STRENGTHENING MONTANA'S WORKFORCE THROUGH CHILD CARE SOLUTIONS

Presentation to the Financial Modernization and Risk Analysis (MARA) Legislative Committee

January 27th, 2022
Caitlin Jensen, Executive Director
Our promise is to stabilize, innovate and build the early childhood system in Montana so families and communities can thrive.
LONG-RANGE WORKFORCE STRATEGIES
START TODAY

Stabilize: Stability in the child care system is foundational to parents, employers and economic prosperity.

Innovate: Solutions are in communities, and multiple strategies at the state and local levels are needed to address our workforce challenges.

Build: Building to last requires a solid plan and committed partners. It also includes surveying the landscape and making informed decisions.
ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILD CARE IMPACTS CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND EMPLOYERS

Child Care Workforce
Current child care wages contribute to turnover and instability in the child care workforce.
Recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce is a barrier for many employers.
One facility or one new child care provider can open the door for many families.

Options for Parents
When child care is not available, parents make difficult decisions.
Access to quality child care gives families options.
Quality child care ensures children are not only safe, but are supported in school readiness and later success in life.

Workforce Stability
Inadequate child care contributes to parent participation in the workforce.
Labor force participation can increase if parents who want to work are able to access more affordable child care.
CURRENT STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYER AND COMMUNITY-LED SOLUTIONS

Child Care Solutions for Your Workforce Summit

Community/Employer Innovations Pilot

Family Forward Montana Initiative

ARPA Child Care: Supplemental Funding
EMPLOYER AND COMMUNITY WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

“It is a common refrain to hear about local service businesses (restaurants, grocery store, etc.) who can’t stay staffed during peak child care hours, and families moving out of Fallon County because of the lack of child care. The problem has especially hit our local hospital and schools hard, because recruiting qualified teachers or medical personnel becomes an almost insurmountable task when there is no available, affordable child care.”
- Vaughn Z., Eastern Montana Economic Development Authority, Fallon County

“In Mineral County, child care is a complex problem to solve. It’s not just that we don’t have enough high-quality care, but also that when we do have new child care facilities open, they often are not able to sustain their business. With many of our families working non-traditional hours and not knowing if a facility will stay open long term, we run into a lot of families not utilizing what we do have. In order to improve the child care system, we first need understand what families really need and identify solutions to improve the current patch-work system we have. We need to build a system that can actually meet the needs of children, families, and our community.”
- Jessica S., Mineral County Health Department
• Communities exploring the feasibility of a variety of child care business models, including cooperative child care, employer partnership models to hold slots, on-site child care, co-located child care, HUB models.
• Budgeting tools to help aid in business model and facility types.
• Access to partner organizations and services to support planning, design and implementation.
• Developing case studies and readily available resources.
• Underscore the importance of employer, parent and provider participation in child care expansion planning and identification of revenue or in-kind facility contributions.
• Collective identification of funding needs and strategies to promote business growth locally.
1. Fiscal Mapping: Targeted fiscal analysis of the current investment: How much money, if any, is currently being invested in the child care system?

2. Cost Modeling and Gaps Analysis: What's the cost to fill the gap?

3. Revenue options research and stakeholder deliberation to identify new innovative strategies to address the gap through state/local funding (i.e. specific fund for child care, like NE, WI, LA).

Build: Building to last requires a solid plan and committed partners. It also includes surveying the landscape and making informed decisions.
ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS NECESSARY FOR A STRONG CHILD CARE SYSTEM

This grid identifies the Essential Elements for sustainable child care supply:

- An effective assessment and planning tool (map, analyze, plan, implement, improve)
- Informed by 30 years of work from FCF at all three levels of business, community & systems
- Framework for reform
### MONTANA MAPPING PROCESS

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ANALYSIS OF THE CHILD CARE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Business
➕: Training, practitioner registry, incentives
🔺: Consultation, small business supports and resources, shared services, workforce pathways

Community
➕: Workforce, higher education
🔺: Supply-building through business models (i.e. child care cooperatives, hub models, facilities planning, access to capital, subsidy increases)

Systems
➕: Private-public partnerships and data collection
🔺: Licensing system review, quality expansion, subsidy expansion, centralized hub for resources and model expertise (agency/organization), cost of quality care and financial modeling
STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER FOR LONG-RANGE CHILD CARE PLANNING

- Identifying the funding gap through a Cost of Quality Child Care Analysis
- Conduct a Fiscal Mapping study
- Identify a variety of revenue options at the local and state level
- Create mechanisms to spur local and statewide innovations (i.e. funding match, tax credits, etc.)
- Expand supply through workforce incentives to eliminate child care deserts
- Increase eligibility for child care subsidy so more families can access care
Good for Montana’s economic growth

Supports businesses and families to stay and invest in Montana, remain competitive

Quality child care helps support children today in being the leaders and innovators of tomorrow

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