

# Montana

## 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 State of Montana has taken action recently to improve early education. The Board of Public Education recently adopted a new rule that includes Early Childhood Education Program and Content Standards for school districts that choose to provide public preschool to children ages 3-5 years, as well as changes to educator licensure requirements for an Early Grades endorsement (age 3 to grade 3), and 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 and went into effect July 1, 2015.

The Montana Early Learning Standards, included within Chapter 63, cover multiple domains including: physical wellbeing 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 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 per year for up to four years to develop preschools for low- and moderate-income families in 16 communities.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
No Program	

RESOURCES RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
No Program	

POLICIES TO SUPPORT	
DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS	WORKFORCE
No Program	

## 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.....	856
Federally funded Head Start enrollment .....	4,100
State-funded Head Start enrollment .....	0

## QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

## RESOURCES

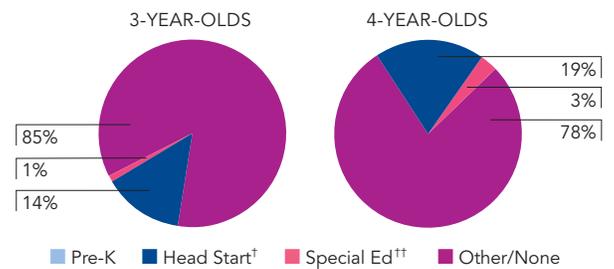
Total state pre-K spending .....	\$0
Local match required? .....	NA
State spending per child enrolled .....	\$0
All reported spending per child enrolled* .....	\$0

\* 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 2014-2015 year includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds served. Past years' figures have unintentionally included funds for Early Head Start.

\*\*\* K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures. Data are for the '14-'15 school year, unless otherwise noted.

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.

TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET  
 No Program

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

