

NO PROGRAM

In 2016-2017, Montana did 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 Bullock's top priorities.

Governor Bullock recently proposed the Montana Early Edge Initiative to fund voluntary public preschool but failed to win legislative approval for a two-year, \$37 million state investment in preschool. The Governor continues to support investments in preschool and recently, in 2017, House Bill 639 was passed, which allocates spending \$6 million over two years on a pilot preschool program, the STARS Preschool Program, for 4- and 5-year-olds. More than 300 children are served across 17 programs which include Head Start, public schools, and private child care centers. Programs are encouraged to prioritize at least 25% of classroom slots to children who are high-needs. All STARS Preschool Programs follow standards aligned with Head Start, Montana's STARS to Quality QRIS, and the state's Preschool Development Grant (PDG) program. While this is a significant investment for the state, Governor Bullock continues to seek additional funding for preschool.

In 2014, Montana was awarded a competitive federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG). 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 2016-2017 school year, the state provided 763 new early childhood education slots, many of which were created through partnerships with Head Start and other early childhood programs in the state.

In 2017, Montana received another competitive federal grant through the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program to support literacy skills among disadvantaged children. Fifteen percent of grant funding will be distributed to preschool programs in the state.

The Montana Board of Public Education, in 2014, adopted a new rule that includes Early Childhood Education Program and Content Standards for school districts choosing 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.

The Montana Early Learning Standards, created in 2014, 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.

The Best Beginnings Advisory Council (BBAC), 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	

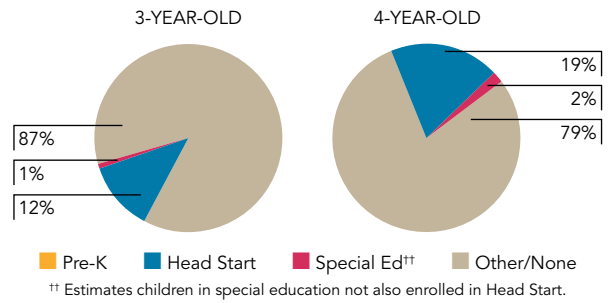
TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET	
CURRENT STANDARDS	NEW STANDARDS
No Program	

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	894
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	3,894
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	0

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



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

