirements and to estimate grant funds that will be needed to meet requirements.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Webinar was viewed by all Subgrantees the week of October 1 and 6, 2014. A commitment process document was returned by October 9, 2014.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Completed Subgrantee Evidence Form See Appendix (pp. 117-122) for the Subgrantee Evidence Form.

(D)(4) How the State Will Subgrant at Least 65% of its Federal Grant Award to its Subgrantees to Implement and Sustain Voluntary, High-Quality Preschool Programs in One or More High-Need Communities

The Montana OPI, DPHHS, and Governor's Office will jointly implement the State's plan and all parties are planning to subgrant at least 65 percent of its federal grant award over the grant period to the Subgrantees as part of the ambitious and achievable plan. The State is committed to

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subgranting 65 percent of the funds to the identified Subgrantees as noted in Tables A and (D)(4) in the Excel Spreadsheets.

Key Activity: The State Implementation Team gathered data from Subgrantees using the Subgrantee Evidence Form (Appendix, pp. 117-122), which includes teacher qualifications/compensation, full day, class size/ratio, evidence-based professional development, and comprehensive services (as noted in Table (D)(4) in Excel Spreadsheets).

Rationale: To ensure Subgrantees have the necessary funds to implement the grant activities and the State Implementation Team commits at least 65 percent of the funds to Subgrantees.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Webinar was viewed by all Subgrantees during the week of October 1 and 6, 2014. A commitment process document was returned by October 9, 2014 with budget information from each Subgrantee.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Completed Subgrantee Evidence Form from Subgrantees with budget information.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

(D)(4)(a) Set Ambitious and Achievable Targets

The State will subgrant at least 65 percent of its federal grant award over the grant period to its Subgrantees to implement and sustain voluntary High-Quality Preschool Programs in one or more High-Need Communities, and set ambitious and achievable annual targets for the number and percentage of additional Eligible Children to be served during each year of the grant period and ensure that the targets are reached by all three cohorts.

Key Activity: Using each Subgrantee's Evidence Form (Appendix, pp. 117-122) and the Montana Program Needs Assessment (Appendix pp. 42-52), identify current number of Eligible Children in each High-Need Community and determine annual target goals for increasing that number and percentage of Eligible Children.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Completed on October 10, 2014.

- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Completed Subgrantee Evidence Forms and Montana Program Needs Assessment annual target goals as shown in the Table 13 for all three cohorts. Evidence for this is also found in Table A, Part 3A in the Excel Spreadsheet.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

Table 13: Annual Preschool Targets					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
All Eligible Children	1,138	1,613	1,613	1,613	5,977

(D)(4)(b)(i) The State plans to expand the number of slots in State Preschool Programs. During the 2015 legislative session, Governor Bullock will bring forward a proposal for voluntary preschool open to all four-year-olds. The plan calls for (b)(4) over the next biennium. The funds will be block-granted to school districts that apply and meet the criteria. The OPI will send out the RFP, review the grants, and oversee distribution of the funds. School districts may subcontract with community-based preschools and local Head Starts that meet the requirements for quality preschool under Montana Preschool Program Standards. These standards include:

- Highly-qualified teachers and staff;
- Safe and nurturing learning environments;
- Family engagement and wrap-around services; and
- Developmentally appropriate curriculum that aligns with what children will learn in kindergarten.

The funding will be allocated in this way: School districts will receive (b)(4) for the first (b) students. Districts will receive an additional (b)(4) for each additional (b)(4) students (no class will be larger than 18 students). For example, if a district has (b) preschool students, the district will receive (b)(4). If a district has (b) students in two classes, the district will receive (b)(4). School districts will be encouraged to partner with Head Start and other existing High-Quality Preschool Programs providers to build on existing programs, such as the Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program, rather than replacing what currently exists in their communities.

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These funds will serve as part of the State's match to this Federal Preschool Development Grant and help to maximize the impact of both programs. Subgrantees will be eligible for state dollars if they are housed within a participating school district or working in partnership with the school district in their community. The State Implementation Team will work with LEAs and Subgrantees to collaborate and determine the best use of State funds to serve Eligible Children. The collaboration will serve as model programs for State-supported preschool programs, and especially collaborations between LEAs and Head Starts.

Key Activity: Increase number of State-funded preschool slots each year of the grant in all High-Need Communities by implementing Governor Bullock's Early Edge Montana block grants.

Rationale: To ensure expansion of high-quality, state-funded preschool slots for eligible children.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team, State Implementation Team, and PLTs.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Annually.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Education Northwest external evaluation will show the number of state funded preschool slots each year of the grant.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

(D)(5) How the State, in Coordination with Subgrantees, Plans to Sustain High-Quality Preschool Programs After the Grant Period

In the past, the OPI has collaborated with many of the same High-Need Communities and the majority of these Early Learning Providers have maintained or increased slots as outlined in the Table 14. These Early Learning Providers have seen remarkable benefits for children and families confirming that children are ready and successful in kindergarten. From January 2010, 21 classrooms participated across five sites in the Early Learning First Project. In the final year of the project, the total number of classrooms in the project grew to 25. The Existing Preschool Programs Slots table below shows the number of slots through Early Reading First and Montana Striving Readers Projects that have been sustained over time.

The State, in coordination with each Subgrantee, intends to sustain High-Quality Preschool Programs after the grant period, including any nonfederal support that the State or each

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Subgrantee commits, to by replicating the same processes that were successfully utilized in these past two grant projects. Through the implementation of the Montana Preschool Program Standards, these processes include our Montana Program Needs Assessment and our Plan for Continuous Improvement of High-Quality Preschools (Appendix, pp. 79-81) . Subgrantees will document their process through Continuous Improvement Cycle and Action Planning that includes ongoing use of data to inform decision making for program implementation..

Table 14: Early Reading First and Montana Striving Readers Project Sustained Growth

EARLY LEARNING PROVIDER	SLOTS PER SCHOOL YEAR					
	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Evergreen	25	30	30	30	30	30
Fort Belknap Head Start	100	105	105	105	105	105
Great Falls Head Start	120	120	120	120	120	120
Great Falls Public Preschool	30	45	85	85	85	85
Hardin Public Preschool	30	30	60	60	60	60
Central Montana Head Start (CMHS)			116	116	116	116
Human Resource Development Council Head Start (HRDC)			185	185	185	185
Rocky Mountain Development Council Head Start (RMDC)			220	220	220	240

E) Collaborating with Each Subgrantee and Ensuring Strong Partnerships (50 points).

(E)(1) Roles and Responsibilities of the State and Subgrantees in Implementing the Project Plan

The State has extensive experience in collaborating with Subgrantees to ensure strong partnerships and achievement for children and students. In the Montana Striving Readers Project (MSRP), the OPI team conducts site visits during which we provide additional, targeted professional development and technical assistance to the Leadership Team. OPI Team members each work with a set of schools and visit once every four to six weeks, depending on the needs of the school. When on site, OPI Team members support their schools by meeting with Head Start

directors, principals, Leadership Teams, and staff members. The OPI engage in conversations regarding a monthly focus area, conduct walkthroughs, and review student and MSRP implementation data. They address issues specific to the site through a continuous improvement cycle, which includes monitoring action plans, revising/setting goals based on progress, and providing professional development during team and all staff meetings. After each visit, they coordinate with the Instructional Consultant Team member assigned to the school to ensure their work is aligned to the needs of the school. The surveys from the external evaluation showed the vast majority of Leadership Team members (90%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the OPI Team provided them with support and training to meet their children and students’ literacy needs. The State will use these same processes that have proved successful in the MSRP and Early Reading First with the three cohorts of Subgrantees.

To implement the project, the State has clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of the State Leadership Team (Table 15), the State Implementation Team (Table 16), and the Subgrantees’ Program Leadership Teams (Table 17). Table 18 demonstrates the structure of how the teams work together.

The State will develop a State Implementation Team to monitor the Early Learning Providers/Subgrantees to ensure they are delivering High-Quality Preschool Programs. The State Implementation Team will be comprised of three teams.

Table 15: STATE LEADERSHIP TEAM	
Team Members	Roles and Responsibilities
State Governor’s Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align existing OPI and DPHHS systems and services • Develop a Preschool Guidance Document. • Review State data and make recommendations to the State Implementation Team. • Coordinate Best Beginnings Coalitions.
State Office of Public Instruction (OPI)	
State Department Health and Human Services (DPHHS)	

Table 16: STATE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM	
Team Members	Roles and Responsibilities
State OPI Team (7 members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor compliance of Grant Requirements.

Table 16: STATE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM	
Team Members	Roles and Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide PD for state team and PLTs on Montana Early Learning Standards and Montana Preschool Program Standards (Leadership, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment).
State DPHHS Team (6 members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor compliance of Grant Requirements. • Provide PD for state team and PLTs on Montana Preschool Program Standards (Environments, Child Guidance, Family and Community Engagement).
Instructional Consultants Team (1 per Subgrantee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support implementation of Montana Preschool Program Standards and Montana Early Learning Standards through on-site coaching and mentoring of Subgrantees

Table 17: SUBGRANTEE'S PROGRAM LEADERSHIP TEAM (PLT)	
Team Members	Roles and Responsibilities
Program Director Program Supervisors Coach Teachers Family Engagement Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement State Requirements • Develop, implement, and sustain Montana Preschool Program Standards and Montana Early Learning Standards. • Develop action goals and steps toward the continuous improvement of Montana Preschool Program Standards and Montana Early Learning Standards

Table 18: STATE LEADERSHIP TEAM			
State Governor's Office	State Office of Public Instruction (OPI)	State Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS)	
State Advisory Group	State Implementation Team		
Best Beginnings Advisory Council •Best Beginnings Work Groups	OPI Team	Instructional Consultants	DPHHS Team

• Best Beginnings Coalitions			
SUBGRANTEES			
Cohort I Implementation Begins June 2015	Cohort II Implementation Begins June 2015	Cohort III Implementation Begins June 2016	
Consists of Early Learning Providers that have been part of the Montana Striving Readers Project (MSRP) and have already begun to implement many of the components of Montana Preschool Program Standards.	Consists of Early Learning Providers who are in districts that are implementing a MSRP but have not received state support to begin implementing the components of Montana Preschool Program Standards	Consists of Head Starts on Indian Reservations that do not have schools participating in the MSRP and have not received state support to implement the components of the Montana Preschool Program Standards.	

(E)(2) How High-Quality Preschool Programs Will Be Implemented

The State plans to implement High-Quality Preschool Programs directly to Subgrantees to support Early Learning Providers in coordinating the delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs to Subgrantees as follows: (1) by conducting outreach to collect relevant evidence; (2) by providing professional development; and (3) by providing on-site training and technical support. All of these efforts will be guided by the Montana Program Needs Assessment (Appendix, pp.42-52.)

Key Activity: To conduct outreach, the State Implementation Team contacted 2 public preschools, 6 Head Starts, and 3 Tribal Head Starts within Cohorts I and II. Subgrantees were invited to attend a webinar detailing all of the State's commitments/requirements (as noted in Table (D)(4) in Excel spreadsheet). Subgrantees were then asked to fill out the Subgrantee Evidence Form for the State Implementation Team who synthesized and incorporated into the State Grant Application and Table D4.

Rationale: To ensure the Subgrantees provided evidence that they will implement the commitments/requirements of this grant.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Webinar was recorded September 29, 2014, link to webinar and the Subgrantee Evidence Form (Appendix, 117-122) and Montana Program Needs Assessment (Appendix, pp. 44-54) were sent out October 1, 2014.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Subgrantee Evidence Form, Table (D)(4) and recorded webinar link

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- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

Key Activity: Develop and provide initial trainings for Subgrantees in the implementation and continuous improvement of Montana Early Learning Standards and Preschool Program Standards.

Rationale: Providing training and meetings will ensure joint accountability and shared knowledge about High-Quality Preschool Programs.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Summer of 2015, Refer to Appendix (pp. 90-111, Plan for Professional Development).
- **Required Evidence:** Training and meeting agendas and evaluation of training by attendees, noted in external evaluation.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

Key Activity: Expand and implement training and on-site professional learning and technical support to all Early Learning Providers in the implementation and continuous improvement of the Montana Early Learning and Preschool Program Standards.

Rationale: Providing training and on-site professional learning for Subgrantees will ensure joint accountability and shared knowledge about High-Quality Preschool Programs.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team and PLTs.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Refer to Table 5 that outlines Training and on-site support for Subgrantees and PLTs.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Training and meeting agendas and surveys notes in external evaluation.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

Key Activity: To ensure High-Quality technical assistance and on-site support, enter Subgrantee Evidence into the Montana Program Needs Assessment to determine the capacity of each Subgrantee and Early Learning Provider in implementing the Montana Preschool Program Standards..

Rationale: To ensure the State Implementation Team understands the capacity of each Early Learning Provider and is prepared to support them in implementing the Montana Preschool Program Standards.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Program Needs Assessment filled in by April 2015..
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Completed Montana Program Needs Assessments..
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

Key Activity: Develop and provide trainings and meetings for the members of the State Implementation Team to ensure a common understanding and language on what constitutes a High-Quality Preschool Program.

Rationale: Providing training and meetings for the State Implementation Team will ensure joint accountability and shared knowledge about the development of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team and State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Refer to Table 5 that outlines PD for State Teams.
- **Required Evidence:** Training and meeting agendas.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

(E)(3) How the Subgrantee Will Minimize Local Administrative Costs

The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) will ensure that each Subgrantee, including LEAs and Head Starts, minimize local administrative costs on two levels:

1. The OPI will work with all LEAs and Head Starts in the establishment and approval of their state-level indirect cost rate. The OPI has a delegation agreement to administer the

calculation of indirect cost rates charged to federal funds sub-granted by the OPI. Rate calculation takes an in-depth review of fiscal coding activity on LEAs financial statements and unallowable coding is provided to LEAs for exclusion in the indirect draw process. This process ensures the activities charged to a specific program meet all federal allowable activities regulations and provides a higher-level review of administrative expense activity.

2. LEAs and Head Starts will be required to submit, as part of the granting process, an in-depth budget, which outlines all administrative and operational costs. Budgets are approved by program administrators and are used by the OPI Grant Accountants in analysis of cash reimbursements. Grant accountants review all reimbursement requests for general reasonability and allow ability per applicable regulations. Again, this level of oversight provides the agency an opportunity to identify and respond to inefficient administrative activity at the local level.

(E)(4) How the State and Subgrantee Will Monitor Early Learning Providers

The State Implementation Team will work together to support Subgrantees in implementing the Montana Preschool Program Standards. The OPI State Team will be responsible for supporting and monitoring Subchapter 1: Program Leadership and Administration and Subchapter 2: Early Learning Content Standards and Developmental Domains. DPHHS will be responsible for supporting and monitoring Subchapter 3: Preschool Program and Delivery Standards. The instructional consultants will work in coordination with the OPI State Team and the DPHHS State Team to support and monitor all three Subchapters. For additional information on the standards within each Subchapter, see the Montana Program Needs Assessment (Appendix, pp. 42-52). Table 19 provides a visual of this support.

Table 19: State Implementation Team Support of Montana Preschool Standards	
Montana Preschool Program Standard Continuous Improvement Component	OPI Implementation Team Responsible for Monitoring and Supporting
Subchapter 1: Program Leadership and Administration	OPI Team Instructional Consultant
Leadership	
Teacher Assignments and Qualifications	
Early Childhood Paraprofessional Qualifications	
Early Childhood Paraprofessional Supervision	
Class Size	
Aggregate Hours	
Enrollment	
Subchapter 2: Early Learning Content Standards Developmental Domains	
Curriculum	
Assessment	
Instruction	
Subchapter 3: Preschool Program Delivery Standards	DPHHS Team Instructional Consultant
Physical and Learning Environment	
Child Guidance	
Family and Community Engagement	

The State Implementation Team will monitor Early Learning Providers to ensure delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs as follows: (1) by using the Plan for Continuous Improvement of High-Quality Preschool Programs; (2) by expanding the current OPI Team; (3) by forming a DPHHS Team; and (4) by expanding existing group of instructional consultants..

Key Activity: The State will monitor the Subgrantees through the use of the Plan for Continuous Improvement of High-Quality Preschools Programs (Appendix, pp. 79-81), which outlines systemic processes for monitoring the planning, implementing, sustaining, and evaluating the success of a High-Quality Preschool Programs Program based on Montana Preschool Program Standards.

Rationale: Monitoring and providing on-site professional learning around the continuous improvement cycle to ensure joint accountability and shared knowledge about the development of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team and PLTs.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Refer to Plan for Professional Development (Appendix, pp. 90-111) that outlines training and on-site support for Subgrantees and PLTs.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Monitoring documents training and meeting agendas..

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- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

Key Activity: Expand the current OPI Team by hiring six regional employees that will provide professional development and technical assistance to Subgrantees. The OPI Team has been overseeing ERF and the MSRP. This team will monitor compliance of state grant requirements and provide professional development and technical assistance on the implementation of Subchapter 1 and 2 of the Montana Preschool Program Standards.

Rationale: Certify that Subgrantees comply with state grant requirements and provide professional development towards the development of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** Montana OPI..
- **Timelines and Milestones:** January and February of year one.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Teams are in place and carrying out their role.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

Key Activity: Form a DPHHS Team by hiring six regional employees who will provide professional development and technical assistance to Subgrantees. This team will guide compliance of state grant requirements and provide professional development and technical assistance on the implementation of Subchapter 3 of the Montana Preschool Program Standards.

Rationale: Certify that Subgrantees comply with The State grant requirements and provide professional development about High-Quality Preschool Programs. .

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** DPHHS..
- **Timelines and Milestones:** January and February of 2015.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** The project director meets at least monthly to monitor progress with all assessments and processes
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

Key Activity: Expand the State's existing group of 5 instructional consultants to 10 consultants. Montana OPI and DPHHS will identify instructional consultants from consulting firms and assign them appropriately to Subgrantees. See Appendix (pp. 123-125) for Summary of Firms' Effectiveness. These consultants will provide on-site professional development and support to Subgrantees in the implementation of Montana Early Learning Standards and Montana Preschool Program Standards. Each Subgrantee will be assigned one or more instructional consultants, based on the number of classrooms.

Rationale: Provide ongoing professional development and technical assistance and feedback towards implementing Montana Preschool Program Standards, which define High-Quality Preschool Programs.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** Montana OPI and DPHHS.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** January and February 2015:
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Consultants are hired based on number of classrooms.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

(E)(5) How the State and Subgrantee Will Coordinate Plans

The State and Subgrantee will coordinate plans related to assessments, data sharing, instructional tools, family engagement, cross-sector and comprehensive services efforts, professional development, and workforce and leadership development through formation of the State Implementation Teams (E)(1) and use of the Plan for Professional Development (Appendix, pp. 90-111).

Key Activity: Form the State OPI Team and the State DPHHS Team to ensure coordinated efforts for assessments, data sharing, instruction, family engagement, cross-sector and comprehensive services efforts.

See Appendix (pp. 69-76) for Plan for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment; see Appendix (pp. 90-111) for Plan for Professional Development; see Appendix (pp. 82-87) for Plan for Family Engagement; see Appendix (pp. 66-68) for Plan for Building State and Community Support Through System Linkages; and see Appendix (pp. 77-78) for Plan for Comprehensive Services.

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Rationale: Alignment of the OPI and DPHHS systems and services will provide consistency for providers and educators as they build and expand access to High-Quality Preschool Programs in their communities.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team (OPI and DPHHS Teams).
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Teams will meet on a regular basis as outlined in the Plan for Professional Development. For additional details about meetings, see Appendix, pp. 90-111, and Table 4.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Meeting agendas and minutes, and coordinated plans for State Implementation Teams are in place as identified in the Professional Development Plan.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

Key Activity: The State Implementation Teams will expand, implement, and sustain workforce development by providing opportunities for paraprofessionals, teachers, educational coordinators, and others to receive continuing education scholarships to increase workforce in early childhood education to ensure that preschools are hiring highly qualified staff to meet High-Quality Preschool Programs Program standards.

Rationale: Increasing advancement on the Montana Career Path (Appendix, pp. 18-19) will help Early Learning Providers meet Montana Preschool Program Standards.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** The OPI team member, Early Learning Provider, and the Early Childhood Project at Montana State University, and Education Northwest, the external evaluator.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - January 2015-August 2016: Distribute funds to interested higher education institutes for scholarships.
 - January 2015-August 2016: Inform Subgrantees of scholarship opportunities and partnering institutes of higher education.
 - September 2015-2015: Offer scholarships to interested early childhood providers.

- **Evidence Required by Montana:** State evaluators will track the number of staff who are highly qualified to determine the increased number.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

(E)(6) How the State and Subgrantee Will Coordinate, but not Supplant, the Delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs with Existing Services for Preschool-aged Children

The State and Subgrantee will coordinate, but not supplant, the delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs funded under this grant with existing services for preschool-aged children. As a part of their review process, which includes the Montana Program Needs Assessment, Subgrantees must include a description and evidence of current High-Quality Preschool Programs that exist in their communities. Subgrantees must describe how they are currently coordinating with existing programs and how the new grant program will not replace any existing services. They will describe how the new grant program will add to the services provided by existing programs that are funded wholly or partially with other funding sources. Applicants will not receive funding unless coordination and non-supplanting are adequately addressed. The State will share with Subgrantees the locations where other funding sources are being used for High-Quality Preschool Programs. The State Implementation Team will assist Subgrantees through technical assistance and monitoring and by communicating and coordinating with these entities after grants are awarded to ensure that coordination and non-supplanting is sustained throughout the grant period.

(E)(7) How the Subgrantee Will Integrate High-Quality Preschool Programs for Eligible Children within Economically Diverse, Inclusive Settings

Subgrantees will serve children from families with incomes below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Line in High-Quality Preschool Programs for Eligible Children within economically diverse, inclusive settings. The State Implementation Team will support Early Learning Providers for meeting the needs of diverse learners

- by providing ongoing professional learning through on-site support and annual summer institutes;

- through the systematic collection of data in the Essential Domains of School Readiness; and
- by reviewing screening and formative assessment data regularly to provide appropriate differentiation of instruction to ensure each child attains the skills and knowledge outlined in the Montana Early Learning Standards.

The State will ensure that grant funds are only used for Eligible Children and that Subgrantees are using other funds to serve children from families with incomes above 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Line.

(E)(8) How the State Will Deliver High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children Who May Be in Need of Additional Supports

The State will require that each Subgrantee address the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports in four key areas: 1) Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment Systems 2) Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS), 3) High-Quality Preschool Programs, and 4) Comprehensive Services. Within each key area, examples of additional supports are listed and reflect the essential understanding and fundamental early childhood concepts that strengthen both development and implementation of the MELS. Table 20 provides examples of supports for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment Systems. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

Table 20: Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment Systems	
Eligible Children	Examples of Additional Supports
Children who have disabilities or developmental delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each child has the right to the supports, resources, and services he or she needs to participate actively and meaningfully in the early childhood setting. • Because of the uniqueness of each child, the services and interventions provided must be responsive to the young child's needs and patterns of development, taking into consideration the whole child and family. • Use results of screenings and assessments to prepare staff for meeting the developmental and learning needs of the child
Children who are English Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use tools for assessing young children's progress that are clearly connected to important learning represented in the standards. • Use tools for assessing young children's progress that are developmentally and culturally valid

Table 20: Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment Systems	
Eligible Children	Examples of Additional Supports
Children who reside on Indian Lands	Assessment is used to determine a child's growth and development across the developmental domains. Using the results of screening and assessment, teachers and families are prepared to meet the developmental and learning needs of each child. The purpose of monitoring each child's development over time is to identify the interactions, activities, and environments that encourage the child to build on his or her existing knowledge and skills, to work with all the people involved in the child's life, and to recognize when others may need to become involved to benefit the child's growth and development.
Children who are homeless	
Children who are involved in the child welfare system	
Children who are from military families	

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing on-site support for Subgrantees.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documentation of Eligible Children being served and services provided.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

(E)(9) How the State Will Ensure Outreach to Enroll Isolated or Hard-to-Reach Families; Help Families Build Protective Factors; and Engage Parents and Families

The State will ensure that Subgrantees implement culturally and linguistically responsive outreach and communication efforts to enroll children from families with Eligible Children to help families build protective factors, and to engage parents and families as decision-makers in their children's education through regular and ongoing communication with families and by conducting a Community Needs Assessment.

Key Activity: To engage parents and families as decision-makers in their children's education, PLTs will engage in regular and ongoing communication with families which includes home visits, program-based family nights, site-based family services, conferences, and family outreach in cultural and linguistic appropriate ways. It will also provide families with translation services, as needed.

Rationale: When families feel welcomed, valued, and respected by program staff they are more likely to engage as partners in their children's learning and development.

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- **Party or Parties Responsible:** PLTs and Family Engagement Coordinator.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing throughout the grant.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Community Needs Assessments and documented home visits.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

Key Activity: Subgrantees will coordinate with the Best Beginnings Advisory Coalitions in their communities to conduct a Community Needs Assessment to identify if all Eligible Children, especially children that are isolated or in hard to reach families, are enrolled in a High-Quality Preschool Programs. The Community Needs Assessment process will include home visits to enroll eligible children in the preschool programs.

Rationale: To ensure all Eligible Children in the High-Needs Community have an opportunity to attend a High-Quality Preschool Programs Program.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** Subgrantees and Best Beginnings Coalitions
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Each year of the grant
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Community Needs Assessment.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7..

(E)(10) How the State Will Ensure Strong Partnerships Between Each Subgrantee and LEAs or Other Learning Providers

(E)(10)(a) The State can easily ensure that each Subgrantee will carry out activities that provide children and their families with successful transitions from preschool into kindergarten. As part of this grant, the State will ask each Subgrantee to develop a Family and Community Engagement Plan.

- The State Implementation Team has considerable experience and strong relationships with all of the LEAs in the High-Need Communities through our work with the Reading Excellence Act, Reading First, and Striving Readers. The State OPI Team and the instructional consultants will meet at a minimum twice a year (January and May) to share

data about each child who will be entering kindergarten. This will ensure the LEA and kindergarten teachers have a comprehensive understanding of each child. See Appendix (pp. 69-76) for Plan for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment.

- Subgrantees will develop a Family and Community Engagement Plan that includes transition planning and activities as well as an up-to-date community specific referral and resource tool, a procedure for referral and follow up, comprehensive services, and specific activities for family engagement. See Appendix (pp. 77-78) for Plan for Comprehensive Services.

(E)(10)(b)

(E)(10)(b)(i).

The State will ensure that each Subgrantee will coordinate and collaborate with LEAs or other Early Learning Providers in providing opportunities for early educators to participate in professional development on early learning and kindergarten standards, assessments, curricula, and culturally and linguistically responsive strategies as follows:

- All kindergarten teachers in each High-Need Community will be asked to participate in Summer Institutes, so that they can effectively coordinate and collaborate with the preschool teachers. The State OPI Implementation Team and the instructional consultants will provide professional development on early learning and kindergarten standards, assessments, curriculum, and culturally and linguistically responsive strategies. See Appendix (pp. 90-111) for more information about Plan for Professional Development.
- All kindergarten teachers in the High-Need Communities will be invited to receive on-site support from the State Implementation Team (OPI and DPHHS). The external evaluator, Education Northwest, will keep track of all attendees at each professional development session and report the findings.

(E)(10)(b)(ii) The State will ensure that each Subgrantee will coordinate and collaborate with LEAs or other Early Learning Providers in providing family engagement, support, nutrition, and other Comprehensive Services by requiring: (1) PLTs and Family Engagement Coordinators to coordinate comprehensive health screenings for families; (2) Subgrantees to develop a Family and Community Engagement Plan; and (3) Family Engagement Coordinators to meet regularly with community partners within their High-Need Community to coordinate Comprehensive Services. High-Quality Preschool Programs will provide Comprehensive Services that support

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the mental, social, and emotional development of young children and their families. These programs will be able to coordinate health, nutrition, social, and other services for families while honoring their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage.

Key Activity: PLTs and Family Engagement Coordinators will collaborate with families to coordinate comprehensive health screenings for families and children in their program.

Rationale: To ensure the health and well-being of each child.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** PLTs and Family Engagement Coordinator.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing throughout grant
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** School calendar, record of activity with families.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

Key Activity: Subgrantees will develop a Family and Community Engagement Plan that includes an up-to-date community specific referral and resource tool, a procedure for referral and follow up, transition planning and activities, comprehensive services, and specific activities for family engagement including home visitation.

Rationale: Engaging and supporting families increases the likelihood that the child will enter kindergarten ready to learn so they can have a successful start in school.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** The State Implementation Team, PLTs, and Program Staff.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - June and July of each year: professional development for Subgrantees.
 - September through May of each year: Monthly on-site technical assistance from DPHHS State Team Member and independent consultant.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Family and Community Engagement Plan.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

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Key Activity: Family Engagement Coordinators will identify and then meet regularly with community partners, such as health providers and WIC, within their High-Need Community to coordinate Comprehensive Services.

Rationale: Close collaboration between community partners increases the successful implementation of services.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** Family Engagement Coordinators and Best Beginnings Coalitions
- **Timelines and Milestones:** First meeting by summer 2015 and then ongoing throughout the grant
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Record of communications and activities with community partners.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

(E)(10)(b)(iii) Through the on-site support and guidance of the State Implementation Team, the State will ensure that each Subgrantee will coordinate and collaborate with LEAs or other Early Learning Providers in supporting full inclusion of Eligible Children with disabilities and developmental delays to ensure access to and full participation in the High-Quality Preschool Programs. The State believes that each child has the right to the supports, resources, and services he or she needs to participate actively and meaningful in an early childhood program.

Key Activity: The State will ensure that each Subgrantee will provide for full inclusion of Eligible Children with disabilities and developmental delays through the on-site support and guidance of the State Implementation Team.

Rationale: To ensure full participation in the High-Quality Preschool Programs for Eligible Children with disabilities and developmental delays.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing on-site support for Subgrantees.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documentation of Eligible Children with disabilities and developmental delays being served and services provided (i.e., IEP data, assessment data, and instructional plans).

- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

(E)(10)(b)(iv) The State will ensure that each Subgrantee will coordinate and collaborate with LEAs or other Early Learning Providers in supporting full inclusion of children who may be in need of additional supports, such as children who are English learners and those who reside on "Indian lands," through on-site support and guidance from the State Implementation Team.

Key Activity 1: The State Implementation Team will ensure full inclusion of children who may need additional supports, especially English Language Learners (ELL) and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in High-Quality Preschool Programs through the constant on-site support and guidance of the State Implementation Team.

Rationale: To ensure full participation in the High-Quality Preschool Programs for children who may need additional supports, especially children on Indian lands that have high percentages of children who are Limited English Proficient..

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team. .
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing on-site support for Subgrantees. See Table 5 for number of days. .
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documentation of Eligible Children who may need additional supports (i.e. assessment data, instructional plans, ELL documentation).
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

(E)(10)(b)(v) The State will ensure that each Subgrantee will coordinate and collaborate with LEAs or other Early Learning Providers in ensuring that High-Quality Preschool Programs have age-appropriate facilities to meet the needs of Eligible Children by:..

- Ensuring all Early Learning Providers have completed the Montana Program Needs Assessment (Appendix, pp. 42-54), which has several components that pertain to age-appropriate facilities. One component of the Needs Assessment is the Preschool Program Delivery Standards, which states, "Our environment provides safe, supervised and

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adequate outside play space with age appropriate equipment and safe, adequate indoor space for each child.”

- Providing continued support and monitoring by the State Implementation Team to ensure Early Learning Providers implement and sustain the Preschool Program and Delivery Standards to ensure age-appropriate facilities that meet the needs of all Eligible Children.

(E)(10)(b)(vi) The State will ensure that each Subgrantee will coordinate and collaborate with LEAs in developing and implementing a systematic procedure for sharing data and other records consistent with federal and state law.

Key Activity: Provide support to the Subgrantees on reports and procedures for sharing the data from the Plan for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment (Appendix, pp. 69-76) and all necessary records with LEAs..

Rationale for activity: To ensure a systematic procedure for sharing data and records among Subgrantees and community partners to benefit children in a more successful transition from preschool to kindergarten.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** The State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Training for PLTs in June of each year.
 - On-site support
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documented procedures and reports
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

Key Activity: Provide professional development to the Subgrantees about the AIM Longitudinal Data System (Appendix, pp. 42-43), how to appropriately utilize the system, and how to interpret the data they receive to share with community partners (LEAs, Best Beginnings Coalitions) consistent with federal and state laws.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** The State Implementation Team..
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Training for PLTs in June of each year.
 - Summer Institute in July of each year.
 - Ongoing site visits from State Implementation Team.

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- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Subgrantees are required to share assessment results with State Leadership Teams.

(E)(10)(b)(vii) The State will ensure that each Subgrantee will coordinate and collaborate with LEAs or other Early Learning Providers by utilizing community-based learning resources, such as libraries, arts and arts education programs, and family literacy programs by requiring PLTs to coordinate with area library and community arts programs and promote involvement and participation of families.

Key Activity: PLTs will coordinate with area libraries and community arts programs and promote involvement and participation of families.

Rationale: To enhance systematic linkages within the community to promote kindergarten readiness.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** PLTs and Best Beginnings Coalitions.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing throughout the grant.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Parent newsletters and attendance logs at library and other community resource events
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** State is committed to addressing the needs of Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, pp. 2-7.

(F) Alignment within a Birth through Third Grade Continuum (20 points).

The State has an ambitious and achievable plan to align High-Quality Preschool Programs supported by this grant with programs and systems that serve children from birth through third grade, and will accomplish this by; 1) expanding the role of the State Leadership Team to coordinate efforts in expanding a birth through third grade continuum, 2) expanding collaboration with Best Beginnings Coalitions to ensure system linkages, 3) supporting Governor Bullock's Early Edge Montana initiative, and 4) expanding collaboration among preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers.

(F)(1) Birth Through Age-Five Programs

Table 21 describes Montana's Current Birth Through Age-Five Programs, or Systems.

Table 21: Montana's Current Birth Through Age-Five Systems	
Program or System	Description
Early Head Start and Head Start	Supports the mental, social, and emotional development of children from birth to age 5. Services are responsive to each family's ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage.
Part C of IDEA	Early Intervention Program for infants and toddlers with disabilities.
Part B of IDEA	Special Education preschool services for children transitioned from Part C of IDEA services.
Title I of the ESEA	Ensures that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.
CCDF Funds	Childcare and Development Funds under the Department of Health and Human Services.
STARS TQRIS	The Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program is a voluntary quality rating improvement system that aligns quality indicators with support and incentives for early childhood programs and early childhood professionals.
MIECHV Home Visiting	Evidence-based maternal, infant, early childhood home visiting program, linking models to community risks and needs.
Montana Striving Readers Project (MSRP)	Implemented in 43 schools and pre-kindergarten centers across the state. The purpose of this project is to develop a comprehensive literacy plan based on the Montana Literacy Plan (MLP), for each participating program.
Early Childhood Project REAL	Designed to address the professional development and support needs of instructional personnel in Montana's schools to meet the needs of students who struggle academically and socially.
Early Reading First	Organized to transform five existing preschool centers serving at-risk young children in Montana into centers of educational excellence which: 1) benefited the children and families that were involved; and 2) has served as a model for other centers across our state.
WIC	A public health program designed to improve health outcomes and influence lifetime nutrition and health behaviors in a targeted, at-risk population.
Nutrition and Physical Activity Program (NAPA)	Mission is to make active living and healthy eating easier everywhere Montanans live, work, learn, and play.
No Kid Hungry AmeriCorps	Leverage efforts by working with local school-based leaders and stakeholders to increase participation in school breakfast programs.

Table 21: Montana’s Current Birth Through Age-Five Systems	
Program or System	Description
Child and Adult Care Food Program	Provides aid to child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes for the provision of nutritious foods that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children
Best Beginnings Coalitions	20 local coalitions that work statewide to increase coordination across child serving systems at the grassroots level in towns, counties, and regions.

(F)(1)(a) As part of the Plan for Professional Development (Appendix, pp. 90-111), within each Cohort the State plans to expand the role of the State Leadership Team to coordinate with early education and care programs and child care family service providers supported through federal, state, and local resources, such as the Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program. .

Key Activity: Expand the role of the State Leadership Team by aligning existing OPI and DPHHS systems and services to build a strong continuum of learning for children from birth through age 5 that expands families’ choices, facilitates or improves their access to programs and supports in their own communities, and engages all families with Eligible Children.

Rationale: Alignment of OPI and DPHHS systems will provide consistency for providers and educators as they build and expand access to High-Quality Preschool Programs in their communities.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team. .
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Work groups from the Best Beginnings Advisory Council will meet January through June 2015 to align processes.
 - State Leadership Team will communicate to providers, educators, and families within the cohorts about these processes for the rest of the grant timeframe.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Meeting agendas, minutes, and logs of meetings

Key Activity: Coordinate with existing local Best Beginnings Coalitions to enhance system linkages within early childhood systems to promote High-Quality Preschool Programs that support children and families.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team, State Implementation Team, and PLTs., and Best Beginnings Coalitions
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing throughout the grant.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Best Beginning Coalition agendas and minutes from monthly meetings to show improvement of new system linkages.

(F)(1)(b) Representation from the local Best Beginnings Coalitions will help to ensure that there is no diminution of other services or increased cost to families for programs serving children from birth through age 5, as their role is to create local strategic plans and implement projects to improve coordination and address service gaps of early childhood at the local level. The focus of these coalitions is on systems change. Each coalition has a diverse membership including parents, early educators, health care providers, Part C providers, childcare resource and referral agencies, local government, school districts, and other agencies. Refer to the Plan for Professional Development (Appendix, pp. 90-111) for details about the collaboration with the local Best Beginnings Coalitions.

(F)(2) Kindergarten Through Third Grade

(F)(2)(a) State leaders are highly committed to improving system coordination and early learning outcomes to ensure young children are well prepared for kindergarten.

- Governor Bullock strongly supports a high-level initiative to unify services and has made Early Edge Montana, his preschool initiative aimed at bringing universal PreK to the State of Montana, a central piece of his policy.
- The Department of Public Health and Human Services has spearheaded several quality improvement initiatives over the past few years, which include the Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program, building local capacity and engagement through Best Beginnings Advisory Council, Best Beginnings Coalitions, and other efforts.
- Superintendent Juneau and the Office of Public Instruction are ready to replicate successful efforts like its Striving Readers and Early Reading First programs by implementing public preschool to improve kindergarten readiness.
- The Montana State Library's Ready 2 Read program educates parents and caregivers about the importance of early literacy development and strategies for nurturing pre-reading skills.
- The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education supports innovative workforce development strategies designed to expand professional development and degree opportunities in

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Montana, including the Pathways Project targeting career and education paths for students in secondary through postsecondary education.

These participating state agencies work together on many projects and they are ready to contribute to the development a preschool program to improve early learning and development services to better support families living in High-Need Communities..

(F)(2)(b)

(F)(2)(b)(i) The State plans to sustain the educational and developmental gains of Eligible Children by promoting collaboration between preschool and kindergarten teachers. Subgrantees will be encouraged to include kindergarten teachers from feeder elementary schools in all professional development and trainings. In addition, the State Leadership Team will be developing a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) which will provide opportunities for partnership between preschool and kindergarten teachers to ensure children's successful from preschool to kindergarten..

Key Activity: Coordinate with State Leadership Team to identify KEA evaluation criteria, research and evaluate existing valid and reliable KEAs, and recommend a KEA that is suitable for Montana schools. The OPI will select a KEA based on recommendations from the State Leadership Team.

Rationale: To measure the outcomes of participating children across the five Essential Domains of School Readiness during the first few months of their admission into kindergarten to inform efforts to close the school-readiness gap at kindergarten entry, to inform instruction in the early elementary school grades, and to inform parents about their children's status and involve them in decisions about their children's education. This assessment will not be used to prevent children's entry into kindergarten or as a single measure for high-stakes decisions.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** State Leadership Team work group will make recommendation by end of year 1. Refer to Plan for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment (Appendix, pp. 69-76)..
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documentation indicating that recommended assessment is valid and reliable and meets all identified criteria.

(F)(2)(b)(ii) Montana offers access to full-day kindergarten for all children. In 2007, the Montana Legislature provided funding through *Section 20-7-117 MCA* to support *full-day*

kindergarten programs in school districts. Within one year, 94 percent of kindergarten students were enrolled in full-day rather than half-day programs, enhancing the early education of more than 10,000 students annually. In 2012, 98 percent of kindergarten students were enrolled in full-day kindergarten programs. According to Montana Code Annotated, the trustees of a school district must make kindergarten available, however enrollment of a child is optional, so informing parents about the importance of kindergarten for success in future years is a priority for the State.

(F)(2)(b)(iii) The State plans to sustain the educational and developmental gains of Eligible Children by increasing the percentage of children who are able to read and do math at grade level by the end of third grade by increasing collaboration between preschool teachers and their elementary feeder schools. Subgrantees are encouraged to participate in trainings and activities with preschool teachers.

Additionally, the State will sustain the educational and developmental gains of Eligible Children by building each preschool program's capacity to engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development. Subgrantees will hire a Family Engagement Coordinator to build capacity to engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development, help families build protective factors, and help parents support their children's learning at home. Subgrantees along with the Family Engagement Coordinators will receive professional development in these areas to ultimately increase the percentage of children who are able to read and do math at grade level by the end of third grade.

The State is also planning to expand the current AIM Longitudinal Data System to track the percentage of children who are able to read and do math at grade level by the end of third grade. As part of the Plan for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment (Appendix, pp. 69-76) a State Team Work Group will provide recommendations on the valid and reliable assessments to be used by Subgrantees for expanding the inventory of screening and formative assessments that are currently being used to include a valid and reliable assessment for each of the five Essential Domains of Learning, as well as Measures of Environmental Quality, Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions, and a KEA. Once the recommendations are made for which assessments to use, Subgrantees will be required to administer the assessments and enter the data into the longitudinal data system which will be able to track student progress from preschool through third grade.

Key Activity: The State will expand the AIM Longitudinal Data System by adding Subgrantee information into Montana's statewide student information system. This will allow for a stronger partnership among preschool and kindergarten teachers to use a continuum of data to inform instructional decisions about each child..

Rationale: By supporting preschool and kindergarten teachers to use the data to guide instruction and program improvements, the State will improve children's success in math and reading.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** By August 2015.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Data entered into AIM and meetings among preschool and kindergarten teachers.

Key Activity: Coordinate with State Leadership Team to research, evaluate, and make recommendations on valid and reliable assessments to be used by Subgrantees for expanding the current inventory of screening and formative assessments to include a valid and reliable assessment for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness, as well as Measures of Environmental Quality, Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions, and a KEA..

Rationale: Rely on the expertise of the State Leadership Team Work Group Members who are qualified to make these recommendations..

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones**
 - State Leadership Team will meet from January through March in year one to research, evaluate and make recommendations to the State Implementation Team.
 - State Implementation Team will receive training on the recommended assessments in April and May of year 1..
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documentation proving that recommended assessments are valid and reliable.

Key Activity: Subgrantees will administer the assessments recommended by the State Leadership Team Work Group and will enter the data into the AIM Longitudinal Data System to track student progress from preschool through third grade..

Rationale: The State and Subgrantees will use the data to guide instruction and program improvements.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** Subgrantees.

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- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing.
- **Required Evidence by Montana:** Data entered into the AIM System.

Key Activity: Add Subgrantee information into the AIM Longitudinal Data System.

Rationale: To ensure the State is able to use the data to guide instruction and program improvement.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** By August 2015.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Data entered into the AIM System.

Key Activity: The State Implementation Team will provide professional development for Family Engagement Coordinators on family engagement and coordination of community-based services for children and their families.

Rationale: To build preschool programs' capacity to engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development, help families build protective factors, and help parents support their children's learning at home.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
 - **Timeline and Milestones:** February through May 2015.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Professional Development Materials.

Key Activity: Subgrantees will develop a position for a Family Engagement Coordinator who will be responsible for building capacity to engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development, help families build protective factors, and help parents support their children's learning at home.

Rationale: To engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development, help families build protective factors, and help parents support their children's learning at home so that children are prepared when they enter kindergarten.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** PLTs.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - April 2015: Communicate that Family Engagement Coordinator position as a grant requirement.
 - June and July, 2015: Professional development for Subgrantees about the Family Engagement Coordinator's role and responsibility.
 - August 2016: All Subgrantees have a Family Engagement Coordinator in place.

- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Family Engagement Coordinators are hired and performing their role.

(F)(2)(c) The State will sustain a high level of parent and family engagement as children move from High-Quality Preschool Programs into the early elementary school years by providing professional development on parent and family engagement to Subgrantee feeder elementary school administration, leadership teams, and kindergarten teachers.

Key Activity: Provide professional development to Subgrantees and feeder schools on family engagement and coordination of community-based services for children and their families.

Rationale: Ensure Subgrantees and their feeder schools have the skills and knowledge to meaningfully engage families and help them learn how to support their children's learning at home.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team, Subgrantees, Feeder Elementary Schools.
- **Timeline and Milestones:**
 - June and July of each grant year: Professional development for Subgrantees and feeder schools
 - September through May of each grant year: Monthly on-site technical assistance from DPHHS State Team Member and independent consultant.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Training and meeting agendas, staff attendance at trainings and meetings.

(F)(2)(d)

(F)(2)(d)(i) The State will build upon the steps it has taken, to expand the alignment of child learning standards and expectations by developing a crosswalk document of the MELs and the Montana Common Core Standards (MCCS) for K-3 for use by Early Learning Providers as they make informed instructional decisions. An alignment has already been done in the areas of communication that includes vocabulary, receptive and expressive communication, print development, early writing skills, print concepts, and phonological awareness. The State will align the areas of emotional and social development, fine motor development, gross motor development, sensory-motor, approaches to learning, early math, science, social studies, and creative arts.

Key Activity: Develop a crosswalk document of the MELs and the MCCS for K-3.

Rationale: To ensure Subgrantees, LEAs, and families understand the continuum of standards and development from preschool through third grade to use in professional development supports by the State Implementation Team at the beginning of year two..

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team Work Groups.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Provide Crosswalk document by the end of year one (December 2015).
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** An alignment document will be created..

(F)(2)(d)(ii) The State Leadership Team will coordinate efforts to align teacher preparation, credentials, and workforce competencies by coordinating with the Higher Education Early Childhood Group to align coursework with the Montana Early Learning Standards. The State Leadership Team will also coordinate with the Higher Education Early Childhood Group to expand teacher and administrator early education training programs and professional development. See Appendix (pp. 18-19) for additional information about the Montana Career Path.

(F)(2)(d)(iii) The State plans to expand the assessment system used in the Montana Striving Readers Project so that it contains all elements of a Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment System: Screening Measures, Formative Assessments, Measures of Environmental Quality, Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions, and a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The State will also expand the assessment system currently in use to include a valid and reliable assessment for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness: Language and Development, Cognition and General Knowledge, Approaches Toward Learning, Physical Well-being and Motor Development, and Social and Emotional Development. See Appendix (pp. 69-76) for more about Plan for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment.

Key Activity: Coordinate with State Leadership Team to research, evaluate, and make recommendations on valid and reliable Screening Measures, Formative Assessments, Measures of Environmental Quality, Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions, and a KEA to be used by Subgrantees..

Rationale: State Leadership Team has experts who are qualified to make these recommendations.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team, State Implementation Team, and Subgrantees.
- **Timelines and Milestones**
 - State Leadership Team will meet from January through March in year one to research, evaluate, and make recommendations to the State Implementation Team.
 - State Implementation Team will receive training on the recommended assessments in April and May of year one.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documentation proving that recommended assessments are valid and reliable.

Key Activity: Coordinate with State Leadership Team to research, evaluate, and make recommendations on the valid and reliable assessments to be used by Subgrantees for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness.

Rationale: Rely on the early childhood experts from the State Leadership Team to provide recommendations on valid and reliable assessments for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness, which are high-priority school readiness indicators used by multiple states, to measure student progress toward kindergarten readiness.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team, State Implementation Team, and Subgrantees.
- **Timelines and Milestones**
 - State Leadership Team groups will meet January through March of year one to research, evaluate and make recommendations to the State Implementation Team.
 - State Implementation Team will receive training on the recommended assessments in April and May of year one.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documentation proving that recommended assessments are valid and reliable for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness.

(F)(2)(d)(iv) The State plans to build upon the steps it has taken, to align, at a minimum, its data systems by expanding the AIM Longitudinal Data System. AIM has the capacity to assign a unique identifier to students enrolled in a preschool program. Currently, students enrolled in preschool programs under IDEA, Part C are reported in the statewide student information system. The unique identifier is used to link assessment data and other data in the AIM System, which can be used to track student progress over time. Program site identifiers are assigned

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through the OPI's existing processes. The OPI can easily assign identifiers to new program sites so Early Learning Providers can be added. One of the goals of this grant is to increase the number of early childhood programs in the AIM System, which will allow data to be analyzed for the purpose of informing efforts to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry. It is important to note that individual level data will not be used to make high-stakes decisions and that data will be used simply to improve instruction to better support the strengths and address the needs of individual student and, thereby, help close the school readiness gap. Refer to Appendix (pp. 64-65) for more information about AIM Longitudinal Data System and Appendix (p. 14) for Criteria for Determining High-Need Communities.

(F)(2)(d)(v) The State plans to build upon the steps it has taken to align family engagement strategies by expanding Best Beginnings Coalitions, providing ongoing professional development, and developing a position for a Family Engagement Coordinator.

In 2010, Montana received a State Advisory Council Grant from the Administration on Children and Families to develop the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. Its goal is to improve collaboration and coordination across the spectrum of governmental and nonprofit organizations providing early childhood services, including health and mental health services, family support and parent education, and early care and education. The State used this funding to formalize local school readiness teams formed through the public-private partnership into Best Beginnings Coalitions, charged with conducting community needs assessments, creating local strategic plans, and implementing projects to improve coordination and address service gaps of early childhood at the local level. The focus of these coalitions is on systems change and each group includes a diverse membership including parents, early educators, health care providers, Part C providers, child care resource and referral agencies, local government, school districts, and other fields. We will coordinate with them to ensure we are employing family engagement strategies that work for our families in High-Need Communities.

Subgrantees will be required to hire a Family Engagement Coordinator who will coordinate family engagement strategies. The State Implementation Team will provide professional development to Family Engagement Coordinator and Subgrantee staff around best practices for engaging families, based on the expertise from the experts on the local Best Beginning Coalitions. See Appendix (pp. 82-87) for Plan for Family Engagement, which includes family engagement strategies currently required within the State.

Key Activity: The State Leadership Team will collaborate with the local Best Beginnings Coalitions to continue to build state- and community-level support for High-Quality Preschool Programs through systemic linkages to other early learning programs and resources to support families' engagement.

Rationale: To enhance systematic linkages within the early childhood system to promote High-Quality Preschool Programs that support children and families so that children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team, Best Beginnings Coalitions.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Throughout the grant to begin January 2015.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Meeting minutes and reports.

Key Activity: Subgrantees will develop a position for a Family Engagement Coordinator who will be responsible for coordinating comprehensive services between the preschool program, community, and families.

Rationale: Ensure that children and families are meaningfully engage families so they are actively involved in their child's learning and will be prepared when they enter kindergarten.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** Subgrantee Program Leadership Teams.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - April 2015: Communicate that a Family Engagement Coordinator position is a grant requirement.
 - June and July 2015: Professional development for Subgrantees about the Family Engagement Coordinator's role and responsibility.
 - August 2016: All Subgrantees have a Family Engagement Coordinator in place.

Evidence Required by Montana: Family Engagement Coordinator is hired and performing adequately-.

Key Activity: Provide professional development to Subgrantees, including Family Engagement Coordinators, and instructional staff on effective family engagement strategies based on the recommendations from the Higher Education Early Childhood Group.

Rationale: Ensure Family Engagement Coordinators and teachers have the skills and knowledge to meaningfully engage families so they are actively involved in their child's learning to be prepared when they enter kindergarten.

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- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team, PLTs, Family Engagement Coordinator, Higher Education Early Childhood Group.
- **Timeline and Milestones:**
 - June and July of each grant year: Professional development for Subgrantees
 - September through May of each grant year: Monthly on-site technical assistance from DPHHS State Team Member and independent consultant.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Training and meeting agendas, staff attendance at trainings and meetings.

(G) Budget and Sustainability

(G)(1) The State will use the funds from this grant and any matching contributions to serve the number of children described in its ambitious and achievable plan for each year, including using the funds for the projected per child costs for new and improved State Preschool Program. The State will ensure that the slots are reasonable and sufficient, and that the projected per child costs for new and improved State Preschool Program slots are reasonable and sufficient to ensure High-Quality Preschool Programs.

The State will allocate 65% of the grant award to Subgrantees, as noted in the Budget Narrative Tables I and J, and use both grant-funds and state-funds to serve close to (b)(4) children over the four years of the grant at an average cost of (b)(4) per child. These amounts are based on our work with Early Reading First and the Montana Striving Readers Project, for which the average cost was (b)(4) per child. A survey by the Best Beginnings Advisory Council was also conducted with principals and superintendents across our State that said at least (b)(4) would be needed per child to fund High-Quality Preschool Programs. In addition to the per child amount, educators in High-Need Communities will have the opportunity to receive full scholarships, as noted in the Budget Narrative, Table G. This amount is above and beyond the (b)(4) per child estimate. The Table below reflects 1) the slots for number of children that will be served each year, 2) the total amount of grant funds and state funds that will be used, and 3) the percentage of the funds that will be used. The numbers in the total column are also evidenced in Table A of the Excel Spreadsheet.

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State Preschool Program Slots					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Years 1-4
New State Preschool Program slots with grant funds	680 slots \$6,110,877 (61%)	1,055 slots \$6,345,463 (63%)	1,055 slots \$6,422,780 (64%)	1,055 slots \$6,422,780 (64%)	3,845 slots \$25,301,900 (63%)
Improved State Preschool Program slots with grant funds	110 slots \$389,123 (4%)	110 slots \$154,537 (2%)	110 slots \$77,220 (1%)	110 slots \$77,220 (1%)	440 slots \$698,100 (2%)
New State Preschool Slots with state funds	(b)(4)				
Improved State Preschool Slots with state funds					

(G)(2) The State will coordinate the use of existing funds from Federal sources that support early learning and development, such as title I of the ESEA, part C and section 619 of part B of IDEA, subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act, the Head Start Act, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and State, private, local, foundation, or other private funding sources for activities and services that help expand High-Quality Preschool Programs; and

The state will coordinate the use of the following existing Federal, State, private, and local resources to support the expansion of High-Quality Preschool Programs. Many of the existing resources listed below are dedicated to serving children with high needs and will enable the State to support the expansion of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

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Existing Resources to Support Expansion of High-Quality Preschool Programs		
Resource	Description	Funding Information
Striving Readers	Federal grant to advance literacy development in children attending preschool and Head Start programs in high need and rural areas. Grant ends in FY 2016.	Estimated FY 2015 funding: \$6,800,000
Special Education Preschool	State funding to serve children 3-5 with developmental delays or disabilities.	(b)(4)
Infinite Campus	State funding supporting the AIM student information system at OPI for Part B and kindergarten students and efforts to incorporate publicly-funded preschool information.	
Full Time Kindergarten	State funds to support full-day kindergarten programs.	
Part B Match	State contributions to IDEA Part B, Section 619 special education services for children ages 3 through kindergarten entry with disabilities.	
IDEA Part C	State contributions to IDEA Part C services to children 0-3 suspected to have, or who have been diagnosed with developmental delays or disabilities.	
Newborn Screening	Funding to support newborn hearing and genetic screenings.	
CCDF	State match to Child Care and Development Fund to support scholarships for children with high needs and/or disabilities.	
TANF Transfer	Block Grant funds devoted to early learning and development programs.	
Working Caretaker Relative	TANF direct funding to support child care scholarships for relative caregivers.	
CHIPRA Bonus	Federal funding to be dedicated to the expansion of the State TQRIS system.	Estimated FY 2015 funding: \$2,400,000
Pregnant and Parenting Teens	Federal grant supporting Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program.	Estimated FY 2015 funding: \$1,000,000
Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems	Federal grant supporting system coordination and improvement efforts.	Estimated FY 2015 funding: \$140,000

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Existing Resources to Support Expansion of High-Quality Preschool Programs		
Resource	Description	Funding Information
Head Start Collaboration	Federal grant to support training and technical assistance for HS and EHS programs statewide.	Estimated FY 2015 funding: \$118,413
Title IV E	Federal waiver funding to support child welfare support services for children.	Estimated FY 2015 funding: \$543,834
Child and Adult Care Food Program	Federal funding supporting food assistance for child care programs receiving subsidy funds.	Estimated FY 2015 funding: \$11,983,152
State Special	Childcare prevention and stabilization funding.	(b)(4)
General Fund	Supports Childcare Prevention and Stabilization funding, allocations to adjust provider rates, direct scholarship assistance, and Head Start Collaboration Office.	
(b)(4) Foundation	Private funding to support development and implementation of assessment process and supports for child well-being among children in foster care.	
Ready to Read (Federal Grants)	Federal grant awarded to Montana State Library to support emerging literacy skill in young children.	Estimated FY 2015 funding: \$44,587
Ready to Read (private)	Private funding to support emerging literacy skill in young children.	(b)(4)

Other Existing Federal, State, Private, and Local Funds to Be Used to Achieve the Outcomes in the State Plan.

Source of Funds [1]	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Fiscal Year 2016	Fiscal Year 2017	Total
OPI TOTAL	(b)(4)				
<i>Striving Readers</i>	\$6,800,000	\$2,100,000	\$0	\$0	\$8,900,000
<i>Special Education Preschool</i>	(b)(4)				
<i>Infinite Campus</i>					
<i>Full-time Kindergarten</i>					

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Other Existing Federal, State, Private, and Local Funds to Be Used to Achieve the Outcomes in the State Plan.					
Source of Funds [1]	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Fiscal Year 2016	Fiscal Year 2017	Total
<i>Part B Match</i>	(b)(4)				
DPHHS Total					
<i>IDEA Part C</i>					
<i>Newborn Screening</i>					
<i>CCDF</i>					
<i>TANF Transfer</i>					
<i>Working Caretaker Relative-TANF Direct</i>					
<i>CHIPRA Bonus [2]</i>	\$2,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000,000
<i>Pregnant and Parenting Teens</i>	\$1,000,000	\$579,538	\$579,538	\$579,538	\$2,738,614
<i>Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems</i>	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$560,000
<i>Head Start State Collaboration</i>	\$118,413	\$118,413	\$118,413	\$118,413	\$473,652
<i>Title IV-E</i>	\$543,834	\$543,834	\$543,834	\$543,834	\$2,175,336
<i>Child & Adult Care Food Program</i>	\$11,983,152	\$12,397,856	\$12,645,813	\$12,898,729	\$49,925,551
<i>State Special [3]</i>	(b)(4)				
<i>General Fund [4]</i>					
<i>Casey Family Foundation</i>					
Montana State Library Total					
<i>Ready 2 Read- Federal grants</i>	\$44,587	\$44,587	\$44,587	\$44,587	\$178,348

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Other Existing Federal, State, Private, and Local Funds to Be Used to Achieve the Outcomes in the State Plan.					
Source of Funds [1]	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Fiscal Year 2016	Fiscal Year 2017	Total
Ready 2 Read-private.	(b)(4)				
<i>[1] Funding as listed above is based on the 2014 and 2015 Montana State Fiscal Year Biennial Budget for Infinite Campus, Full-time kindergarten, Title IV-E, General and State Special funds. Federal projections are based on current year information provided on the most recent notice of</i>					
<i>[2] The legislature approved \$2,400,000 federal CHIPRA bonus funds that the state will receive for the Best Beginning STARS program in the Early Childhood Services Bureau. The legislature restricted funding for this purpose and added an order of priority in the event CHIPRA grant funds are insufficient to fund all appropriations. Based on order of priority, the Governor's Budget Office currently estimates that \$2 million will be available.</i>					
<i>[3] Childcare Prevention and Stabilization Funding.</i>					
<i>[4] This general fund component of the Childcare Prevention and Stabilization funding (b)(4) consists of funding for (b)(4) Matching as well as allocations to adjust provider rates and federal poverty index. Additionally, a portion of this funding supports direct services for scholarships. A small component (b)(4) annually supports the matching Heat Start State Collaboration Grant.</i>					

(G)(3) The State will sustain the High-Quality Preschool Programs supported through this grant in the following ways: 1) continue to invest and support Subgrantees in implementing the Montana Preschool Program Standards, 2) increase workforce development, 3) support Subgrantees in coordinating funds (listed in Table above) to ensure sustainability of grant activities and GPRA outcomes (listed in Abstract and criterion C2c), and 4) support Best Beginnings Coalitions in each High-Need Community..

Cost of Sustaining High-Quality Preschool Programs		
Montana Preschool Program Standards		
Activity to Sustain High-Quality Preschool Programs	Budget Narrative Reference	Excel Spreadsheet Reference
The State will utilize personnel from the OPI, DPHHS, and -personnel contracted to develop the Preschool Guidance Document to support Early Learning Providers in fully implementing the Montana Preschool Program Standards to a sustainable level. This will assist Early Learning Providers in sustaining the activities and supports provided with grant funds..	Tables A1, A2, F	Tables A, 1A, 1E, 2A, 2B, D4

Cost of Sustaining High-Quality Preschool Programs		
Montana Preschool Program Standards		
Activity to Sustain High-Quality Preschool Programs	Budget Narrative Reference	Excel Spreadsheet Reference
The State will provide professional development through summer institutes and on-site support to Early Learning Providers to ensure implementation of the Montana Preschool Program Standards and use of the Preschool Guidance Document. This targeted and ongoing support will allow the Early Learning Providers to go from exploring and developing many of the standards to sustaining them..	Tables B1, B2, D1, D2, E, F, G	Tables A 1A, 1E, 2A, 2B Table D4 Budget Table
Workforce Development		
The State, through the Early Childhood Group, will provide full scholarships to educators in High-Need Communities. Teacher Assignments and Qualifications is in the Montana Preschool Program Standards and is a critical piece to ensuring High-Quality Preschool Programs and their sustainability. Expanding the preschool workforce will allow for greater consistency in LEA salaries and greater retention of a highly qualified preschool staff. .	Tables G1, G2	Table A, 1A Budget Table
Existing Resources		
The State will work with Subgrantees to coordinate the funds listed in the Table above: Existing Resources to Support Expansion of High-Quality Preschool Programs. In addition, it will use the Governor's Early Edge Montana block grants to better leverage all funding sources to sustain activities of the grant. The State has extensive experience supporting preschools and school districts in leveraging funds to support the most critical activities and processes for children and students. Personnel, Travel, Professional Development, Contracts will all support efforts for building sustainability..	Tables A1, A2, B1, B2, F, G1, G2	Table A: Matching Funds for New and Improved Preschool Slots Budget Table

Cost of Sustaining High-Quality Preschool Programs		
Montana Preschool Program Standards		
Activity to Sustain High-Quality Preschool Programs	Budget Narrative Reference	Excel Spreadsheet Reference
Best Beginnings Coalitions		
The State will coordinate with local Best Beginnings Coalitions to support Subgrantees in culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and communication to ensure families in High-Need Communities receive the services and information they need to ensure children are prepared for success when they enter kindergarten.	Table G	Table A, 1A . Budget Table

Competitive Preference Priority 1: Contributing Matching Funds

The State has a credible plan for obtaining and using non-Federal matching funds to support the implementation of its ambitious and achievable plan during the grant period through

1) Governor Bullock’s Early Edge Montana initiative; 2) Montana Preschool Program Standards; 3) Achievement in Montana (AIM) Longitudinal Data System; and 4) Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program (Montana’s TQRIS). Here is the Evidence:

1. Governor Bullock’s Early Edge Montana Initiative

During the 2015 legislative session, Governor Steve Bullock will bring forward a proposal for voluntary preschool that is open to all four-year-olds. The plan calls for \$37 million over the next biennium. The funds will be block-granted to school districts that apply and meet the criteria for High-Quality Preschool Programs as defined by Montana Preschool Program Standards. The OPI will send out the request for proposal, review the grants, and oversee the distribution of the funds. School districts may subcontract with community-based preschools and local Head Starts that meet the requirements for quality preschool under Montana Board of Education, ARM Title 10, Chapter 63, Preschool Standards of Accreditation. Montana’s Program Standards include provisions for:

- Highly qualified teachers and staff;
- Safe and nurturing learning environments;
- Family engagement and wrap-around services; and

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- Developmentally appropriate curriculum that aligns with what children will learn in kindergarten.

The funding will be allocated as follows: School districts will receive (b)(4) for the first (b)(4) students. Districts will receive an additional (b)(4) for each additional (b)(4) students (no class will be larger than 18 students). For example, if a district has (b)(4) preschool students, the district will receive (b)(4). If a district has (b)(4) students, the district will receive (b)(4).

The Federal Preschool Development grant will fund three cohorts of Subgrantees who will also implement the Montana Preschool Program Standards to ensure that High-Need Communities have enhanced opportunities to support school readiness for children. The State expects that the Subgrantees that are LEAs will also apply for the Early Edge Montana block grants, and Subgrantees that are Head Starts will collaborate with their LEAs to receive block grant funding. Therefore, the State is expecting each grant year LEAs will receive a block grant award ranging from (b)(4). The State expects a Head Start to collaborate with a LEA who receives a block grants, and the LEA will allocate one or two of the block grants to the Head Starts in their communities. Based on a recent survey with principals and superintendents, (b)(4)% of the block grants will be used for new state preschool slots and (b)(4)% will be used to improve existing slots. These funds will serve as part of the State's match to the Preschool Development Grant, pending approval by the state legislature, and will help to maximize the impact of both the Federal Preschool Grant and Governor Bullock's Early Edge Initiative block grants. The estimated amount of the Governor's Early Edge Initiative block grants is (b)(4) in Year 1, and (b)(4) in Years 2-4. However, the estimated amount for Subgrantees is (b)(4) per year, which is the match for the grant. Refer to Table A, 2B for evidence of High-Quality Preschool Programs Program funds.

2. Montana Preschool Program Standards

The Montana Preschool Program Standards are found in Chapter 63, Preschool Standards of Accreditation. This policy has been give pending approval by the Montana Board of Public Education and will be up for formal adoption in November 2014. In May 2014, the OPI invited a group of stakeholders to make recommendations for accreditation and content standards for preschool education. State investment for the process was (b)(4) and is reflected in Table A, Part II, 2A, State-Level Infrastructure in Excel Spreadsheets..

3. Achievement in Montana (AIM) Longitudinal Data System

Montana Preschool Development Grant

The State plans to expand its current Statewide Longitudinal Data System to link preschool and elementary and secondary school data by utilizing the expanding the Achievement in Montana (AIM) Longitudinal Data System. The AIM System has the capacity to assign a unique identifier to students enrolled in a preschool program. The unique identifier is used to link assessment data and other data in the AIM System, which can be used to track student progress over time. The OPI can easily assign identifiers to new program sites so Early Learning Providers can be added. The State will increase the number of early childhood programs using the AIM System, which will allow data to be analyzed for the purpose of informing efforts to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry. The State investment is (b)(4) annually, with a total of \$3,402,012, and is reflected in Table A, Part II 2A, State-Level Infrastructure in the Excel Spreadsheets.

4. Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program (Montana's TORIS)

The Governor included funding for the Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program for the 2014 biennium. The Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program is a voluntary, tiered quality improvement system comprised of a set of achievable criteria designed to support early childhood programs to improve the quality of educational and support services for young children. To support Best Beginnings STARS to Quality, the State Legislature identified one-time-only funds through a performance bonus. Governor Bullock's budget request for the 2016 biennium includes (b)(4) in state funds to continue to improve early childhood settings for community based providers for 2014-2015. An additional (b)(4) has been requested in the 2015 legislative session for each year of the 2016 biennium. The State investment is (b)(4) per year and is reflected in Table A, Part II, 2A, State-Level Infrastructure in the Excel Spreadsheets.

Total Match:

The State's total match funding over four years is (b)(4), which is (b)(4) %.

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Supporting a Continuum of Early Learning and Development

The State has an ambitious and achievable plan that addresses the creation of a more seamless progression of supports and interventions from birth through third grade for a defined group of

Montana Preschool Development Grant

Eligible Children and their families within each High-Need Community served by each Subgrantee. The State will ensure:

- All Subgrantees have a Family Engagement Coordinator that will integrate comprehensive high-quality supports and services to help create smooth transitions for children and families to ensure continuous and consistent high-quality early learning opportunities critical to children's success through transitions from one system to another and to coordinate services including home visiting, high-quality infant and toddler care, preschool programs, before-and-after-care services, and other family supports as outlined in criteria (C)(1)(i) and (E)(10)(a).
- Collaboration between Subgrantees and the Best Beginnings Advisory Council and local Best Beginnings Coalitions as described in (B)(5), (C)(1)(j). The local Best Beginnings Coalitions will coordinate with Subgrantees to provide a more seamless progression of supports and interventions from birth through third grade, such as high-quality infant and toddler care, home visitation, attendance in state funded Full-Day kindergarten, and before- and after-care services, adult education, housing, health, and mental health services.
- Expansion of the current Achievement in Montana (AIM) Statewide Longitudinal Data System to link preschool and elementary and secondary school data as identified in criterion (B)(3).
- Expansion of the alignment of child learning standards and expectations by developing a crosswalk document of the MELs and the Montana Common Core Standards (MCCS) for K-3 for use by early learning providers as they make informed instructional decisions as outlined in (F)(2)(d)(i).
- Subgrantees will develop a Family and Community Engagement Plan that will ensure access to resources, services, and outline activities that provide children and families with successful transitions from preschool to kindergarten.
- Support for Subgrantees in the sustainment of high levels of parent and family engagement as children move from High-Quality Preschool Programs into the early elementary school years by providing professional development on parent and family engagement to Subgrantee feeder schools administration, leadership teams, and kindergarten teachers as defined in (F)(2)(c).

Competitive Preference Priority 3: Creating New High-Quality State Preschool Program Slots

Background: Many States have taken note of the short- and long-term benefits of early education and have launched efforts to expand the availability of State Preschool Programs. As of 2013, 40 States and the District of Columbia have at least one State Preschool Program in place.

Nevertheless, only about 28 percent of America’s four-year-olds were enrolled in a State Preschool Program in the 2012-2013 school year. The high costs of private preschool programs and the lack of State Preschool Programs narrow options for families, and especially so for low-income families. In 2011, four-year-olds under 200 percent of poverty were 16 percentage-points less likely than their higher-income peers (above 200 percent) to attend any preschool program, whether public or private.¹

Priority: To receive a competitive preference under this priority, the State must demonstrate how it will use at least 50 percent of its Federal grant award to create new State Preschool Program slots that will increase the overall number of new slots in State Preschool Programs that meet the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

The State plans to use 63 percent of the Federal grant award to create new State Preschool Program slots that meet the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs as defined by the Montana Preschool Program Standards. Evidence is found in Table A, 1B in the Excel Spreadsheet.

New State Preschool Program Slots					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Years 1-4
New State Preschool Program slots with grant funds	680 slots \$6,110,877 (61%)	1,055 slots \$6,345,463 (63%)	1,055 slots \$6,422,780 (64%)	1,055 slots \$6,422,780 (64%)	3,845 slots \$25,301,900 (63%) pf total grant award

Montana Preschool Development Grant

The state has selected the High-Need Communities using the following criteria: (1) Is a High-Need Community in a tribal area that has a Head Start Program and (2) Is a High-Need Community in an area in which a school district is currently receiving a Striving Reader's Comprehensive Literacy Subgrant. The Subgrantees are school district preschools and Head Start Programs. While the participating Early Learning Providers have some of the criteria for High-Quality Preschool Programs in place they currently do not meet all of the High-Quality Preschool Programs Program criteria as outlined in the Montana Preschool Program Standards. Therefore, the State will use the Federal Grant funds to improve and increase slots that are not a State Preschool Program slot so that they are a High-Quality Preschool Programs Program to increase the total number of State Preschool Program Slots..

Other Attachment File(s)

* Mandatory Other Attachment Filename:	Excel Spreadsheet.xls
	Delete Mandatory Other Attachment View Mandatory Other Attachment

To add more "Other Attachment" attachments, please use the attachment buttons below.

Add Optional Other Attachment		
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Non Responsive

Non Responsive

Appendix: Table of Contents

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Additional Supports for Eligible Children

Table 1 Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment Systems	
Eligible Children	Examples of Additional Supports
Children who have disabilities or developmental delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each child has the right to the supports, resources, and services he or she needs to participate actively and meaningfully in the early childhood setting. Because of the uniqueness of each child, the services and interventions provided must be responsive to the young child's needs and patterns of development, taking into consideration the whole child and family (DEC, 2005). Use results of screenings and assessments to prepare staff for meeting the developmental and learning needs of the child
Children who are English Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use tools for assessing young children's progress that are clearly connected to important learning represented in the standards Use tools for assessing young children's progress that are developmentally and culturally valid
Children who reside on Indian Lands	Assessment is used to determine a child's growth and development across the developmental domains. Using the results of screening and assessment, teachers and families are prepared to meet the developmental and learning needs of each child. The purpose of monitoring each child's development over time is to identify the interactions, activities, and environments that encourage the child to build on his or her existing knowledge and skills, to work with all the people involved in the child's life, and to recognize when others may need to become involved to benefit the child's growth and development.
Children who are homeless	
Children who are involved in the child welfare system	
Children who are from military families	

Table 2 Early Learning and Development Standards	
Eligible Children	Examples of Additional Supports
Children who have disabilities or developmental delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Early Learning and Development Standards help teachers focus on what children CAN do and reinforce the idea that children are capable learners. The Early Learning and Development Standards help teachers meet children's developmental needs, including those of

Table 2 Early Learning and Development Standards	
	children with disabilities, at the level they require and in an individual capacity.
Children who are English Learners	<p>The acquisition of language is essential to children's cognitive and social development. Regardless of what language children speak, they still develop and learn. (Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education, A position statement of NAEYC, 1995).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain the first language of individual children to support and facilitate learning of the second language. • Employ children's home language in the early childhood curriculum • Promote language development in English and the home language • Involve families in supporting children's language learning • Regardless of their level of English development, young children who are mastering the rudiments of English may need additional supports to help them participate fully in classroom learning activities. • Use visual representations along with explanations provide support for learning.
Children who reside on Indian Lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture is a word for people's way of life, and children acquire cultural knowledge from the day they are born. Each child has a unique culture within their own family. Respect and appreciation for each child's cultural, racial, and linguistic heritage are a valuable and important part of his or her development. • The MELs reinforce healthy partnerships between families, early childhood educators, and communities, in developing culturally and linguistically competent practices and services to support young children. It is recognized by the National Education Goals Panel, based on research that a child's learning is complex and is influenced by cultural and contextual factors (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1995).

Table 2 Early Learning and Development Standards	
Children who are homeless	Environmental Circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anything and everyone surrounding the young child contributes to his or her life experiences. Varied circumstances add to the uniqueness of the child's personality. These include family composition, living situation, and how many different people and places the child experiences in a day. Life experiences affect how individual children build relationships and approach learning. Each child's unique life circumstance can be discovered by talking with family members and others involved in the child's life. Teachers who take the time to truly understand the situation of each individual child, are likely to build a trusting relationship, to ultimately establish an environment that supports children in meaningful ways.
Children who are involved in the child welfare system	
Children who are from military families	

Table 3 High-Quality Preschool Programs	
Eligible Children	Examples of Additional Supports
Children who have disabilities or developmental delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality programs practice inclusion to address the needs of each child. Teachers work together with families, following the parents' lead. Collaborate with children's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Program (IEP) teams. Modify/adapt program activities and routines (make reasonable accommodations). Implement appropriate interventions within the context of the early childhood setting (DEC/NAEYC Joint Position Statement on Inclusion, 1993).
Children who are English Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ children's home language in the early childhood curriculum Promote language development in English and the home language Involve families in supporting children's language learning Regardless of their level of English development, young children who are

Additional Supports for Eligible Children

Table 3 High-Quality Preschool Programs	
	<p>mastering the rudiments of English may need additional supports to help them participate fully in classroom learning activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use visual representations along with explanations provide support for learning
Children who reside on Indian Lands	<p>Culture: Culture is a word for people's way of life, and children acquire cultural knowledge from the day they are born. Each child has a unique culture within their own family. Respect and appreciation for each child's cultural, racial, and linguistic heritage are a valuable and important part of his or her development.</p>
Children who are homeless	
Children who are involved in the child welfare system	
Children who are from military families	

Table 4 Comprehensive Services	
Eligible Children	Examples of Additional Supports
Children who have disabilities or developmental delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality programs practice inclusion to address the needs of each child. • Teachers work together with families, following the parents' lead. • Collaborate with children's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Program (IEP) teams • Modify/adapt program activities and routines (make reasonable accommodations). • Implement appropriate interventions within the context of the early childhood setting (DEC/NAEYC Joint Position Statement on Inclusion, 1993). • When developing family engagement goals with parents review specific needs related to knowledge, resources and support the family might need about the child's disability or developmental delay.
Children who are English Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child's home language must be respected as the basis for learning a second language. That fact is recognized by the National Education Goals Panel, based on research that a child's learning is complex, and is influenced by cultural and contextual factors (NAEYC, 1995).

Table 4 Comprehensive Services	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective family communication and involvement consistently lead to positive effects for the early development of young children (NAEYC and NAES/SDE, 2002). • When families are non-English speakers every effort will be made to provide translation services as needed and ensure home school communication is provided in such a way that it is understood by the family.
Children who reside on Indian Lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture is a word for people's way of life, and children acquire cultural knowledge from the day they are born. Children have a unique culture within their own family. Respect and appreciation for each child's cultural, racial, and linguistic heritage are a valuable and important part of his or her development. • The MELs reinforce healthy partnerships between families, early childhood educators, and communities, in developing culturally and linguistically competent practices and services to support young children. It is recognized by the National Education Goals Panel, based on research that a child's learning is complex and is influenced by cultural and contextual factors (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1995).
Children who are homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program staff will make determinations with families of homeless status based on appropriate state and federal statutes. • Staff will provide information to families about additional services and supports available to homeless families. • Staff will coordinate with their LEA homeless liaison as needed to coordinate services. • Staff will be aware of resources to support homeless families in meeting immediate and longer-term needs.

Additional Supports for Eligible Children

Table 4 Comprehensive Services	
Children who are involved in the child welfare system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The family support staff will coordinate with the state agency involved with the family to have shared goals and support plans in place.• Additional outreach will be provided to the child and family to help mitigate further trauma and coordinate systems.
Children who are from military families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff will be aware of the military family support programs and staff available throughout the state of Montana.• Staff will coordinate with families to provide support and referral to military supports within their community as needed.

10.57.412 CLASS 1 AND 2 ENDORSEMENTS (1) remains the same.

(2) Areas approved for endorsement on Class 1 and 2 licenses include the following: agriculture, art K-12, biology, business and information technology education, chemistry, communication, computer science K-12, early childhood (age 3 to grade 3), earth science, economics, elementary education (K-8), English, English as a second language K-12, family and consumer sciences, geography, health, health enhancement K-12, history, industrial technology education, journalism, library K-12, marketing, mathematics, middle grades (4-8), music K-12, physical education K-12, political science, school counseling K-12, science (broadfield), social studies (broadfield), sociology, special education P-12, theater, trades and industry, traffic education K-12, and world languages.

(3) Permissive special competencies identified on an educator license may be retained as long as the licensee continues to renew the license.

(4) To obtain an elementary (K-8), early childhood (age 3 to grade 3), or middle grades (4-8) endorsement, an applicant must provide verification of completion of an accredited teacher education program in those areas to include student teaching or supervised teaching experience.

(5) To obtain a secondary (5-12) or K-12 endorsement other than special education, the applicant must provide verification of:

(a) completion of an accredited professional educator preparation program at the grade level(s) identified by the program, including supervised teaching experience; and

(b) for those applicants completing programs which are not an accredited professional educator preparation program:

(b) and (c) remain the same but are renumbered (i) and (ii).

(6) To obtain an endorsement in special education P-12, the applicant must provide verification of:

(a) a bachelor's degree; and

(b) completion of an accredited special education P-12 program which includes student teaching or supervised teaching experience.

(7) Applicant must also submit a recommendation for any endorsement requested from the appropriate official from an accredited professional educator program.

(8) Applicants who have completed accredited professional educator preparation programs outside of Montana and hold endorsements in specific disability areas (for example, early childhood special education, autism, hearing impaired) in another state may not qualify for a special education P-12 endorsement.

(9) Applicants with graduate degrees in an endorsable area may use experience instructing in relevant college or university courses as credit in that endorsement area for licensure.

NEW RULE VI EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (1) The program requires that successful candidates:

(a) demonstrate an understanding of young children's (birth-age 8) characteristics and needs encompassing multiple, interrelated areas of children's development and learning including physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, and aesthetic domains as well as learning processes and motivation to learn;

(b) base their practice on coherent early childhood theoretical perspectives, current research about brain growth and development, and the importance of play;

(c) apply their understanding of multiple influences on young children's development and learning including family, community, cultural, and linguistic contexts, temperament, approaches, and dispositions to learning (including initiative, self-direction, persistence, and attentiveness), motivation, attachment, economic conditions, health status, opportunities for play and learning, technology and media, and developmental variations;

(d) understand the potential influence of early childhood programs, including early intervention, on short- and long-term outcomes for children;

(e) demonstrate the ability to use developmental knowledge including strengths of families and children to create physically and psychologically safe learning environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child;

(f) know about, understand, and value the complex characteristics and importance of children's families and communities including home language, cultural values, ethnicity, socioeconomic conditions, family structures, relationships, stresses, supports, and community resources;

(g) create respectful, reciprocal relationships with families using a range of formal and informal strategies such as home visits, parent-teacher conferences, family nights, and transition planning into and out of early childhood programs including kindergarten;

(h) promote and encourage family involvement in all aspects of children's development and learning including assisting families to find resources concerning parenting, mental health, health care, and financial assistance;

(i) demonstrate essential knowledge and core skills in team building and in communicating with families and colleagues from other disciplines to encourage families' participation in curriculum and program development as well as assessment of children's learning, including identification of children's strengths and needs;

(j) recognize the goals of assessment and summarize, analyze, and use assessment information gathered through ongoing, systematic observations and

other informal and formal assessments, including play-based assessments and developmental screenings to:

- (i) learn about children's unique qualities;
 - (ii) guide instruction; and
 - (iii) evaluate effective curriculum to maximize children's development and learning;
- (k) make ethical considerations when administering and interpreting assessments including:
- (i) an understanding of family context and involving families in the assessment process;
 - (ii) recognizing the importance of establishing positive conditions for assessment (in familiar settings with familiar people); and
 - (iii) avoiding bias and using culturally sensitive assessments that have established reliability and validity;
- (l) create a caring community of learners that supports positive relationships; promotes the development of children's social, emotional, and friendship skills; and assists children in the development of security, self-regulation, responsibility, and problem solving;
- (m) utilize a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching skills and strategies supportive of young learners, such as integrating curricular areas; scaffolding learning; teaching through social interactions; providing meaningful child choice; implementing positive guidance strategies; and making appropriate use of technology;
- (n) provide curriculum and learning experiences that reflect the languages, cultures, traditions, and individual needs of diverse families and children, with particular attention to the cultures of the children and families in the classroom and to American Indians and tribes in Montana;
- (o) use a variety of learning formats and contexts to support young learners, including creating support for extended play, creating effective indoor and outdoor learning centers, teaching primarily through individual and small group contexts, and utilizing the environment, schedule, and routines as learning opportunities;
- (p) design, implement, and evaluate developmentally meaningful, integrated, and challenging curriculum for each child using professional knowledge, Montana's Early Learning Standards, Montana Content Standards (K-5), and Indian Education for All;
- (q) integrate and support in-depth learning using both spontaneous and planned curricula and teaching practices in each of the academic discipline content areas including language and literacy; science; mathematics; social studies; the performing and visual arts; health and well-being; and physical development, skills, and fitness by:

(i) demonstrating knowledge and understanding of theory and research and applying knowledge in the areas of language, speaking and listening, reading and writing processes, literature, print and non-print texts, which are inclusive of texts from and about American Indians and tribes in Montana, and technology; and planning, implementing, assessing, and reflecting on English/language arts and literacy instruction that promotes critical thinking and creative engagement;

(ii) demonstrating knowledge, understanding, and use of the fundamental concepts of physical, life, earth, and space sciences to design and implement age-appropriate inquiry lessons to teach science, to build student understanding for personal and social applications, to convey the nature of science, the concepts in science and technology, the history and nature of science, including scientific contributions of American Indians and tribes in Montana;

(iii) demonstrating knowledge, understanding, and use of the major concepts, and procedures, and reasoning processes of mathematics that define number systems and number sense, operations, algebra, geometry, measurement, data analysis statistics and probability in order to foster student understanding and use of patterns, quantities, and spatial relationships that can represent phenomena, solve problems, and deal with data to engage students in problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, connections, and representation, including culturally inclusive lessons and examples relating to American Indians and tribes in Montana;

(iv) demonstrating knowledge, understanding, and use of the major concepts and modes of inquiry from the social studies, the integrated study of history, government, geography, economics including personal financial literacy, and an understanding of the social sciences and other related areas to promote students' abilities to make informed decisions as citizens of a culturally diverse democratic society, including the cultural diversity of American Indians and tribes in Montana, and interdependent world;

(v) demonstrating knowledge, understanding, and use of the content, functions, and achievements of the performing arts (dance, music, drama) and the visual arts as primary media for communication, inquiry, perspective, and engagement among students, and culturally diverse performing and visual arts inclusive of the works of American Indian artists and art in Montana;

(vi) demonstrating knowledge, understanding, and use of the major concepts

(w) engage in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession; and

(x) demonstrate knowledge, skills, and dispositions during well-planned and sequenced clinical experiences working with children and families in two different age groups (3-5 and 5-8) and two types of the settings:

(i) one of which must include a Kindergarten-3rd grade experience in an accredited school setting for a formal student teaching experience; and

(ii) the second clinical site may include state-licensed child care centers or homes, Head Start, and community or school-based preschool programs.

AUTH: 20-2-114, MCA

IMP: 20-2-121, MCA

Criteria for Determining High-Need Communities

1. Head Start on an Indian Reservation, or
2. Current Montana Striving Reader's Comprehensive Literacy subgrantee. The criteria MT used to determine the High-Need Communities for our SRCL grant (Table ____).

Montana's Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Eligibility for Subgrantees
Eligible Applicants: Criteria for LEA eligibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• District has 50% or more students eligible for free/reduced price meals; or• District has an on-time graduation rate of <80%. (5% below AYP benchmark of 85%).
AND, additionally, the LEA must meet one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• District has a low-income student group not meeting AYP target in Reading, or• District is identified for Title I improvement; or• District has >12% students with disabilities
Criteria for eligibility for schools within a district: (A district may only include up to two schools per grade span from elementary, one middle school, and one high school. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School has 50% percent or more students eligible for free/ reduced price meals.
AND, additionally, the school must meet one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School has low-income student group not meeting AYP target in Reading, or• School is identified for Title I improvement; or• High school has an on-time graduation rate of <85%, or• School is in a district with >12% students with disabilities.
Eligible Applicants: Criteria for Early Learning Programs eligibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program is an established Head Start.• Program is an established Early Head Start• Program is an established district operated special education preschool

D2: Number and percentage of 4-year olds in publically-funded preschools in each community.

How many students enrolled in school district preschool or Head Start in each community?

Selection High-Need Communities:

High-Need Community	Description	Early Learning Providers-Subgrantees
Cohort 1		
Begin Implementing June 2015		
Great Falls (City)	-Poverty based on free and reduce lunch rates 50.3% -Indian population 1445 Little Shell Chippewa, Blackfeet, and Gros Ventre -Number of students with disabilities 1005 -AYP status Corrective action year seven -District is 10 years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 79.6%	LEA-Great Falls School District
Hardin (Tribal Area)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 84.3% -Indian population 1541 Crow -Number of students with disabilities 134 -AYP status Corrective action year eight -District is 11 years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 60.9%	LEA-Hardin School District
Lewistown (Rural Town)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 45.8% -Indian population 21 Blackfeet and Gros Ventre -Number of students with disabilities 168 -AYP status Corrective action year two -District is five years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 86.7%	Lewistown Head Start (CMHS)
Helena (City)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 37.3% - Indian population 430 Blackfeet, Gros Ventre, Pend d'Oreille, and Salish -Number of students with disabilities 945 -AYP status Corrective action year seven -District is 10 years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 86.7%	Helena Head Start (RMDC)
Bozeman (City)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 24.3% - Indian population 193 Blackfeet, Gros Ventre, Pend d'Oreille, and Salish -Number of students with disabilities 563 -AYP status Corrective action year three -District is six years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 86.4%	Bozeman Head Start
Cohort 2		
Begin Implementing June 2015		

High-Need Community	Description	Early Learning Providers-Subgrantees
Wolf Point (Tribal Area)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 81.1% -Indian population 717 Assiniboine and Sioux -Number of students with disabilities 104 -AYP status Corrective action year seven -District is 10 years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 70.4%	Fort Peck Head Start
Browning (Tribal Area)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 83.6% -Indian Population 1965 Blackfeet -Number of students with disabilities 225 -AYP Status Corrective action year 12* -District is 15* years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 66.7%	Browning Head Start
Anaconda (Rural: Town)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 57.0% -Indian population 49 Pend d'Oreille and Salish -Number of students with disabilities 188 -AYP status Corrective action year three -District is six years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 88.2%	LEA- Anaconda School District and Anaconda Head Start
Crow Agency (Tribal Area)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 92.4% -Indian population 274 Crow -Number of students with disabilities 10 -AYP status Restructuring year 10 -District is 14* years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 60.9%	Crow Agency Head Start
Libby (Rural Town)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 59% -Indian population 44 Kootenai -Number of students with disabilities 85 -AYP status Corrective action year three -District is six years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 85.1%	Libby Head Start and LEA-Libby School District
Cohort 3 Begin Implementing June 2016		
Kalispell (City)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 53.2% -Indian population 137 Kootenai -Number of students with disabilities 573 -AYP status Improvement year two -District is two years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 82.0%	LEA-Kalispell School District

High-Need Community	Description	Early Learning Providers-Subgrantees
Butte (Rural Town)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 50.2% - Indian population 224 Pend d'Oreille, Salish, and Crow -Number of students with disabilities 410 -AYP status Corrective action year seven -District is 10 years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 82.0%	Butte Head Start and LEA- Butte School District
Box Elder (Tribal Area)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 79.9% -Tribal community 380 Little Shell Chippewa, Blackfeet, and Gros Ventre -Number of students with disabilities 50 -AYP status Corrective action year 11* -District is 14* years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 45.8%	Box Elder Head Start
Lame Deer (Tribal Area)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 93.6% -Tribal community 501 Crow and Cheyenne -Number of students with disabilities 98 -AYP status Corrective action year 11* -District is 14* years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 51.6%	Lame Deer Head Start
Rocky Boy (Tribal Area)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 86.7% -Tribal community 532 Chippewa Cree -Number of students with disabilities 55 -AYP status Corrective action year 12* -District is 15* years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 66.0%	Rocky Boy Head Start
Pablo/Ronan; Salish Kootenai (Tribal Area)	-Poverty based on free and reduced lunch rates 76.6% -Tribal community 885 Pend d'Oreille, Salish, and Kootenai -Number of students with disabilities 166 -AYP status Corrective action year four -District is seven years in Title 1 Improvement -Graduation rate 86.6%	Pablo/Ronan Head Start



The Montana Career Path: A Framework for Professional Development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Eight (8) hours of approved training (may include orientation or in-service training) in the last year. ◆ Current First Aid and CPR certification ◆ Currently working in an Early Childhood setting**. ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 8 hours of approved training (if in licensed program, the 8 hours required for state licensing will count).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High School diploma or GED certificate. ◆ Fifteen (15) hours of approved entry level training (may NOT include orientation) in the last year ◆ Current First Aid and CPR certification ◆ Minimum of 500 hours working in an Early Childhood setting** ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 15 hours of approved training (plus 8 hours required for state licensing, if applicable, for a total of 23 hours)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High School diploma or GED certificate. ◆ 60 hours of approved training in the past 5 years ◆ Current First Aid and CPR certification ◆ Minimum of 500 hours working in an Early Childhood setting** ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 15 hours of approved training (plus 8 hours required for state licensing, if applicable, for a total of 23 hours)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Current national Child Development Associate (CDA) credential ◆-OR- ◆ Current National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) accreditation and 120 hours of approved training in the past 5 years ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting** ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 15 hours of approved training (plus 8 hours required for state licensing, if applicable, for a total of 23 hours)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Current national CDA credential plus at least 20 semester college credits* in Early Childhood Education/Child Development ◆-OR- ◆ Current Montana Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship Certificate (college coursework required) ◆-OR- ◆ One year certificate requiring 30 college credits* in Early Childhood Education/Child Development ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting** ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 15 hours of approved training (plus 8 hours required for state licensing, if applicable, for a total of 23 hours)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Associate's Degree with at least 20 semester college credits in Early Childhood Education/Child Development* ◆ 300 hours supervised teaching experience ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting** ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 15 hours of approved training (plus 8 hours required for state licensing, if applicable, for a total of 23 hours)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bachelor's Degree with at least 20 semester college credits in Early Childhood Education/Child Development* ◆ 300 hours supervised teaching experience ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting** ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 15 hours of approved training (plus 8 hours required for state licensing, if applicable, for a total of 23 hours).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bachelor's Degree with an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education OR a minor in Early Childhood Education ◆ 300 hours supervised teaching experience ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting** ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 15 hours of approved training (plus 8 hours required for state licensing, if applicable, for a total of 23 hours).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development* ◆ 300 hours supervised teaching experience ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting** ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 15 hours of approved training (plus 8 hours required for state licensing, if applicable, for a total of 23 hours).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development* ◆ —OR— ◆ Master's Degree in a related field with emphasis in Early Childhood Education/Child Development* ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting** ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 15 hours of approved training (plus 8 hours required for state licensing, if applicable, for a total of 23 hours)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Doctorate in Early Childhood Education/Child Development* ◆ —OR— ◆ Doctorate in a related field with Early Childhood Education/Child Development emphasis* ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting** ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 15 hours of approved training (plus 8 hours required for state licensing, if applicable, for a total of 23 hours).

*All credits and degrees must be from regionally accredited colleges and universities.

**Early Childhood settings are programs offering services to young children and their families including administrative and teacher/caregiving roles, or programs that conduct training or education in early childhood.

Visit www.mtecp.org for more information about The Early Childhood Project.



Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS)

Montana Early Learning Standards

2014



The standards that guide the work of early childhood professionals to ensure that children from birth to age five have the skills and knowledge they need to achieve success in learning to reach their full potential in life

Acknowledgments

The 2014 Montana Early Learning Standards reflects the passionate, engaged, and effective collaboration of early childhood experts and leaders from across the state representing a variety of interests, knowledge, and experience in the care and education of young children. Facilitation of this effort was conducted jointly by Cindy O'Dell and Libby Hancock. Major editing was completed by Sandra Morris. The Early Childhood Services Bureau of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services provided funding. Special thanks to Audra Landis of the Montana Department of Administration, Print and Mail Services for graphic design and layout.

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Introduction

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- Early Learning Principles

2014 Montana Early Learning Standards

The standards that guide the work of early childhood professionals to ensure that 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

Alterations of Note

Montana's Early Learning Guidelines for Children 3 to 5 (2004) and Montana's Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers (2009) were incorporated into one document that represents a continuum of growth and development for children from birth to age 5. This integrated document is called the 2014 Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS). Major changes include:

- Instead of using the term “guidelines,” the current document uses the term “standards.” This wording aligns with similar documents used across the state to guide the education of Montana’s children, most notably K—12 Standards.
- Changes were made to ensure that the MELS incorporate current research, particularly in the areas of brain development and cultural/linguistic diversity, including significant and meaningful integration of the Montana Indian Education for All Act. In addition, a crosswalk analysis of the MELS was conducted to highlight connections with other professional standards, including the Montana Common Core Kindergarten Standards for Language Arts and Math and the Next Generation Science Standards as well as the Head Start Framework.
- The MELS feature a continuum of developmental progression without listing specific ages. Children’s development can be identified and observed over time on the continuum described in each developmental domain.

Applicable Settings

The Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS) are applicable to children regardless of the setting in which they are cared for, nurtured, and educated. These settings may include their own homes; family, friend and neighbor homes; family and group child care homes; child care centers; preschool programs; Head Start; Early Head Start; and public schools.

Appropriate Use

In case there is any confusion about how, when, and where to use the MELS, the following lists of how they SHOULD and SHOULD NOT be used have been created. This information clearly defines the MELS as a tool to guide early childhood practice in a way that benefits an early childhood practitioner’s decision-making and intentional teaching on a daily basis.

✗ 2014 Montana's Early Learning Standards (MELS) SHOULD be used to

Acknowledge the diverse value systems in which children learn and grow

Assist early childhood professionals in communication/collaboration with policy makers, community members, and key stakeholders

Develop training and education programs for adults working with children and their families

Emphasize the importance of early care and education to the community

Help teachers focus on what children CAN do and reinforce the idea that children are capable learners

Help teachers meet children's developmental needs, including those of children with disabilities, at the level they require and in an individual capacity

Help teachers recognize the critical need to meet children's emotional/social needs and that meeting those needs serves as the basis for a child's future learning

Help teachers recognize their own value and abilities

Improve quality in early care and education programs and serve as a model for teaching and building secure relationships with young children

Increase the flow of information among early childhood teachers, professionals, and policy makers

Support teachers in learning more about child development

✗ 2014 Montana's Early Learning Standards (MELS) SHOULD NOT be used to

Diagnose or assess a child's development

Evaluate early care and education programs or parenting skills

Highlight differences between the core philosophies of early childhood and elementary education

Increase pressure on children and the adults who care for and educate them

Justify inappropriate assessment packages

Make decisions about funding programs

Mandate specific curriculum or practices or serve as rules and regulations for programs to follow

Place increased importance on academics and move adults away from the power of play and relationships

"Push down" curriculum meant for older children to young children

Screen children to determine school readiness and/or limit access to kindergarten

Suggest that preschool is more valuable than the home experience

Audience

The Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS) are a tool for every early childhood and related service professional working with young children and their families, including early care and education practitioners, elementary school teachers, early interventionists, pre-service teachers, parent/family educators, family support specialists, home visitors, mental health providers, and child/family health practitioners. The MELS are also a tool for those who plan and provide early childhood professional and career development, including college instructors, high school teachers, professional development specialists, and Early Head Start/ Head Start training and technical assistance personnel.

Caution

The Montana Early Learning Standards are not intended to be used as a diagnostic or assessment tool. They are not mandatory standards nor are they a set of regulations.

Description

The Montana Early Learning Standards document is designed to guide the work of early childhood professionals in a variety of early childhood settings. Professionals who implement the Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS) help ensure that children from birth to age five develop the skills and knowledge they need to achieve success in learning and reach their full potential in life.

Language

Throughout the MELS, the people that care for young children are referred to primarily as “teacher” as defined as “anyone who cares for or provides support and services to young children and families.” Although those who provide direct services to children are often referred to as “caregivers” or “practitioners,” adults cannot care for children well without teaching, and teaching is most effective when it occurs in a caring and nurturing context (ELS Task Force, August 2013).

Further, while adults are most often considered the primary teachers of young children, interaction, modeling, and playful experiences can be led—either formally or informally—by peers and older children, including the child’s siblings.

Purpose

The MELS provide a structure that frames the amazing developmental process from birth to age five as the foundation for children’s success in life and learning. They are meant to:

- Provide a common language and improve communication among the professionals who impact and provide services to young children and their families;
- Build upon early childhood professionals’ understanding of the continuum of children’s growth and development;
- Serve as a resource for ways to enhance children’s early learning experiences;
- Describe the expectations for what young children should know and be able to do across different domains of learning;
- Support the transfer of child development knowledge to improve teaching and caregiving practices and encourage individualization;
- Provide information and context for the range of skills children develop from birth to age 5. They do not provide a comprehensive or exhaustive list of every skill children might achieve in the first years of life.

Organization: Core Domains → Subdomains → Standards

The MELS are arranged in multiple layers, reflecting the complexity of young children's development. Children's development is organized within 4 **Core Domains**, which can be defined as broad categories or dimensions of development reflective of children's learning and growth. A basic description of each **Core Domain** is included along with an explanation of essential components across domains: teacher-child relationships, environment, and connection with other core domains. The **Core Domains** are:

1. Emotional/Social
2. Physical
3. Communication
4. Cognition

Although the MELS are organized within **Core Domains**, it is important to note that each **Core Domain** is related to and influences the others. Children's growth and development occur, not as a series of isolated events throughout the first years of life, but through ebb and flow in a unique way for each child. Sometimes growth in one domain will result in a pause, or even regression, in another domain.

The four **Core Domains** are further expanded into 12 **Subdomains** that are described in more detail in 47 **Standards**. The **Standards** are statements reflecting young children's growth and development and are accompanied by detailed descriptions. The chart below shows the relationship and the content of the **Core Domains**, **Subdomains**, and **Standards**.

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Core Domains	Subdomains	Standards
1. EMOTIONAL/ SOCIAL	Culture, Family, and Community	Culture Family Community
	Emotional Development	Self-Concept Self-Efficacy Self-Regulation Emotional Expression
	Social Development	Interactions with Adults Interactions with Peers
2. PHYSICAL	Physical Development	Fine Motor Gross Motor Sensorimotor
	Health, Safety, and Personal Care	Daily Living Skills Nutrition Physical Fitness Safety Practices

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3. COMMUNICATION	Communication and Language Development	Receptive Language Expressive Communication Social Communication English Language Learners: Dual Language Acquisition
	Literacy	Early Reading and Book Appreciation Print Development and Writing Print Concepts Phonological Awareness
4. COGNITION	Approaches to Learning	Curiosity Initiative and Self-direction Persistence and Attentiveness Reflection and Interpretation
	Reasoning and Representational Thought	Reasoning and Representational Thought
	Creative Arts	Creative Movement Drama Music Visual or Fine Arts
	Mathematics and Numeracy	Number Sense and Operations Measurement Algebraic Thinking and Operations Pattern Recognition and Reproduction Geometry and Spatial Reasoning
	Science	Scientific Thinking/Use of the Scientific Method Life Science Physical Science Earth and Space Engineering
	Social Studies	Awareness of Time (History) Places, Regions and Spatial Awareness (Geography) The Physical World (Ecology) Technology

Organization of Benchmarks, Indicators, and Learning Opportunities for Each Standard

The **Standards** can be further used to shape a continuum of behaviors expected in children from birth to 5 years old or **Benchmarks**. For each **Standard**, there are 10 - 17 **Benchmarks** with related **Indicators** and **Learning Opportunities**. The **Benchmarks** explain key skills and behaviors representative of what we want the child to be able to do to achieve each **Standard**.

For each **Benchmark**, there is an associated **Indicator**. **Indicators** describe behaviors we might see that demonstrate children have reached the **Benchmark**.

For each **Indicator**, there is an example of the type of **Learning Opportunities** or experiences we might provide to support development. In other words, activities we might use to support children's development of the behavior described in the **Benchmark** and result in ultimate achievement of the **Benchmark**.

The chart below illustrates one example from the MELS of how the layers or levels of development fit together into a useful framework for guiding early childhood practice.

Core Domain Four: COGNITION

Subdomain: Approaches to Learning

Standard 4.3: Persistence and attentiveness –

Children develop the ability to focus their attention and concentrate to complete tasks and increase their learning.

Benchmarks	Indicators	Learning Opportunities
<i>What we want the child to be able to do</i>	<i>Behaviors we might see</i>	<i>Experiences we might use to support development</i>
b. Hold the attention of a caregiver	The child may smile, babble and/or sustain eye contact.	Play with the child one-on-one and face-to-face.

Revision Process

Throughout 2013, drafts of the MELS were intensely reviewed, modified, and validated by a task force of early childhood leaders from across the state, representing various areas of expertise and service (see Acknowledgments). In addition, multiple stakeholders representing specific interests, such as Indian Education for All, reviewed the document and provided feedback. Other reviewers included early childhood providers, program directors, higher education faculty, special education practitioners, and Early Head Start/ Head Start personnel. Comments were received on the document's usability, readability, completeness, and attention to specific details. Additional information about the MELS Task Force members can be found at the end of this document.

Early Learning Principles

The following principles reflect the essential understandings and fundamental early childhood concepts that strengthen both development and implementation of the Montana Early Learning Standards. It is well documented that growth and development in the early years is essential to children's success in school and in life. There is also ample evidence linking high quality early care and education programs with future achievement and lifelong learning.

The Early Learning Principles include the roles and relationships of a number of critical issues, including assessment, brain research, and developmentally appropriate practice, to children's growth and development.

Alignment across

Early Childhood Settings

The Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS) were aligned to ensure flow between the foundations for learning and the standards set by Montana's Office of Public Instruction (OPI) for kindergarten through 12th grade and the Head Start Framework. In the Joint Position Statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education entitled "Early Learning Standards: Creating the Conditions for Success," it is made clear that early childhood is a unique period of life. The Position Statement asserts that this period serves as the foundation for later learning and has value outside of preparation for elementary school.

The Position Statement further explains that early learning guidelines should be built forward, from their earliest beginnings, rather than being simplified versions of standards for older children. The result will be more powerful content and more valid expectations for early learning and skill development. With this process, early

learning standards do align with what comes later, but the connections are meaningful rather than mechanical and superficial (NAEYC and NAECS/SDE, 2002).

"Alignment works both horizontally, as the child experiences a single learning level, and vertically as the child moves up through grade [developmental] levels.

- *Horizontal alignment* highlights the coherence or inter-connectedness between standards (what children are expected to know and do), curriculum (what children are taught), instruction (how children are taught) and assessments (what and how children's progress is measured) within a single learning level. Learning is deepened.
- *Vertical alignment* highlights the continuous and progressive nature of learning and development. The skills and knowledge gained in one year serve not as an end point but as a foundation upon which to build additional skills and knowledge in the next year. Gains are sustained. In addition, aligned experiences include all areas of learning (social, emotional, physical and cognitive).

Aligned approaches require that such experiences are of high quality and ensure they are matched to the developmental abilities of individual children" (Education Commission of the States, 2010).

Assessment

Assessment is used to determine a child's growth and development across the developmental domains. Using the results of screening and assessment, teachers and families are prepared to meet the developmental and learning needs of each child.

The purpose of monitoring each child's development over time is to identify the interactions, activities, and environments that encourage the child to build on his or her existing

“When I approach a child, he inspires in me two sentiments: tenderness for what he is, and respect for what he may become.”

— Louis Pasteur

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knowledge and skills, to work with all the people involved in the child's life, and to recognize when others may need to become involved to benefit the child's growth and development.

Most states stress that their early learning guidelines or standards are not intended as a "readiness checklist" or an "assessment tool." Rather, states often recommend that early learning guidelines and standards be used to help early care and education providers select the instructional tools and assessment instruments that are appropriate for young children at different stages of their development. In these states, the results of the assessment are typically used on an individual, child-level basis, to inform instructional practices or to guide discussions with parents about their child's skills and abilities. They are not used to monitor statewide percentages of children "ready for school" (Daily, Burkhauser, and Halle, 2010).

"Tools for assessing young children's progress must be clearly connected to important learning represented in the standards, must be technically, developmentally, and culturally valid and must yield comprehensive, useful information" (NAEYC, 2002).

Brain Development and Research

Children have the right to have their early experiences acknowledged and recognized as extremely important in their growth and development. Children come into the world ready to learn and actively engage in making sense of their world from birth. The early years in a child's

life set the groundwork for a lifetime of brain development and must be taken into consideration when planning any further learning (Families and Work Institute, 1997).

The brain is made up of brain cells or neurons, connected to one another by synapses. It is by way of the connections between neurons that information is passed from cell to cell. Infants go through a critical period of neural growth immediately after birth and during the first years of life. Synaptic growth corresponds with whole branches of brain cells that receive and process signals in the brain. The greatest growth of branches and synapses occurs during the first five years of life. As a child's brain develops, it goes through several "critical periods," or developmental phases in which the brain requires certain environmental input or it will not develop normally (Murray, 2007).

The exceptionally strong influence of early experience on brain architecture makes the early years of life a period of great vulnerability as well as great opportunity for brain development. A growth-promoting environment with adequate nutrients, free of toxins, filled with social interactions, and an attentive caregiver, prepares the developing brain to function optimally (NSCDC, 2007). All domains of development and learning are closely related and critically important. To teach young children well involves fostering their development and learning in all domains (NAEYC, 2008).

Child Development Expertise

Each child has the right to expect that their early care and education practitioner has a solid knowledge of child development and continues to improve his or her practice through continuing education on the latest developments in the field. Teachers of young children need foundational knowledge in child development along with professional development in teaching practices that promote optimal outcomes for each child. Research shows that quality early care and education contributes to a child's readiness to learn, and that staff education and experience are determining factors in high quality programs (Pathways Mapping Initiative, 2002).

Connections among Domains

Children's development cannot easily be divided into separate domains because it occurs across domains and age ranges. That is, children are learning all the time and integrate their emerging knowledge in each area across everything they see and do.

The dynamic interaction of all areas and stages of development was considered in each MELS Domain and Benchmark. Research shows that learning is multidimensional and that children learn best through integrated, meaningful experiences. Individual development and learning is constructed on a continuum that builds on children's prior experience and knowledge, crossing over to other areas of development. Children's growth, development, and learning

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should be incorporated into typical everyday routines and naturally occurring “teachable moments” as well as into carefully planned activities throughout the day.

Culture

Culture is a word for people’s way of life, and children acquire cultural knowledge from the day they are born. Each child has a unique culture within their own family. Respect and appreciation for each child’s cultural, racial, and linguistic heritage are a valuable and important part of his or her development. The MELS reinforce healthy partnerships between families, early childhood educators, and communities, in developing culturally and linguistically competent practices and services to support young children. It is recognized by the National Education Goals Panel, based on research, that a child’s learning is complex and is influenced by cultural and contextual factors (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1995).

Curriculum

Curriculum is an educational plan that guides the teaching process - from lesson development - to implementation - to evaluation. Quality early childhood curriculum is grounded in research-based understandings of child development and developmentally appropriate practices. Teachers utilize curriculum to identify what to teach, to develop and organize learning experiences, and to assess what was learned. “The curriculum also

needs to align with the program’s and families’ background knowledge and experiences” (Bullard, 2014), as well as individual and group outcomes and early learning standards.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Childhood is a unique stage in human development and must be appreciated as such (NAEYC, 2006). Each child has the right to be treated as an individual with distinctive strengths, interests, and approaches to learning. Early care and education must address the “whole child” and be consistently working with children on multiple levels. Learning opportunities must be provided that recognize that development is continuous and sequential across areas of growth and learning. Developmentally appropriate practice is, in the simplest terms, an effort to provide nurturing care and learning activities, materials, or toys that promote each individual child’s development.

The pace and sequence of development and learning varies from child to child. The MELS acknowledge that children begin life as capable and confident learners with unique strengths, interests, and approaches to learning. Teachers have the responsibility to adjust their practice to support the growth and development of each child considering both the child’s age and developmental stage.

Developmentally appropriate practice results when decisions about the well-being and education of young children are based on what is known about: a) child development and learning; b) the strengths, interests, and needs of each individual child; and c) the social and cultural context in which each child lives.

It is essential for caregivers to know and understand the growth and development of young children, both as individuals and as a group, and provide a variety of rich and challenging age-appropriate learning experiences.

Dual Language Learners

The acquisition of language is essential to children’s cognitive and social development. Regardless of what language children speak, they still develop and learn. (Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education, A position statement of NAEYC , 1995).

Dual language learners are children learning two or more languages at the same time, as well as those learning a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language (Alliance for a Better Community, 2012). An English language learner is a child whose home language is not English who is learning to become proficient in English. The term “bilingual” refers to the skills of a person who has developed fluency in two languages...other experts use it to describe anyone who is in the process of learning to use a second language” (Nemeth, 2012).

Research indicates that developing and maintaining a child’s first language supports and facilitates learning of the second language.

Emotional and Social Development

Healthy emotional and social development supports a child’s emerging capacity to experience, manage, and express the full range of positive and negative emotions; develop close, satisfying

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relationships with other children and adults; and actively explore their environment and learn (Zero to Three, 2005). It is the desire to connect with others that motivates the child to learn.

“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

— Nelson Mandela

Developing emotional security and basic mental processes within the context of positive relationships and nurturing environments lay the foundation for all future learning (NCCIC, 2005). Young children’s social and behavioral competence predict their academic performance in the first grade, over and above their cognitive skills and family background (Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behaviors, 2003). Children thrive in the care of familiar adults who play a significant role in their lives over time, adults that the child can count on for relative consistency of style, feelings of security, belonging, and love (WestEd/PITC, 2007).

Environments

Early childhood environment plays a critical role in children’s learning and development. “The environment we are in affects our moods, ability to form relationships, effectiveness in work or play - even our health” (Bullard, 2014). Effective learning environments are created with respect to each child’s family and culture (Gandini, 2001) and include well-developed spaces that support

play and exploration. Child-centered, stimulating, aesthetic, and thoughtfully planned environments support optimal development and can be emotionally nurturing (Gerber, 2013).

Ethics and Professionalism

Each child has the right to be cared for and educated under the protection of a professional Code of Ethical Conduct. Early care and education practitioners should understand and follow the profession’s ethical guidelines at all times and in all situations (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998).

Working with young children requires a commitment to the field of early childhood education. Professionals gain knowledge of developmental theories and practices, promote quality in the services they provide, and take advantage of opportunities for growth and competence through continuing education and self-reflection. The resulting care and education they provide balances the evidence of the effectiveness of any given practice with accumulated wisdom and experience, standards and recommended practices, and current research in the field. The paramount responsibility of the caregiver is to provide a safe, healthy, nurturing, responsive setting for the child and, above all, cause no harm to children (NAEYC, revised 2005).

Ethically driven and evidence-based practice changes the way a person’s knowledge of early childhood approaches is created, interpreted, shared, and applied (Zero To Three, 2006).

Teachers must use a decision-making process that integrates the best available research evidence about teaching and learning with family and professional values and wisdom.

Family Engagement

Children have the right to the involvement of their families in all aspects of their care and education. Families are key partners in every young child’s education and must be engaged and supported by the early care and education community. Effective communication and participation consistently lead to positive effects for the early development of young children (National Association for the Education of Young Children and National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education, 2002). Families need access to information about what to look for in choosing quality early care and education programs, opportunities to learn about their child’s strengths, and regular involvement in setting goals for their child.

Health and Well-being

Children, as our most vulnerable citizens, rely on parents and teachers to meet their needs. Basic human needs include love and emotional security, food, shelter, clothing, and medical care. When these basic needs are met, children can take full advantage of learning opportunities.

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Teachers should be able to recognize when children's needs are compromised or neglected and employ the proper steps to ensure their safety and health. Research shows that general health is a critical indicator of a child's success in school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002 and Pathways Mapping Initiative, 2002).

Health and wellness means more than just being free from illness and injury. It means having personal needs met by dependable adults who are making and modeling healthy choices and teaching the child to make such choices for themselves over a lifetime.

Inclusion

Children are capable of learning, achieving, and making developmental progress regardless of their physical, emotional, or cognitive abilities, backgrounds, or experiences. Each child has the right to the supports, resources, and services he or she needs to participate actively and meaningfully in the early childhood setting. Because of the uniqueness of each child, the services and interventions provided must be responsive to the young child's needs and patterns of development, taking into consideration the whole child and family (DEC, 2005).

Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a

sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports (DEC/NAEYC Joint Position Statement on Inclusion, 2009).

Quality programs practice inclusion to address the needs of each child (the epitome of individualization). Teachers must be prepared to work together with families, following the parents' lead. They must make referrals when children's development appears delayed, collaborate with children's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Program (IEP) teams, modify/adapt program activities and routines (make reasonable accommodations), and implement appropriate interventions within the context of the early childhood setting (DEC/NAEYC Joint Position Statement on Inclusion, 1993).

Indian Education for All

The Montana Constitution of 1972 (Article X, section 1:2) provides recognition for the state's obligations to Indian education (Montana Legislative Services, 2009). "It is the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop the full educational potential of each person. Equality of educational opportunity is guaranteed to each person of the state" (Montana OPI, 2013). In addition to the educational priority of ensuring full educational opportunities to all Montana students, the Montana constitution also

recognized the importance of increasing Native and non-Native students' knowledge of Montana Indian histories and cultures (Montana Legislative Services, 2009).

For early childhood education, the implications of this legislative and constitutional promise is based upon the premise that early educators must help children to be aware of and demonstrate respect for differences amongst people, but more importantly, similarities amongst themselves, their communities, and the peoples of Montana. "Within our state, Montana Indians are recognized by individual tribes, and early learning experiences and activities can provide respectful inclusion and accurate portrayals of Native Americans" (OPI, 2013).

Individuality

Each child approaches life in a unique way based upon his or her temperament, prior experiences, and environmental circumstances. How the people around young children understand and respond to these individual differences has a significant impact on the young child's growth and development. Appreciating and understanding how individual children approach the world allows teachers to respond to his or her needs.

1. **Temperament:** Each of us is born with a unique set of characteristics that determine how we approach the world around us and build relationships with others. Researchers (Thomas, Chess, and Birch, 1968) have identified nine different temperament traits that are displayed from birth:

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- Activity level—how much energy one needs or exhibits
- Biological rhythms—the regularity of patterns of sleeping, eating, or eliminating
- Approach/Withdrawal—how easily one reacts to a new situation or experience
- Adaptability—how easily one can adapt to changes in the environment
- Sensitivity threshold—how sensitive one is to potentially irritating stimuli
- Intensity of Reaction—the amount of energy one uses to express feelings
- Quality of mood—the amount of “cheerful, friendly” or “cranky, unfriendly” behavior
- Distractibility—how easily one can be distracted from an activity
- Persistence—the length of time one will stay at a difficult task

Knowing a child’s temperament can help a teacher understand the child’s behavior and adjust interactions accordingly. When a child is accepted as he or she is, he or she is more likely to build stronger relationships and be more open to learning and experimentation. Recognizing that these temperament traits may be with the child from birth, adults will be better able to respond to them in appropriate ways and maximize early learning.

2. **Environmental Circumstances:** Anything and everyone surrounding the young child contributes to his or her life experiences. Varied circumstances add to the uniqueness of the child’s personality. These include family composition, living situation, and how many different people and places the child experiences in a day.

As with temperament, life experiences affect how individual children build relationships and approach learning. Each child’s unique life circumstance can be discovered by talking with family members and others involved in the child’s life. Truly understanding each child’s situation may take time, and can only be accomplished as a trusting relationship is built. Ultimately, this information makes it possible for teachers to establish an environment that supports the child in meaningful ways.

Lifelong Learning

Each child has the right to be supported as a lifelong learner. Children should be recognized as capable individuals and competent learners. They must be allowed to develop a disposition and eagerness to learn in order to find success in their learning experiences. A positive approach to learning has been shown to be a critical determinant to mastering school skills (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

Modeling

Teacher modeling is an element of explicit instruction that begins with setting the stage for learning, often followed by a clear explanation of what to do (telling), followed by modeling

of the process (showing), followed by multiple opportunities for practice (guiding), and imitation until independence is attained. Modeling a love of learning and inquisitiveness about the world we live in is an important role for early childhood practitioners.

Open-ended Materials and Open-ended Questions

Objects and learning materials that are open-ended have multiple and infinite possibilities for exploration, creation, and ways of using them. Open-ended questions use language that encourages children’s critical thinking, has no implied right or wrong answer, and leads to reflection. Open-ended questions typically begin with words such as “Why”, and “How”, or phrases such as “Tell me about”. Often they are not technically a question, but a statement which implicitly asks for a meaningful response.

Play

Children build new knowledge and develop new skills through play and active exploration using open-ended, hands-on materials. Play is so important to optimal child development that it has been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right of every child (General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of November 1989).

Children have the right to expect that their play is respected as a valuable learning tool. They need to have a rich learning environment to explore, and they need to be exposed to a variety of experiences that help deepen their understanding of the world around them.

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Children learn best through a combination of teacher-guided and child-guided methods, through both guided play and open – ended activities. Play is how a child accesses the complexities of the world and is the primary way they learn about the world around them (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009). Dramatic or symbolic play is when children use props, plots, and roles in their pretend play to help them make sense of their world.

Play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation, as well as promoting language, cognition, and social competence. Children of all ages love to play, and it gives them opportunities to explore the world, interact with others, express and control emotions, develop their symbolic and problem-solving abilities, and practice emerging skills.

Research shows the links between play and foundational capacities such as memory, self-regulation, oral language abilities, social skills, and success in school (NAEYC, 2008). Play offers individualized learning opportunities – meaningful experiences that engage children's interests, abilities and culture through self-discovery and challenging, but attainable, tasks.

The stages of play are:

- Unoccupied Play – child performs random movements that do not seem to have a goal
- Solitary Play – child plays alone
- Onlooker Play – child watches other children play

- Parallel Play – child plays separately from others but near other children; perhaps with toys like those the others are using or in a manner that mimics their play
- Associative Play – children's play that involves social interaction with little or no organization
- Cooperative Play – children's interaction in a group with a sense of group identity and organized activity

Policy-making

For children to grow and develop to their fullest potential they need safe, nurturing, and healthy environments. Collaboration of policy-makers, community leaders, professionals, and families is necessary to develop strategies to meet the needs of children.

Policy-makers must build an infrastructure at the community, state, and federal level which includes a professional development system; access to affordable health care and nutritional services; high quality care and education programs accessible to everyone; and services linked to health, mental health, and social services.

Decision makers have the responsibility to keep in mind the effects that their actions have on our youngest citizens (Children's Defense Fund, 2002).

Primary Caregiver

A primary caregiver is any adult primarily responsible for the care and education of a young child. Primary caregivers may include teachers, parents, guardians, foster parents, grandparents, or other significant family members.

Quality

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines quality as "degree of excellence." Programs that serve young children should continually be working to improve by showing a willingness to change and grow. This is critical to the children, families, and communities that rely on their services (NAEYC, 2006).

Research shows that quality early care and education contributes to a child's readiness to learn, and that staff education and experience are determining factors in high quality programs (Pathways Mapping Initiative, 2002). The responsibility for program quality rests with the leadership of the program and the teachers. Children and families should be able to expect that early childhood programs are prepared to meet their needs.

Research on child care has shown that small group size and appropriate adult to child ratios are also key components of quality care. The younger the child, the smaller the group size needs to be (PITC, 2007). An early childhood teacher should have a solid knowledge of child development, and continue to improve his or her practices through continuing education in the field.

Relationships

Children have the right to be cared for by adults who understand the importance of nurturing relationships. Positive social relationships are the foundations for healthy growth and development. The MELS reflect the belief that infants and toddlers who develop strong attachments with primary caregivers are better able to learn, play and

grow. “A secure attachment to a caregiver is where a young child recognizes a caregiver as a ‘secure base’ from whom exploration is possible, and who can be returned to if exploration leads to stress that the child cannot handle alone. This is not simply an emotional bonding, which emphasizes closeness, but is broader in scope and recognizes the need for children to develop their autonomy” (Oates, 2007). Relationship-based care should drive all other caregiving and teaching practices.

1. Family Relationships: When a young child is cared for outside the home, the child’s home, community, and family life must be valued and respected. Responsive family partnerships grow from interpersonal relationships that reflect a mutual respect and appreciation for individual cultures, values, and language.

Family partnerships are key in every child’s care and education. Responsive teachers honor the values and practices within the families being served, as well as among the people providing the services (DEC, 2002).

A child’s home language must be respected as the basis for learning a second language. That fact is recognized by the National Education Goals Panel, based on research that a child’s learning is complex, and is influenced by cultural and contextual factors (NAEYC, 1995).

The results of the relationship between families, children and other adults last a lifetime. Effective family communication and involvement consistently lead to positive effects for the early development of young children (NAEYC and NAES/SDE, 2002).

2. Teacher/caregiver Relationships: As previously noted, the process of developing emotional security and basic mental processes within the context of nurturing relationships and environments lays the foundation for all future learning (NITCCI and NCCIC, 2005). The process of forming a strong positive identity should occur in a setting that offers security, protection, and intimacy (Zero to Three, 2007).

“All of life is education and everybody is a teacher and everybody is forever a pupil.”

— Abraham Maslow

Children thrive in the care of teachers who play a significant role in their lives over time, teachers that the child can count on for relative consistency of style, feelings of security, belonging, and love (WestEd, PITC, 2007.) Children’s teachers need to be nurturing and clearly understand the importance—and practice—of respectful, responsive, and reciprocal care for the age group they are working with.

Research and Best Practice

Early childhood practice should reflect current research and be grounded in evidence-based practices. The MELS reflect the most recent

available research about child development. Where research is not available, information in the MELS is supported by evidence-based practice and professional wisdom.

Virginia Buysse and Patricia Wesley from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill define evidence-based practice as “a decision-making process that integrates the best available research evidence with family and professional wisdom and values—in other words, a balance of scientific proof and professional and family experience and values.”

Responsive Routines

Many learning opportunities for young children take place during and around routine care: feeding/eating, bathing/washing up, diapering/toileting, sleeping/quiet time, and dressing. Healthy growth and development occurs through developing “deep, meaningful, and satisfying” reciprocal relationships through verbal and nonverbal communication during these typical routines.

A loving and responsive caregiver uses every opportunity to help children grow and thrive (Zero to Three, 2007). Following the child’s unique rhythms and styles promotes well-being and a healthy sense of self (PITC, 2007). Routines and activities should be performed with respect to the child’s pace and viewed as opportunities to meaningfully connect and build positive rapport.

School Readiness

Children should be recognized as capable, competent learners and supported as such. They are born ready to learn. The experiences that children have in the early years are the foundation for growth and development, and what they learn through these experiences is shaped by each child's family, community, and school. Children have the right to expect that public schools, specifically kindergarten classrooms, will be prepared to meet their needs. Failing to meet the challenge to improve all children's readiness and achievement will perpetuate the inequities of achievement gaps and the low performance of the U.S. student population as a whole (NAEYC, 2009).

Screen Time

Screen time generally describes time spent using any category of electronic devices that include screens, such as televisions, tablets, and cell phones. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screen time for children under the age of two and very limited access for preschoolers.

"Modern science confirms what the early childhood community has known for years that infants, toddlers, and young children learn through exploring with their whole bodies and need plenty of face-to-face interactions. Yet from infancy, children spend increasing amounts of time with screen technologies and studies show that the more time young children spend with screens, the less time they spend engaged in interactions with caring adults and in hands-on, creative play" (www.commercialfreechildhood.org/sites/default/files/EarlyChildhoodProfessionals.pdf).

Use of Technology

Understanding the appropriate use of technology in early childhood is essential as more programs use computers, the Internet, and other digital technologies. "Technological tools can support learner-centered and play-oriented early childhood curriculum and promote relationship-building among children, families, and the wider community. Not all programs have access to costly technology, but most do have more common tools, such as a computer or digital camera, for providing meaningful hands-on experiences for children" (www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200809/OnOurMinds.pdf). It is important for teachers and parents to make intentional and well-informed decisions about technology and how it can affect children's development and learning – both negatively and positively.



The following needs assessment is a tool intended to be used by school districts and Head Start programs to gauge current level of quality. High quality programs are fully implementing the Montana Preschool Standards of Accreditation. Answer the following questions with regard to your current preschool implementation status to determine your strengths and areas of in need of further refinement and development to meet basic Standards of Accreditation. If you are in the process of planning changes that will be implemented soon, please note those changes in the column designated for remarks.

Table 1			
School District:			
School/Head Start Name:			
Name and Position of Person Completing this Survey:			
Date Completed:			
Contact Phone Number:			
Email Address:			
Mailing Address:			
Current Number of Preschool Classrooms	Current Number of Lead Preschool Teachers	Current Number of Preschool Paraprofessional	Anticipated Number of Preschool Classrooms in the Next School Year

As appropriate, rate the extent of the implementation of quality standards denoted. A rating of 1 indicates the *Standard of Quality* is not being implemented but might possibly be explored, and a rating of 5 indicates sustained consistent implementation of the *Standard of Quality*.

1 2 3 4 5

Not being implemented-----Sustained Practice

Table 2			
High Quality Preschool Programs Information			
Program Leadership and Administration			
LEADERSHIP			
Standard of Quality			
1)The program leadership has implemented policies, procedures, and systems that support stable staff and strong personnel, fiscal, and program management so all students, families, and staff have high quality experiences. (10.63.201)			1 2 3 4 5
TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS			
Standard of Quality	# of Teachers	Remarks	

Table 2		
High Quality Preschool Programs Information		
2) Number of lead teachers who are licensed and endorsed appropriately in accordance with Chapter 58 (bachelor's degree in Early Childhood, Special Education Preschool, or K-8 Elementary Education). (10.63.202)		
3) Number of lead teachers with an Early Childhood Education Special Permissive Competency. (10.63.202) Note: These teachers may be lead teachers until July 1, 2018, at which time they need to be appropriately licensed and endorsed to remain lead teacher.		
4) Number of lead teachers or individuals with background, training, or experience in early childhood that are seeking appropriate licensing and endorsement and plan to apply for a Class 5 Provisional License to remain lead teacher until they receive their credentials.(10.63.202) Note: Teachers may teach with a Class 5 Provisional License for up to three years.		
5) Number of lead teachers who currently do not have an appropriate license and are not actively seeking one. (10.63.202)		
EARLY CHILDHOOD PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS		
Standard of Quality	# of Teachers	Remarks
6) Number of paraprofessionals who have completed two years of study at an institution of higher education. (10.63.203)		
7) Number of paraprofessionals who have obtained an associate (or higher) degree. (10.63.203)		
8) Number of paraprofessionals who have a high school diploma and have met a rigorous Standard of Quality in which they have proven they are able to demonstrate knowledge through a formal state or local academic assessment of and have the ability to assist in the delivery of		

Table 2		
High Quality Preschool Programs Information		
the curriculum, instruction, and program delivery standards to support students' development of the knowledge and skills outlined in the Early Learning Content Standards. (10.63.203)		
EARLY CHILDHOOD PARAPROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION		
Standard of Quality		
9) Early childhood paraprofessionals are under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher who is responsible for instruction and assessment of students. (10.63.204)		1 2 3 4 5
10) Early childhood paraprofessionals assigned to assist students with special education needs are under the direct supervision of the teacher. (10.63.204)		1 2 3 4 5
11) The supervising teacher is always available while an early childhood paraprofessional is fulfilling his or her responsibilities. We understand that they cannot be simultaneously assigned to another teaching duty or preparation time. (10.63.204)		1 2 3 4 5
CLASS SIZE		
Standard of Quality		
12) There is one appropriately licensed and endorsed teacher for 10 students, with an early childhood paraprofessional for any additional students over 10. (10.63.205)		1 2 3 4 5
13) There are no more than 18 total students in a classroom with two or more adults. This is the maximum class size regardless of the number of adults in the room. (10.63.205)		1 2 3 4 5
AGGREGATE HOURS		
Standard of Quality	Number	Remarks
14) Number of half-time classrooms that operate at least 180 days of the year (minimum of 720 hours per year). (10.63.206)		
Note: Outdoor play, snack, and meal time are included in the aggregate hours.		

Table 2		
High Quality Preschool Programs Information		
Naptime and daily transportation to and from the classroom do not count as part of the 720-hour preschool program hours.		
15) Number of classrooms that operate a minimum of six hours per day at least 180 days of the year (minimum of 1,080 hours per year). (10.63.206)		
16) Number of days in the school term. (10.63.206)		
17) Current length of the school day. (10.63.206)		
18) Number of school days in a week. (10.63.206)		
ENROLLMENT		
Standard of Quality	Number	Remarks
19) Number of children enrolled who have reached <u>3</u> years of age before the district's official start date of the preschool program. (10.63.207)		
20) Number of children enrolled who have reached <u>3</u> years of age who are eligible for special education services and related services before the district's official start date of the preschool program. (10.63.207)		
21) Number of <u>3</u> year olds enrolled who are not eligible for special education and related services. (10.63.207)		
22) Number of children enrolled who have reached <u>4</u> years of age before the district's official start date of the preschool program. (10.63.207)		
23) Number of children enrolled who have reached <u>4</u> years of age who are eligible for special education services and related services before the district's official start date of the preschool program. (10.63.207)		
24) Number of children who are <u>4</u> years old upon enrollment from families whose income is <u>at or below</u> 200 percent of the		

Table 2			
High Quality Preschool Programs Information			
Federal Poverty Line (refer to chart on last page). (10.63.207)			
25) Number of children who are 4 years old upon enrollment from families whose income is above 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Line (refer to chart on last page). (10.63.207)			
Early Learning Content Standards and Developmental Domains			
Standards, Curriculum, and Instruction			
Standard of Quality			
26) We use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching strategies that enhance students' development and learning of the Montana Early Learning Standards. (10.63.301)			1.....2.....3.....4.....5
Curriculum			
Standard of Quality			
27) Our curriculum contains a written philosophy and framework, grounded in research-based understandings of child development, to provide a clear coherent focus for planning students' experiences. (10.63.302)			1.....2.....3.....4.....5
28) Our curriculum guides the learning process and daily plans for learning through the selection of materials and equipment to enhance development and learning in each core domain, including emotional/social, physical, communication and cognition, and encourage integration of early childhood content areas, including social, emotional, physical, health, safety, language, literacy, mathematics, science,			1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Table 2			
High Quality Preschool Programs Information			
social studies, creative expression and the arts, and technology. (10.63.302)			
29) Our curriculum includes planned opportunities for active exploration, discovery, and social interaction. (10.63.302)			1 2 3 4 5
30) Our curriculum plans for students' engagement in play each day. (10.63.302)			1 2 3 4 5
31) Our curriculum is implemented in a manner reflective of student's family and community lives while being responsive to diversity, including gender, age, language, culture, and ability, opportunities for students and families to learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians, particularly Montana Indian tribes, in a culturally responsive manner. (10.63.302)			1 2 3 4 5
Assessment			
Standard of Quality			
32) Have assessment processes in place for monitoring the progress of students toward achieving content standards and learning in the developmental domains using formative and summative approaches that include universal screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessments. (10.63.302)			1 2 3 4 5
33) Staff administration of assessments is valid and reliable. (10.63.302)			1 2 3 4 5
34) Staff understands how to interpret assessment results to guide instructional decision making. (10.63.302)			1 2 3 4 5
35) Educators and teams have timely access to disaggregated data to inform instructional planning and decision making. (10.63.302)			1 2 3 4 5
36) Families are involved as partners in linguistically and culturally responsive ways to inform decisions about students' needs. (10.63.302)			1 2 3 4 5
37) Assessment data is used to determine the effectiveness of the instructional			1 2 3 4 5

Table 2			
High Quality Preschool Programs Information			
program and guides adjustments for improvement. (10.63.302)			
INSTRUCTION			
Standard of Quality			
38) The preschool program shall ensure developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching strategies that enhance students' development and learning of the Early Learning Content Standards through the program's curriculum. (10.63.303)			1 2 3 4 5
39) Learning opportunities intentionally engage young learners in meaningful, planned, and purposeful experiences related to the curriculum goals and content standards. (10.63.303)			1 2 3 4 5
40) Staff use a variety of effective approaches and strategies which include opportunities for both teacher and student initiated interactions and activities. (10.63.303)			1 2 3 4 5
41) Staff use knowledge of each student's development to enhance instruction, modify strategies and materials, and adjust supports and challenges as students gain competence, understanding, and skills. (10.63.303)			1 2 3 4 5
42) Staff build upon students' language, understanding of concepts, and increase vocabulary. (10.63.303)			1 2 3 4 5
43) Staff integrate knowledge of students' families and the community to build relationships that foster integral connections with the curriculum and learning experiences. (10.63.303)			1 2 3 4 5
44) Staff use cultural and community resources in the classroom to enhance each student's learning and development. (10.63.303)			1 2 3 4 5
45) Staff work as a team to implement learning plans, including plans for students with special needs. (10.63.303)			1 2 3 4 5

Table 2			
High Quality Preschool Programs Information			
Preschool Program Delivery Standards			
PHYSICAL AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT			
Standard of Quality			
46) Our environment is designed to protect students' health and safety. (10.63.401)			1 2 3 4 5
47) Our environment allows for supervision of students primarily by sight. (10.63.401)			1 2 3 4 5
48) Our environment provides sanitization in accordance to state and federal health standards. (10.63.401)			1 2 3 4 5
49) Our environment follows state and federal guidelines for meals and snacks. (10.63.401)			1 2 3 4 5
50) Our environment provides safe, supervised, and adequate outside play space with age-appropriate equipment and safe, adequate indoors space for each child. (10.63.401)			1 2 3 4 5
51) We have a written, predictable, but flexible schedule that provides intentionally planned routines and transitions. (10.63.401)			1 2 3 4 5
52) Daily indoor and outdoor activities are provided. (10.63.401)			1 2 3 4 5
53) Daily planned learning center time where students offer individual choice of activities. (10.63.401)			1 2 3 4 5
54) Children are engaged in daily opportunities to learn and play individually, in small groups, and as a whole group. (10.63.401)			1 2 3 4 5
55) Materials and equipment are developmentally appropriate. (10.63.401)			1 2 3 4 5
CHILD GUIDANCE			
Standard of Quality			
56) Staff employ a variety of strategies to foster self-regulation, respect for others, problem-solving, and emotional and social development in an ongoing			1 2 3 4 5

Table 2			
High Quality Preschool Programs Information			
interactive process, and help students learn how to communicate with others in developmentally appropriate ways. (10.63.402)			
57) Staff use positive behavior supports to ensure the social, emotional, and cultural development of each student. (10.63.402)			1 2 3 4 5
58) Staff provide a positive climate to ensure equality, inclusion, and citizenship. (10.63.402)			1 2 3 4 5
59) Staff develop relationships with the student and the student's family in ways that are linguistically and culturally sensitive. (10.63.402)			1 2 3 4 5
60) Staff provide opportunities for students to be contributing members of the classroom community. (10.63.402)			1 2 3 4 5
61) Staff provide clear behavioral expectations, including the use of effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior. (10.63.402)			1 2 3 4 5
62) For students with challenging behavior, staff partner with families and other professionals to develop and implement an individualized plan that foster the child's inclusion and success. (10.63.402)			1 2 3 4 5
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT			
Standard of Quality			
63) The program staff establish and maintain collaborative relationships with each child's family and community to foster student's development in all settings. (10.63.404)			1 2 3 4 5
64) Protocols are in place to ensure collaborative relationships between families and the community. (10.63.404)			1 2 3 4 5
65) The program has established intentional practices designed to foster strong reciprocal relationships with families. (10.63.404)			1 2 3 4 5

Table 2			
High Quality Preschool Programs Information			
66) The program ensures that families are an integral part of the decision-making team through communication and family conferences, which promote dialogue and partnership regarding their students' educational goals and services. (10.63.404)			1 2 3 4 5
67) The program collaborates with families to help students participate successfully in early childhood settings. (10.63.404)			1 2 3 4 5
68) The program ensures that all families, regardless of family structure, socioeconomic, racial, religious and cultural diversity, gender, abilities, or preferred languages are included in their child's educational experience. (10.63.404)			1 2 3 4 5
69) The program assists families in locating, contacting, and using community resources that support students' well-being, development, and goals. (10.63.404)			1 2 3 4 5
70) The program promotes awareness and understanding of the unique legal and political structures of Montana Tribal Nations in order to best meet the needs of Indian students and families. (10.63.404)			1 2 3 4 5
71) The program collaborates with community-based programs to ensure that parents and families have the resources they need to be involved in their students' education, growth, and development. (10.63.404)			1 2 3 4 5
72) The program provides access to health screenings and referrals for all enrolled students. (10.63.404)			1 2 3 4 5

Table 2.

**2014 POVERTY GUIDELINES FOR THE 48
CONTIGUOUS STATES
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Persons in family/household Poverty guideline

For families/households with more than eight persons,
add \$4,060 for each additional person.

1.	\$11,670
2	15,730
3.	19,790
4.	23,850
5	27,910
6	31,970
7.	36,030
8.	40,090

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

In the matter of the adoption of NEW) NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON
RULES I through XV pertaining to) PROPOSED ADOPTION
preschool programming for public)
schools)

TO: All Concerned Persons

1. On November 3, 2014, at 11:00 a.m., the Board of Public Education will hold a public hearing in the Office of Public Instruction conference room at 1300 11th Avenue, Helena, Montana, to consider the proposed adoption of the above-stated rules.

2. The Board of Public Education will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in this rulemaking process or need an alternative accessible format of this notice. If you require an accommodation, contact the Board of Public Education no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 21, 2014, to advise us of the nature of the accommodation that you need. Please contact Peter Donovan, Executive Secretary, 46 North Last Chance Gulch, P.O. Box 200601, Helena, Montana, 59620-0601; telephone (406) 444-0302; fax (406) 444-0847; or e-mail pdonovan@mt.gov.

3. The rules as proposed to be adopted provide as follows:

NEW RULE I. PROCEDURES (1) The trustees of a school may establish a public preschool program to meet the unique developmental needs for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years. When preschool programs are established they must be an integral part of the public school and must be governed according to the following accreditation standards for the preschool standards of early learning content and accreditation in coordination with the standards outlined for schools within ARM Title 10, chapter 55, excluding 10.55.601, 10.55.602, 10.55.603, 10.55.704, 10.55.705, 10.55.709, 10.55.710, 10.55.712, 10.55.715, and ARM Title 10, chapter 55, subchapters 10 through 21. For the purposes of the accreditation process detailed in ARM 10.55.606, preschool programs will be assessed on the program's assurance standards only.

(2) Preschool programs shall meet this chapter's curriculum, instruction, and program delivery standards, supporting children's development of the knowledge and skills outlined in the content standards in subchapter 3, which describe the expectations for what young children should know and be able to do across the four core developmental domains of learning upon entrance to kindergarten.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE II. DEFINITIONS (1) For the purposes of this chapter, the following terms apply:

(a) "Accreditation" means certification by the Board of Public Education that a school meets the adopted standards of the Board of Public Education for a specified school year.

(b) "Assessment" means the gathering, organizing, and evaluation of information about student learning in order to monitor and measure student learning, the effectiveness of the instructional program, and to inform local policies and decisions.

(c) "Collaborative inquiry" means a teaching strategy in which teachers and students engage in joint learning, discovery, or intellectual effort, or when groups of students work together to search for understanding, meaning, or solutions.

(d) "Developmental domain" means the broad, interrelated categories or dimensions of early childhood development reflective of preschool children's learning and growth. The four core domains include emotional/social, physical, communication, and cognitive.

(e) "Early childhood curriculum" means an articulated educational plan for young children, which is grounded in research-based understandings of child development and developmentally appropriate practices. Curriculum guides the teaching process from identifying what to teach, including early content standards in each of the four developmental domains and how to teach, including developing learning experiences based upon individual and group outcomes, and assessing what was learned then using this data to inform future planning and teaching.

(f) "Experiential learning" means to engage in learning through exploration, experimentation, and discovery.

(g) "Paraprofessional, assistant teacher, or teacher aide" means an adult with the qualifications detailed in [New Rule V] who works under the direct supervision of a teacher and who may work independently in a teacher's absence, but for the majority of the time works directly with the teacher in the same space with the same group of students.

(h) "Teacher" means a licensed individual as defined in ARM 10.55.602, with primary responsibility for a group or class of preschool students.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE III. LEADERSHIP (1) The program leadership shall effectively implement policies, procedures, and systems that support stable staff and strong personnel, fiscal, and program management so all students, families, and staff have high-quality experiences.

(2) Professional development for preschool educators as required by ARM 10.55.714 should be tailored to early childhood development and learning.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE IV. TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS

(1) Teachers shall be assigned at the levels for which they are licensed and endorsed in accordance with state statutes and Board of Public Education rules.

(2) Teachers with an Early Childhood Education Special Permissive Competency shall be considered to be appropriately licensed, endorsed, and assigned to teach in an accredited preschool program until July 1, 2018, at which time those teachers will need to be appropriately licensed and endorsed pursuant to ARM Title 10, chapter 57.

(3) All other teachers or individuals with background, training, or experience in early childhood that are interested in teaching in a public school preschool program may apply for a Class 5 provisional license pursuant to ARM 10.57.424, if they do not have the proper endorsement.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE V. EARLY CHILDHOOD PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (1) Early childhood paraprofessionals must have:

(a) completed two years of study at an institution of higher education; or

(b) obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; or

(c) a high school diploma and meet a rigorous standard of quality and be able to demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to assist in the delivery of the curriculum, instruction, and program delivery standards to support students' development of the knowledge and skills outlined in the early learning content standards.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE VI. EARLY CHILDHOOD PARAPROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION (1) Early childhood paraprofessionals shall be under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher who is responsible for instruction and assessment of students.

(2) Early childhood paraprofessionals assigned to assist students with special education needs shall be under the supervision of the teacher.

(3) The supervising teacher shall be available while an early childhood paraprofessional is fulfilling his or her responsibilities and shall not be simultaneously assigned to another teaching duty or preparation time.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE VII. CLASS SIZE (1) There must be one appropriately licensed and endorsed teacher for ten students, with an early childhood paraprofessional for

any additional students over ten, for up to no more than 18 total students in a classroom with two adults.

(2) Class size of 18 preschoolers is the maximum number of students, regardless of the number of staff.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE VIII. AGGREGATE HOURS (1) Trustees may designate the preschool program as either a half-time or full-time program with a minimum of 720 hours. Outdoor play, snack, and meal time are included in the aggregate hours. Nap time and daily transportation to and from the classroom do not count as part of the 720 hour preschool program hours.

(2) The trustees of a school district shall set the number of days in the school term, the length of the school day, and the number of school days in a week.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE IX. ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY (1) A child must have reached three years of age before the district's official start date of the preschool program or have been enrolled by special permission by the board of trustees.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE X. EARLY LEARNING CONTENT STANDARDS

DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAINS (1) The emotional and social domain requires instruction which incorporates and includes:

- (a) culture, family, and community, wherein students learn to develop:
 - (i) an awareness of and appreciation for similarities and differences between themselves and others;
 - (ii) an awareness of the functions and diverse characteristics of families; and
 - (iii) an understanding of the basic principles of how communities function, including work roles and commerce.
- (b) emotional development wherein students:
 - (i) develop an awareness and appreciation of self as a unique, competent, and capable individual;
 - (ii) demonstrate a belief in their abilities;
 - (iii) manage internal states, feelings, and behavior, and develop the ability to adapt to diverse situations and environments; and
 - (iv) express a wide and varied range of feelings through facial expressions, gestures, behaviors, and words.
- (c) social development which helps students:
 - (i) develop trust, emotional bonds, and interact comfortably with adults;
 - (ii) interact and build relationships with peers; and
 - (iii) develop skills in cooperation, negotiation, and empathy.

(2) The physical domain requires development of motor skills and instruction in health, safety, and personal care.

(a) Development of motor skills includes:

- (i) small muscle strength, coordination, and skills;
- (ii) large muscle strength, coordination, and skills; and
- (iii) use of their senses to explore the environment and develop skills through sight, smell, touch, taste, and sound.

(b) Health, safety, and personal care standards for early childhood education are that students:

- (i) develop personal health and hygiene skills as they develop and practice self-care routines;
- (ii) eat a variety of nutritional foods and develop healthy eating practices;
- (iii) develop healthy behaviors through physical activity; and
- (iv) develop an awareness and understanding of safety rules as they learn to make safe and appropriate choices.

(3) The communication domain includes communication, language, and literacy development.

(a) Standards for early childhood communication and language include:

(i) receptive communication, wherein students use listening and observation skills to make sense of and respond to spoken language and other forms of communication; enter into the exchange of information around what is seen, heard, and experienced; and they begin to acquire an understanding of the concepts of language that contribute to learning;

(ii) expressive communication, wherein students develop skills in using sounds, facial expressions, gestures, and words, such as to help others understand their needs, ask questions, express feelings and ideas, and solve problems;

(iii) social communication wherein students develop skills to interact and communicate with others in effective ways; and

(iv) for dual language speakers, students receive support in their home language(s) while becoming proficient in English.

(b) Literacy standards for early childhood education are that students develop:

(i) an understanding, skills, and interest in the symbols, sounds, and rhythms of written language and develop awareness that the printed word can be used for various purposes;

(ii) interest and skills in using symbols as a meaningful form of communication;

(iii) an understanding that print carries a message through symbols and words and that there is a connection between sounds and letters (the alphabetic principle); and

(iv) an awareness of the sounds of letters and the combination of letters that make up words and use this awareness to manipulate syllables and sounds of speech.

(4) The cognitive domain requires instruction which incorporates and includes:

(a) approaches to learning which help students develop:

- (i) curiosity through imagination, inventiveness, originality, and interest as they explore and experience new things;
- (ii) initiative and self-direction through engagement in new tasks and to take risks in learning new skills or information;
- (iii) persistence and attentiveness with the ability to focus their attention and concentration to complete tasks and increase their learning; and
- (iv) reflection and interpretation skills in thinking about their learning in order to inform their future decisions.
- (b) development of reasoning and representational thought skills in causation, critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, and representational thought;
- (c) instruction in creative arts, including:
 - (i) creative movement wherein students produce rhythmic movements spontaneously and in imitation with growing technical and artistic abilities;
 - (ii) drama, wherein students show appreciation and awareness of drama through observation, imitation, and participation in simple dramatic plots;
 - (iii) music, wherein students engage in a variety of musical or rhythmic activities; and
 - (iv) visual arts, wherein students demonstrate a growing understanding and appreciation for the creative process and visual arts.
- (d) mathematics and numeracy standards for early childhood education are that students:
 - (i) develop number sense and operations through the ability to think and work with numbers, to understand their uses, and describe their relationships through structured and everyday experiences;
 - (ii) develop an awareness of measurement concepts through use of measurement instruments to explore and discover measurement relationships and characteristics, such as length, quantity, volume, distance, weight, area, and time;
 - (iii) apply mathematical skills in data analysis, such as counting, sorting, and comparing objects;
 - (iv) develop an awareness of initial algebraic thinking and operations through counting, sorting, and comparing objects; and
 - (v) build the foundation for geometric and spatial reasoning through recognition, creation, and manipulation of shapes, and learning spatial reasoning and directional words as they become aware of their bodies and personal space in their physical environment.
- (e) science standards for early childhood education are that students:
 - (i) engage in scientific thinking and the use of scientific methods through investigation using their senses to observe, manipulate objects, ask questions, make predictions, and develop conclusions and generalizations;
 - (ii) develop an understanding of and compassion for living things;
 - (iii) develop an understanding of the physical world, the nature and properties of energy, and nonliving matter;
 - (iv) develop an understanding of the earth and planets; and
 - (v) develop an understanding of engineering as the process that assists people in designing and building.
- (f) social studies for early childhood education are that students:

- (i) develop an understanding of the concept of historical time, including past, present, and future;
- (ii) develop knowledge of geographical places and regions by understanding that each place has its own unique characteristics and the reciprocal effect individuals have with the world around them;
- (iii) become aware of their natural world, including the environment and our interdependence on the natural world; and
- (iv) develop an understanding of technology with awareness of technological tools and developmentally appropriate exploration of the ways to use these resources.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE XI. CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT (1) The early childhood curriculum, as defined in [New Rule II], shall:

- (a) contain a written philosophy and framework, grounded in research-based understandings of child development, to provide a clear, coherent focus for planning students' experiences;
- (b) guide the learning process and daily plans for learning through the selection of materials and equipment to enhance development and learning in each core domain, including emotional/social, physical, communication, and cognition; and encourage integration of early childhood content areas, including social, emotional, physical, health, safety, language, literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, creative expression and the arts, and technology;
- (c) include planned opportunities for active exploration, discovery, and social interaction;
- (d) plan for students' engagement in play each day; and
- (e) be implemented in a manner reflective of students' family and community lives while being responsive to diversity, including gender, age, language, culture, and ability, including opportunities for students and families to learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians, particularly Montana Indian tribes, in a culturally responsive manner (20-1-501, MCA).

(2) School districts shall develop preschool programs to include an ongoing and systematic written assessment plan which includes protocols for:

- (a) monitoring the progress of students toward achieving content standards and learning in the developmental domains using formative and summative approaches that include universal screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessments;
- (b) administration of assessments and interpretation of assessment results;
- (c) providing disaggregated data to educators and teams to inform instructional planning and decision making;
- (d) involving families as partners in linguistically and culturally responsive ways to inform decisions about students' needs; and
- (e) assessing the effectiveness of the instructional program that guides adjustments for improvement.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-1-501, 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE XII INSTRUCTION (1) The preschool program shall ensure developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching strategies that enhance students' development and learning of the early learning content standards [New Rule X] through the program's curriculum.

(2) The preschool instructional program shall:

(a) use both content and child development knowledge to create learning opportunities and to engage young learners in meaningful, planned, and purposeful experiences related to the curriculum goals and content standards;

(b) use a variety of effective approaches and strategies which include opportunities for both teacher and student-initiated interactions and activities;

(c) use knowledge of each student's development to enhance instruction, modify strategies and materials, and adjust supports and challenges as students gain competence, understanding, and skills;

(d) build upon student's language, understanding of concepts, and increase vocabulary;

(e) integrate knowledge of students' families and the community to build relationships that foster integral connections with the curriculum and learning experiences;

(f) use cultural and community resources in the classroom to enhance student learning and development; and

(g) work as a team to implement learning plans, including plans for students with special needs.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE XIII PHYSICAL AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (1) The preschool program shall ensure an appropriate and well-maintained safe and healthful physical environment that:

(a) is designed to protect student health and safety;

(b) allows for supervision of students primarily by sight;

(c) provides sanitization according to state and federal health standards;

(d) follows state and federal guidelines for meals and snacks; and

(e) provides safe, supervised, and adequate outside play space with age-appropriate equipment and safe, adequate indoor space for each child.

(2) The preschool program shall ensure a safe and healthful learning environment by:

(a) providing a written predictable but flexible schedule that provides intentionally planned routines and transitions; and

(b) providing daily indoor and outdoor activities, including:

(i) planned time where students have individual choice of activities;

(ii) opportunities to learn and play individually, in small groups, and as a whole group; and

(iii) use of developmentally appropriate materials and equipment.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE XIV CHILD GUIDANCE (1) Child guidance means employing a variety of strategies to foster self-regulation, respect for others, problem solving, and emotional and social development in an ongoing interactive process and helps students learn how to communicate with others in developmentally appropriate ways. To ensure appropriate child guidance, the preschool program shall:

- (a) use positive behavior supports to ensure the social, emotional, and cultural development of each student;
- (b) provide a positive climate to ensure equality, inclusion, and citizenship;
- (c) develop relationships with the student and the student's family in ways that are linguistically and culturally sensitive;
- (d) provide opportunities for students to be contributing members of the classroom community;
- (e) provide clear behavioral expectations, including the use of effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior; and
- (f) partner with families and other professionals for students with challenging behavior to develop and implement an individualized plan that fosters the child's inclusion and success.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

NEW RULE XV FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (1) The program staff shall establish and maintain collaborative relationships with each child's family and community to foster student's development in all settings.

(2) To ensure collaborative relationships between the community, school, and families, preschool programs shall have protocols which:

- (a) establish intentional practices designed to foster strong reciprocal relationships with families;
- (b) ensure that families are an integral part of the decision-making team through communication and family conferences which promote dialogue and partnership regarding their student's educational goals and services;
- (c) collaborate with families to help students participate successfully in early childhood settings;
- (d) ensure that all families, regardless of family structure, socioeconomic, racial, religious, and cultural diversity, gender, abilities, or preferred languages are included in their child's educational experience;
- (e) assist families in locating, contacting, and using community resources that support the student's well-being, development, and goals;
- (f) promote awareness and understanding of the unique legal and political structures of Montana Tribal Nations in order to best meet the needs of Indian students and families;

- (g) collaborate with community-based programs to ensure that parents and families have the resources they need to be involved in their student's education, growth, and development; and
- (h) provide access to health screenings and referrals for all students in the program.

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

4. **Statement of Reasonable Necessity:** The Governor has announced an early childhood initiative, Early Edge, for the coming legislative session. It is necessary to have rules to ensure that programming and accreditation standards meet the needs of the state, reflect current and best practice, and are consistent with related laws and chapters of ARM Title 10.

The Board of Public Education has determined it is reasonable and necessary to adopt rules relating to preschool program standards for public schools. The Office of Public Instruction staff facilitated a comprehensive process to draft these new rules with input from Montana P-20 education stakeholders.

5. The effective date of these rules is July 1, 2015.

6. Concerned persons may submit their data, views, or arguments either orally or in writing at the hearing. Written data, views, or arguments may also be submitted to: Peter Donovan, Executive Secretary, 46 North Last Chance Gulch, P.O. Box 200601, Helena, Montana, 59620-0601; telephone (406) 444-0302; fax (406) 444-0847; or e-mail pdonovan@mt.gov and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m., November 6, 2014.

7. Peter Donovan has been designated to preside over and conduct this hearing.

8. The board maintains a list of interested persons who wish to receive notices of rulemaking actions proposed by the board. Persons who wish to have their name added to the list shall make a written request that includes the name, e-mail, and mailing address of the person to receive notices and specifies for which program the person wishes to receive notices. Notices will be sent by e-mail unless a mailing preference is noted in the request. Such written request may be mailed or delivered to the contact person in 6 above or may be made by completing a request form at any rules hearing held by the board.

9. An electronic copy of this proposal notice is available through the Secretary of State's web site at <http://sos.mt.gov/ARM/Register>. The Secretary of State strives to make the electronic copy of the notice conform to the official version of the notice, as printed in the Montana Administrative Register, but advises all concerned persons that in the event of a discrepancy between the official printed text of the notice and the electronic version of the notice, only the official printed text

will be considered. In addition, although the Secretary of State works to keep its web site accessible at all times, concerned persons should be aware that the web site may be unavailable during some periods, due to system maintenance or technical problems.

10. The bill sponsor contact requirements of 2-4-302, MCA, do not apply.

11. With regard to the requirements of 2-4-111, MCA, the board has determined that the adoption of the above-referenced rules will not significantly and directly impact small businesses.

/s/ Peter Donovan
Peter Donovan
Rule Reviewer

/s/ Sharon Carroll
Sharon Carroll
Board Chair
Board of Public Education

Certified to the Secretary of State September 29, 2014.

Montana's Longitudinal Data System	
Essential Data Element	Comments
(a) A unique statewide child identifier or another highly accurate, proven method to link data on that child, including Kindergarten Entry Assessment data, to and from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and the coordinated early learning data system (if applicable)	(a) Montana's statewide student information system (AIM) has the capacity to assign a unique identifier to students enrolled in a preschool program. Students enrolled in preschool programs under IDEA, Part C are reported in the statewide student information system. The unique identifier is used to link assessment data and other data in the statewide longitudinal data system.
(b) A unique statewide early childhood educator identifier	(b) Montana's assigns a unique identifier to every licensed educator, including those with an early childhood endorsement. In addition, the state assigns a school employee identifier. School employees who serve as paraprofessionals in an early childhood program can be linked to data within the state's longitudinal data system through their unique identifier.
(c) A unique program site identifier	(c) Program site identifiers are assigned through OPI's existing processes. OPI can easily assign identifiers to new program sites.
(d) Child and family demographic information	(d) The statewide system can be expanded to collect child and family demographic information that is not currently collected through AIM.
(e) Early childhood educator demographic information, including data on educational attainment and State credentials or licenses held, as well as professional development information	(e) OPI's licensure system collects demographic information on licensed educators, including data on educational attainment and State credentials or licenses held. We will need to expand our system to collect data on professional development depending on the identified needs and requirements of the grant.
(f) Program-level data on the program's structure, quality, child suspension and expulsion rates, staff compensation, work environment, and all applicable data reported	(f) The OPI currently collects data on program structure, child suspension and expulsion rates, and staff compensation for the K12 system. These collections should be able to be expanded to include public preschool

Montana's Longitudinal Data System	
Essential Data Element	Comments
as part of the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	programs. We will need to request resources to expand our collections to include work environment and other data reported as part of the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.
(g) Child-level program participation and attendance data	(g) OPI currently collects program participation and attendance data on every child in the K12 system at certain points in the year. This system can be extended to include preschool students, but we may need additional resources for data system enhancements if the grant requires real time or frequent collection of attendance data.

Plan for Building State and Community Support Through Systemic Linkages To Other Early Learning Programs and Resources

Plan for Building State and Community Support Through Systemic Linkages to Other Early Learning Programs and Resources

Montana has a culture of collaboration and **strong State systems** in place that make it well positioned to take on this Preschool Development Grant to enhance preschool program infrastructure and capacity to deliver High-Quality Preschool Programs and implement and sustain High-Quality Preschool Programs that reach and serve eligible children in our High-Need Communities.

GOAL 1

Enhance State and community-level support for High-Quality Preschool Programs through systemic linkages to other early learning programs and resources to support families.

Key Activity 1: The State Leadership Team will continue to meet three times per year and local Best Beginnings Coalitions will continue to meet monthly.

Rationale: To enhance systematic linkages within the early childhood system to promote High Quality Preschool Programs that support children and families so that children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team, Best Beginnings Coalitions
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Throughout the grant to begin Jan. 2015.
- **Evidence Required by MT:** Meeting minutes and reports

GOAL 2

Develop awareness about community-based learning resources, such as libraries, arts and arts education programs, and family literacy programs to enhance systematic linkages within the community to promote kindergarten readiness for families in High-Needs Communities.

Key Activity 1: PLT's will coordinate with area library and community arts programs and promote involvement and participation of families within their program.

Rationale: To enhance systematic linkages within the community to promote kindergarten readiness for families in High-Needs Communities to ensure Eligible Children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** PLT's and Community Partners
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing
- **Evidence Required by MT:** Parent newsletters

GOAL 3

Implement culturally and linguistically responsive outreach and communication to enroll children from families with Eligible Children, including isolated or hard-to-reach families into High-Quality Preschool Programs.

Key Activity 1: PLT's will engage in regular and ongoing communication with families that include multiple strategies such as home visits, program-based family nights, site-based family services, conferences, and family outreach in cultural and linguistic appropriate ways. Provide families with translation services as needed from staff that have a strong background in the community culture.

Rationale: When families feel welcomed, valued, and respected by program staff they are more likely to engage as partners in their children's learning and development which increases the chance that children will enter kindergarten ready to learn.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** PLT's and Family Engagement Coordinator
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing throughout the grant
- **Evidence Required by MT:** Family Survey

Best Beginnings Advisory Council Members	
Volunteer	Ex- Officio/Administrative
Best Beginnings Community Councils (8 representatives)	Child and Adult Care Food Program
Business	
Child and Adult Care Food Program Sponsors	Child and Family Services Division Administrator
Child Care Center **	Child Care Licensing
Child Care Family Home **	Children's Mental Health
Child Care Group Home **	Department of Labor and Industry
Child Care Resource & Referral Network	Developmental Services Division **
Domestic Violence Coalition	Developmental Services Division; Part C
Early Childhood Higher Education **	Early Childhood Project; Professional Development
Family Support	Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief **
Head Start Association President	Family and Community Health Bureau
Military Child Care	Family and Community Health Bureau; Home Visiting
Montana After School Alliance	Head Start State Collaboration Director

Best Beginnings Advisory Council Members	
Montana Association for the Education of Young Children	Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program
Montana Child Care Association	Human and Community Services Division Administrator
Non Profit Association	Montana State Library
Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education	Public Health and Safety Division Administrator
Office of Public Instruction; Cabinet Member **	Statewide Pyramid Model Coordinator
Office of Public Instruction; Early Grades Specialist	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
Office of Public Instruction; Title I Director	.
Office of Public Instruction; IDEA Part B Coordinator	.
Office of Public Instruction Homeless Coordinator	.
Organized Labor – Union	.
Philanthropy	.
Public Health Association	.
Tribal CCDF (7 tribes)	.

Plan for the Development of a Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment System

The National Research Council (2008) suggested that “assessments of children may be used for purposes as diverse as determining the level of functioning of individual children, guiding instruction, or measuring functioning at the program, community, or state level.” As part of Montana’s ambitious and achievable plan, subgrantees will be required to use a coordinated and comprehensive system of multiple assessments, each of which is valid and reliable for its specific purpose and for the population with which it will be used. The table below identifies the assessments that are currently in place from birth to age 5 within our state systems.

Table 1					
2014 Inventory of Current Assessments Being Used From Birth to Age 5					
	Montana Comprehensive Early Learning ASSESSMENT ELEMENTS				
MONTANA PROGRAMS or SYSTEMS	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult/child Interactions	A Kdg Entry Assessment (KEA)
Early Head Start Head Start *Must meet EHS/HS Federal Requirements	Grantee choice* (Teaching Strategies Gold)	Grantee choice* (Teaching Strategies Gold)	Grantee choice* (ECERS/CLASS)	CLASS	No KEA in place
IDEA Part C Programs	Child Find (DIAL)				
ESEA Title I Programs	Child Find				
CCDF Programs			Health and safety, general environmental quality with health and safety standards.		
Quality Rating and Improvement Systems	Star 5 (incorporates NAEYC accreditation)	Star 5 (incorporates NAEYC accreditation)	Start 2-5 ERS	ERS Subscale	

Table 1					
2014 Inventory of Current Assessments Being Used From Birth to Age 5					
	Montana Comprehensive Early Learning ASSESSMENT ELEMENTS				
MONTANA PROGRAMS or SYSTEMS	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult/child Interactions	A Kdg Entry Assessment (KEA)
State-Licensed Providers			Health and safety, general environmental quality with health and safety standards.		No KEA in place
Home Visitation	Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3) (ASQ:SE)		Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment	ASQ-3 ASQ:SE	
Early Reading First	PALS •Uppercase Letter Identification •Lowercase Letter Identification •Name Writing IGDI- Picture Naming Peabody Picture Vocabulary (PPVT) Test of Preschool Literacy (TOPEL)	PALS •Uppercase Letter Identification •Lowercase Letter Identification •Name Writing IGDI-Picture Naming	ELLCO	CLASS	
Striving Readers Programs	ISIP	ISIP		iWalkthrough	

Table 1					
2014 Inventory of Current Assessments Being Used From Birth to Age 5					
	Montana Comprehensive Early Learning ASSESSMENT ELEMENTS				
MONTANA PROGRAMS or SYSTEMS	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult/child Interactions	A Kdg Entry Assessment (KEA)
Project REAL	ASQ-3 ASQ:SE Early Learning Screening Get Ready to Read DECA	IGDI-Picture Naming Get Ready to Read PPVT TOPEL Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ)	ELLCO	CLASS	No KEA in place

Plan for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment Plan

Current assessment systems currently in use within our state will be expanded to measure student progress toward the Essential Domains of School Readiness: Language and Literacy Development, Cognition and General Knowledge, Approaches toward Learning, Physical Well-Being and Motor Development, and Social and Emotional Development.

Table 2 2014 Inventory of Current Assessments Being Used in the Essential Domains of School Readiness					
	ESSENTIAL DOMAINS OF SCHOOL READINESS				
	Language and Literacy Development	Cognition and General Knowledge	Approaches toward Learning	Physical Well-being and Motor Development	Social and Emotional Development
Screening Measures	PALS: •Uppercase Letter Identification •Lowercase Letter Identification •Name Writing IGDI- Picture Naming PPVT TOPEL	<u>Math</u> OWL Measures	DIAL Get Ready to Read	DIAL	ASQ:SE
Formative Assessments	PALS: Uppercase Letter Identification, Lowercase Letter Identification, and Name Writing IGDI- Picture Naming PPVT	<u>Math</u> OWL Measures			ASQ:SE

Plan for the Development of a Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment System

Key Goals and Activities

GOAL 1

Expand assessment system currently in use to include a valid and reliable assessment for each of the Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment Elements: Screening Measures, Formative Assessments, Measures of Environmental Quality, Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions, and a Kindergarten Entry Assessment.

Key Activity 1: Coordinate with the State Leadership Team to research, evaluate, and make recommendations on valid and reliable assessments to be used by subgrantees.

Rationale: The State Leadership Team has experts who are qualified to make these recommendations:

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team
- **Timelines and Milestones**
 - The State Leadership Team will meet from January through March in year one to research, evaluate, and make recommendations to the State Implementation Team.
 - The State Implementation Team will receive training on the recommended assessments in April and May of year one.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documentation proving that recommended assessments are valid and reliable.

Key Activity 2: Provide professional development to the subgrantees about the purpose of the assessments, how to appropriately administer them, and how to interpret the results to make informed instructional decisions.

Rationale: Assessments must be implemented with fidelity to produce valid, reliable, and useful results that inform instructional decision-making.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Training for the Program Leadership Team (PLT) in June of each year.
 - Summer Institute in July of each year.
 - Ongoing site visits from State Regional Person and IC.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Subgrantees are required to share assessment results with the State Leadership Teams.

GOAL 2

Expand assessment system currently in use to include a valid and reliable assessment for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness: Language and Development, Cognition and General Knowledge, Approaches toward Learning, Physical Well-being and Motor Development, and Social and Emotional Development.

Key Activity 1: Coordinate with the State Leadership Team to research, evaluate, and make recommendations on the valid and reliable assessments to be used by subgrantees for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness.

Rationale: Rely on the early childhood experts from the State Leadership Team to provide recommendations on valid and reliable assessments for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness, which are high-priority school readiness indicators used by multiple states to measure student progress toward kindergarten readiness.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones**
 - The State Leadership Team Groups will meet January through March of year one to research, evaluate and make recommendations to the State Implementation Team.
 - The State Implementation Team will receive training on the recommended assessments in April and May of year one.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documentation proving that recommended assessments are valid and reliable for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness.

Key Activity 2: Provide professional development to the subgrantees about the purpose of the assessments, how to appropriately administer them, and how to interpret the results to make informed instructional decisions.

Rationale: Assessments must be implemented with fidelity to produce valid, reliable, and useful results that inform instructional decision making.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Training for the PLT in June of each year.
 - Summer Institute in July of each year.
 - Ongoing site visits from the State Regional Person and IC.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Subgrantees are required to share assessment results with the State Leadership Teams.

GOAL 3

Select a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA).

Rationale: CEELO (February 2014) conducted a survey with states that have developed a KEA and determined that the achievement of successful procedures for assessing individual student school readiness in the key domains of development is a multistage, long-term process.

Key Activity 1: Coordinate with the State Leadership Team to identify the KEA evaluation criteria, to research and evaluate existing valid and reliable KEAs, and to recommend a KEA that is suitable for Montana schools. The OPI will select a KEA based on recommendations from the State Leadership Team.

Rationale: To measure the outcomes of participating children across the five Essential Domains of School Readiness during the first few months of their admission into kindergarten to inform efforts to close the school-readiness gap at kindergarten entry, to inform instruction in the early elementary school grades, and to inform parents about their children's status and involve them in

decisions about their children's education. This assessment must not be used to prevent children's entry into kindergarten or as a single measure for high-stakes decisions.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** SLT work group will make recommendation by end of year one..
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documentation indicating that recommended assessment is valid and reliable and meets all identified criteria.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** MPDP is committed to addressing the needs of eligible children who may be in need of additional supports.

Table 3. KEA Plan for the MPDP	
Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State Leadership Team will assemble a KEA work group to research other states KEAs in order to develop a KEA that will work best for the culture of Montana. • The State Leadership Team KEA Work Group will make recommendations to the State Implementation Team and Superintendent Denise Juneau.
Year Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State Implementation Team will receive training on the KEA implementation. • PLT and their feeder schools will receive training on how to administer the KEA in a valid and reliable way and on how to use the data they receive to inform instruction and to inform parents about their child's status and how to involve them in decisions about their children's education.
Year Three (fall)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subgrantees will coordinate with feeder schools to implement the KEA in kindergarten classrooms in the fall and how to enter data into the longitudinal data system.
Year Four (fall)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subgrantees will coordinate with feeder schools to implement the KEA in kindergarten classrooms in the fall and how to enter data into the longitudinal data system.

Key Activity 2: Provide professional development to the subgrantees and feeder elementary school staff about the purpose of the KEA, how to appropriately administer it, and how to interpret the results to make informed instructional decisions.

Rationale: The KEA must be implemented with fidelity to produce valid, reliable, and useful results that inform instructional decision making.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Training for PLT in June of year two..
 - Summer Institute in July of year two.

Plan for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment Plan

- Ongoing site visits from the State Regional Person and IC
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documentation indicating increased student achievement.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** MPDP is committed to addressing the needs of eligible children who may be in need of additional supports.

Key Activity 3: Support subgrantees as they implement the KEA and processes in their feeder elementary schools.

Rationale: Kindergarten teachers will need to learn about the purpose of the KEA, how to appropriately administer it, and how to interpret the results to make informed instructional decisions.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Site visits from the State Regional Person and IC in August and September of years three and four.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Documentation indicating increased student achievement.
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** MPDP is committed to addressing the needs of eligible children who may be in need of additional supports.

Plan for Comprehensive Services

Comprehensive Services

High-Quality Preschool Programs provide Comprehensive Services that support the mental, social, and emotional development of young children and their families. These programs are able to coordinate health, nutrition, social, and other services for families while honoring their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage.

GOAL 1

Develop and expand coordination of Comprehensive Services for families with various community partners to ensure families have access to necessary services in High-Needs Communities.

Key Activity 1: PLT's and Family Engagement Coordinators will collaborate with families to coordinate comprehensive health screenings for families and children in their program.

Rationale: Ensure the health and well-being of each child.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** PLT's and Family Engagement Coordinator
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Ongoing all four years
- **Evidence Required by MT:** School Calendar, Record of Activity with Families

Key Activity 2: Subgrantees will develop a Family and Community Engagement Plan that includes an up-to-date community specific referral and resource tool, a procedure for referral and follow up, transition planning and activities, comprehensive services, and specific activities for family engagement including home visitation.

Rationale: Engaging and supporting families increases the likelihood that the child will enter kindergarten ready to learn so they can have a successful start in school.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** The State Implementation Team, PLT's, and Program Staff
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - June and July of each year: Professional Development for Subgrantees
 - September through May of each year: Monthly on-site Technical Assistance from DPHHS State Team Member and Independent Consultant
- **Evidence Required by MT:** Family and Community Engagement Plan

Key Activity 3: Subgrantees will coordinate with the Best Beginning Advisory Coalitions in their communities to conduct a Community Needs Assessment to identify if all Eligible Children are enrolled in a High-Quality Preschool.

Rationale: To determine if additional classrooms need to be added to ensure all Eligible Children in the High-Needs Community have an opportunity to attend a High-Quality Preschool Program.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team, State Implementation Team, and PLT's

- **Timelines and Milestones:**

- Cohort 1: 2015- Meetings will occur and Community Needs Assessment will be Conducted
- Cohort 1: January through March 2016- PLT's will identify if additional classrooms will be added
- Cohort 1: January- June 2016- Families will be contacted about enrolling children
- Cohort 1: August 2016- Children will be enrolled

- Cohort 2: 2016- Meetings will occur and Community Needs Assessment will be Conducted
- Cohort 2: January through March 2017- PLT's will identify if additional classrooms will be added
- Cohort 2: January- June 2017- Families will be contacted about enrolling children
- Cohort 2: August 2016- Children will be enrolled

- Cohort 3: 2017- Meetings will occur and Community Needs Assessment will be Conducted
- Cohort 3: January through March 2018- PLT's will identify if additional classrooms will be added
- Cohort 3: January- June 2018- Families will be contacted about enrolling children
- Cohort 3: August 2018- Children will be enrolled

- **Evidence Required by MT:** Community Needs Assessment

Key Activity 4: Family Engagement Coordinators will identify and meet regularly with community partners within their High Needs Community to coordinate Comprehensive Services. Rationale: Close collaboration between community partners increases the successful implementation of services so that children enter kindergarten ready to learn so they can have a successful start in school.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** Family Engagement Coordinators
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing throughout the grant
- **Evidence Required by MT:** Record of Communications and Activities with Community Partners

Plan for Continuous Improvement of High Quality Preschool Programs

Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating a High-Quality Preschool Program

This framework outlines systemic processes for planning, implementing, and evaluating the success of a High-Quality preschool program through a Continuous Improvement Cycle. It's important to understand that continuous program improvement is a multifaceted system that combines infrastructure with intentionality that promotes responsibility and commitment for supporting action through data-based decision making. Each educational setting is unique so working through this process should be a starting point for important conversations for capitalizing on the resources distinctive to your educational setting.

Table 1 High-Quality Preschool Program Framework	
Continuous Improvement Components (CIC)	
Leadership and Administration	
Early Learning and Development Standards	
Curriculum	
Assessment	
Instruction	
Physical and Learning Environment	
Child Guidance	
Family and Community Engagement	

Continuous Improvement Cycle

The continuous improvement cycle is a problem solving model that converts decisions into data-informed action steps. Although the process is conceptualized as a sequential pattern because each step serves as a logical basis for the next, the process is also cyclical. The cyclical pattern begins with the development of a decision strategy includes deliberate, purposeful action goals and moves through implementation and appraisal of results (Litchfield, 1956). The cycle includes the following steps: 1) Assess the current situation, 2) Develop a plan of change, 3) Implement the plan, 4) Monitor the plan, 5) Monitor the impact of the plan, 6) Review new data, and 7) Revise and refine the plan. Many decision-making action cycles may be occurring simultaneously.

Programs may find themselves at various stages of implementation of the sub-components of the CIC's beginning with exploring, moving toward implementation, and finally reaching the sustaining phase which indicates that the component is sustained into daily practice within the district or school.

Exploring: A CIC sub-component that is still in the exploring stage is still in the planning stages of execution. These sub-components are just being investigated by personnel and further action is needed.

Implementing: A CIC sub-component that that has been introduced and is being utilized in many ways across the system may be in the implementation phase. These sub-components are sometimes being implemented by some staff but not by all staff and further action is needed.

Sustaining: A CIC sub-component that is at the sustaining phase of implementation has become part of the regular routine and protocols used across the organization and have been embraced by all educational stakeholders involved within the educational system.

Needs Assessment

The Needs is designed to be used by programs to assess the current level of implementation for each of the CIC's proven to be effective indicators of a High-quality Preschool Program...

Action Planning

The CIC components are defined through key sub-components within the Needs Assessment. When these sub-components are sustained processes within a program they are proven to effectively support children and families. Leadership teams are encouraged to identify the current implementation phase of the sub-components and decide which areas are in further need of action.

Consider the following questions when planning action steps for the continuous improvement components for improving student literacy outcomes.

1. What current practices or processes will be adjusted and how?
2. What new practices, processes, or strategies will strengthen our current implementation?

Table below provides an example of the steps a program would take as they work through the continuous improvement cycle.

Table 2 High-Quality Preschool Program Framework- Continuous Improvement Cycle	
Assess Current Situation: ..	Conduct Needs Assessment
Develop a Plan of Action: ..	Identify 3-5 Needs
	Write Action Goals for each of the areas of need identified
	Identify action steps for each goal that defines who is responsible, resources needed, and timeline for each step as needed. ..
Implement the Plan: ..	Complete action steps for each goal in the identified timeline.
Monitor the Plan:	Identify a regularly scheduled meeting time for the Program Leadership Team to meet.. Track progress toward the identified action steps and adjust who is responsible, resources needed, and timeline for each step as needed.
Monitor the Impact of the Plan:	Identify key factors to measure progress toward the goals. Child outcome measures are a key indicator for program success..
Review New Data:	Identify specific benchmark timeframes for reviewing key factors to measure progress toward goals.
Revise and Refine the Plan:	Review progress toward goals. .. Review measures of progress. .. Identify if goals have been met. .. If they have not been met, revise action plan and action steps. .. If they have been met discuss strategies for sustaining the goal and identify a new goal.. Conduct needs assessment again to identify new priorities.

Plan for Family Engagement

Family Engagement Strategies Currently Required within the State	
Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	Education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, transitional support for families as children move to preschool or other community settings, social networks of support, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development. Family Support State Advisory Council: the inter-agency advisory council with required parent participation regionally.
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	No current requirements, but IDEA Part B must abide by federal requirements: <i>include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making.</i>
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	No current requirements, but Title I must abide by federal requirements: <i>include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, outreach to fathers and other family members, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making.</i>
Programs receiving CCDF funds	Same as state licensing requirements.

Family Engagement Strategies Currently Required within the State	
<p>Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements</p> <p><i>Specify by tier:</i></p> <p><i>Excerpts taken from center criteria, similar criteria in place for family/group child care</i></p>	<p>Star1: state licensing requirements.</p> <p>Star 2: Enrollment Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A written enrollment process is in place that facilitates an exchange of information between the program and parents, which works to assure strong partnerships. This process should include the following: description of the program and policies; family culture; and wishes around topics such as eating, sleeping, toileting, and discipline. <p>Child Care Contract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program has a signed child care contract with each family. Topics in the contract will include, along with any required licensing policies, at least the following: hours, fees, payment policy, schedule, vacation, program closure, ill child and absence policy, responsibility for alternate care, and termination policy. <p>Star 3: Community Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program provides families with information regarding community resources. Examples of community resources may include: Child Care.
Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	<p>Resource & Referral Agencies, public library, city recreation department, housing authority, parent resource center, public health clinic, hospital, public schools, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Office of Public Assistance, county health department, family support agency, early intervention organizations such as : Hi-Line Home Programs, Inc., Developmental Educational Assistance Program (DEAP), Quality Life Concepts (QLC), Support & Techniques for Empowering People (STEP), Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), Family Outreach, Child Development Center (CDC).</p> <p>Transitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program supports children and families while transitioning children into child care and out of child care into another educational setting. <p>Family Involvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program provides families with multiple opportunities for involvement such as: open house, opportunities to volunteer, social events, potluck meals, parent/family surveys, parent resource center, etc. <p>Star 4: Conferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program offers, in addition to ongoing conversations, a meeting/conference with each child's family at least once per year. Together, the child's progress and needs are reviewed, and goals for the child are set. <p>Home/School Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities are available to facilitate exchange of information between the program and families, such as home/school journals

Family Engagement Strategies Currently Required within the State	
	<p>or notebooks, bulletin boards, newsletters, parent advisory councils, parent volunteers, parent participation, etc.</p> <p>Star 5: NAEYC Accredited (Centers):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Head Start/Head Start Performance Standards (Head Start Programs)
State licensing requirements (child care licensing)	<p>ARM 37.95.115 (1) requires the following information to be made available to the parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A typical daily schedule of activities • Admission requirements, enrollment procedures, hours of operation • Frequency and type of meals and snacks served • Fees and payment plan • Regulations regarding sick children • Transportation and trip arrangements
Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline policies • Department day care licensing requirements (3) of this same rule requires: <i>"The licensee or registrant shall allow custodial and non-custodial parental access as well as access by legal guardians to the facility at any time during which child day care services are provided, unless there is a current court order preventing parent-child contact."</i>
Other: Autism Waiver	Autism Waiver: IFSP development and ongoing child and family outcomes assessment.
Other: Home Visiting	Parent access to program and participation in visits; ongoing two-way communication with families and family goal-setting, parent education in child development, group connections between parents in the community, linkages with community supports and programs.
Other: Best Beginnings Community Coalitions	Locally driven plans for family engagement through focused family forums, parent education and support, parent involvement in decision-making
Other: CPS Waiver	Parent access to program and participation in visits, parent and family involvement in decision-making and family group decision-making meetings; ongoing communication with families and family goal setting, outreach to fathers and other family members, parent education in child development, linkages with community supports and program.

GOAL 1

Build subgrantees capacity to engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development, in a systemic, integrated and comprehensive manner.

Key Activity 1: Develop a Preschool Program Guidelines Document to provide explicit information on the implementation of evidence-based best practices necessary for meeting the MT Early Learning and Program Standards.

Rationale: An explicit, easy-to-understand document is needed in order to provide clear guidance, tools, and steps for exploring, implementing, and fully sustaining the components within the MT Early Learning and Program standards (Leadership, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Environments, Child Guidance, and Family and Community Engagement).

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team Work Group
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - January 2015-April 2015: The State Leadership Team Work Group will develop a draft of the guidance document
 - April 2015-May 2015: The draft of the guidance document will be shared with the Best Beginning's Advisory Council and the Early Learning Providers.
 - June and July 2015: Changes to the Preschool Program Guidelines Document will be made by the State Leadership Team Work Group
 - August 2015: The guidance document will be published for use by Early Learning Providers.
- **Evidence Required by MT:** Preschool Program Guidelines Document

Key Activity 2: Develop a State DPHHS Team that will include a supervisor and five regional support staff who will coordinate family services, provide professional development, and technical assistance of the Montana Early Learning Standards in the categories of Physical and Learning Environments, Child Guidance, and Family and Community Engagement for the MPDP.

Rationale: Certify that subgrantees comply with MPDP grant requirements and provide professional development towards the development of High-Quality Preschools

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** DPHHS
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - January and February 2015: Develop state team by hiring a DPHHS employee and five regional support employees who will provide professional development and technical assistance to subgrantees.
- **Evidence Required by MT:** Teams are in place and carrying out their roles.

Key Activity 3: Subgrantees will develop a position for Family Engagement Coordinator who will be responsible for coordinating Comprehensive Services between the preschool program, community, and families.

Rationale: Ensure that children and families receive the support they need so that each child reaches their maximum potential and to ensure smooth transitions from one program or service to another.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** PLT's
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - April 2015: Communication Family Engagement Coordinator position as a grant requirement
 - June and July, 2015: Professional development for subgrantees about the Family Engagement Coordinator's role and responsibility
 - August 2016: All subgrantees have Family Engagement Coordinator in place
- **Evidence Required by MT:** Family Engagement Coordinator is hired and performing fulfilling their role

Key Activity 4: State Team will develop professional development for Family Engagement Coordinators on family engagement and coordination of community-based services for children and their families.

Rationale: Ensure Family Engagement Coordinators have the skills and knowledge to meaningfully engage families and coordinate community-based services for children and their families.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team
- **Timeline and Milestones:**
 - February through May 2015
- **Evidence Required by MT:** Professional Development Materials

Key Activity 5: Provide professional development to PLT's, Family Engagement Coordinators, and instructional staff on family engagement and coordination of community-based services for children and their families.

Rationale: Ensure Family Engagement Coordinator's have the skills and knowledge to meaningfully engage families and coordinate community-based services for children and their families.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team, PLT's, Family Engagement Coordinator
- **Timeline and Milestones:**
 - June and July of each grant year: Professional Development for Subgrantees
 - September through May of each grant year: Monthly on-site Technical Assistance from DPHHS State Team Member and Independent Consultant.
- **Evidence Required by MT:** Training and meeting agendas, staff attendance at trainings and meetings

GOAL 2: The State Implementation Team will inform subgrantees about strategies to help families in High Needs Communities support the health and well-being of their children so they are ready for kindergarten.

Key Activity 1: The State DPHHS Team will provide professional development and technical assistance to program staff and families about Adverse Child Experiences (ACE) and Trauma Informed Care.

Rationale: Education about Trauma Informed Care and ACE provides families with information to help shield their children from distressing experiences and build resilience in them if childhood trauma has been a part of their lives.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team, PLT's, Family Engagement Coordinator
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - June and July of each year: Professional Development for Subgrantees
 - September through May: Monthly on-site Technical Assistance from DPHHS State Team Member and Independent Consultant
- **Evidence Required by MT:** Review of training schedule, staff attendance at trainings

Key Activity 2: The State Implementation Team will provide professional development and technical assistance to subgrantees' staff about how to support parents in creating a supportive home learning environment.

Rationale: Subgrantees are able to inform and support families in creating supportive home learning environment which increases children's school readiness.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team, PLT's and their staff
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - June and July of each year: Professional Development for Subgrantees.
 - September 2015 through May 2016: Monthly on-site Technical Assistance from the State Implementation Team
- **Evidence Required by MT:** Training agendas and site visit reports.

Plan for Implementation of a System to Measure Preschool Quality

Implementation of a System to Measure Preschool Quality

GOAL

Implement a system to measure preschool quality.

Key Activity 1: Increase the number of early childhood programs in Montana providing care and education for children ages 0-5 years old involved in STARS to Quality the Montana TQRIS quality improvement program by the end of the grant.

Rationale: Involvement in STARS indicates a level of quality for a preschool program and provides for sustainability of quality over time. When children enroll in high quality programs they are more likely to enter kindergarten ready to learn.

Party or Parties Responsible: DPHHS State Team, PLTs, and program staff.

- **Timelines and Milestones:** By Jan. 2020
- **Evidence Required by MT:** QRIS documentation of program enrollment
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** The STARS quality improvement system is a documented systematic approach for raising program quality through a three-pronged approach. It is imperative for our most needy children to be receiving high quality preschool programming. STARS involvement will also provide for sustainability of quality over time and gives parents a consistent indicator of level of quality of child care options. MPDP is committed to addressing the needs of eligible children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, Supports for Eligible Children.

Key Activity 2: Conduct a Parent Survey with all families enrolled in Programs participating in the MPDP each year of the grant.

Rationale: Parents feedback provides PLT's with important information about whether or not families feel that their children's educational, social-emotional, health and safety, and nutrition needs are being met. This information will be reviewed by the PLT as they make decisions about program improvement.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team and PLTs
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - January through April 2015: State Implementation Team will develop a Parent Survey
 - May of Each Grant Year: PLT's and staff will provide Parent Survey for Parents to Provide feedback
- **Evidence Required by MT:** Parent Survey Results
- **Additional Supports for Eligible Children:** When parents feel their children's needs are being met in a quality setting they have more trust and are able to build a more collaborative relationship with the Preschool program that benefits children. MPDP is committed to addressing the needs of eligible children who may be in need of additional supports. For more detailed information, refer to Appendix, Supports for Eligible Children.

Key Activity 3: Subgrantees will coordinate with the Best Beginning Advisory Coalitions in their communities to conduct a Community Needs Assessment to identify if all Eligible Children are enrolled in a High-Quality Preschool.

Rationale: To determine if additional classrooms need to be added to ensure all Eligible Children in the High-Needs Community have an opportunity to attend a High-Quality Preschool Program.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team, State Implementation Team, and PLT's
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Cohort 1: 2015- Meetings will occur and Community Needs Assessment will be Conducted
 - Cohort 1: January through March 2016- PLT's will identify if additional classrooms will be added
 - Cohort 1: January- June 2016- Families will be contacted about enrolling children
 - Cohort 1: August 2016- Children will be enrolled

 - Cohort 2: 2016- Meetings will occur and Community Needs Assessment will be Conducted
 - Cohort 2: January through March 2017- PLT's will identify if additional classrooms will be added
 - Cohort 2: January- June 2017- Families will be contacted about enrolling children
 - Cohort 2: August 2016- Children will be enrolled

 - Cohort 3: 2017- Meetings will occur and Community Needs Assessment will be Conducted
 - Cohort 3: January through March 2018- PLT's will identify if additional classrooms will be added
 - Cohort 3: January- June 2018- Families will be contacted about enrolling children
 - Cohort 3: August 2018- Children will be enrolled

Plan for Professional Development

The key goals of our Professional Development plan is focused on the Montana Early Learning and Program Standards; preschool programs that meet our standards are High-Quality Preschools...

GOAL 1

Develop a State Leadership Team that will oversee the implementation of the MPDP grant. The State Leadership Team is the oversight group that includes representation from the governor's office, the OPI, DPHHS, and the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The State Leadership Team will meet three times a year, at the same time as the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meets. At these meetings, current data from the MPDP will be reviewed, and work groups will be formed to provide critical information and professional learning opportunities for implementation teams. The table below outlines the plan for the State Leadership Team in supporting the MPDP.

Key Activity 1: Align existing OPI and DPHHS systems and services.

Rationale: Alignment of the OPI and DPHHS systems will provide consistency for providers and educators as they build and expand access to High-Quality Preschools in their communities.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Work groups will meet January through June, 2015 to align processes.
 - State Leadership team will communicate to providers, educators, and families about these processes for the rest of the grant timeframe.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Meeting agendas and minutes.

Key Activity 2: Develop a Preschool Program Guidelines Document to provide explicit information on the implementation of evidence-based best practices necessary for meeting the MT Early Learning and Program Standards.

Rationale: An explicit, easy-to-understand document is needed in order to provide clear guidance, tools, and steps for exploring, implementing, and fully sustaining the components within the MT Early Learning and Program standards (Leadership, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Environments, Child Guidance, and Family and Community Engagement).

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team Work Group.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - January 2015-April 2015: The State Leadership Team Work Group will develop a draft of the guidance document
 - April 2015-May 2015: The draft of the guidance document will be shared with the Best Beginning's Advisory Council and the Early Learning Providers.

Plan for Professional Development

- June and July 2015: Changes to the preschool program guidelines document will be made by the State Leadership Team Work Group.
- August 2015: The guidance document will be published for use by Early Learning Providers.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Published preschool program guidelines document.

Key Activity 3: Review MDPD data and make recommendations to the State Implementation Team about next steps for the MPDP.

Rationale: Rely on the expertise of the State Leadership Team to ensure Eligible Children have access to high-quality preschools.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team and State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** The State Leadership Team will review the external evaluation at the end of each grant year and provide recommendations for next steps.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** External Evaluation will show evidence of progress toward the MPDP goals.

Key Activity 4: Coordinate with existing local Best Beginnings Coalitions to enhance system linkages within early childhood systems to promote High-Quality Preschool Programs that support children and families.

Rationale: Rely on the expertise of the local coalition members to enhance system linkages within early childhood systems to promote High-Quality Preschool Programs that support children and families so that children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team, State Implementation Team, and PLTs.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Ongoing throughout the grant.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Best Beginning Coalition agendas and minutes from monthly meetings.

Table 1**Best Beginnings Advisory Council Members**

Volunteer	Ex- Officio/Administrative
Best Beginnings Community Councils (eight representatives)	Child and Adult Care Food Program
Business	
Child and Adult Care Food Program Sponsors	Child and Family Services Division Administrator
Child Care Center **	Child Care Licensing
Child Care Family Home **	Children's Mental Health
Child Care Group Home **	Department of Labor and Industry
Child Care Resource and Referral Network	Developmental Services Division **
Domestic Violence Coalition	Developmental Services Division; Part C
Early Childhood Higher Education **	Early Childhood Project; Professional Development
Family Support	Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief **
Head Start Association President	Family and Community Health Bureau
Military Child Care	Family and Community Health Bureau; Home Visiting
Montana After School Alliance	Head Start State Collaboration Director
Montana Association for the Education of Young Children	Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program
Montana Child Care Association	Human and Community Services Division Administrator
NonProfit Association	Montana State Library
Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education	Public Health and Safety Division Administrator
Office of Public Instruction; Cabinet Member **	Statewide Pyramid Model Coordinator
Office of Public Instruction; Early Grades Specialist	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
Office of Public Instruction; Title I Director	
Office of Public Instruction; IDEA, Part B Coordinator	
Office of Public Instruction Homeless Coordinator	
Organized Labor – Union	
Philanthropy	
Public Health Association	

Table 1**Best Beginnings Advisory Council Members**

Tribal CCDF (seven tribes)	
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Table 2**Professional Development Plan: State Leadership Team**

YEAR 1	State Leadership Team	Individual Work Group Activities
January		<p>Work Groups from the Best Beginning Advisory Council and the OPI and DPHHS State Teams will meet. Work Groups will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review MDPD data and make recommendations to the State Implementation Team for next steps for the project. • Begin to align the STARS to Quality with the OPI preschool program standards. • Develop a Program Guidance Document document. • Coordinate with State Implementation Teams to research, evaluate, and make recommendations on the valid and reliable assessments for each of the Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment Elements to be used by Subgrantees. • Coordinate with State Implementation Teams to research, evaluate, and make recommendations on the valid and reliable assessments for each of the Five Essential Domains of Learning to be used by Subgrantees. • Develop a crosswalk of Program Standards from birth to grade 3 (STARS to Quality, MT Program Standards, including Preschool and K-12). • Coordinate with the Montana Early Childhood Education Consortium to align coursework with Montana's new Preschool Learning and Development Standards and Program Standards. • Coordinate with Montana Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium to expand teacher and administrator early education training programs and professional development. • Coordinate with State Implementation Team to research, evaluate, and make recommendations on valid and reliable assessments to be used by Subgrantees assessment for each of the Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment Elements. • Coordinate with State Implementation Team to research, evaluate, and make recommendations on valid and reliable assessments to be used by Subgrantees for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness. • Coordinate with State Leadership Team to identify Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) evaluation criteria.
February	State Leadership Team Meeting	
March		
April		
May		
June	State Leadership Team Meeting	

Table 2		
Professional Development Plan: State Leadership Team		
		to research and evaluate existing valid and reliable KEAs, and to recommend a KEA that is suitable for Montana schools. "The OPI will select KEA based on recommendations from State Leadership Team..
July		Specific work groups will provide professional development at MPDP Summer Institute.
August		Work groups will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information and professional learning opportunities for Implementation Teams, as needs arise. • Research and make recommendations on the assessment measures for the KEA. • Provide guidance to the State Implementation Team for ways to support the development and implementation of Governor Bullock's block grant program in High Need Communities in coordination with the State Implementation Team and the Best Beginnings Early Childhood Coalitions. • Coordinate with the Montana Early Childhood Education Consortium to align coursework with Montana's new Preschool Learning and Development Standards and Program Standards. • Coordinate with Montana Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium to expand teacher and administrator early education training programs and professional development.
September		
October		
November	State Leadership Team Meeting	
December		
YEARS 2-4	Entire State Leadership Team	Individual Work Group Activities
January		Work groups will provide information and professional learning opportunities for Implementation Teams, as needs arise.
February	State Leadership Team Meeting	
March		
April		
May		
June	State Leadership Team Meeting	Specific work groups will provide professional development at MPDP Summer Institute.
July		
August		
September		
October		
November	State Leadership Team Meeting	Work groups will provide information and professional learning opportunities for Implementation Teams, as needs arise.
December		

GOAL 2

Develop a State Implementation Team to support implementation of the MPDP. The State Implementation Team will be comprised of three teams.

Team 1 will be comprised of seven employees from the Montana OPI who will monitor compliance of MPDP grant requirements and provide professional development and technical assistance on the implementation of Montana Early Learning Standards and Leadership, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Program Standards.

Team 2 will be comprised of five people from the Montana DPHHS who will monitor compliance of MPDP grant requirements and provide professional development and technical assistance on the implementation of Environments, Child Guidance, and Family and Community Engagement Program Standards.

Team 3 will be comprised of Instructional Consultants who will work in coordination with the state OPI Team, the state DPHHS Team, and the Program Leadership Teams to provide on-site professional development to Subgrantees in the implementation of Montana Early Learning and Program Standards.

Key Activity 1: Expand the OPI team that will monitor compliance of MPDP grant requirements and provide professional development and technical assistance on the implementation of Montana Early Learning Standards and Leadership, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Program Standards.

Rationale: Certify that Subgrantees comply with MPDP grant requirements and provide professional development towards the development of High-Quality Preschools.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** The OPI.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** January and February of year one: Develop state team by hiring two OPI employees and five regional employees that will provide professional development and technical assistance to Subgrantees.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Teams are in place and carrying out their role.

Key Activity 2: Develop DPHHS team that will guide compliance of MPDP grant requirements and provide professional development and technical assistance on the implementation of Environments, Child Guidance, and Family and Community Engagement Program Standards.

Rationale: Certify that Subgrantees comply with MPDP grant requirements and provide professional development toward the development of high-quality preschools.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** DPHHS.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** January and February of 2015: Develop state team by hiring a DPHHS employee and five regional employees who will provide professional development and technical assistance to subgrantees.

- **Evidence Required by MT:** Teams are in place and carrying out their roles.

Key Activity 3: Expand the existing group of state instructional consultants to provide on-site professional development to Subgrantees in the implementation of Montana Early Learning and Program Standards. Each Subgrantee will be assigned an instructional consultant that will support their implementation of the Montana Early Learning and Program standards.

Rationale: Provide ongoing technical assistance and feedback toward the development of high-quality preschools.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** The OPI and DPHHS will identify instructional consultants from consulting firms and assign them appropriately to Subgrantees.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** January and February 2015: Develop state team by hiring two OPI employees and five regional employees that will provide professional development and technical assistance to Subgrantees.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Teams are in place and carrying out their roles.

Table below outline the roles and responsibilities of the MPDP State Implementation Team

Table 3		
State Implementation Team	Team Members	Roles and Responsibilities
State OPI Team	Seven members (See breakdown in table below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor compliance of grant requirements. • Provide PD for state team and PLTs on Montana Early Learning Standards and Montana Program Standards (Leadership, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment).
State DPHHS Team	Six members (See breakdown in table below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor compliance of grant requirements. • Provide PD for state team and PLTs on Montana Program Standards (Environments, Child Guidance, Family and Community Engagement).
State Independent Consultants (ICs) Team	One per subgrantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support implementation of Montana Program Standards and Montana Early Learning Standards through on-site coaching and mentoring of Subgrantees.

Table 4	
Professional Development Plan: State Implementation Team	
YEAR 1	State Implementation Team Activities
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop state implementation team.

Table 4	Professional Development Plan: State Implementation Team
February-May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop professional development about the implementation and continuous improvement of the Montana Early Learning and Program Standards (Leadership and Administration, Early Learning and Development Standards, Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, Physical and Learning Environment, Child Guidance, Family and Community Engagement). • Develop professional development for Family Engagement Coordinators on family engagement and coordination of community-based services for children and their families. • Coordinate with the SLT to develop a preschool program guidance document that will provide information about the implementation of evidence-based best practices for meeting Montana Early Learning and Program Standards. • Coordinate with existing Best Beginnings Coalitions and PLTs to enhance system linkages within early childhood systems to promote High-Quality Preschool Programs that support children and families. • Expand the OPI team which will monitor compliance of MPDP grant requirements and provide professional development and technical assistance on the implementation of Montana Early Learning Standards and Leadership, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Program Standards. • Develop a team from DPHHS that will guide compliance of MPDP grant requirements and provide professional development and technical assistance on the implementation of Environments, Child Guidance, and Family and Community Engagement Program Standards. • Expand the existing group of state instructional consultants to provide on-site professional development to Subgrantees in the implementation of Montana Early Learning and Program Standards. • Develop and expand Subgrantee PLTs continuous improvement of the implementation of Montana Early Learning and Program Standards. • Coordinate with State Leadership Team to research, evaluate, and make recommendations on valid and reliable assessments to be used by Subgrantees assessment for each of the Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment Elements. • Coordinate with State Leadership Team to research, evaluate, and make recommendations on valid and reliable assessments to be used by Subgrantees for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness. • Coordinate with State Leadership Team to identify KEA evaluation criteria, to research and evaluate existing valid and reliable KEAs, and to recommend a KEA that is suitable for Montana schools. The OPI will select KEA based on recommendations from State Leadership Team.
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional development to PLTs in cohort one and two: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ About the implementation and continuous improvement of the Montana Early Learning and Program Standards (Leadership and Administration, Early Learning and Development Standards, Curriculum, Assessment,

Table 4 Professional Development Plan: State Implementation Team	
	<p>Instruction, Physical and Learning Environment, Child Guidance, Family and Community Engagement).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ About the purpose of the identified assessments, how to appropriately administer them, and how to interpret the results so they can make informed instructional decisions. ▪ Family engagement and coordination of community-based services for children and their families. ▪ Adverse Child Experiences (ACE) and Trauma Informed Care.
July	<p>•Provide Professional Development to Subgrantee program staff in cohort one and two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ About the implementation and continuous improvement of the Montana Early Learning and Program Standards (Leadership and Administration, Early Learning and Development Standards, Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, Physical and Learning Environment, Child Guidance, Family and Community Engagement). ▪ About the purpose of the identified assessments, how to appropriately administer them, and how to interpret the results so they can make informed instructional decisions. ▪ Family engagement and coordination of community-based services for children and their families. ▪ ACE and Trauma Informed Care. ▪ Supporting parents in creating a supportive home learning environment.
August	• Communicate with PLTs about upcoming site visits.
September-December	•Provide on-site visits from Regional State Team Members and independent consultants to provide coaching support and technical assistance with the implementation of the MPDP.
YEAR 2-4	State Implementation Team Activities
January	<p>•Provide on-site visits from Regional State Team Members and independent consultants to provide coaching support and technical assistance with the implementation of the MPDP.</p> <p>•Increase the number of early childhood programs in Montana providing care and education for children ages 0-5 years old involved in STARS to Quality the Montana TQRIS quality improvement program by the end of the grant.</p> <p>•The MPDP will work in coordination with the local Best Beginnings Coalitions to provide local trainings for Early Learning Providers enrolled in the Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry.</p>
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	<p>•Provide professional development to PLTs in cohort one, two, and three:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ About the implementation and continuous improvement of the Montana Early Learning and Program Standards (Leadership and Administration, Early Learning and Development Standards, Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, Physical and Learning Environment, Child Guidance, Family and Community Engagement).

Table 4 Professional Development Plan: State Implementation Team	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ About the purpose of the identified assessments, how to appropriately administer them, and how to interpret the results so they can make informed instructional decisions. ▪ Family engagement and coordination of community-based services for children and their families. ▪ ACE and Trauma Informed Care. ▪ Supporting parents in creating a supportive home learning environment. ▪ And their feeder schools on the KEA.
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional development to Subgrantee program staff in cohort one and two: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ About the implementation and continuous improvement of the Montana Early Learning and Program Standards (Leadership and Administration, Early Learning and Development Standards, Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, Physical and Learning Environment, Child Guidance, Family and Community Engagement). ▪ About the purpose of the identified assessments, how to appropriately administer them, and how to interpret the results so they can make informed instructional decisions. ▪ Family engagement and coordination of community-based services for children and their families. ▪ ACE and Trauma Informed Care. ▪ Supporting parents in creating a supportive home learning environment. ▪ Provide training in meeting the needs of children with disabilities and English learners to Subgrantees and trainings for Early Learning Providers enrolled in the Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry.
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with PLTs about upcoming site visits.
September-December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide on-site visits from Regional State Team Members and independent consultants to provide coaching support and technical assistance with the implementation of the MPDP.

GOAL 3

Develop and expand PLT to support the continuous improvement of the implementation of Montana Early Learning and Program Standards in their High-Needs Communities.

Key Activity 1: Subgrantees will create a PLT to support the implementation of Montana Preschool Development Project in their preschool program.

Rationale: PLTs engage and support staff as in the development of High-Quality Preschool Programs by communicating a clear and shared focus and monitoring progress toward goals and actions steps.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** Each Subgrantee will be responsible for identifying a Program Leadership Team that will monitor the grant activities to ensure that action plans are guiding progress toward the continuous improvement of the implementation of Montana Early Learning and Program Standards.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - March and April 2015: Program Leadership Teams are established for each Subgrantee.
 - June 2015: PLTs will participate in State Leadership Training.
 - July 2015: PLTs attend MDPD Summer Institute.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Monthly PLT meeting agenda and minutes.

Table below outline the roles and responsibilities of the Program Leadership Team

Table 5 Subgrantee Program Leadership Team	Team Members	Roles and Responsibilities
Program Leadership Team (PLTs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Director • Supervisors Coach Teachers • Family Engagement Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement MPDP requirements. • Develop, implement, and sustain Montana Program Standards and Montana Early Learning Standards. • Develop action goals and steps toward the continuous improvement of Montana Program Standards and Montana Early Learning Standards.

Table 6	Subgrantee Commitment Program Leadership Teams
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Program Leadership Teams. • Coordinate with the Best Beginning Advisory Coalitions in their communities to conduct a Community Needs Assessment to identify if all Eligible Children are enrolled in a high-quality preschool. • Develop a Family and Community Engagement Plan that includes an up-to-date community specific referral and resource tool, a procedure for referral and follow up, transition planning and activities, comprehensive services, and specific activities for family engagement including home visitation. • Collaborate with families to coordinate comprehensive health screenings for families and children in their program. • Coordinate with existing Best Beginnings Coalitions to enhance system linkages within early childhood systems to promote High-Quality Preschool Programs that support children and families. • Coordinate with area library and community arts programs and promote involvement and participation of families within their program. • Engage in regular and ongoing communication with families that include multiple strategies such as home visits, program-based family nights, site-based family services, conferences, and family outreach in cultural and linguistic appropriate ways. Provide families with translation services as needed from staff that have a strong background in the community culture. • Conduct a parent survey with all families enrolled in programs participating in the MPDP each year of the grant. • Subgrantees will coordinate with the Best Beginning Advisory Coalitions in their communities to conduct a community needs assessment to identify if all Eligible Children are enrolled in a high-quality preschool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTL's Participate in Provide Professional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ About the implementation and continuous improvement of the Montana Early Learning and Program Standards (Leadership and Administration, Early Learning and Development Standards, Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, Physical and Learning Environment, Child Guidance, Family and Community Engagement). ▪ About the purpose of the identified assessments, how to appropriately administer them, and how to interpret the results so they can make informed instructional decisions. ▪ Family engagement and coordination of community-based services for children and their families. ▪ ACE and Trauma Informed Care.
<p style="text-align: center;">Instructional Staff: Teachers and Para educators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Professional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ About the implementation and continuous improvement of the Montana Early Learning and Program Standards (Leadership and Administration, Early Learning and Development Standards, Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, Physical and Learning Environment, Child Guidance, Family and Community Engagement). ▪ About the purpose of the identified assessments, how to appropriately administer them, and how to interpret the results so they can make informed instructional decisions. ▪ Family engagement and coordination of community-based services for children and their families. 	

Table 6
Subgrantee Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ACE and Trauma Informed Care,
Family Engagement Coordinators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with families to coordinate comprehensive health screenings for families and children in their program. • Identify and meet regularly with community partners within their High Need Community to coordinate Comprehensive Services. • Coordinate with existing Best Beginnings Coalitions to enhance system linkages within early childhood systems to promote High-Quality Preschool Programs that support children and families.

GOAL 4

Develop and implement professional development for the State Implementation Team that includes trainings, meetings, and on-site professional learning about the implementation and continuous improvement of Montana Early Learning and Program Standards (Leadership and Administration, Early Learning and Development Standards, Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, Physical and Learning Environment, Child Guidance, Family and Community Engagement) to ensure that preschool students are ready when they enter kindergarten.

Key Activity 1: Develop and implement trainings and meetings for State Implementation Team in the implementation of the MPDP.

Rationale: Providing training and meetings for the State Implementation Team will ensure joint accountability and shared knowledge about the development of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team and State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Refer to table that outlines PD for state teams.
- **Required Evidence:** Training and meeting agendas.

Key Activity 2: Develop trainings for Subgrantees in the implementation and continuous improvement of Montana Early Learning and Program Standards (Leadership and Administration, Early Learning and Development Standards, Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, Physical and Learning Environment, Child Guidance, Family and Community Engagement).

Rationale: Providing training and meetings will ensure joint accountability and shared knowledge about the development of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Refer to Table 3 Professional Development Plan for State Implementation Teams and PLTs.
- **Required Evidence:** Training and meeting agendas.

Key Activity 3: Expand and implement training and on-site professional learning and technical support in the implementation and continuous improvement of the Montana Early Learning and Program Standards (Leadership and Administration, Early Learning and Development Standards, Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, Physical and Learning Environment, Child Guidance, Family and Community Engagement).

Rationale: Providing training and on-site professional learning for Subgrantees will ensure joint accountability and shared knowledge about the development of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Implementation Team and PLTs.
- **Timelines and Milestones:** Refer to Table 4 that outlines training and on-site for Subgrantees and PLTs.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Training and meeting agendas.

GOAL 5

Expand, implement, and sustain workforce development. The MPDP will *expand* its work with the Early Childhood Project, which is housed at Montana State University, to ensure paraprofessionals, teachers, and educational coordinators receive scholarships so that they can advance on the Montana Career Path (Appendix ____), and therefore greatly enhance Montana's available workforce for preschool.

Key Activity 1: Provide opportunities for paraprofessionals, teachers, educational coordinators, and others interested to receive continuing education scholarships to increase workforce in early Childhood in Montana to ensure that programs are hiring highly qualified staff to meet High-Quality Preschool Program standards.

Rationale: Increasing advancement on the Montana Career Path will help Early Learning Providers meet Program Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** OPI team member, Early Learning Provider, and the Early Childhood Project, and Education Northwest, the external evaluator.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - January 2015-August 2016: Distribute funds to interested higher education institutes for scholarships.
 - January 2015-August 2016: Inform Subgrantees of scholarship opportunities and partnering institutes of higher education.
 - September 2015-2018: Offer scholarships to interested early childhood providers.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** The evaluators of the MDPD will track the number of staff meeting highly staff qualifications throughout this grant to determine if the numbers are increasing based on this activity.

GOAL 6

Expand, implement, and sustain the number of slots in High-Quality Preschools in Montana.

Key Activity 1: Subgrantees will coordinate with the Best Beginning Advisory Coalitions in their communities to conduct a community needs assessment to identify if all Eligible Children are enrolled in a high-quality preschool.

Rationale: To determine if additional classrooms need to be added to ensure all Eligible Children in the High-Need Community have an opportunity to attend a High-Quality Preschool Program.

- **Party or Parties Responsible:** State Leadership Team, State Implementation Team, and PLT's.
- **Timelines and Milestones:**
 - Cohort 1: 2015 - Meetings will occur and community needs assessment will be conducted.
 - Cohort 1: January-March 2016 - PLTs will identify if additional classrooms will be added.
 - Cohort 1: January-June 2016 - Families will be contacted about enrolling children.
 - Cohort 1: August 2016 - Children will be enrolled.
 - Cohort 2: 2016 - Meetings will occur and community needs assessment will be conducted.
 - Cohort 2: January-March 2017- PLTs will identify if additional classrooms will be added.
 - Cohort 2: January-June 2017- Families will be contacted about enrolling children.
 - Cohort 2: August 2017 - Children will be enrolled.
 - Cohort 3: 2017- Meetings will occur and community needs assessment will be conducted.
 - Cohort 3: January-March 2018- PL's will identify if additional classrooms will be added.
 - Cohort 3: January-June 2018 - Families will be contacted about enrolling children.
 - Cohort 3: August 2018 - Children will be enrolled.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Community needs assessment.

Key Activity 2: Increase number of preschool slots each year of the grant by adding a new cohort of Subgrantees in years one, two, and three to participate in the MPDP activities.

Rationale Expand number of slots in high-quality preschools in Montana.

Party or Parties Responsible: State Leadership Team, State Implementation Team, and PLTs.

- **Timelines and Milestones:** Refer to Table 7 Professional Development Plan for State Implementation Teams and PLTs.
- **Evidence Required by Montana:** External evaluation report will show the number of slots each year of the grant.

Key Activity 3: Develop a mentorship in which Cohorts 2 and 3 will be mentored and learn from Cohort 1.

Rationale: 6- Mentee programs get to rely on the experience and knowledge of the mentor program.

Party or Parties Responsible: State Leadership Team, State Implementation Team, and PLTs

- **Timelines and Milestones:**

- June and July 2015: Cohort 2 will attend joint trainings with Cohort 1 to learn from their experiences.
- September 2015-May 2016: Cohort 2 will do on-site visits at assigned mentor Cohort 1 site.
- June and July 2015: Cohorts 2 and 3 will attend joint trainings with Cohort 1 to learn from their experiences.
- September 2015-May 2016: Cohorts 2 and 3 will do on-site visits assigned mentor Cohort 1 site.
- September 2015-May 2016: Cohort 1 will provide staff time to go to their assigned Cohort 2 mentor site to conduct on-site observations and provide feedback based on their experiences to increase the quality of their program.
- June and July 2017: Cohorts 2 and 3 will attend joint trainings with Cohort 1 to learn from their experiences.
- September 2017-May 2018: Cohorts 2 and 3 will do on-site visits to assigned mentor Cohort 1 site.
- September 2017-May 2018: Cohort 1 will provide staff time to go to their assigned Cohorts 2 and 3 mentor site to conduct on-site observations and provide feedback based on their experiences to increase the quality of their program.
- June and July 2018: Cohorts 2 and 3 will attend joint trainings with Cohort 1 to learn from their experiences.
- September 2018-May 2019: Cohorts 2 and 3 will do on-site visits to assigned mentor Cohort 1 site.
- September 2018-May 2019: Cohort 1 will provide staff time to go to their assigned Cohorts 2 and 3 mentor site to conduct on-site observations and provide feedback based on their experiences to increase the quality of their program.

- **Evidence Required by Montana:** Preschool program staff survey.

Table 7.

Professional Development Plan for State Implementation Teams and PLT's

YEAR 1: January 2015-December 2015

Month	State Team	Cohort 1 Subgrantees PLTs	Cohort 2 Subgrantees PLTs	Cohort 3 Subgrantees PLTs
January. February.	-Develop State Teams (hire staff and communicate roles and responsibilities). -Develop a preschool program guidelines document for Early Childhood Programs and providers to understand how to implement best practices for preschool programs.	Ongoing communication about grant commitments and planning for upcoming trainings and site visits.	Ongoing communication about grant commitments and planning for upcoming trainings and site visits.	
March	Training for State Teams.			
April	Training for State Teams.			
May	Training for State Teams.			
June	Facilitate and attend PLT Leadership Training.	PLT leadership training.	PLT leadership training.	
July.	Facilitate and Attend Summer Institute.	Summer Institute training for Subgrantee staff.	Summer Institute training for Subgrantee staff.	

Table 7 Professional Development Plan for State Implementation Teams and PLT's				
August	State Team Conference Call.	Site visit from IC.		
September.	State Team Conference Call.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees. • Two-three days per month from regional state person. • Four days per month from independent consultant.		
October.	State Team Meeting.			
November.	State Team Conference Call.			
December.	State Team Conference Call.			
YEAR 2: January 2016-December 2016				
Month	State Team	Cohort 1 Subgrantees PLTs	Cohort 2 Subgrantees PLTs	Cohort 3 Subgrantees PLTs
January.	State Team Meeting.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees. • Two-three days per month from regional state person. • Four days per month from independent consultant.	Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.	
February.	State Team Conference Call.		Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.	
March	State Team Conference Call.		Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.	
April	State Team Meeting.		Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.	
May.	State Team Conference Call.		Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.	
June.	Facilitate and Attend PLT Leadership Training.	PLT leadership training.	PLT leadership training.	PLT leadership training
July.	Facilitate and Attend Summer Institute.	Summer Institute training for Subgrantee staff.	Summer Institute training for Subgrantee staff.	Summer Institute training for Subgrantee staff.

Table 7

Professional Development Plan for State Implementation Teams and PLT's

August	State Team Conference Call.	Site visit from regional state person and IC.	Site visit from regional state person and IC.	Site visit from regional state person and IC.
September	State Team Conference Call.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees... • One day per month from regional state person. • Two days per month from independent consultant.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees... • Two days per month from regional state person. • Three days per month from independent consultant. • One day per month from Cohort 1 mentor.	Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.
October	State Team Meeting.			Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.
November	State Team Conference Call.			Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.
December	State Team Conference Call.			Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.

YEAR 3: January 2017-December 2017

Month	State Team	Cohort 1 Subgrantees PLTs	Cohort 2 Subgrantees PLTs	Cohort 3 Subgrantees PLT's
January	State Team Meeting.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees... • One day per month from regional state person. • Two days per month from Independent consultant.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees... • Two days per month from regional state person. • Three days per month from independent consultant. • One day per month from Cohort 1 mentor.	Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.
February	State Team Conference Call.			Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.
March	State Team Conference Call.			Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.
April	State Team Meeting.			Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.
May	State Team Conference Call.			Visit Cohort 1 mentor site.
June	Facilitate and Attend PLT Leadership Training.	PLT leadership training.	PLT leadership training.	PLT leadership training.

Table 7

Professional Development Plan for State Implementation Teams and PLT's

July	Facilitate and Attend Summer Institute.	Summer Institute training for Subgrantee staff.	Summer Institute training for Subgrantee staff.	Summer Institute training for Subgrantee staff.
August	State Team Conference Call.	Site visit from regional state person and IC.	Site visit from regional state person and IC.	Site visit from regional state person and IC.
September	State Team Conference Call.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees. • One day per month from regional state person. • One day per month from independent consultant.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees. . • One day per month from regional state person. • Two days per month from independent consultant. • One day per month from Cohort 1 mentor.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees. . • Two days per month from regional state person. • Three days per month from independent consultant. • One day per month from Cohort 1 mentor.
October	State Team Meeting.			
November	State Team Conference Call.			
December	State Team Conference Call.			
YEAR 4: January 2018-December 2018				
Month	State Team.	Cohort 1 Subgrantees PLTs	Cohort 2 Subgrantees PLTs	Cohort 3 Subgrantees PLT's
January	State Team Meeting.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees. . • One day per month from regional state person. • One day per month from Independent consultant.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees. . • One day per month from regional state person. • Two days per month from independent consultant. • One day per month from Cohort 1 mentor.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees. . • Two days per month from regional state person. • Three days per month from independent consultant. • One day per month from Cohort 1 mentor.
February	State Team Conference Call.			
March	State Team Conference Call.			
April	State Team Meeting.			
May	State Team Conference Call.			

Table 7 Professional Development Plan for State Implementation Teams and PLT's				
June	Facilitate and Attend PLT Leadership Training.	PLT leadership training.	PLT leadership training.	PLT Leadership Training
July	Facilitate and Attend Summer Institute.	Summer Institute training for Subgrantee staff.	Summer Institute training for Subgrantee staff.	Summer Institute training for Subgrantee staff.
August	State Team Conference Call.	Site visit from regional state person and IC.	Site visit from regional state person and IC.	Site Visit from Regional State Person and IC.
September	State Team Conference Call.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees... • One day per month from regional state person.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees... • One day per month from regional state person. • Two days per month from independent consultant. • One day per month from Cohort 1 mentor.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees... • Two days per month from regional state person. • Three days per month from independent consultant. • One day per month from Cohort 1 mentor.
October	State Team Meeting.			
November	State Team Conference Call.			
December	State Team Conference Call.			
YEAR 5: January 2019-June 2019				
Month	State Team.	Cohort 1 Subgrantees PLTs	Cohort 2 Subgrantees PLTs	Cohort 3 Subgrantees PLT's
January	State Team Meeting.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees... • One day per month from regional state person.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees... • one day per month from regional state person. • Two days per month from independent consultant.	On-site support and technical assistance for Subgrantees... • Two days per month from regional state person. • Three days per month from independent consultant.
February	State Team Conference Call.			
March	State Team Conference Call.			
April	State Team Meeting.			
May	State Team Conference Call.			

Table 7. Professional Development Plan for State Implementation Teams and PLT's				
			•One day per month from Cohort 1 mentor.	• One day per month from Cohort 1 mentor.
June	Facilitate and Attend PLT Leadership Training.	PLT leadership training.	PLT leadership training.	PLT leadership training.



INSTRUCTIONS

2014 Fall PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE AWARD— Higher Education (PDIA—HE) APPLICATION

This award has been developed with the goal of improving the quality of early care and education for young children and families, by promoting early childhood education college coursework, college certificate and degree attainment. PDIA—HE participants may receive \$1000 for completion of a minimum of 6 credits or \$400 for completion of 2-5 credits for Fall 2014.

PDIA—HE awards will be available based on the following criteria:

1. An individual must have a current Practitioner Registry Certificate at the time of application. The ECP will check your registry status online upon receipt of your application. If you would like to apply to The Practitioner Registry go to www.mtecp.org. It may take up to 8 weeks to receive your current certificate depending upon how quickly you verify your application information by sending the ECP documentation.

2. Applicants must work a minimum of 15 hours a week in a:

- State registered group or family child care home, or
- State licensed child care center, or
Applicants who are in the process of becoming state licensed or registered, but have not yet been granted a certificate are eligible to apply.
- Montana Head Start or Tribal Head Start, or
- Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Agency

3. The following education will qualify:

- College courses that lead to a national credential (Child Development Associate/CDA), Montana Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship Certificate, 30 Credit College Early Childhood Certificate, Associate's, Bachelor's, or Master's Degrees in Early Childhood or yearly courses you are taking as continuing education. Verification of completion of coursework with a grade of 'C' or higher will be required.
- Undergraduate courses must be taken through a regionally accredited Montana college or university.
- Graduate courses must be taken through any regionally accredited college or university.
- If the MT Infant Toddler or Preschool Course is being taken for 4 college credits with additional early childhood courses, it may be used to receive this award under the 6 credits or more option. If you choose to do this, you will not be eligible to receive the \$500 award for I/T course completion.

The attached application must be completed and received in The Early Childhood Project office, no later than 4:00 p.m. on August 20, 2014. Approval and denial letters will be mailed by August 27, 2014.

Please **ONLY SEND** the application. Additional documents will be required **AFTER** the completion of the approved courses to receive your award. **DO NOT SEND** any other documents at this time with your application, they will be discarded.

If you have any questions, please contact The Early Childhood Project at 1-800-213-6310, ecp@montana.edu or visit www.mtecp.org.

Send to:

Early Childhood Project—MSU
PO Box 173540
Bozeman, MT 59717





montana
early childhood project

PR Status: _____

Level: _____

Expiration Date: _____

APPLICATION

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE AWARD—HIGHER EDUCATION
FOR COURSES TO BE COMPLETED Fall 2014**

Please type or print using BLUE OR BLACK ink.

Name: _____ State PS# _____

Date of Birth: _____ SSN: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Work Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Place of Employment: _____ State PV#: _____

1. You **MUST** have a current Practitioner Registry certificate to continue with this application. We will verify your current status online. If you would like to apply to The Practitioner Registry go to www.mtecp.org. It may take up to 8 weeks to receive your current certificate depending upon how quickly you verify your application information by sending your documentation to the ECP.

2. Applicants must work a minimum of 15 hours/week in one of the settings listed below:

Type of program where you work:

☐ Registered Family Child Care Home ☐ Registered Group Child Care ☐ Licensed Child Care Center

☐ Part-Day Head Start/Early Head Start ☐ Full-Day Head Start/Early Head Start ☐ Tribal Head Start

☐ Child Care Resource & Referral agency ☐ Tribal Child Care ☐ In process of becoming a state licensed
or registered child care program

3.

How will this award help you achieve your career and education goals? Please be specific.

4.

Have you received a PDIA- Higher Ed before? ☐ Yes ☐ No Year: _____

5. Have you submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for 2013/2014? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Go to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> for more information. This may help you pay for college!

6. Please indicate the total amount of financial assistance you expect to receive for this semester.
(This information will not disqualify you from a PDIA- HE)

Federal Pell Grant \$ _____ Student Loans \$ _____ Employer \$ _____ Other \$ _____

Please choose one of the two award options:

☐ \$400 for 2.5 credits

☐ \$1000 for a minimum of 6 credits

PDIA — HE APPLICATION (Page 2 of 2)

Undergraduate coursework must be completed at a regionally accredited college or university located in Montana. **Graduate** coursework may be completed at a college or university, in or out of Montana, which is regionally accredited through the U.S. Department of Education.

For the \$1000 award:

- A minimum of 6 Semester Credits or 9 Quarter Credits for Fall 2014
- \$1000 will be awarded upon successful completion of a minimum of 6 credits of approved coursework for Fall 2014

For the \$400 award:

- A minimum of 2 credits and a maximum of 5 credits for Fall 2014
- \$400 will be awarded upon successful completion of a minimum of 2 credits of approved course work for Fall 2014

PLAN OF STUDY FALL 2014

Fill in each box below All fields in the box below are required, please use the examples as a guide to complete this

College Course (ex. EDEC 160 EC through Adolescent Development)	Name of College/University (ex. Montana State University)	Start Date & End Date (ex. 1/16/14–5/5/14)	Number of Semester (or Quarter Credits)
			Total Credits:

I _____ attest that I am seeking a Credential, Certificate or Degree in Early Childhood Education that leads to a Level 4 or higher on The Practitioner Registry.

I am currently working toward (check one):

- ☐ Child Development Associate (CDA) credential...
 ☐ MT Child Care Development Apprenticeship Certificate...
☐ 30 Credit College ECE Certificate...
 ☐ Associate's Degree...
☐ Bachelor's Degree...
 ☐ Master's Degree...
☐ Early Childhood Minor...

Major: _____ Minor: _____

Employer Certification: (Must be filled in even if the applicant is the owner/director of the facility)

I certify that _____ is currently working 15 or more hours per week in a _____ registered group or family child care home, a licensed child care center, Head Start, Early Head Start, or Tribal Head Start, Tribal Child Care or with a Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Agency.

Signature of Director/Owner: _____ State PV#: _____

☐ I certify that all information given is true and correct.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

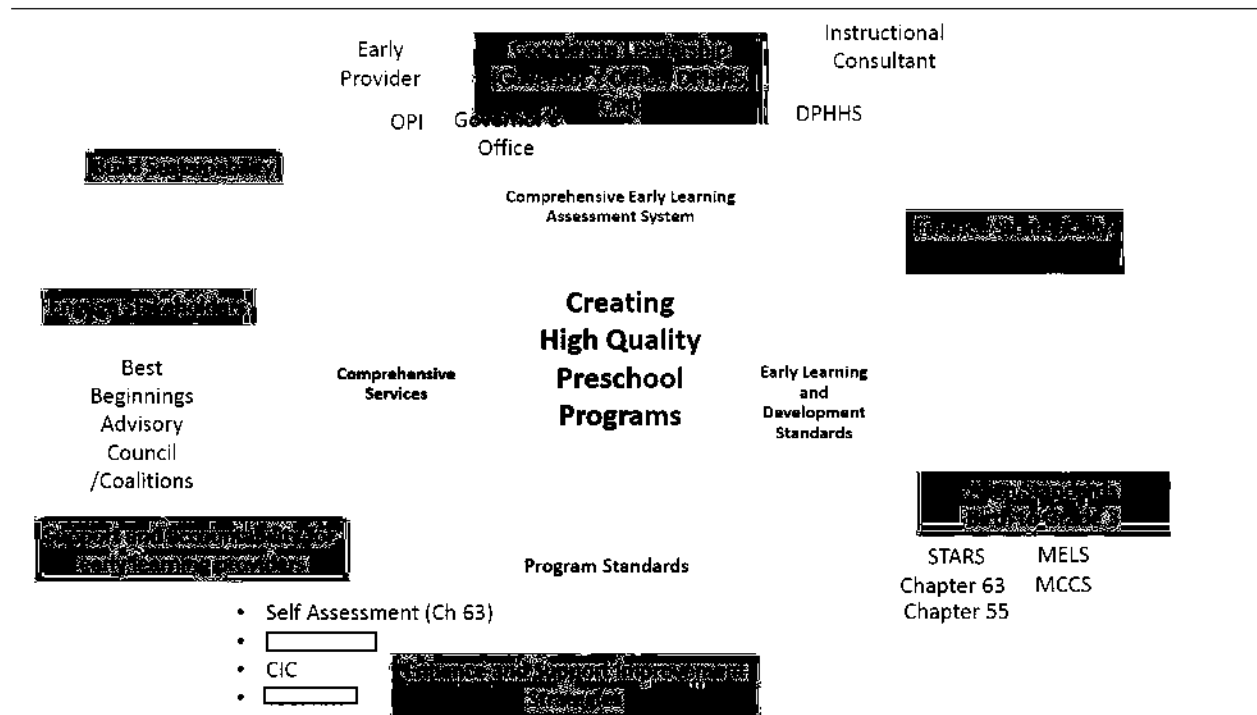
Applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. August 20, 2014...

Faxed and emailed applications are not accepted.

Send to: ECP/MSU, PO Box 173540, Bozeman, MT 59717

STATE LEADERSHIP TEAM			
State Governor's Office	State Office of Public Instruction (OPI)	State Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS)	
State Advisory Group	State Implementation Team		
Best Beginnings Advisory Council •Best Beginnings Work Groups • Best Beginnings Coalitions	OPI Team	Instructional Consultants	DPHHS Team
SUBGRANTEES			
Cohort I Implementation Begins June 2015	Cohort II Implementation Begins June 2015	Cohort III Implementation Begins June 2016	
Consists of Early Learning Providers that have been part of the Montana Striving Readers Project (MSRP) and have already begun to implement many of the components of Montana Program Standards.	Consists of Early Learning Providers who are in districts that are implementing a MSRP but have not received state support to begin implementing the components of Montana Program Standards	Consists of Head Starts on Indian Reservations that do not have schools participating in the MSRP and have not received state support to implement the components of the Montana Program Standards.	

State Organizational Chart



Cohort 1 Subgrantee: Human Resource Development Council Head Start

Table 1								
Criteria	Year 1 August 2015-June 2016 Highlight one	Costs Current Funding Grant Funding List amounts	Year 2 2016- 2017 Highlight one	Costs Current Funding Grant Funding	Year 3 2017-2018 Highlight one	Costs Current Funding Grant Funding	Year 4 2018- 2019 Highlight one	Costs Current Funding Grant Funding
<p>These items HAVE to be in place. Please indicate when they can be put in place..</p> <p>Teacher Qualifications:</p> <p>High staff qualifications including a teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field with a State-approved alternate pathway, which may include coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, and teaching assistants with appropriate credentials</p> <p>Instructional staff salaries comparable to salaries of local K-12 staff</p> <p>Full day Program equivalent to the full school day at the public elementary school</p>	<p>In Place currently.</p> <p>Could be in place with grant funding</p> <p>Cannot put in place.</p> <p>In Place currently.</p> <p>Could be in place with grant</p>	<p>Current Funding in place:.</p> <p>Needed Grant Funding: 190,000 for 8 teachers. This would cover costs for extended day and year, also.</p> <p>For 8 asst teachers, small pay increase and extended day and year. 90,000</p> <p>Current Funding in place:</p> <p>Needed Grant Funding: we would need additional facilities in</p>	<p>In Place currently.</p> <p>Could be in place with grant funding</p> <p>Cannot put in place.</p> <p>In Place currently.</p> <p>Could be in place with grant funding</p>	<p>Current Funding in place:.</p> <p>Needed Grant Funding: 190,000 Asst. 90,000</p> <p>Current Funding in place:.</p> <p>Needed Grant Funding:</p>	<p>In Place currently.</p> <p>Could be in place with grant funding</p> <p>Cannot put in place.</p> <p>In Place currently.</p> <p>Could be in place with grant funding</p>	<p>Current Funding in place:.</p> <p>Needed Grant Funding: 200000..... Asst. 100,000.</p> <p>Current Funding in place:</p> <p>Needed Grant Funding:</p>	<p>In Place currently.</p> <p>Could be in place with grant funding</p> <p>Cannot put in place.</p> <p>In Place currently.</p> <p>Could be in place with grant</p>	<p>Current Funding in place:.</p> <p>Needed Grant Funding: 200000 Asst 100,000</p> <p>Current Funding in place:</p> <p>Needed Grant Funding:</p>

Subgrantee Evidence Form

	funding . . Cannot put in place.	Bozeman and Belgrade, cost unknown at this time. We could go full day in Livingston, two classrooms.	. . Cannot put in place.		. . Cannot put in place.		funding . . Cannot put in place.	
Class Size Ratio A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications (as outlined above)	In Place currently Could be in place with grant funding . . Cannot put in place.	Current Funding in place: Needed Grant Funding: 0	In Place currently. Could be in place with grant funding . . Cannot put in place.	Current Funding in place:. Needed Grant Funding:0	In Place currently. Could be in place with grant funding . . Cannot put in place.	Current Funding in place: Needed Grant Funding:0	In Place currently Could be in place with grant funding . . Cannot put in place.	Current Funding in place: Needed Grant Funding:0.
On-site coordination for comprehensive services in the areas of : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health screenings• Family engagement activities• Nutrition services• Early intervention services• Physical activity• Community connections for linkage for family engagement	In Place currently Could be in place with grant funding . .	Current Funding in place: 0 Needed Grant Funding:	In Place currently Could be in place with grant funding . . Cannot	Current Funding in place: 0 Needed Grant Funding:	In Place currently Could be in place with grant funding . . Cannot	Current Funding in place: 0 Needed Grant Funding:	In Place currently Could be in place with grant funding . . Cannot	Current Funding in place: 0 Needed Grant Funding:

PR/Award # S419A150015

Subgrantee Evidence Form

	Cannot put in place.		put in place.		put in place.		put in place.
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Table 2:				
Evidence Based Professional Development	Year 1 Costs Cohort 1	Year 2 Costs Cohort 1	Year 3 Costs Cohort 1	Year 4 & 5 Costs Cohort 1
<p>These are required professional development activities.. Please highlight YES that you are committing to participating in the activities and also the estimated costs for each activity..</p> <p>January – May</p>	<p>Ongoing communication about grant commitments and planning for upcoming trainings and site visits</p> <p>Yes.....</p> <p>\$ \$2000</p>	<p>Subgrantees will receive- On-site support and technical assistance 2-3 days per month from regional state person and 4 days per month of on-site technical assistance from Independent Consultant.</p> <p>Yes.....</p> <p>\$ 2000</p>	<p>Subgrantees will receive-On-site support and technical assistance 1 day per month from regional state person and 2 days per month of on-site technical assistance from Independent Consultant</p> <p>Yes.....</p> <p>\$ 2000</p>	<p>Subgrantees will receive – On-site support and technical assistance 1 day per month from regional state person (yrs. 4&5) and 1 day per month of on-site technical assistance from Independent Consultant (yr.4).</p> <p>Yes.....</p> <p>\$ 2000</p>
June	<p>PLT Leadership Training</p> <p>Yes.....</p> <p>\$ 2000</p>	<p>PLT Leadership Training</p> <p>Yes.....</p> <p>\$ 2000</p>	<p>PLT Leadership Training</p> <p>Yes.....</p> <p>\$ 2000</p>	<p>PLT Leadership Training (yrs. 4&5).</p> <p>Yes.....</p> <p>\$ 2000</p>
July	<p>Summer Institute Training for subgrantee staff</p> <p>Yes.....</p>	<p>Summer Institute Training for subgrantee staff</p> <p>Yes.....</p>	<p>Summer Institute Training for subgrantee staff</p> <p>Yes.....</p>	<p>Summer Institute Training for subgrantee staff (yr. 4)</p> <p>Yes.....</p>

PR/Award # S419A150015

Subgrantee Evidence Form

August	\$ <u>5000</u> Site Visit from IC Yes.....\$	\$ <u>5000</u> Site Visit from Regional State Person and IC Yes.....\$	\$ <u>5000</u> Site Visit from Regional State Person and IC Yes.....\$	\$ <u>5000</u> Site Visit from Regional State Person and IC (yr. 4) Yes.....\$
September- December	Subgrantees will receive – On-site support and technical assistance 2-3 days per month from regional state person and 4 days per month of on-site technical assistance from Independent Consultant Yes..... \$ <u>40,000</u>	Subgrantees will receive-On-site support and technical assistance 1 day per month from regional state person and 2 days per month of on-site technical assistance from Independent Consultant. Yes..... \$ <u>50,000</u>	Subgrantees will receive-On-site support and technical assistance 1 day per month from regional state person and 1 day per month of on-site technical assistance from Independent Consultant Yes..... \$ <u>25000</u>	Subgrantees will receive – On-site support and technical assistance 1 day from regional state person (yr. 4) Yes..... \$ <u>5000</u>

Table 3 Sub grantee Expectations and Commitment to the MT Preschool Development Project		
<u>Commitment</u> These are additional commitments of this grant.. Please indicate Yes by highlight the YES that you are willing to do these and the evidence that provides the assurance..	<u>Yes we commit to doing this. Provide Evidence</u>	<u>For OPI use only</u>
Sharing of essential data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program level data on the program's structure, quality, child suspension and expulsion rates, staff retention, staff compensation, work environment, and all applicable data reported as part of the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and Child-level program participation and attendance data; Early childhood educator demographic information, including data on educational attainment and State credentials or license held, as well as professional 	Yes we have comprehensive data collection and report generating capabilities We have certified CLASS evaluators on staff (classroom environment).	

Table 3. Sub grantee Expectations and Commitment to the MT Preschool Development Project		
Commitment: These are additional commitments of this grant. Please indicate Yes by highlight the YES that you are willing to do these and the evidence that provides the assurance.	Yes we commit to doing this. Provide Evidence	For OPI use only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development information Child and family demographic data Measures of Environmental Quality Measures of Quality of Adult-Child Interactions. Serve children of high need (family income level below 200% of Federal Poverty Line)	Yes, might be limited in year 1 to 130% of poverty OR LFS5.	
Implementation of Montana Early Learning Standards which are designed with connections to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What all children from birth to kindergarten entry should know and be able to do and their dispositions toward learning Standards appropriate for each grade group and includes English Learners, and children with disabilities or developmental delays Covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness; and Is universally designed and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate 	Yes w/ USF Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies Gold.	
Provide quality program in the essential areas of School Readiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language and Literacy Development Cognition and General Knowledge Approaches toward Learning Physical Well-being and Motor Development Social and Emotional Development 	Yes. Creative Curriculum. Covers Head Start Framework, MT Early Learning Standards.	

Subgrantee Evidence Form

Table 3. Sub grantee Expectations and Commitment to the MT Preschool Development Project		
<u>Commitment:</u> These are additional commitments of this grant. Please indicate Yes by highlight the YES that you are willing to do these and the evidence that provides the assurance.	<u>Yes we commit to doing this. Provide Evidence</u>	<u>For OPI use only.</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Formative Assessments that are linked to evidence-based curriculum aligned to meet the Montana Early Learning Standards 	Yes ISIP, GDI, .	
Follow Chapter 63 Accreditation Standards (and/or Head Start Framework Standards?) Follow Chapter 63 Accreditation Standards (and/or Head Start Framework Standards?)	Yes. Yes, We already meet Head Start and have everything in place to provide evidence and reports.	

These are estimates to have our present 8 classrooms meet salary and full day requirements.

In addition, it could be very possible that, in year 1, we could secure additional space to have a 9th or maybe 10th classroom with students up to 200% of poverty. If so, instruction staff, and staff for other comprehensive services would be about \$150,000, per classroom. Classroom materials and equipment would be about \$8000 per classroom.

Summary of Firm's Effectiveness

Summary of Firm's Effectiveness

(b)(4) was founded in 2006 by (b)(4) (b)(4) has served in many capacities in the field of education with (b)(4) years as a special and general education pre-K-12 teacher, district administrator, United States Department of Education Reading Consultant and Program Administrator and national educational consultant. (b)(4) (b)(4) provides a team of highly qualified educational consultants who serve as coaches, working with schools and districts to analyze their data, determine core curricula and intervention needs and support the development of an effective plan that includes a powerful Response to Intervention (RTI) process. (b)(4) (b)(4) has worked successfully for many years in Montana with the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and with districts and schools in the capacity of consultant and professional development provider. (b)(4) was the primary consulting company on the projects listed below.

1. Montana Early Reading First Project 2010-2012, results showed overall effectiveness in student achievement and teacher knowledge (PPVT, PALS, TOPEL) in Early Reading Skills Table 5-1 shows, on all assessments, more children met benchmark in spring 2011 than fall 2010. These gains were all statistically significant and effect sizes were all in the medium to large range. By spring, the majority of children (67 to 84 percent) were at benchmark on any given assessment, except for the children age-eligible to attend a second year of preschool.

Early Reading Skills	<u>Fall 2010</u>	<u>Spring 2011</u>	<u>Effect Size</u>
Oral Language			
Receptive (PPVT)	62%	79%	.36
Expressive (TOPEL)	64%	84%	.46
Phonological Awareness (TOPEL)	38%	72%	.68
Print Knowledge	41%	67%	.66
Alphabet Knowledge			
Kindergarten in Fall 2011	26%	73%	1.3
Kindergarten in Fall 2012	0%	24%	na
Letter Sounds (PALS)			
Kindergarten in Fall 2011	20%	76%	1.4
Kindergarten in Fall 2012	1%	41%	na

2. The OPI has seen a decline in the number of students being identified for special education services each year: 2006 - 33 percent, 2007- 31 percent, 2008 - 24 percent, 2009 -19 percent, 2010 - 15 percent. Decline attributed in part to the high-quality RTI professional development schools are receiving across the state.

3. Shoshone Idaho High School - From 2008-2009 to 2009-2010 in the 10th grade ISAT: a 15 percent increase of students who scored proficient and a decrease by 15 percent of students in basic and below basic from 2008-2009 to 2009-2010.

4. Charlotte Mecklenberg Schools (150 K-12 schools) - A 2000-2001 development of a K-12 Three-Tiered Model of Instruction targeted professional development, technical assistance, rapid support team resulted in increased outcomes in 2002-2003, of 12.6 percent in Schools of Distinction, 5.4 percent in Schools of Excellence, and no low performing schools.

5. New Hanover County NC, 1999 - A K-5 summer school project focused on reducing the achievement gap in reading between students who are white and students who are African

Summary of Firm's Effectiveness

Americans through professional development, coaching, and technical assistance in 20 schools, 486 students, and 59 teachers resulted in a reduction in the gap by 17 points.

Overview and Summary of Effectiveness of (b)(4)

(b)(4) provides research-based professional development and consulting along with a continuum of school improvement services for school turnaround, transformation, and restart. Additionally, (b)(4) provides targeted professional development for leadership development; multi-tiered systems of support for academics and behavior; K-12 standards-aligned literacy and math staff development and onsite coaching; and professional development on analyzing and using data. (b)(4) organized in 2004, is the pedagogy-based professional development unit of (b)(4), the largest U.S. publisher of K-12 intervention materials. Our consultants are knowledgeable in major core curricula, intervention programs, and assessment tools.

Indianapolis Public Schools, 2012-2013, results showed 8 of 13 elementary schools made gains in both reading and math scores as measured by Indiana's high-stakes exam, ISTEP+. Of the 15 elementary and secondary schools served, 7 were removed from the state's "F" list. These 7 schools earned the following grades following 1 year of (b)(4) support: 1 received an A; 2 received B's; 1 received a C; and 3 received D's. In addition, at John Marshall Community School, grades 7-12, the Algebra passing rate increased from 44% to 55.6%. Also, this school maintained a 70% graduate rate while decreasing waivers by 15%.

Cleveland Metropolitan District, 2013-present, is implementing turnaround services at John Adams High School. The chart below details year-to-year results on the Ohio Graduation Test taken by all tenth graders as a requirement for graduation.

	Writing		Reading		Math		Social Studies		Science	
Ohio Graduation Test	<u>2012-2013</u>	<u>2013-2014</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>	<u>2013-2014</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>	<u>2013-2014</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>	<u>2013-2014</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>	<u>2013-2014</u>
10 th Grade	58.2%		57.6		40.1%	36.2	33.8%	33.1%	25.9%	

Colorado Department of Education, 2008-2012, received on-site coaching for interventionists and classroom teachers. Below are the DIBELS Next results for 2012, indicating a significant decrease in students requiring intervention support.

	Kindergarten		First Grade		Second Grade		Third Grade	
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
Intensive	20%	1%	35%	10%	20%	10%	26%	11%
Strategic	64%	4%	56%	18%	62%	19%	59%	15%

Colorado Department of Education, 2004-2008, received staff development and onsite coaching for K-3 reading teachers in all Colorado Reading First Schools. In just one year of our assistance, Colorado Reading First reported an average of 8% gains in first-grade students meeting the winter DIBELS benchmark, moving from 48% to 56% achieving benchmark.

General References

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Montana Office of Public Instruction. 2009. *Montana Full-Time Kindergarten Model Curriculum Guide*. <http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/ELK/0317KModelCurriculum.pdf>.

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Montana Preschool Development Grant Participating Agency Scope of Work

Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
Grant Administration	DPHHS	<p>DPHHS Staff will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work collaboratively with Lead Agency and Subgrantees and provide support in carrying out overall scope of work; 2. When applicable, transfer or contract grant funds to support activities in the state plan and specific scopes of work, all in accord with the overall grant budget; 3. Provide feedback to Lead Agency status updates, interim reports, and project plans and products; 4.5. Facilitate coordination across Participating Agencies as applicable and necessary to 	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		<p>implement the State Plan;</p> <p>6. Identify sources of technical assistance for the project;</p> <p>7. Appoint key staff and a project manager for Preschool Development grant activities;</p> <p>8. Work with Lead Agency personnel to determine appropriate timelines for project status reports;</p> <p>10. Negotiate in good faith toward achieving the goals of the Preschool Development grant, including modifications and scope of work changes...</p>	
(B) (1)	DPHHS	<p>DPHHS will work with lead agency on any updates to the standards and alignment activities...</p> <p>DPHHS will print additional copies.</p>	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		of the standards for Subgrantees... DPHHS will partner with lead agency to provide training on the standards.	
(B) (3)	DPHHS.	DPHHS is the lead agency for TQRIS and the Early Childhood Comprehensive System... As part of the Governor's budget proposal for the 2016 biennium, a request to continue TQRIS is included... DPHHS will continue TQRIS.	
(B) (4)	DPHHS.	DPHHS manages the voluntary TQRIS, STARS to Quality and will continue to gather evidence on participating programs and number of children served in STARS programs... DPHHS is a partner in providing technical assistance and training related to the STARS criteria and identified Montana Program Standards for the	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		grant....	
(B) (5)	DPHHS	DPHHS manages the Early Childhood Advisory Council, which serves as the collaboration vehicle for the early childhood system... Work groups will be identified through the council to support the work of this grant.	
(C) (1)	DPHHS	DPHHS will provide guidance to local early childhood coalitions related to the needs assessment... DPHHS will provide training and technical assistance related to program standards focused on family engagement, support, and other comprehensive services, as well as the MELS area of environments and child guidance... DPHHS will contract with the Early Childhood Project to provide professional development.	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		<p>scholarships and training stipends... DPHHS will continue to support the Early Childhood Project through the Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium and the Career Path Practitioner Registry... DPHHS will continue to provide training, TA, and monitoring of participating programs in STARS to Quality (Head Starts) and will participate with Lead Agency in evaluation of acceptable assessment tools as described in the grant in addition to the early learning assessment system....</p>	
(C) (2)	DPHHS	DPHHS will participate in the State implementation team and activities....	
(E) (1)	DPHHS	DPHHS will participate on the State Leadership Team and will support the local early	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		<p>childhood coalitions in working with Subgrantees on transition activities to support children as they enter kindergarten... Through the Advisory Council, DPHHS will facilitate work to align existing DPHHS and OPI systems were applicable.</p>	
(E) (2)	DPHHS	<p>DPHHS will provide training and technical assistance to support Subgrantees including strengths based coaching, pyramid model training, and other training focused on family engagement, support, and other comprehensive services, as well as the MELS area of environments and child guidance. DPHHS will support local early childhood coalitions in connecting</p>	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		Subgrantees and other community based learning resources....	
(E) (4)...	DPHHS	DPHHS will monitor compliance and provide professional development and technical assistance related to implementation of appropriate environments, child guidance, and family and community engagement standards. DPHHS will participate in identification of instructional consultants.	
(E) (5)...	DPHHS	DPHHS will coordinate with OPI as appropriate to not duplicate assessments and share data as needed and allowed by law. DPHHS will work toward alignment of systems and services where appropriate for service delivery under the grant. DPHHS will contract with Early Childhood	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		Project to expand workforce development opportunities.....	
(E) (6)	DPHHS		.
(E) (7)	DPHHS		.
(E) (8)	DPHHS		.
(E) (9)	DPHHS	DPHHS will work with early childhood coalitions and family engagement coordinators to complete the community needs assessment and update resource guides.	.
(E) (10)	DPHHS	DPHHS will provide professional development on helping families build protective factors, building parent's capacity to support their child's learning and development, and engaging parents as decision makers in their child's education.	.
(F) (1)	DPHHS	DPHHS will sustain and expand as appropriate Best Beginnings coalitions and will participate in the state leadership team to build	.


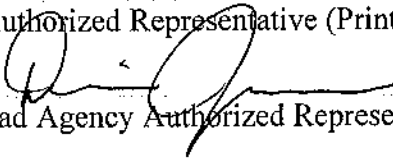
Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		alignment among professional development, systems and sharing of information... The state early childhood council will also serve as a vehicle to assure systems are talking to each other and continued focus occurs on de-duplication of services and addressing gaps in services....	
(F) (2)	DPHHS	DPHHS will continue to focus on quality improvement activities system wide as well as early childhood systems alignment through the state council and local coalitions....	
(G) (1). (2)	DPHHS	DPHHS will assure DPHHS designated funds are used in accord with the grant guidelines and scope of work..	
(G) (3)	DPHHS	DPHHS will continue to partner with lead agency and Governor's Office in assuring all applicable funds	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		over time are used to support high quality early childhood experiences. across the broader early childhood system...	

Copy this form as a separate word document and save as a PDF document and then upload to Grants.gov under Part 5: Other Attachments Form

These forms require basic identifying information about the applicant and the application. Please provide all requested applicant information (including name, address, e-mail address and DUNS number).

APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS
Preschool Development Grants --Development Grants Competition
(CFDA No. 84.419A)

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): Governor Steve Bullock	Applicant's Mailing Address: Montana State Capitol PO Box 200801 Helena, MT 59620-0801
Employer Identification Number: 81-0302402	Organizational DUNS: 8095887000000
Lead Agency: Office of Public Instruction Contact Name: Denise Juneau (Single point of contact for communication)	Lead Agency Contact Phone: 406-444-5658 Lead Agency Contact Email Address: djuneau@mt.gov
Required Applicant Signatures (Must include signatures from an authorized representative of each Subgrantee. Insert additional signature blocks as needed below. To simplify the process, signatories may sign on separate Application Assurance forms.):	
<p>To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct.</p> <p>I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:</p>	
Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Steve Bullock Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: 	Telephone: 406-444-3111 Date: Oct. 7, 2014
Lead Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Denise Juneau Signature of Lead Agency Authorized Representative: 	Agency Name: Office of Public Instruction Date:

Budget Narrative File(s)

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PERSONNEL

Table A1: The OPI State Team Personnel and Fringe Benefits	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Debbie Hunsaker .25 25% of Debbie's time will be committed to this project, 25% of her salary will be paid with the grant funds.	21,171	21,806	22,460	23,134	88,571
Tara Ferriter Smith 1.00 FTE 100% of Tara's time will be committed to this grant and 100% of her salary and benefits will be paid with grant funds.	64,975	66,924	68,932	71,000	271,831
New OPI Team Member 1.00 FTE. 100% of OPI Team Member's time and salary and benefits will be paid with grant funds.	64,975	66,924	68,932	71,000	271,831
Terri Barclay .50 FTE. 50% of Terri's time will be committed to this project and 50% of her salary and benefits will be paid with grant funds.	16,038	16,519	17,015	17,525	67,097
5 new OPI Team members 5.00 FTE. 100% of the OPI Team member's time will be committed to this grant and 100% of their salaries and benefits will be paid with grant funds. \$31.00 per hour plus benefits = \$86,778 per team member per year for a total of.	433,890	446,907	460,314	474,123	1,815,234
Data Person 50 FTE. 50% of the Data Person's time will be committed to this project and 50% of their salary and benefits will be paid with grant funds.	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	200,000
Senior Analyst/Programmer to support additional data elements for Longitudinal Data System. 1.00 FTE 100% of the programmers' time will be committed to this project.	100,000	103,000	106,090	109,273	418,363
Project Accountant 6.5% of an OPI accountant to oversee subgrant payments and accounting procedures.	4,462	4,831	4,458	4,956	18,707
Total Personnel	755,511	776,911	798,201	821,011	3,151,634
Activities: OPI personnel will support Subgrantees in the implementation of High-Quality Preschools.					

Funds are requested to support personnel from the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) that make up the OPI State Team including project director, Debbie Hunsaker, MS Ed. Additional OPI

Implementation Team members include (Tara Ferriter-Smith, MS Ed., Terri Barclay, MS Ed who will serve as team member and assessment manager, and five new OPI Team Members who will provide on-site support for all high-need communities and subgrantees. Benefits, averaging 20%, are included in the requested amounts with a 3% increase for Year 2 and 3 and insurance increases. Ms. Hunsaker, Ms. Ferriter-Smith, and Ms. Barclay have led the efforts in our state for literacy improvement. They have over 50 combined years in education and over 25 combined years in developing, implementing, and sustaining State Federal Literacy Initiatives such as the Reading Excellence Act, Reading First, Early Reading First, and the Montana Striving Readers Project. The State is also requesting funds for a full-time OPI senior analyst/programmer FTE to identify specifications and expand the longitudinal data system. This effort would involve interaction with constituents (pre-K children and their parents/care providers) that the OPI doesn't have established relationships with, so there would be considerable effort and emphasis from the analyst perspective in determining requirements, establishing processes and working with the data/program owner to ensure the system meets all stakeholders' expectations.

Table A2: The DPHHS State Team Personnel and Fringe Benefits	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
New DPHHS Team Member 1.00 FTE. 100% of DPHHS Team Member's time and salary and benefits will be paid with grant funds.	68,629	70,688	72,808	74,993	287,118
5 new DPHHS Team members 5.00 FTE. 100% of the DPHHS Team member's time will be committed to this grant and 100% of their salaries and benefits will be paid with grant funds.	244,348	251,678	259,229	267,006	1,022,261
Kathy Rich .25 25% of Kathy's time will be committed to this project, 25%.	17,915	18,452	19,006	19,576	74,949

of her salary will be paid with the grant funds.					
Total Personnel	330,892	340,818	351,043	361,575	1,384,328
Activities: DPHHS personnel will support Subgrantees in the implementation of High-Quality Preschools.					

Funds are requested to support personnel from DPHHS that make up the DPHHS State Team including project director, Kathy Rich, MSW, new DPHHS grant manager and five new DPHHS Team Members who will provide on-site support for all high-need communities and subgrantees. Benefits, averaging 27% are included in the requested amounts with a 3% increase for Year 2 and 3 and insurance increases.

TRAVEL

Table B1: OPI State Team Travel <i>local mileage rate .55</i>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
240 miles/week, OPI State Team for 40 weeks/year, state motor pool car services, and meals and lodging at state rate costs. This is based on our on-site support with Reading First, Early Reading First and Striving Readers. 11 sites in Year 1 and Year 2, 3 days per month on-site, so 33 days per month for all sites. Estimated travel per day is \$150, which includes car, hotel, and meals. $33 \times \$150 = \$4,950 \times 11 \text{ months} = \$54,450$ 17 sites in Year 3, 3 days per month, so 51 days for all 17 sites. $51 \times \$150 = \$7,650 \times 11 \text{ months} = 84,150$ 17 sites in Year 4 but less travel to Cohort 1: Cohort 1: 1 day onsite support 6 sites x 1 day x $150 \times 11 \text{ month} = \$9,900$. Cohort 2 and 3: 11 sites, so 33 days per month. $\$150 \text{ per day} \times 33 \text{ days for all sites} = \$4,950 \times 11 \text{ months} = \$54,450$	54,450	54,450	84,150	64,350	257,400
Travel of State Implementation Team to meetings with State Leadership Team and State Implementation Team and Summer Institute. \$150. Per day for all expenses. 12 meetings with State Implementation Team, 3 with State leadership Team, 11 with work	32,550	32,550	32,550	32,550	130,200

Budget Narrative, Montana

groups, and 4 days for summer institutes. 31 days per person x \$150 = \$4,650 x 7 OPI Team members = \$32,550					
Total Travel	87,000	87,000	116,700	96,900	387,600
Activities: Travel of OPI State team members for on-site support for LEAs and Head Start programs and Statewide Workshops.					

Funds are requested to cover state travel (mileage, lodging, and meals) for the OPI State Team to conduct all grant activities and on-site visits to LEAs and Head Start programs.

Table B2: DPHHS State Team Travel <i>local mileage rate .55</i>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
240 miles/week, DPHHS State Team for 40 weeks/year, state motor pool car services, and meals and lodging at state rate costs. This is based on our on-site support with Reading First, Early Reading First and Striving Readers. 11 sites in Year 1 and Year 2, 3 days per month on-site, so 33 days per month for all sites. Estimated travel per day is \$150, which includes car, hotel, and meals. 33 x \$150 = \$4,950 x 11 months = \$54,450 17 sites in Year 3, 3 days per month, so 51 days for all 17 sites. 51 x \$150 = \$7,650 x 11 months = 84,150 17 sites in Year 4 but less travel to Cohort 1: Cohort 1: 1 day onsite support 6 sites x 1 day x 150 x 11 month = \$9,900. Cohort 2 and 3: 11 sites, so 33 days per month. \$150 per day x 33 days for all sites = \$4,950 x 11 months = \$54,450	54,450	54,450	84,150	64,350	257,400
Travel of State Implementation Team to meetings with State Leadership Team and State Implementation Team and Summer Institute. \$150. Per day for all expenses. 12 meetings with State Implementation Team, 3 with State leadership Team, 11 with work groups, and 4 days for summer institute. 31 days per person x \$150 = \$4,650 x 6 DPHHS Team members = \$32,550	27,900	27,900	27,900	27,900	111,600
Total Travel	82,350	82,350	112,050	92,250	369,000
Activities: Travel of DPHHS State team members for on-site support for LEAs and Head Start programs,					

and Statewide Workshops,

Funds are requested to cover state travel (mileage, lodging, and meals) for the DPHHS State Team to conduct all grant activities and on-site visits to LEAs and Head Start programs.

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Table C1: OPI State Team Equipment and Office Supplies	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
IPads for 6 OPI State Team Members (\$800/each)	4,800				4,800
Laptops and second monitor for 6 OPI State Team Members	9,000				9,000
IPads for all preschool teachers and directors for Cohort I and II in Year 1 and Cohort III in Year 2. (\$800/each x 80 estimated full day with bachelor's degree for cohort I and II and 30 full day for Cohort III). 3,000 additional in year 3 for maintenance, which we found to be an issue in the ERF project	64,000	24,000	3,000		91,000
Supplies for Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment System: Five Essential Domains Measures of Environmental Quality Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions KEA (based on work in Early Reading First and MSRP for supplies for state team)	34,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	184,000
Rent and communications -\$6000 per staff x 6 FTE	36,000	36,000	36,000	36,000	144,000
Office set up desks, chairs, file cabinets	9,600				9,600
Office Supplies (\$100 per month per OPI full time team members for paper, toner cartridges, binder clips etc.)	7,200	7,200	7,200	7,200	28,800

Total Equipment and Supplies	164,600	117,200	96,200	93,200	471,200
Activities: Supplies necessary for implementation of required assessments (databases, and iPads).					

The OPI team will use computers, iPads and a Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment System data base to monitor overall project. The iPads will be used during on-site visits to LEAs and Head Start programs to gather data about instructional effectiveness during classroom walkthroughs/observations. The data base will be utilized to determine if child progress is being made towards reaching the measured outcomes identified in section C and E. iPads will be purchased for all full-time teachers with bachelor's degrees to facilitate data discussions and professional development, including workforce development. Moderate material costs are requested as the OPI Implementation team members are fairly well-equipped...

Table C2: DPHHS State Team Equipment and Supplies	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Laptops and second monitor for 6 DPHHS State Team Members	9,000				9,000
Supplies to meet ERS/CLASS assessments- Year 1 -\$2500 for each assessment in 6 programs 2 assessments per year- \$27500 Year 2- \$2500 for each assessment in 6 programs, 2 assessments per year- \$27500 Year 3- -\$2500 for each assessment in 6 programs 2 assessments per year- \$27500 Year 4--\$2500 for each assessment in 6 programs 2 assessments per year- \$27500	27,500	27,500	27,500	27,500	110,000
Office Supplies (\$100 per month per OPI full time team members for paper, toner cartridges, binder clips etc.)	7,200	7,200	7,200	7,200	28,800
Rent and communications -\$6000 per staff x 6 FTE	36,000	36,000	36,000	36,000	144,000

Coaching Data Module- data system to support coaching evaluation and assessment will be used in conjunction with ECP	50,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	80,000
Office set up desks, chairs, file cabinets	9,600				9,600
Total Equipment and Supplies	139,300	80,700	80,700	80,700	381,400
Activities: Supplies necessary for implementation of required assessments and computers and initial equipment set up.					

Funds are requested to provide initial DPHHS office equipment and computers and then supplies and office costs in subsequent years of the grant. DPHHS is also planning on using funds for assessment supplies and the module data system for coaching, money is in the first year of the grant to purchase the module and then in subsequent years to maintain the system.

SUPPLIES AND EXPENSES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Table D1: OPI State Team Supplies and expenses for Professional Development	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
State Leadership Team Meetings: 3 meetings per year (monthly at \$4,000 per meeting for reimbursement of team costs and meeting space \$4,000 X 3 months = \$12,000)					
Work Groups from the Best Beginning Advisory Council meetings (monthly at \$4,000 per meeting for reimbursement of work group costs and meeting space \$4,000 X 11 months = \$44,000)					
Costs based on Best Beginning Advisory Council workgroups that came together to develop MT's Program Standards	56,000	56,000	56,000	56,000	224,000
State Implementation Team Meetings: monthly at \$2,000 per meeting for reimbursement and meeting space (\$2,000 X 12 months = \$24,000)	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	96,000

Budget Narrative, Montana

Summer Institute for all preschool lead teachers, assistants, and kindergarten teachers. Estimate 200 educators. Costs cover all expenses for summer institute including presenters, meeting space, and necessary reimbursement. This cost is based on our work with Reading First and Early Reading First. Each day = \$15,000 X 4 days = \$60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	240,000
Total Supplies	140,000	140,000	140,000	140,000	560,000
Activities: Expenses for State Leadership Team Meetings, Best Beginnings Advisory Meetings, Best Beginnings Coalition Meetings, State Implementation Team Meetings, and Summer Institutes for Subgrantee personnel.					

The State is requesting funds for professional development and supplies in order to effectively train Program Leadership Teams from the LEAs and Head Start programs in developing and implementing the components of this grant. The State Implementation Team will meet with the State Leadership Team, work groups from the Governor's Best Beginnings Advisory Council, provide professional development during a Summer Institute and provide on-site training to all staff. These materials, professional development, and on-site support will ensure the meetings and professional development has a direct impact on increasing access to high-quality preschools for all eligible children.

Table D2: DPHHS State Team Supplies for Professional Development	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Strengths based coaching training for 10 staff members, DPHHS and OPI field staff, supplies and support. Follow up training yearly for up to 10 staff.	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	140,000
Total	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	140,000
Activities: Provide training and support to all State Team field staff in year 1 and additional state and cohort staff in years 2,3, and 4.					

DPHHS will coordinate strengths based training for 12 staff members, 6 DPHHS staff and 6 OPI staff, supplies and support. Follow up training yearly for up to 12 staff to include cohorts and additional state and OPI staff to build further early childhood coaching system capacity.

Table E: OPI and DPHHS State Team Development and Distribution of Materials to LEAs and Head Starts	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Preschool Guidance Document \$8 per copy x 100 in year 1, 2, 3, 4 for Early Learning Providers and State Leadership Team	8,000 (OPI)	8,000 (OPI)	8,000 (OPI)	8,000 (OPI)	32,000 (OPI)
Montana Early Learning Standards \$10 per copy x 100 in year 1, 2, 3, 4 for Early Learning Providers and State Leadership Team	10,000 (OPI)	10,000 (OPI)	10,000 (OPI)	10,000 (OPI)	40,000 (OPI)
Fostering Partnership with Head Start and IDEA Service Providers \$10 per copy x 100 in year 1, 2, 3, 4 for Early Learning Providers and State Leadership Team	10,000 (DPHHS)	10,000 (DPHHS)	10,000 (DPHHS)	10,000 (DPHHS)	40,000 (DPHHS)
Total Supplies	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	112,000
Activities: Printing of the Preschool Guidance Document, the Montana Early Learning Standards document, and the Fostering Partnership with Head Start and IDEA Service Providers document for Early Learning Providers and State Leadership Team members.					

The costs are based on past printings of these documents and the number of documents that will need to be printed for our High-Need Communities.

CONTRACTUAL

Table F: Contractual	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
External Evaluation (Theresa Durreson) NWREL See Section E for scope of activities and justification of amount.	156,000	156,000	156,000	156,000	624,000
Assessment Training chosen valid and reliable assessments. These costs are estimated on our work with Early Reading First and estimated					

Budget Narrative, Montana

at \$5,000 per day x 8 days in the first year and 4 days in years 2-4	40,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
Longitudinal Data System 6 months of contracted programmer (1000 hours x \$100 per hour) = \$100,000 to support increase in data elements in longitudinal data system, just in year 1.	100,000				100,000
State funds to supplement on-site support for Cohort II and III in 2015 and Cohort I in 2017, due to funding being reduced on the per child basis each year for sustainability. Support is still critical in starting Cohort II on the right track and building sustainability with Cohort I in Year 4.	275,000	421,000	394,010	391,000	1,481,010
Total Contractual	571,000	597,000	570,010	567,000	2,305,010
Activities: Contractual services are necessary for the following activities: (1) To include an external evaluation that will ensure the State is meeting the goals identified with in the abstract and narrative (2) To provide training and support to LEAs and Head Start programs to ensure high-quality preschool programs.					
Intergovernmental Agreement with the State DPHHS Team. These costs are reflected in Table .	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	6,000,000

The Office of Public Instruction's procurement procedures allow selection of the contractors before the grant is awarded. The State will contract with Education Northwest, the external evaluator to measure progress toward the grant goals (see abstract and narrative). The annual external evaluation report will contain data and information for the State Implementation Team and Statewide Leadership Team providing important performance feedback to inform State and local continuous improvement efforts. The State will utilize a contracted programmer vendor to assist with the actual programing of the Longitudinal Data System. These funds will allow the contracted PD providers to effectively support the State Implementation Teams during Statewide Workshops. OPI will also be contracting with consulting firms, as identified in the Appendix, beginning on page 123 under Summary of Firm's Effectiveness. to ensure all LEAs and Head

Start programs have the necessary training to effectively implement all assessments through supplemental on-site support for Cohort II in 2015 and 2016 and Cohort III in 2016 and 2017.

OPI will be partnering with DPHHS in an intergovernmental agreement to ensure all LEAs and Head Start programs have the necessary training to effectively implement all assessments

TRAINING STIPENDS

Table G: OPI and DPHHS State Team Training Stipends	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Workforce Development: Scholarship support to be provided to the Early Childhood Project for workforce development.	500,000 (DPHHS)	500,000 (DPHHS)	500,000 (DPHHS)	500,000 (DPHHS)	2,000,000 (DPHHS)
BBAC and Local Coalition Support- BBAC- \$50,000,support for 3 2-day meetings a year estimate 6 days of meetings per year for 57 participants from across the state - hotel, expenses, facilities, supplies, member reimbursements. Local Coalitions- 20 coalitions x \$10,000 per coalition per year for support of ongoing work and needs assessment of preschool needs in communities. Provided an extra \$10,000 in year 2 to help with printing of needs assessment reports.	250,000 (DPHHS)	260,000 (DPHHS)	250,000 (DPHHS)	250,000 (DPHHS)	1,010,000 (DPHHS)
Coaching Pyramid Model-the Pyramid Model supports social and emotional needs of children in quality preschool programs. The Training stipend provides ongoing support for the training and support of the Pyramid Model across the state.	80,000 (DPHHS)	120,000 (DPHHS)	120,000 (DPHHS)	120,000 (DPHHS)	440,000 (DPHHS)

STARS, QRIS support and training for incentives and supplies	72,458 (DPHHS)	71,132 (DPHHS)	41,207 (DPHHS)	50,475 (DPHHS)	235,272 (DPHHS)
Total	902,458	951,132	911,207	920,475	3,685,272
Activities: Scholarships to promote workforce development, Expenses for BBAC meetings, training stipends for the Coaching Pyramid Model, and training for STARS, QRIS.					

The stipends will support the Early Childhood Project to provide opportunities for paraprofessionals, teachers, educational coordinators, and others interested to receive upfront scholarships for continuing education to increase the workforce in early childhood in Montana to ensure that programs are hiring highly qualified staff to meet High-Quality Preschool Program standards. Table G2 shows the amounts of the scholarships at the two universities and one college that offer early childhood programs.

Table G2: Early Childhood Scholarships			
Montana Universities and Colleges	Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Early Childhood Endorsement (ECPSC)
University of Montana-Western	60 credits (part time--taking six credits each semester) \$10,832 Full time \$8,568	120 credits (part time cost) \$24,702 Full time \$19,988	27 credits (part time) \$6,306
Montana State University		Full time \$24,680	
Salish Kootenai College	Enrolled tribal member \$8382 Montana resident \$12,558	Enrolled tribal member \$16,766 Montana Resident \$25,116	
In addition, required books and materials would be provided. A fund would also be established to assist students who lack computers or Internet access. This cost would average approximately \$2,500 per year, per student.			

The Governor's Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a critical piece of the State Leadership Team and the local coalitions are the local arms for the comprehensive early childhood system. The funding through this grant will provide the needed support for the grant goals.

Both the state QRIS system “Stars to Quality” and the Pyramid Model Coaching provide the infrastructure for support of the quality preschool initiatives at the state and local providers levels.

The Governor’s Best Beginnings Advisory Council is a critical piece of the State Leadership Team and the local coalitions are the local arms for the comprehensive early childhood system. The funding through this grant will provide the needed support for the grant goals.

TOTAL DIRECT COSTS

Table H: Total Project Costs for OPI and DPHHS Teams	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Direct Costs	1,736,111	1,736,111	1,736,111	1,736,111	6,944,444
INDIRECT COSTS for the MT Office of Public Instruction, 15.2%	263,889	263,899	263,899	263,899	1,055,556
Internal Governmental Agreement with DPHHS	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	6,000,000
Project Total:	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	14,000,000

FUNDS TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO SUBGRANTEES

Table I: LEAs and Head Start Programs Budget				
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
6,500,000	6,500,000	6,500,000	6,500,000	26,000,000

The state will subgrant 65% of the grant award to LEAs and Head Starts in 3 Cohorts.

Table J: Distribution of Funds by Cohort			
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3
Year 1			

Budget Narrative, Montana

(6.5 million)	\$4,550,000	\$1,950,000	0
Year 2 (6.5 million)	\$2,600,000	\$2,600,000	\$1,300,000
Year 3 (6.5 million)	\$1,300,000	\$2,600,000	\$2,600,000
Year 4 (6.5 million)	\$1,300,000	\$2,600,000	\$2,600,000

Table J shows the amounts of funding that LEAs and Head Start programs will receive each year by Cohort. The OPI has over 12 years of experience with federal literacy initiatives budgets and subgranting to Head Starts and LEAs, and has found the most accurate way to project the costs needed is on a per child basis. This is based on our work in Reading First, Early Reading First, and the Montana Striving Reader's Project. Based on current numbers we synthesized from the Subgrantee Evidence, we are projecting the per child cost to be about \$2,500 per year. If the Subgrantees apply for Governor Bullocks Early Edge Block Grants, that per child cost may increase. In addition, each assistant, teacher, and director will have the opportunity to apply for a scholarship to fully fund their career advancement, which is being funded through DPHHS and the Early Childhood Project. That amount is in addition to the amounts in Table J. In addition, the OPI will factor in the subgrant evidence that was submitted by subgrantees in Cohort 1 and 2 to ensure they can implement the categories in Table D4 within the Excel Spreadsheet.

Table K: On-Site Support for LEAs and Head Starts			
Number of Classrooms	# of On-site Support Days per month from DPHHS Implementation Team Member	# of On-site Support Days per Month from OPI Implementation Team Member (August-June)	# of On-site Support Days per Month from Instructional Consultant (August-June)
2 to 4	1	1	3
5 to 8	2	2	4
9 to 12	3	3	5
13+	4	4	6

Table K shows the amount of support the State Implementation Team will provide each early learning provider based on the # of classrooms.

Table L: LEA and Head Start Budget					
Category	Description	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Personnel	Personnel Costs for teachers and Family Engagement Coordinator •Salary and Benefits for teachers with bachelor's degrees only Substitute Costs •For staff to meet with Instructional Consultant and State Implementation Team Members	Based on Subgrantee Evidence and MT Program Needs Assessment	Based on Subgrantee Evidence and MT Program Needs Assessment	Based on Subgrantee Evidence and MT Program Needs Assessment	Based on Subgrantee Evidence and MT Program Needs Assessment
Travel and Professional Development	Summer Institute... •Costs to Program Leadership Team to summer institute (approx. \$2,000 per team per day x 4 days = \$8,000 Site visits for Cohort 2 and 3 to Cohort 1 (mentors).				
Equipment	Technology •Data System •For meeting MELS •For meeting Montana Program Standards •For assessments	Based on Subgrantee Evidence and MT Program Needs Assessment	Based on Subgrantee Evidence and MT Program Needs Assessment	Based on Subgrantee Evidence and MT Program Needs Assessment	Based on Subgrantee Evidence and MT Program Needs Assessment

Budget Narrative, Montana

Supplies and Materials	Evidence-based Programs to teach the five essential domains of learning Assessments: •ELLCO •CLASS •Additional Assessments required by State Implementation Team •Additional supplies and materials needed to administer, analyze, and use data to make instructional decisions	Based on Subgrantee Evidence and MT Program Needs Assessment	Based on Subgrantee Evidence and MT Program Needs Assessment	Based on Subgrantee Evidence and MT Program Needs Assessment	Based on Subgrantee Evidence and MT Program Needs Assessment
Contractual	*Instructional Consultant Team Member \$2,500 per day (see Table K for # of days).	Based on # of classrooms	Based on # of classrooms	Based on # of classrooms	Based on # of classrooms
Total Direct Costs					
Indirect Costs					
Total Costs					

LEAs and Head Start programs will be required to fill out the LEA and Head Start Budget table above and in addition provide a budget narrative that demonstrates evidence that the costs relate to the activities and objectives of the grant and that the costs are reasonable and allowable and fall within the guidelines of Table J and K.

FUNDS SET ASIDE FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Table M: Total Costs of State Budget					
State Budget	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
OPI State Team Budget	<i>1,975,000</i>	<i>1,975,000</i>	<i>1,975,000</i>	<i>1,975,000</i>	<i>7,900,000</i>
DPHHS State Team Budget (intergovernmental Agreement with OPI)	<i>1,500,000</i>	<i>1,500,000</i>	<i>1,500,000</i>	<i>1,500,000</i>	<i>6,000,000</i>
State Implementation Team (OPI and DPHHS) technical assistance	25,000 (OPI Budget)	25,000 (OPI Budget)	25,000 (OPI Budget)	25,000 (OPI Budget)	100,000 (OPI Budget)
LEA and Head Start Program Budget	6,500,000	6,500,000	6,500,000	6,500,000	26,000,000
Total Budget	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	40,000,000

The State Implementation Team is committed to participating in grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS or in collaboration with other State grantees, and has set aside \$25,000 for the technical assistance.

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUDGET INFORMATION
NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS**

OMB Number: 1894-0008
Expiration Date: 04/30/2014

Name of Institution/Organization

Montana Office of Public Instruction

Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.

**SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDS**

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Total (f)
1. Personnel	869,123.00	894,184.00	919,396.00	946,059.00		3,628,772.00
2. Fringe Benefits	217,280.00	223,545.00	229,848.00	236,517.00		907,190.00
3. Travel	194,350.00	194,350.00	253,750.00	214,150.00		356,600.00
4. Equipment	303,900.00	197,900.00	173,900.00	173,900.00		849,600.00
5. Supplies	203,000.00	203,000.00	203,000.00	171,500.00		780,500.00
6. Contractual	571,000.00	597,000.00	570,010.00	567,000.00		2,305,010.00
7. Construction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
8. Other	6,500,000.00	6,500,000.00	6,500,000.00	6,500,000.00		26,000,000.00
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	3,853,653.00	3,809,979.00	3,849,904.00	8,309,136.00		35,327,672.00
10. Indirect Costs*	263,889.00	263,889.00	263,889.00	263,889.00		1,055,566.00
11. Training Stipends	877,453.00	926,122.00	886,197.00	926,355.00		3,616,127.00
12. Total Costs (lines 9-11)	10,000,000.00	10,000,000.00	10,000,000.00	10,000,000.00		40,000,000.00

***Indirect Cost Information (To Be Completed by Your Business Office):**

If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line 10, please answer the following questions:

(1) ... Do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government? ☒ Yes ☐ No

(2) ... If yes, please provide the following information:

Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: 07/01/2013 To: 06/30/2016 (mm/dd/yyyy)

Approving Federal agency: ☒ ED ☐ Other (please specify):

The Indirect Cost Rate is: 15.25 %.

(3) ... For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:

☒ Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement?.. or, ☐ Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)? The Restricted Indirect Cost Rate is %.

Name of Institution/Organization Montana Office of Public Instruction	Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.
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**SECTION B - BUDGET SUMMARY
NON-FEDERAL FUNDS**

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Total (f)
1. Personnel	(b)(4)					
2. Fringe Benefits						
3. Travel						
4. Equipment						
5. Supplies						
6. Contractual						
7. Construction						
8. Other						
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)						
10. Indirect Costs						
11. Training Stipends						
12. Total Costs (lines 9-11)						

SECTION C - BUDGET NARRATIVE (see instructions)

ED Form No. 524

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION
FOR THE SF-424

OMB Number: 1894-0007
Expiration Date: 07/31/2014

1. Project Director:

Prefix:	First Name:	Middle Name:	Last Name:	Suffix:
	Debbie		Bunsaker	

Address:

Street1:	1227 11th Avenue
Street2:	P.O. Box 202501
City:	Helena
County:	
State:	MT: Montana
Zip Code:	59620-2501
Country:	USA: UNITED STATES

Phone Number (give area code)	Fax Number (give area code)
406 444 0733	406 444 1373

Email Address:

dbunsaker@mt.gov

2. Novice Applicant:

Are you a novice applicant as defined in the regulations in 34 CFR 75.225 (and included in the definitions page in the attached instructions)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not applicable to this program

3. Human Subjects Research:

a. Are any research activities involving human subjects planned at any time during the proposed project Period?

☐ Yes ☒ No

b. Are ALL the research activities proposed designated to be exempt from the regulations?

☐ Yes Provide Exemption(s) #:

--

☐ No Provide Assurance #, if available:

c. If applicable, please attach your "Exempt Research" or "Nonexempt Research" narrative to this form as indicated in the definitions page in the attached instructions.

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United States Senate

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL
LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL
LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL
LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL
LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

October 3, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary and
Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave SW
Washington, DC 20202

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg:

I write in support of the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA 84.419A). This grant would provide Montana with an opportunity to expand pre-school education and services to four-year olds and their families in high-needs areas of our state.

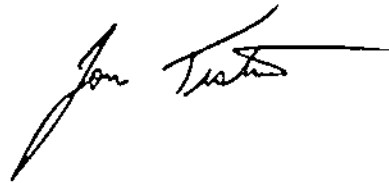
This is a historic opportunity in Montana to increase access to high quality early learning in our state. Research shows that investing in early education generates a return of seven dollars for every one dollar invested. These young learners will have higher academic achievement, higher graduation rates and higher earnings over the course of their lifetime. While families everywhere in Montana want the best for their children, those families in communities with high poverty rates and on Indian reservations don't have access to the resources they need to make sure their children are ready for school.

This grant will allow Montana to capitalize on and strengthen many excellent programs that are already in place and create options for community-level collaboration between schools districts and existing Head Start and early childhood programs. It will also support Pre-K teachers in obtaining early childhood degrees and receiving wages comparable to their K-8th grade peers. This step will ensure quality programs for young children and their families, and as well as help attract and retain Pre-K teachers.

Governor Bullock made a strong commitment to directing state dollars to pre-school education, and collaboration between the Governor's office, the Montana Office of Public Instruction, and the Montana Department of Health and Human Services will ensure this grant is wisely used and that our youngest learners will be ready to succeed when they start kindergarten.

Thank you for your attention to this application. If I can provide any additional information, do not hesitate to contact me. Please inform my office of the eventual decision on this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Tester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jon Tester
United States Senator

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2605

October 7, 2014

Ms. Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Mr. Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Secretary Delisle and Secretary Greenberg:

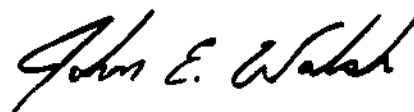
I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A).

Montanans know the value of education and work hard every day to give their children the best opportunities possible. Unfortunately, families living in poverty and on remote Indian reservations don't always have the resources they need to ensure that their young children are ready to succeed in school. Governor Steve Bullock, the Montana Office of Public Instruction, and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services have formed a strong coalition committed to addressing this problem by increasing access to early childhood education for all Montana children.

This investment will pay off in the long run. In addition to a financial return for the state and nation as a whole, access to early childhood education helps kids build the futures they want and deserve. They are more likely to graduate from high school, have higher earnings potential, and are less likely to be involved in criminal activity. If funded, this grant will allow Montana to develop and expand preschool education and services to four year-olds and their families on Indian reservations and other high needs areas of our state. It will also create options for community-level collaboration between school districts and existing Head Start and early childhood programs to meet the needs of four-year-olds and their families. Finally, it will support Pre-K teachers in obtaining early childhood degrees and receiving wages comparable to their K-8th grade peers.

Again, this project carries my support and I hope their application is reviewed favorably. Please feel free to contact my office if I can provide further information. I would also greatly appreciate if you kept me informed of this request.

Sincerely,



JW/jj



Department of Public Health and Human Services

Director's Office ♦ 111 N Sanders, 3rd Floor ♦ Helena, MT 59620

Steve Bullock, Governor
Richard H. Opper, Director

October 3, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

This letter demonstrates the Department of Health and Human Services commitment and support of the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A).

The Department of Public Health and Human Services is one of the largest departments in Montana state government, comprised of 12 divisions. The mission of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) is to improve and protect the health, wellbeing, and self-reliance of all Montanans. More specifically, DPHHS programs seek to achieve the following goals:

- All children are wanted, safe and living in healthy families.
- All Montanans are healthy and safe from injury and have access to high-quality health care.
- All Montanans, including the elderly and those with disabilities, have the tools they need to be as self-sufficient as possible.
- All Montanans can contribute to these goals through community giving and service.

DPHHS is committed to comprehensive services for young children and their families through many divisions. Collaboration is a focus for the department; with the overarching goals of assuring children have a safety net. Through the Human and Community Services Division, Early Childhood Services Bureau, our work is focused on coordinating systems to best meet the needs of young children and families through the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Head Start State Collaboration, Early Childhood Comprehensive Services grant, Project Launch, Statewide Early Childhood Advisory Council, to name a few. Through this work, we support local early childhood coalitions.

Engaging families, aligning systems across agencies, and focusing on developing access to quality early childhood programs will help ensure that Montana provides high quality services and education for our youngest citizens.

Please contact me at 444-5623 or ropp@mt.gov with questions.

Sincerely,

Richard Opper, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

Montana Preschool Development Grant Participating Agency Scope of Work

Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
Grant Administration	DPHHS	<p>DPHHS Staff will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work collaboratively with Lead Agency and Subgrantees and provide support in carrying out overall scope of work; 2. When applicable, transfer or contract grant funds to support activities in the state plan and specific scopes of work, all in accord with the overall grant budget; 3. Provide feedback to Lead Agency status updates, interim reports, and project plans and products; 4.5. Facilitate coordination across Participating Agencies as applicable and necessary to 	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		implement the State Plan; 6. Identify sources of technical assistance for the project; 7. Appoint key staff and a project manager for Preschool Development grant activities; 8. Work with Lead Agency personnel to determine appropriate timelines for project status reports; 10. Negotiate in good faith toward achieving the goals of the Preschool Development grant, including modifications and scope of work changes...	
(B) (1).	DPHHS.	DPHHS will work with lead agency on any updates to the standards and alignment activities... DPHHS will print additional copies	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		of the standards for Subgrantees... DPHHS will partner with lead agency to provide training on the standards....	
(B) (3).	DPHHS	DPHHS is the lead agency for TQRIS and the Early Childhood Comprehensive System... As part of the Governor's budget proposal for the 2016 biennium, a request to continue TQRIS is included. DPHHS will continue TQRIS..	
(B) (4).	DPHHS	DPHHS manages the voluntary TQRIS, STARS to Quality and will continue to gather evidence on participating programs and number of children served in STARS programs... DPHHS is a partner in providing technical assistance and training related to the STARS criteria and identified Montana Program Standards for the	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		grant....	
(B) (5).	DPHHS	DPHHS manages the Early Childhood Advisory Council, which serves as the collaboration vehicle for the early childhood system. Work groups will be identified through the council to support the work of this grant....	
(C) (1).	DPHHS	DPHHS will provide guidance to local early childhood coalitions related to the needs assessment. DPHHS will provide training and technical assistance related to program standards focused on family engagement, support, and other comprehensive services, as well as the MELS area of environments and child guidance... DPHHS will contract with the Early Childhood Project to provide professional development.	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		<p>scholarships and training stipends. DPHHS will continue to support the Early Childhood Project through the Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium and the Career Path Practitioner Registry. . . DPHHS will continue to provide training, TA, and monitoring of participating programs in STARS to Quality (Head Starts) and will participate with Lead Agency in evaluation of acceptable assessment tools as described in the grant in addition to the early learning assessment system. . . .</p>	
(C) (2)	DPHHS	DPHHS will participate in the State implementation team and activities. . . .	
(E) (1)	DPHHS	DPHHS will participate on the State Leadership Team and will support the local early	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		<p>childhood coalitions in working with Subgrantees on transition activities to support children as they enter kindergarten. Through the Advisory Council, DPHHS will facilitate work to align existing DPHHS and OPI systems were applicable....</p>	
(E) (2) ...	DPHHS	<p>DPHHS will provide training and technical assistance to support Subgrantees including strengths based coaching, pyramid model training, and other training focused on family engagement, support, and other comprehensive services, as well as the MELS area of environments and child guidance... DPHHS will support local early childhood coalitions in connecting</p>	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		Subgrantees and other community based learning resources....	
(E) (4)...	DPHHS.	DPHHS. will monitor compliance and provide professional development and technical assistance related to implementation of appropriate environments, child guidance, and family and community engagement standards.. DPHHS will participate in identification of instructional consultants.	
(E) (5)...	DPHHS.	DPHHS. will coordinate with OPI as appropriate to not duplicate assessments and share data as needed and allowed by law. DPHHS will work toward alignment of systems and services where appropriate for service delivery under the grant... DPHHS will contract with Early Childhood	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		Project to expand workforce development opportunities.....	
(E) (6)	DPHHS		
(E) (7)	DPHHS		
(E) (8)	DPHHS		
(E) (9)	DPHHS	DPHHS will work with early childhood coalitions and family engagement coordinators to complete the community needs assessment and update resource guides.	
(E) (10)	DPHHS	DPHHS will provide professional development on helping families build protective factors, building parent's capacity to support their child's learning and development, and engaging parents as decision makers in their child's education.	
(F) (1)	DPHHS	DPHHS will sustain and expand as appropriate Best Beginnings coalitions and will participate in the state leadership team to build	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		alignment among professional development, systems and sharing of information... The state early childhood council will also serve as a vehicle to assure systems are talking to each other and continued focus occurs on de-duplication of services and addressing gaps in services....	
(F) (2) ...	DPHHS	DPHHS will continue to focus on quality improvement activities system wide as well as early childhood systems alignment through the state council and local coalitions.	
(G) (1) (2)	DPHHS	DPHHS will assure DPHHS designated funds are used in accord with the grant guidelines and scope of work.	
(G) (3) ...	DPHHS	DPHHS will continue to partner with lead agency and Governor's Office in assuring all applicable funds	

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation	Performance Measure (if applicable)
		over time are used to support high quality early childhood experiences across the broader early childhood system...	

**ANACONDA-DEER LODGE COUNTY
HEAD START**

P.O. Box 219
Anaconda, MT 59711
Telephone (406) 563-8445



October 9, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Sheldon,

This letter demonstrates the Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Head Start intent to participate in the Montana Pre School Development Project.

Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Head Start has completed the MPDP Sub grant Evidence Form and appreciates this opportunity to the possibilities of increase access to quality early learning programs for 4 year olds in our high needs community.

This is an exciting time for our Head Start program to be able to engage families further in support of quality preschool programs for their children as well as aligning systems across agencies and focus on continuing to developing quality preschool programs in our community.

We appreciate this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant. We stand with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Gail Mickey, Director
Anaconda- Deer Lodge County Head Start
406.563.8445
gailm@anacondaheadstart.org

Central Montana Head Start



204 7th Avenue West
Roundup, MT 59072
(406)323-3255
(406)323-4255-fax

25 Meadowlark Lane
Lewistown, MT 59457
(406)535-7751
(406)535-7752-fax

304 East Division
Harlowton, MT 59036
(406)632-4382
(406)632-4416-fax

October 3, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle and
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education.
U.S. Department of Education.

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Sheldon,

This letter demonstrates Central Montana Head Start's intent to participate in the Montana Pre School Development Project.

As an organization which serves children and families, the following statements give credibility to the process and abilities to serve children and families under the Montana Pre-school Development Project:

- Central Montana Head Start is a non-profit organization. CMHS is funded by a federal grant through the Department of Human Services and Administration for Children and Families.
- Central Montana Head Start provides comprehensive pre-school services for low income families and children with disabilities. CMHS currently serves three and four old children.
- Central Montana Head Start serves 116 children in three counties; Fergus County, Musselshell County and Wheatland County.
- The Montana Pre-school project would enable Central Montana Head Start to serve additional children who fall above the 130% poverty which is the eligibility level for Head Start children. There are many four year old children who would fall in the 130% and 200% poverty levels.
- This is an unprecedented opportunity for Montana to increase access to quality early learning programs for 4 year olds in high-needs communities and to continue building a successful continuum of early learning from birth to five years old.
- Engaging families, aligning systems across agencies, and focusing on developing access to quality preschool programs will help ensure that Montana provides high quality services and education for our youngest learners.
- This grant is an opportunity to work with existing pre-school providers and Head Starts, as well as enhance collaboration with the local school district who provide services for the Head Start children with disabilities.
- We appreciate this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant. We stand with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan.

Please contact me at (insert contact information) with questions.

Central Montana Head Start Letter of Intent

Sincerely,

Carra Godbey
Executive Director..

Hardin Public Schools Letter of Intent



Hardin Public Schools
Kindergarten Readiness Center
125 North Cody
Hardin, MT 59034
406-665-9391



October 9, 2014.

Deborah S. Delisle..... and
Assistant Secretary of Elementary.....
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
Services.

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for.....
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Sheldon,

This letter demonstrates the Hardin, Montana Public School's Kindergarten Readiness Center's intent to participate in the Montana Pre School Development Project.

The Hardin Public Schools serve approximately one thousand seven hundred students in grades pre kindergarten through grade twelve. Approximately seventy percent of the students are of an American Indian ethnicity. The Kindergarten Readiness Center (Preschool) has four classrooms with fifty-five three and four year olds being served. The center offers full day, full academic year services.

The Montana Pre School Development grant would allow us to serve families that are presently on the waiting list to enter the program. It would also insure the continuation of four classrooms, presently, we are at the mercy of the school district budget for funding. Should a district budget shortfall occur, the Kindergarten Readiness Center would surely be in jeopardy. The grant would also open the possibility of opening preschools in outlying rural areas of the district.

Data from the last three years demonstrates that students the enter kindergarten after attending the Readiness Center are extremely well prepared for the rigors of kindergarten. During the 2013-2014 school year, ninety two percent of the Readiness Center students were benchmarked in letter recognition. This gives them a significant head start as they enter kindergarten. Beyond the academics, students leaving the program are well prepared for the social and emotional aspects of a K-12 education as well.

This grant is an unprecedented opportunity for Montana and in particular, reservation communities, to increase access to quality early learning programs for four year olds in high need communities and to continue building a successful continuum of early learning from birth to five years old. The project will engage families, align systems across agencies, and focus on developing access to quality preschool programs, which in turn, will ensure that Montana provides high quality services and education and services for its youngest learners. This grant is an opportunity to work with existing preschool providers and Head Starts and increase collaborative efforts among them. We appreciate this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant. We stand with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support the plan.

Please contact me at 406-665-9391 with questions.

Sincerely,
Jerry Guay

Hardin Public Schools Letter of Intent

Jerry Guay, director
Hardin Kindergarten Readiness Center.

.



HEAD START



Oct. 14th, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

This letter demonstrates the Human Resource Development Council, District IX Head Start's intent to participate in the Montana Pre- School Development Project.

- We have completed the MPDP Sub grant Evidence Form.
- This is an unprecedented opportunity for Montana to increase access to quality early learning programs for 4 year olds in high-needs communities and to continue building a successful continuum of early learning from birth to five years old.
- Engaging families, aligning systems across agencies, and focusing on developing access to quality preschool programs will help ensure that Montana provides high quality services and education for our youngest learners.
- This grant is an opportunity to work with existing pre-school providers and education agencies.
- We appreciate this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant. We stand with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan.

Please contact me at 406-586-9652 with questions.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Ken Miller
Director
HRDC District IX, Head Start

October 9, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
Human Services

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Sheldon,

This letter demonstrates Rocky Mountain Development Council, Inc. - Head Start's intent to participate in the Montana Pre School Development Project.

We have submitted the MPDP Sub Grant Evidence form, which will provide you with additional information regarding our program and its needs. This is an unprecedented opportunity for Montana to increase access to quality early learning programs for preschool aged children in high-needs communities and to continue building a successful continuum of early learning from birth to five years old.

We appreciate this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant. We stand with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan.

Please contact me at apena@rmdc.net or 406-457-7375 with questions.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Ashley Peña
Program Operation Manager
RMDC Head Start
P.O. Box 1717, 200 S. Cruse Ave
Helena, MT 59624
Ph: 406-457-7375
Fax: 406-447-1629
apena@rmdc.net

Julie A. Serstad, MSN
Executive Director
Rocky Mountain Development Council
PO Box 1717, 200 S. Cruse Ave.
Helena, MT 59624
Ph: 406-457-7327; cell: (b)(6)
Fax: 406-447-1629
jserstad@rmdc.net



Board of Public Education

PO Box 200601
Helena, Montana 59620-0601
(406) 444-6576
www.bpe.mt.gov

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Ekalaka

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Higher Education

Denise Juneau,
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

Steve Bullock, Governor

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Pete Donovan

September 29, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
and Human Services

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

This letter demonstrates the Montana Board of Public Education's commitment and support of the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A). The Board of Public Education has constitutional authority to provide general supervision of P-12 education in Montana. The Board of Public Education is currently engaged in the process of working collaboratively with Governor Bullock and Superintendent of Public Instruction Juneau, to review and update Montana's administrative rules pertaining to preschool education.

The Preschool Development Grant would provide an unprecedented opportunity for Montana to increase access to quality early learning programs for 4 year olds in high-needs communities and to continue building a successful continuum of early learning from birth to five years old. The grant would facilitate engaging families, aligning systems across agencies, and focusing on developing access to quality preschool programs.

The Montana Board of Public Education appreciates this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant. We stand with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan.

Please give us a call at the Board of Public Education office if you have any questions: (406) 444-6576.

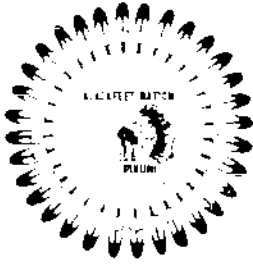
Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Sharon Carroll, Chairperson

(b)(6)

Peter Donovan, Executive Director



BLACKFEET NATION

P.O. BOX 850 BROWNING, MONTANA 59417
(406) 338-7521 FAX (406) 338-7530

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Harry Barnes, Chairman
Iliff "Scott" Kipp, Sr., Vice-Chairman
Tyson T. Running Wolf, Secretary
Tinsuwella Bird Rattler, Treasurer

BLACKFEET TRIBAL BUSINESS COUNCIL

Earl Old Person
Harry Barnes
Joseph "Joe" McKay
Nelse St. Goddard
Forrestina Calf Boss Ribs
Tyson T. Running Wolf
William "Bill" Old Chief
Iliff "Scott" Kipp, Sr.
Cheryl Lynn Little Dog

October 9, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary and
Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg:

On behalf of the Blackfeet Nation, I offer my support the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A) to develop and expand preschool education and services to four year-olds and their families on Indian lands and other communities in our state.

Funding from this grant will support the Blackfeet Early Childhood Center's efforts to expand to provide high quality preschool education for additional children in our community. All parents want their children to have a bright future. Early childhood education that involves the family is respectful of cultural traditions and provides a quality learning environment is an important foundation for a child's academic success in school.

I support Governor Bullock's commitment to or preschool education and to collaborating with existing programs that are providing quality services. I urge your approval of this grant proposal.

Please feel free to contact me at (406) 338-3513 if you have further need of information.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Harry Barnes, Chairman
Blackfeet Tribal Business Council

CROW TRIBE EXECUTIVE BRANCH



Office of
Chairman Darrin Old Coyote

Bachooitche Avenue
P.O. Box 159
Crow Agency (Baaxuwuashé), Montana 59022
Phone: (406) 638 3732/638-3786
Fax: (406) 638-7301

Darrin Old Coyote

CHAIRMAN

Dana Wilson

VICE CHAIRMAN

Alvin Not Afraid Jr.

SECRETARY

Shawn Backbone

VICE SECRETARY

October 10, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary and
Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg:

On behalf of the Crow Nation, I support the application submitted by the State of Montana for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A). The grant will develop and expand preschool education services to four-year-olds and their families throughout *all* of Montana's communities.

Funding from this grant will support the Crow Agency Head Start's efforts to expand high quality preschool education for our Crow children. As Crow people, we view our children as our most precious resource. Parents from our community want our children to have a bright future and the early childhood education will provide a quality learning environment. The goals that will be attained by the early childhood education are important foundations for a child's academic success as they enter kindergarten. Children who attend quality preschool programs are more likely to graduate from high school and seek higher education for a better quality of life.

In closing, I support Governor Bullock's commitment to preschool education and collaboration with existing community programs that are providing quality services. I urge your approval of this very important grant proposal.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Darrin Old Coyote, Chairman
Crow Nation

FORT PECK TRIBES

Assiniboine & Sioux

October 9, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary and
Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg:

On behalf of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, I offer my support the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A) to develop and expand preschool education and services to four year-olds and their families on Indian lands and other communities in our state.

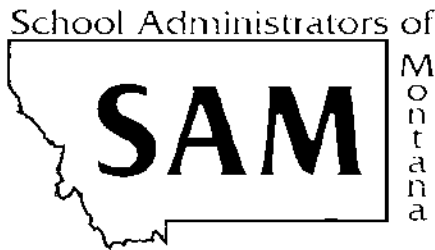
Funding from this grant will support the Fort Peck Head Start's efforts to expand high quality preschool education for additional children in our community. Early childhood education that involves the family, is respectful of cultural traditions and provides a quality learning environment is an important foundation for a child's academic success as they enter kindergarten. Children who attend quality preschool programs are more likely to graduate from high school, more likely to go on to college and more likely to increase their earning potential over the course of their lives. I support Governor Bullock's commitment to or preschool education and collaborating with existing community programs that are providing quality services.

I urge your approval of this grant proposal.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

A.T. Stafne
Chairman
Fort Peck Tribal Executive Board



SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS OF MONTANA

Educational Leaders...Advocates for Youth

(406) 442-2510 Phone

(406) 442-2518 Fax

900 No. Montana Avenue, Suite A-4

Helena, Montana 59601

October 8, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary and
Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg:

On behalf of the School Administrators of Montana, I write in support of the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A). Montana is making great strides in preschool education. The state is poised to adopt accreditation and content standards for preschool, as well as a special licensure endorsement for educators to teach children from age three through Third grade.

Funding from this grant will allow Montana to build on the many excellent programs that are already in place and create options for community-level collaboration between schools districts and existing Head Start and early childhood programs to meet the needs of four-year-olds and their families. It will also support Pre-K teachers in obtaining early childhood degrees and receiving wages comparable to their K-8th grade peers.

I know from my experience as a teacher and school administrator that an investment in early childhood education makes a difference in a student's academic success. Access to early education for children living in poverty means that they are more likely to graduate from high school, less likely to get involved in criminal activity and will have a higher earning potential throughout their lives.

Governor Bullock has a strong commitment to allocating state dollars for preschool education and this grant will help Montana build the infrastructure needed to provide preschool education to all Montana's children in the near future. I urge your support of Montana's application.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Kirk J. Miller, Ed.D.
Executive Director
School Administrators of Montana



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

October 7, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

Please accept this letter as The Annie E. Casey Foundation's (AECF) endorsement and commitment of support for the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A).

As you undoubtedly know, our Foundation is devoted to developing a brighter future for millions of children at risk of poor educational, economic, social and health outcomes through evidence-based policy solutions. Over the years, we've provided a series of well-researched and data-rich publications to make the case for public investment in early childhood systems. Our 2013 Policy Brief, "The First Eight Years," lines out a series of policy recommendations to increase access to programs including: state adoption of early learning and development standards (which Montana has done) and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (which Montana has piloted and is formalizing). Additionally, this grant opportunity aligns well with AECF recommendations to focus on investments that will benefit low-income children in particular, as well as partnerships between the federal government and states to ensure quality, access and equity.

Access to high quality early childhood education is a key component in ensuring equity in outcomes for all our children. In our 2014 policy report, "Race for Results: Building a Path for Opportunity for all Children," we developed an equity index to highlight disparities in opportunity for different ethnic and racial populations in the US. American Indians as a whole face some of the steepest barriers, and of the 25 states with significant numbers of Native American children, Montana fell in the bottom three on a composite measure which included children in preschool. By focusing preschool development in high need communities, particularly on Montana's American Indian Reservations, this grant will help raise the well-being of children and families in the state.

AECF is committed to supporting work in Montana. We have invested in a 20-year relationship with the state of Montana through the University of Montana's Bureau of Business and Economic Research. Their high quality Montana KIDS COUNT data publications regarding early childhood issues demonstrate the state's interest in developing a preschool system that improves the school readiness and educational achievement of their children.

Please let me know if I can provide you any additional information regarding this letter of support.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Dennis J. Campa
Associate Director of Policy Reform and Advocacy
External Affairs
The Annie E. Casey Foundation



Department of Public Health and Human Services

Early Childhood Services Bureau ♦ P.O. Box 202925 ♦ Helena, MT 59620-2925 ♦ fax: 406-444-2547

Steve Bullock, Governor

Richard H. Opper, Director

October 6, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

This letter demonstrates the Best Beginnings Advisory Council's commitment and support of the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A).

The **Best Beginnings Advisory Council**, the statewide arm of the comprehensive early childhood system, focuses on the multiple systems impacting young children and families, particularly those with high needs. Its goal is to improve collaboration and coordination across the spectrum of governmental and non-profit organizations providing early childhood services, including health and mental health services, family support and parent education, and early care and education.

The BBAC is committed to comprehensive services for young children and their families through this work we support the 20 local early childhood coalitions across the state of Montana. Both the state BBAC and the local community coalitions will play a large part in the leadership team and support at the local level for aligned comprehensive systems of Quality Preschool across Montana's highest need communities. The BBAC and local coalitions are excited to engage upon this important work engaging families, aligning systems across agencies, and focusing on developing access to quality early childhood programs and will help ensure that Montana provides high quality services and education for our youngest citizens. This is an unprecedented opportunity for Montana to increase access to quality early learning programs for 4 year olds in high-needs communities and to continue building a successful continuum of early learning from birth to five years old.

Please contact me at (406)444-0589 or krich@mt.gov with questions.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Kathy Rich, Early Childhood Systems Collaboration Manager
BBAC Coordinator
Early Childhood Services Bureau
Department of Health and Human Services





Central Montana Head Start

25 Meadowlark Lane
Lewistown, MT 59457

406-535-7751

Fax 406-535-7752

E-mail: cgodbey@cmheadstart.org



October 1, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

This letter demonstrates Central Montana Head Start, Inc., commitment and support of the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A).

Central Montana Head Start (CMHS) is a private not-for-profit agency that provides comprehensive preschool services for children (3-5 years old) living in Fergus, Wheatland and Musselshell Counties. Our mission is to strengthen and empower children, families and communities. In addition to providing educational opportunities (4 hours a day, four days a week) for children to help prepare them for kindergarten, CMHS also offers services to enrolled participants in the areas of health, mental health, nutrition, disabilities, parent engagement and family support.

As a recipient of the Montana Striving Readers Project grant, CMHS has displayed a 100% commitment from the onsite Leadership Implementation Team to improving literacy results for preschool children through the Montana RTI Framework. Our commitment to improving literacy results for preschool children is even more evident by the 100% buy-in from all CMHS staff, CMHS governing boards, and administration in all three LEAs to which CMHS children are transitioned. Moreover, CMHS has committed to the Montana Striving Readers Project re-application process for an additional two years.

This grant is an opportunity to work with existing Head Starts and Montana Striving Reader Project recipients further demonstrating commitment to children and families; engaging families, aligning systems across agencies, and focusing on developing access to quality preschool programs will help ensure that Montana provides high quality services and education for our youngest learners.

We appreciate this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant. We stand with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan.

Please contact me at 406-535-7751 with questions.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Carra Godbey
Executive Director
Central Montana Head Start

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Jennifer Pfau
Board President
Central Montana Head Start



October 3, 2014

Ms. Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Mr. Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary
Administration for Children & Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg:

This letter demonstrates Montana State University – Bozeman's commitment and support of the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A). This is an unprecedented opportunity for Montana to increase access to high quality early learning programs for four-year-olds in high-needs communities and to continue building a successful continuum of early learning from birth to five years old and beyond.

As one of three institutions of higher education in the state of Montana offering a four-year degree in Early Childhood Education, Montana State University – Bozeman is committed to the education, training, and career placement of individuals working with young children and their families. We strive to provide the highest caliber of teacher preparation, including coursework and fieldwork experiences focused on family engagement, developmentally appropriate practice, and early childhood advocacy.

The Preschool Development Grant provides a unique opportunity to continue building collaborative relationships between and among public and private stakeholders with a shared interest in strengthening communities. There is tremendous potential in Montana to align existing systems that will help connect children and families to high quality early childhood services and education.

Montana State University – Bozeman appreciates this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant. As leaders in higher education in the state of Montana, we are committed to serving as advocates for young children, families, and the early childhood profession. We stand with

Office of the President

211 North Park
R/O Box 173420
Bozeman, MT 59717-0120
www.montana.edu

Tel: (406) 294-2341
Fax: (406) 294-1893

Mountains & Minds

Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant, and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Waded Cruzado, Ph.D.

President

(b)(6)

Martha A. Potvin, Ph.D.

Provost

(b)(6)

Lynda Ransdell, Ph.D.

Dean, College of Education, Health & Human Development

(b)(6)

Jayne Downey, Ph.D.

Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning,

College of Education, Health & Human Development

(b)(6)

Sandy Bailey, Ph.D.

Department Head, Health & Human Development

(b)(6)

Christine Lux, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Health & Human Development



Strengthening Families, Supporting
Communities, Nurturing Children

October 6, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
Human Services

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

The Montana Children's Trust Fund Board is pleased to offer this Letter of Support for Governor Bullock's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A). The mission of the Montana Children's Trust Fund (MT CTF) is to reduce the occurrence of child maltreatment and increase safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments for all Montana children. We do this primarily through providing small, annual prevention grants to a variety of family support programs statewide and some limited statewide initiatives. Our grantees include a network of community-based, primary and secondary prevention focused family resource and support programs as well as a statewide shaken baby prevention program. The work of MT CTF is focused on prevention of abuse and neglect through evidence based education programs for parents, families and caregivers that teach about child development, the influences of adverse childhood experiences, appropriate parenting techniques, and parental support.

Current studies show that to be kindergarten-ready and able to learn, children perform best when they come from safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments free of trauma and abuse. One of the best investments we can make to prepare children for school is through fostering and growing these nurturing relationships during early childhood.

The MT CTF is currently financially unable to fund child maltreatment prevention programs in every identified high-risk community in the state. However, in partnership with other stakeholders, including early childhood Best Beginnings Councils, we are making inroads in prevention. Prevention efforts, particularly for low-income, rural, and tribal communities, can make the difference that will enable our children to be kindergarten-ready.

These efforts are a necessary part of any effective early childhood system. As such, the Montana Children's Trust Fund is committed to the full development of a sustainable,

family-focused early childhood system. We are willing to participate in development opportunities, coordinate with wrap around activities where possible, and continue to build a trauma-informed cadre of grantees that create partnerships with Montana families.

This is an unprecedented and much needed opportunity for Montana's children and families. The MT CTF's board and staff enthusiastically support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant and ask you to approve the application. We stand with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan.

Please contact us at (406) 444-3002 with questions.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

JoAnne Eder, Chair

(b)(6)

Casey Malloy

(b)(6)

Jamey Petersen, Director

(b)(6)

Clementine Lindley, Vice Chair

(b)(6)

Patty Butler

DENNIS & PHYLLIS
WASHINGTON
FOUNDATION

101 International Drive
Post Office Box 16630
Missoula, MT 59808
www.dpwfoundation.org

October 1, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

The purpose of this letter is to convey the strong commitment of the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation to the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A).

The Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation was founded in 1988 with a primary focus on youth and economically and socially disadvantaged individuals, families and those with special needs. Just in the last eight years, we have:

- Partnered with two of Montana's Governors to host two statewide early childhood education business leaders summits.
- Provided funds to the State Department of Public Health and Human Services to match federal early childhood care and education funds.
- Joined with the Governor's office to fund a study of the statewide economic impact of early care and education in Montana.
- Sponsored several early childhood education conferences in Montana for professionals and practitioners to share best practices in the early care and education industry.
- Funded numerous nonprofit organizations providing direct services in the area of early care and education, including parent training.

We are strong supporters of expanded investments by the public and private sector in early childhood education because of the direct, positive impact early childhood education can have on the cognitive, social, emotional, and economic success of each child. Extensive, longitudinal research conducted in the U.S. and Europe clearly shows the connection between high quality early care and education to: increased graduation rates, reduced juvenile crime, reduced use of public assistance programs, increased enrollment in higher education, higher wages and greater employment longevity and a more productive workforce. The Preschool Development Grant would increase access to quality early learning programs for 4 year olds in high-needs communities, especially Montana's seven Indian Reservations and underserved rural communities.

**DENNIS & PHYLLIS
WASHINGTON
FOUNDATION**

101 International Drive
Post Office Box 16630
Missoula, MT 59808
www.dpwfoundation.org

The Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation is dedicated to opening doors for youth in the area of education, especially early childhood education and we would welcome the opportunity to work with the public sector to expand access to quality early learning programs to 4 year olds. We appreciate this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant and we are ready to work as partners with Governor Bullock and Superintendent of Public Instruction Denise Juneau to implement the plan.

Should you have any questions about the contents of this letter, please contact me directly at 406-523-1325.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Mike Halligan, Executive Director
Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation

October 1, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg:

I am pleased to write a letter of support for the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A). The Early Childhood Project (ECP) at Montana State University is dedicated to building a comprehensive early childhood system for young children and families. The ECP coordinates Montana's early childhood career development programs and services through a workforce registry, professional development approval system and a variety of incentives and awards. We verify training, education and employment records for the early childhood profession and provide eleven career path levels of certification. Additionally we convene the Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium that plays a key role in the design and implementation of early childhood education workforce development in our state. As a grant-funded outreach program at MSU, we have served young children, their families, and support services with a mission to improve the coordination, quality and availability of high quality early childhood programs and a comprehensive system since 1985.

This grant provides Montana with an opportunity to expand preschool education and services to four year olds and their families in high needs areas of our state. It has the potential to create avenues of collaboration between the Office of Public Instruction and the Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Services Bureau and with other key partner agencies and organizations in Montana. Through increased understanding of high quality early childhood education across systems, Montana can capitalize upon and strengthen many excellent programs and initiatives in place, expand professional development opportunities, and create options for community-level collaboration between schools districts and existing Head Start and early childhood programs to meet the needs of four-year-olds and their families...

The Early Childhood Project will continue to contribute to bring meaningful time, effort and funding to support this plan. Montana children and families deserve the best - high quality early childhood programs that address all domains of development so children are successful in learning and life! We appreciate Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau's leadership in requesting this grant for the State of Montana. . .

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

Libby Hancock

Libby Hancock
Director

**Department of
Health and Human
Development**

**Early Childhood
Project**

2066 Stadium Dr. Ste 203
P.O. Box 173540
Bozeman, MT 59717-3540
www.mtecp.org

Tel 406-404-1624
Fax 406-404-1628
Email ecp@montana.edu

Mountains & Minds

The University of Montana Western

October 2, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

This letter demonstrates the University of Montana Western's commitment and support of the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A). This is an unprecedented opportunity for Montana to increase access to quality early learning programs for 4 year olds in high-needs communities and to continue building a successful continuum of early learning from birth to five years old. It will also support Pre-K teachers in obtaining early childhood degrees and receiving wages comparable to their K-8th grade peers. This is important in ensuring quality programs for young children and their families and the in attracting and retaining Pre-K teachers. Currently, it is extremely difficult to hire qualified early childhood teachers and to retain them.

The University of Montana Western provides 24 credits of early childhood coursework in eight locations throughout Montana and also offers a hybrid combining online coursework with limited week-end face-to-face classes. This core of courses forms the basis for an early childhood associate degree, bachelor's degree, and a minor. Through collaborative arrangements with other campuses, students can take their general education courses at local institutions. Further, early children specialty courses required for the bachelor's degree are offered online. This allows working practitioners to receive degrees in their home communities. Onsite mentors observe and conference with students to assist with application of coursework. They also assist students in understanding and navigating higher education. This has led to increased degree completion and retention.

Dr. Julie Bullard has been the director of the ECE program for the past 25 years. She has been instrumental in both the state and the nation in establishing early childhood standards. For example, she was one of a seven member national task force that established the NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation. These standards are used throughout the nation for NCATE/CAEP program reviews. Within the last few months she has assisted with the development of the Montana Early Childhood Higher Education professional preparation standards, Pre-K program standards, Pre-K children's standards, and the Montana Early Learning Standards. She is a member of many other boards including the Board of Examiners for CAEP (a national accreditation for education programs) and the National ECE Advisory Panel for ETS. This work has helped to inform the development and continual improvement of early childhood degrees at Montana Western.

At Montana Western we are committed to continuing to provide an accessible, outstanding early childhood degree. Qualified teachers are critical in providing high-quality programs for children.

We appreciate this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant. We stand with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan. Please contact me with questions.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Roberta Evans
Interim Chancellor



everychild.one voice.

October 5, 2014

Governor Steve Bullock
State Capitol, Room 204
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Montana PTA
P.O. Box 1269
Laurel, MT 59044

Dear Governor Bullock,

On behalf of Montana PTA's more than 4,500 members across the state, I write to express our support the federal Preschool Development Grant program, a new early learning program appropriated by the US Congress in the bipartisan FY2014 budget. This program would support our state to allow us to build, develop and expand access to high-quality preschool programs for Montana's children.

As the nation's largest volunteer child advocacy organization, PTA has long advocated for programs that further the success of our youngest learners. Research clearly shows that providing effective, targeted supports and interventions to children and parents beginning at birth leads to a number of short- and long-term outcomes, including increased school readiness, higher graduation rates and college attendance, increased employment and earnings, and reduced likelihood of arrest and incarceration. For this reason, PTA advocates that programs should be affordable, accessible, and characterized by high standards for teaching, health, and safety. Finally, PTA strongly encourages the inclusion of a robust family education component in all early education programs, as research also shows that this is a cost-effective investment that also improves student achievement, regardless of parents' education level, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background.

Jointly administered by the US Department of Education and US Department of Health and Human Services, the Preschool Development Grant program presents a new and valuable opportunity to help children from low-and moderate-income families enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Under this program Montana is eligible to receive up to \$10 million to develop and enhance our preschool program infrastructure and capacity to deliver high-quality education.

To be competitive in a global economy, our children must have access to high-quality early education. Montana PTA encourages you to take full advantage of this valuable opportunity for our children. We look forward to working with you to ensure that every child has the tools to help him or her succeed. If we can be of assistance, please contact Montana PTA's office at 406-628-9007 or email at ptamontana@robmt.org.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Sherry Holderith, President Montana PTA



The Big Sky Country

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPRESENTATIVE EDITH (EDIE) MCCLAFFERTY
HOUSE DISTRICT 75

HELENA ADDRESS:
CAPITOL BUILDING
PO BOX 200400
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-0400
PHONE: (406) 444-4800

HOME ADDRESS:
1311 STUART
BUTTE, MONTANA 59701
PHONE: (406) 782-2700
CELL: (406) 490-5873

October 7, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary and
Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

RE: Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A)

Dear Assistant Secretary Ms. Delisle and Assistant Secretary Mr. Greenberg:

As an educator, a Montana State Representative and a strong advocate of early education I am writing this letter in support for the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A). This grant will provide Montana an opportunity to expand preschool education and services to four year olds and their families in the high needs areas of our state.

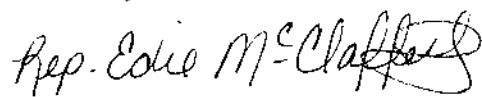
While families everywhere in Montana want the best for their children, families in communities with high poverty rates and on Indian reservations often don't have access to the resources they need to make sure their children are ready for school. As an educator and a state legislator, I know how important early education is to a child. A quality preschool program makes a big difference in a child's life. It sets the stage for a child to succeed in school and in life, something we want for all our children.

Montana is ready to develop and invest in public preschool. We will have early learning standards in place and by the time this grant is funded, Montana will have adopted accreditation standards for preschool to ensure quality instruction and quality learning environments.

The funding from this grant will allow Montana to build on its existing partnerships with Head Start and early childhood programs to meet the needs of four-year-olds and their families. It will also support Pre-K teachers in their efforts to obtain degrees in early childhood education. This is a critical component to ensuring quality programs for young children and in attracting and retaining Pre-K teachers.

Governor Bullock has made it a priority to invest in early education. The collaborative effort between the Governor's office, the Montana Office of Public Instruction, and the Montana Department of Health and Human Services will ensure that our youngest learners will be ready to learn when they start kindergarten.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rep. Edith McClafferty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rep." written in a smaller, more formal script than the last name.

Representative Edith McClafferty
House District 75

October 6, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

This letter demonstrates MEA-MFT's commitment and support of the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A).

MEA-MFT is the largest union in Montana. We represent a diverse group of Montanans, including Head Start teachers and staff, K-12 teachers and staff, the employees of the Montana Public Health and Human Services who are charged with licensing Montana's day cares and university faculty, among others. We advocate for quality public education at all levels, including preschool.

This is an unprecedented opportunity for Montana to increase access to quality early learning programs for 4 year olds in high-needs communities and to continue building a successful continuum of early learning from birth to five years old. Engaging families, aligning systems across agencies, and focusing on developing access to quality public preschool programs will help ensure that Montana provides high quality services and education for our youngest learners.

We are especially pleased that this grant is an opportunity to work with existing Head Starts. Montana's Head Starts have been providing high quality comprehensive services for children for decades. Our biggest concern with Head Start is inadequate funding, especially for salaries for teachers and staff. By improving the educational attainment and salaries of Head Start teachers, this grant will improve the already high quality of Head Start by addressing the serious problems of recruitment and retention.

We appreciate this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant. We stand with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan.

Please contact me at 406-442-4250 if you have questions.

(b)(6)

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Eric Feaver, President
MEA-MFT

- Public Schools ■ Higher Education
- State & County Employees
- Head Start ■ Health Care

Working for Montana's Future

1232 East Sixth Ave., Helena, MT 59601 ■



Montana Child Care Resource & Referral Network

October 2, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U. S. Department of Education
Services

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children & Families
U.S. Department of Health & Human

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

This letter is written to support and demonstrate our commitment to the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A).

This letter is written on behalf of the Montana Resource & Referral Network which comprises representation from the eleven Directors of the Regional Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies within the state of Montana. The CCR&R Agencies are funded through the Child Care Block Grant and supplement their programs with other contracts such as the Child & Adult Care Food Program, Part C IDEA, Healthy Mothers, and many more. Agencies also seek other funding sources and these non-federal funding allows us to play an active part in Advocacy for Early Care & Education at the State and Federal level. All the agencies concentrate their mission in the Early Childhood field. We work closely with the DPHHS- State of Montana Early Childhood Services Bureau staff to develop Program Management Plans to meet the State of Montana goals. The CCR&R Network has been a key player in the development of the Quality Improvement Rating System (STARS) and employ trained and certified Professional Development Specialists that are playing key roles in developing and carrying out Montana State approved intentional, sequential, competency based training as well as coaching and T/TA for all licensed child care providers within the State of Montana. We also reach out to other programs and individuals that are working with young children to encourage them to participate in our approved training and education.

We work on ensuring our Family Services Staff who are working daily with the families of Montana to help them with Child Care assistance are knowledgeable with all current information and resources and able to deliver that information to the families daily. Montana is a very large and predominantly rural area and the philosophy of the agencies is to deliver services from border to border. The eleven CCR&R agencies are dedicated to reaching all the families and children within the state.

We have a responsibility to work with the DPHHS Quality Assurance Division and Child Care Licensors. Our overall goal is to work closely to bring Early Care & Education and Child Care Licensing into similar working goals and terms; and to offer the children and families of Montana Quality Early Care & Education. We work with the office of Public Instruction to enable our young children to transition to the School setting or who will be receiving Early Childhood Special Education

throughout the school districts of Montana to be successful in the process. We offer to conduct trainings to their school staff in early care and child development and consider their needs when planning continuing education and training for early childhood educators in our areas. We have qualified staff that can help make the child's early years successful in all settings of care and education.

We are very excited to be writing this letter of support for the Preschool Development Grant. This grant will have far reaching impact on young children and their families in one of our nation's most high-need states. Fifty percent of all young children in Montana live in families earning less than 200% of the federal poverty level. The state has large populations of Native American children and children with special health care needs. A high percentage of children enter kindergarten without the skills and abilities they need to succeed. This grant provides the State of Montana the opportunity to increase the quality of early learning and education and more opportunities for our four year olds in high need communities to have the opportunity to attend a preschool program prior to kindergarten. In some of these communities, these opportunities do not exist or if they do, there isn't the qualified early educator to teach these programs. Currently, early childhood services are provided through a disconnected collection of programs and supports. Though every attempt is made to coordinate those services, many children do not receive the critical health, social development, early learning, and other services that would enable them to develop the skills needed for kindergarten readiness.

This grant will provide every Montana child access to a safe, accessible and high quality early childhood education that includes developmentally appropriate curricula, knowledgeable and well-trained program staff and educators, comprehensive services that support their health, nutrition and social well-being, in an environment that respects and supports diversity. Young children that are supported are more likely to be prepared for success in K-12 and beyond. This grant would work closely with existing Head Start and preschool programs. In many areas of the State, we know that Head Start programs have waiting lists for children and this grant would be able to financially assist them with increasing classrooms. We have high quality preschool programs throughout the state, but they continue to struggle to offer financial assistance to families so not all our children are attending such programs. Those high needs children are the ones being left out. This grant will provide opportunities to families and children who could not afford a private preschool program. Head Starts are not located in every county or city in the State of Montana and a large number of children do not have that opportunity in the rural areas.

We appreciate this opportunity to work with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan. We have staff who are capable of offering intentional and sequential training for child care providers and early care educators that will meet the guidelines within the grant proposal. The Network is very excited to support this Preschool Development Grant so that our children and families in Montana have an opportunity to higher quality early care and education. This grant is about capacity building resources and Montana has in place supporters ready to move forward to make this Grant be successful. The Network Directors look forward to the work involved.

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(b)(6)

(b)(6)



October 1, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle and
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

This letter demonstrates the commitment and support of Montana KIDS COUNT and the Annie E. Casey Foundation for the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A).

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) is a private foundation which has demonstrated its longstanding commitment to the well-being of children and families in the United States through its many projects and initiatives. One such project is KIDS COUNT, a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the U.S. by providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being. Montana KIDS COUNT is the AECF grantee for our state, and in addition to supporting the national initiative and network, we also provide more detailed, county-level data on the condition of Montana children in order to inform policy and decision making in our state.

Three indicators in particular underscore Montana's need for developing a system of high-quality early childhood education and services. First, a full 60 percent of children in Montana are currently not attending preschool, compared to the national average of 54 percent. Second, the number of Montana children under age 5 is on an upward trajectory, creating continual growth in the demand for such services. And third, early education options are especially limited on American Indian reservations, forcing parents to rely on family and friends for child care. American Indian children and families face enormous disparities in a range of educational, health and economic outcomes. Developing an early childhood education and services system provides an opportunity to ensure equitable access for all children across Montana, which in turn leads to a more prosperous and vibrant future for our state.

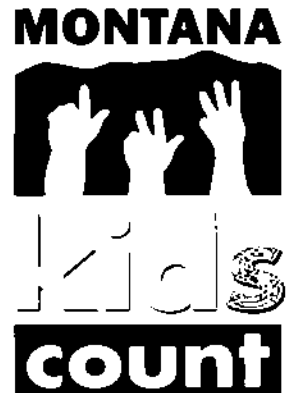
Like many rural and Mountain West states, Montana falls within the "Philanthropic Divide." Coined by the Big Sky Institute for the Advancement of Nonprofits, the term describes the lack of per capita foundation assets and investment in our state. Montana requires investment in infrastructure development in order to provide services for smaller communities spread over vast areas. While the state may lack the capital and resources of more populous states, our human and professional networks are strong and highly valued. This grant will assist Montana in developing, strengthening, and formalizing the state's network of early childhood systems in order to provide access to early learning opportunities for our most vulnerable children. We are confident that Superintendent Juneau and Governor Bullock are bringing together the right people, organizations, and resources for this endeavor.

Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Thale Dillon, Director
Montana KIDS COUNT
406-243-5113
thale.dillon@business.umt.edu

www.montanakidscount.org





Salish Kootenai College

P.O. Box 70
Pablo, MT 59855
Ph. (406) 275-4800
Fax (406) 275-4801



October 3, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

This letter demonstrates Salish Kootenai College's commitment and support of the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A). Salish Kootenai College (SKC) is a tribal college located on the Flathead Reservation, home of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in Northwest Montana. SKC offers accredited early childhood and elementary education programs at the associate and bachelor degree levels. Our mission at SKC is to provide quality post-secondary programs to Native American students locally and throughout the United States.

The Education Division faculty at Salish Kootenai College are excited about the opportunities that the Preschool Development Grant can provide to our education teacher candidates and to preschool children and their families throughout the state, particularly those who live in communities impacted by high poverty rates. This is an unprecedented opportunity for Montana to increase access to quality early learning programs for 4 year olds in high-needs communities and to continue building a successful continuum of early learning from birth to five years old.

In addition, the funding from this grant would provide much needed scholarships for our teacher candidates in early childhood as they work towards becoming highly qualified early childhood educators. Most of our post-secondary students at SKC are first generation college students, who are non-traditional, and often do not have adequate funding to complete their degree programs. The funding for higher education and workforce development will ensure that the teachers for preschool children are well prepared and are adequate in number. We cannot offer high quality preschool for children without the necessary workforce. This proposal has thoughtfully and strategically addressed this concern, and the developers have involved appropriate stakeholders to provide input into the design and programming for teacher preparation.

We appreciate this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant. We stand with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan.

Please contact me at the above address if you need more information.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Dr. Cindy O'Dell, Dean of Education



October 14, 2014

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

and

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

This letter demonstrates the Great Falls Public School's intent to participate in the Montana Pre School Development Project.

We have completed the Montana Preschool Development grant Subgrantee Evidence form, providing budgetary information and High-Quality Preschool Program criteria for our program. Great Falls Public Schools currently operates a preschool program in the Skyline Center. This program is funded by ESEA Title 1, IDEA, along with grants such as the Striving Readers Grant. However, the significant limitations on these funds have limited our ability to develop the program which meets the needs of all preschool children in Great Falls.

The community of Great Falls presents unique demographics; families move into and out of Great Falls to the three Indian Reservations in our geographic region, the Blackfoot, Rocky Boy, and Fort Belknap Reservations. During the 2012-13 school year 12.89% of our student population had identified tribal memberships; 41.9% of the children attending qualified for free and reduced lunch, a number that, in the current ESEA application has increased to 45.1% with almost 300 children identified as homeless. Of the fifteen elementary schools in Great falls, ten receive ESEA Title 1 funds, with free and reduced lunch rates ranging from 98.8% to 44.1%. Of these ten elementary schools identified as greater than 40% poverty we are able to serve the five highest poverty schools in our preschool program. There is currently a waiting list for preschool services with 68 children being served and a potential need to serve more than 150 children. In addition to children living in poverty, we serve 35 IDEA eligible including children identified as having cognitive delays, autism, blindness, or hearing impairments.

This is an unprecedented opportunity for Montana to increase access to quality early learning programs for 4 year olds in high-needs communities and to continue building a successful continuum of early learning from birth to five years old. Because we are the only large public preschool program in Montana, we have also become a regional center, with schools located in outlying communities seeking preschool placements for children with significant educational needs and/or disabilities. We believe we could become a preschool training model for the state of Montana, and would like to partner with other schools such as Libby, Helena, Bozeman, or Missoula to help build similar preschool programs as well as learn from their programs

Great Falls as a community is also working to develop a community network to serve young children. The Early Childhood Coalition (ECC) is comprised of representatives from Head Start, the City County Health Department, the Alliance for Youth, Great Falls Public schools, United Ways, Quality Life Concepts (QLC) and other community organizations and leaders work together to implement a seamless, comprehensive service system to meet the needs of our community's children from prenatal to age eight.



We appreciate this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant. We stand with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan.

Great Falls Public School Preschool is located at 3300 3rd St NE
Please contact me at 268-6438 with questions.

Sincerely, /

(b)(6)

Colette Getten
Early Childhood Coordinator
Great Falls Public Schools



Montana Association
for the Education
Of Young Children

10/15/14

Deborah S. Delisle and
Assistant Secretary of Elementary
and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
Human Services

Mark Greenberg
Assistant Secretary for
Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and

Dear Ms. Delisle and Mr. Greenberg,

The Montana Association for the Education of Young Children would like to express our commitment and support of the State of Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant (CFDA #84.419A).

MtAEYC is an affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We are a membership organization of professionals that advocate for the early childhood workforce, quality care and education for young children and families; and provide leadership and professional development opportunities for the early care and education community.

We recognize the importance of early development and learning from birth through the preschool years and are committed to engaging families, aligning systems across agencies, and focusing on developing access to quality preschool programs will help ensure that Montana provides high quality services and education for our youngest learners. . .

We believe this grant is an opportunity to work with existing pre-school providers and Head Start Programs. We appreciate this opportunity to support Montana's application for the Preschool Development Grant. We stand with Governor Bullock and Superintendent Juneau in their request for this grant and we are ready to work as partners to implement and support this plan.

Sincerely,

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Sharon DiBrito, Executive Director
Montana AEYC