

NO PROGRAM

While Montana does not provide state-funded pre-K as defined in this report, the state has taken several steps to address early learning. Governor Steve Bullock has made early childhood education one of his top priorities, proposing the Montana Early Edge Initiative to fund voluntary public preschool. The governor was unsuccessful in his budget request for a 2-year \$37 million state investment in preschool.

The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) has taken action recently to improve early education. The OPI proposed accreditation standards (Chapter 63) to the Board of Public Education for school districts that choose to provide public preschool to children ages 3-5 years. It also recommended changes to educator licensure requirements for an Early Grades endorsement (Age 3-Grade 3), including changes to the educator preparation program requirements for the early grades endorsement. Recommendations were approved by the Montana Board of Public Education in November 2014.

The Montana Early Learning Standards, separate from Chapter 63, cover multiple domains including: physical well-being and motor development; social-emotional development; approaches toward learning; language development; and cognitive and general knowledge. Two previous documents, Montana's Early Learning Guidelines for children ages 3-5 which had been in existence since 2004, and the Montana Guidelines for infants and toddlers, since 2009, were combined and revised in 2014. The Montana Early Learning Standards have not been approved by the Board of Public Education.

The Best Beginnings Advisory Council (BBAC), established in 2011, serves as the state early childhood advisory council and collaborating entity for the early childhood system. A core principal for BBAC is that children will have access to high quality early childhood programs. The Early Childhood Services Bureau within the Department of Public Health and Human Services serves as the home for BBAC. Additionally, Best Beginnings local coalitions work to increase coordination across early childhood systems.

Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program is Montana's voluntary quality rating improvement system, aligning quality indicators with support and incentives for early childhood programs and early childhood professionals. Participating licensed preschool facilities are awarded up to 5 stars indicating the level of quality.

In 2013, Montana submitted an application in the third round for competitive Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funding. Though the collaborative application was not funded, the Governor's Office, Office of Public Instruction, Board of Public Education, Department of Public Health and Human Services, Montana University System, and the State Library, identified the goal to make all Montana children school-ready, in its comprehensive early learning and development vision.

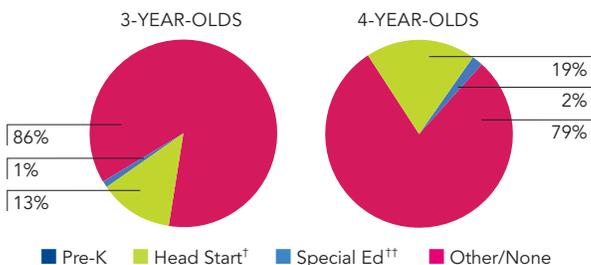
In 2014, Montana was awarded a competitive federal Preschool Development Grant for \$10 million to develop preschools for low- and moderate-income families in 16 communities.



ACCESS

Total state program enrollment	0
School districts that offer state program	NA
Income requirement	NA
Hours of operation	NA
Operating schedule.....	NA
Special education enrollment.....	827
Federally funded Head Start enrollment	4,009
State-funded Head Start enrollment	0

STATE PRE-K AND HEAD START ENROLLMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION



† Some Head Start children may also be counted in state pre-K.
 †† Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET

No Program

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$0
Local match required?	NA
State spending per child enrolled	\$0
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$0

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
 ** Head Start per-child spending for the 2012-2013 year includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds served. Past years figured have unintentionally included funds for Early Head Start.
 *** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures. Data are for the '12-'13 school year, unless otherwise noted.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

