Increasing access to high quality preschool for 4 and 5 year old children in Montana

STARS Preschool
Section 11 and 12. Coordination instruction

- One time, general fund appropriation to the DPHHS under the Human and Community Services Division – $6 million over 2 years
- To increase access to preschool for 4- and 5-year-old children
- To test multiple delivery models
Variety of facility types

Mandy Berens – Kountry Kare

Discovery Place

Troy Elementary

Explorers Academy, Billings Head Stars
Key STARS Preschool Criteria

- Provide a minimum of 5.5 hours per day, or 28 hours per week
- Teaching staff in public schools shall be licensed, non-public teaching staff shall have BA with 20 Early Childhood credits
- Classrooms must use a research based curriculum
- Programs are encouraged to prioritize at least 25% of classroom slots to children who are high needs
- Staff child ratios must be 1 adult to every 10 children with maximum classroom sizes at 18 students
- Program must show alignment to the Montana Early Learning Standards
In July, a selection committee reviewed 47 applications and selected 17 STARS Preschool programs.

- Lockwood and Ronan SD support 2 classrooms.
- Total of 19 STARS Preschool classrooms.
- Explorers Academy, Billings Head Start plans to open a second classroom in Laurel, starting in January.

Sink or float predictions,
Early Childhood Center Flathead Community College, Kalispell
Budget Allocation

- $2.3 million allocated to programs directly
- $700,000 allocated to infrastructure support for the early childhood classrooms through training, coaching, etc.
- Program awards range from $27,190.00 to $150,000.00
- Average awarded amount $120,848.00
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<tr>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Head Start</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Alberton Elementary</td>
<td>• ABC Academy, Helena</td>
<td>• Explorers Academy, Billings</td>
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<td>• Cherry Valley STARS Preschool Program, Polson</td>
<td>• Beartooth Children Center, Red Lodge</td>
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<td>• Eastgate Elementary, East Helena</td>
<td>• Discovery Place, Bozeman</td>
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<td>• Hawthorne Elementary, Helena</td>
<td>• Early Childhood Center, Flathead Valley Community College, Kalispell</td>
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<td>• Lockwood School District</td>
<td>• Kountry Kare, Shepard</td>
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<td>• Marion Elementary</td>
<td>• Small Wonders, Lewistown</td>
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<td>• Ronan School District</td>
<td>• Stepping Stones, Dillon</td>
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<td>• W.F. Morrison Elementary, Troy MT.</td>
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STARS Preschool estimates serving 300 children in a high quality preschool setting the first year.
How is the STARS Preschool criteria being monitored?

- Monthly on-site support and monitoring
- Quarterly Reports
- Assessments
- End of the year program and family surveys
How is the STARS Preschool criteria being evaluated?

- Project Data
  - Facility Data
    - Health and Safety Inspections
    - Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)
  - Child Development and Outcome Data
    - Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE)
    - Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL)
For more information, please visit starspreschool.mt.gov
Thank you