

NO PROGRAM

Montana does not offer a state-funded pre-K program (as defined in this report) but the state has made other commitments to early learning, and early childhood education is one of Governor Steve Bullock's top priorities. During the last legislative biennium, the Governor proposed the Montana Early Edge Initiative to fund voluntary public preschool but was unsuccessful in his budget request for a two-year, \$37 million state investment in preschool. The Governor continues to support investments in preschool though recently House Bill 563 was rejected, which would have provided \$12 million in grants to school districts, Head Start, and other high-quality preschool providers to offer preschool to 4-year-olds from families at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

In 2014, Montana was awarded a competitive federal Preschool Development Grant. The state received \$10 million per year for up to four years to develop preschools for low- and moderate-income families in 16 communities. During the 2015-2016 school year, the state provided 462 low-income 4-year-olds with new early childhood education slots, many of which were created through partnerships with Head Start and other early childhood programs in the state.

The Board of Public Education 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 three to five. It also changed requirements for educator licensure to include an Early Grades endorsement (age three to grade three) and changed the educator preparation program requirements for the early grades endorsement. These 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 cover multiple domains including: approaches toward learning, physical wellbeing and motor development, language development, social-emotional development, and cognitive and general knowledge. The Montana Early Learning Standards were based on the combination of Montana's Early Learning Guidelines for children ages three to five and the Montana Guidelines for infants and toddlers, created in 2014.

The Best Beginnings Advisory Council (BBAC), which was established in 2011, is the state early childhood advisory council and collaborating entity for the early childhood system in Montana. BBAC is housed within the Department of Public Health and Human Services and aims to ensure all children have access to high-quality early childhood programs. Local coalitions work to increase coordination across early childhood systems in the state. Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program is Montana's voluntary quality rating improvement system (QRIS). The QRIS aligns quality indicators with support and incentives for early childhood programs and early childhood professionals. Licensed preschool programs can participate in the QRIS and earn up to five stars, indicating the level of quality.

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

RESOURCE RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
No Program	

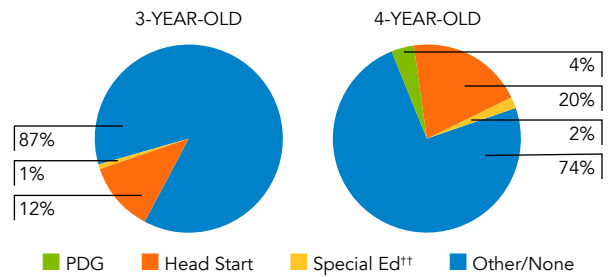
TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET	
CURRENT STANDARDS	NEW STANDARDS
No Program	

MONTANA

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	0
School districts that offer state program	NA
Income requirement	NA
Minimum hours of operation	NA
Operating schedule	NA
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	836
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	3,964
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	0

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



** Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

NO PROGRAM

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$0
Local match required?	NA
State Head Start spending	\$0
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 includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.

*** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

