

Montana Advocates for Children

2005 Legislative Agenda

EXHIBIT 3
DATE 2-4-05
HB 462

- 1) We support maintained funding at the FY05 level of \$26.9M/year to sustain child care payment assistance to low income working families.
 - This may require investment of General Fund for FY06-07.
 - This maintains child care payment assistance for 10,100 children from 6,300 low income working families during each year of the biennium.
 - We advocate that other human services to low income families not be reduced in order to fund child care.
- 2) We urge that children's health services for low income families be adequately funded to ensure the safe growth and development of young children.
 - This includes mental health, dental health and CHIP services.
- 3) We support an Early Childhood School Readiness Project to optimize the early development, learning, and future success of young children.
 - This effort assists child care providers, other early childhood professionals, and families to prepare young children for school.
 - Strategies include close coordination of state services for young children and their families, professional development and retention of caregivers (i.e. Best Beginnings Merit Pay and Star Quality Tiered Reimbursement), and promotion of quality early childhood care and education.
 - This effort will help Montana meet the required outcomes of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.
 - Estimated cost \$.7 million.
- 4) We request that licensed child care programs be included in any state efforts to provide funding for afterschool programs.

(Approved 12/06/04)

Montana Advocates for Children is a coalition of state level professional organizations including Montana Association for the Education of Young Children, Montana Child Care Association, Montana Head Start Association, and Montana Child Care Resource & Referral Network.