EXHIBIT 4
DATE 2/4/13
HB

Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program

STARS to Quality is a continuous quality improvement program for early childhood education in Montana. Early childhood stakeholders have developed a vision for quality early childhood education in Montana and have identified an approach to investing in and ensuring strong quality outcomes for children over time. The Best Beginnings *STARS to Quality Program* is a **voluntary** quality rating improvement system that aligns achievement of **quality indicators** with **support and incentives** for early childhood **programs** and **early childhood professionals.** Our quality system for Montana includes 1) Workforce Development; 2) Quality Rating Improvement System; 3) Infrastructure to administer the programs, by providing training, coaching, and technical assistance, and validation.

The Governor's budget proposal of $1 Million dollars for each year of the biennium would support an additional 1000 children, 600 families, and 100 providers. There is excitement in the field of Early Childhood Education and it continues to grow as the demand for access to *STARS to Quality* continues to grow.

What are the STARS to Quality Program goals?

- 5 STAR Level System focuses on 1) Education, Qualifications & Training; 2) Staff/Caregiver-to-Child Ratio & Group Size; 3) Family/Community Partnerships; 4) Leadership & Program Management; 5) High Quality Learning Environments. (these are based on national standards)
- Encouraging professional development along a continuum of training, maintaining quality over time.
- Monetary incentives/grants to support programs in their quality improvement goals
- Accountability for quality improvement and use of funds occurs through achieving STAR levels and by the use of monitoring tools: Environmental Rating Scales and Program and Business Administration Scales.

What are the Best Beginnings *STARS to Quality* Incentives?

STARS incentives are payments made to programs as they achieve certain criteria and submit a budget to support continued goal setting. These are available to programs in two forms:
Quality improvement awards (based on improvement goals)
Tiered reimbursement percent above standard state reimbursement rates for facilities that serve Best Beginnings Scholarship families.

STARS Incentives (Quarterly)					
	Family 6 - Licensed Capacity	**Group** 12- Licensed Capacity	**Small Center** 13-29- Licensed Capacity	**Medium Center** 30-59 - Licensed Capacity	**Large Center** 60+ - Licensed Capacity
STAR 1	Beginner STAR Kit, Resources, Help and Support				
STAR 2	$625	$875	$1250	$1625	$2063
	5% increased reimbursement for Best Beginnings Scholarships				
STAR 3	$938	$1375	$1875	$2500	$3125
	10% increased reimbursement for Best Beginnings Scholarships				
STAR 4	$1250	$1875	$2500	$3375	$4063
	15% increased reimbursement for Best Beginnings Scholarships				
STAR 5	$1563	$2250	$3125	$4250	$5000
	20% increased reimbursement for Best Beginnings Scholarships				

How do providers become eligible and move through the STARS matrix levels to receive incentives?

Criteria must be met to participate in the program, and to move through the STARS system. Programs that may be eligible include licensed or registered child care providers, Head Start/Early Head Start Programs, and tribal programs that are state licensed or registered, or have a formal MOU to show the equivalent to Montana license or registration standards met. STARS incentives begin at level 2, and each level builds upon previous one(s) with increasing incentive as well increasing quality criteria.