

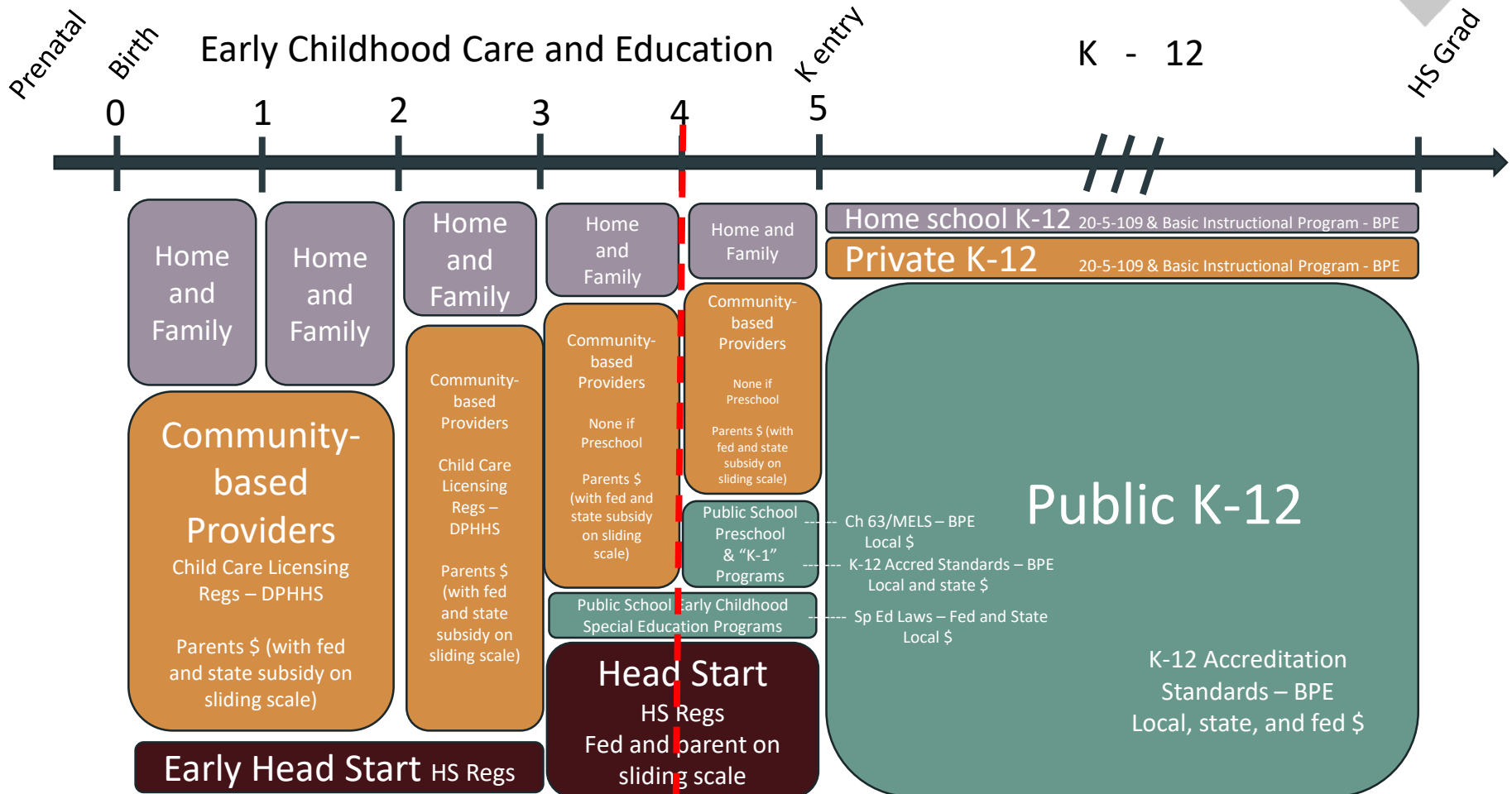
Where the Kids Are...

(Or, where they might be, as we don't know for sure prior to school entrance. This estimate for discussion purposes.)

Who's watching them...

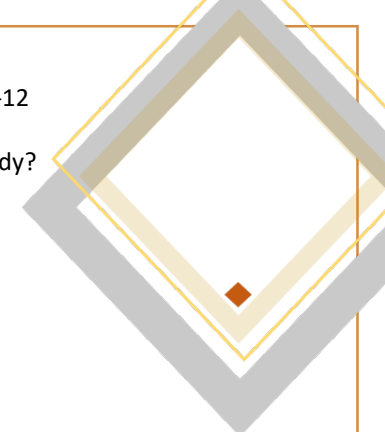
(As in, the entity with regulatory oversight. Some providers may opt-in to various regulations.)

And, who's paying for them...



Policy considerations when designing state-funded preschool programs:

- **Governance**—who will administer and supervise the program? How will quality and effectiveness be measured and alignment with K-12 be ensured?
- **Universal or targeted**—is the program for all children of a certain age or just for children at greater risk of not being kindergarten ready?
- **“Dosage”**—will the program provide for a full-day or partial-day program, one year or two?
- **Providers**—will the program be provided by public schools only or through a mixed-delivery model that includes community-based providers?
- **Funding**—how will state dollars be distributed and how will accountability be ensured?
- **Community and family engagement**—how will the program promote strong relationships with parents and the community at large?
- **Educators**—how will the program develop and support a sufficient pipeline of early childhood educators?



Preschool Proposals in Montana 2015-2019

2015	2017	2019
<p>The executive budget for the 2017 biennium requested \$18.5 million per year as a new proposal for “Early Childhood Education” and that the following language be inserted in HB 2 (there was no accompanying legislation):</p> <p>“Early Childhood Education may only be used by the office of public instruction to distribute block grants for voluntary, high-quality, pre-kindergarten for 4-year olds. School districts may partner with Head Start, local child care centers, family child care providers, or provide services within district facilities.”</p> <p>The proposal had been marketed as “Early Edge” by the Governor’s Office.</p> <p>The executive budget also included a new proposal to fund 1.00 FTE at OPI for an early childhood specialist to oversee the allocation of this funding to school districts and support early childhood educators and programs.</p> <p>This proposal was rejected by the Legislature.</p> <p>In December 2014, Montana was awarded a 4-year, \$10 million/year federal Preschool Development Grant. This grant provided roughly 1,000 preschool slots in about 20 Montana communities and supported professional development to strengthen Montana’s early childhood education system.</p>	<p>HB 563 (Kelker) established a preschool grant program similar to what was proposed in 2015 (but targeted at children from low-income families) and appropriated \$12 million per year. The proposal allowed school districts to apply for grants from a new “Bright Start for Montana Kids Board” to provide a minimum of 360 hours/year or contract with Head Start programs or nonsectarian private providers that meet quality standards to do the same.</p> <p>The grant amount was \$3,000 per preschool child, but was subject to proration if the appropriation was insufficient. The fiscal note estimated that this would allow roughly 2,000 eligible 4-year-olds to participate.</p> <p>This proposal was rejected by the Legislature.</p> <p>Late in the 2017 session, HB 639 (Cook) was amended to include coordination language to increase the appropriation to the Human and Community Services Division at DPHHS by \$3 million per year to “to expand the program and increase access to preschool for 4- and 5-year-old children” and required that the money be used to “create and support pilot programs to test multiple delivery models, including public programs, private programs, and mixed delivery programs through public-private partnerships.”</p> <p>This legislation was enacted. STARS Preschool funded about 20 classrooms serving 300 preschoolers in FYs 18 and 19. (STARS Preschool Year One Evaluation Report)</p>	<p>HB 225 (Schreiner) revised various school laws and included provisions allowing school districts to enroll 4-year-olds in preschool programs and include these children in enrollment counts (up to ½-time enrollment) thereby generating state and local revenue for them through Montana’s school funding formula. This bill was supported by the Governor’s Office, and the executive budget included a request in Section E for an additional \$10 million in FY 2020 and \$11 million in FY 2021 to fund the proposal. The executive budget also included \$4 million in each year of the biennium to continue STARS Preschool in Section B.</p> <p>HB 225 and the Governor’s related budget requests were rejected by the Legislature.</p> <p>HB 755 (Moore) was introduced in late March and created a mixed delivery preschool program for 4-year-olds overseen by a new cabinet-level state agency, the Department of Early Childhood. The director was charged with establishing quality guidelines and approving providers (school districts, private providers, and Head Start grantees) with priority going to providers in school districts with higher rates of poverty. HB 755 included an appropriation of \$11 million in FY 2021 to fund the program and \$5 million in “bridge” funding in FY 2020 to continue programs under the Preschool Development Grant and STARS Preschool Pilot Program.</p> <p>This proposal was rejected by the Legislature.</p>