



CORE MESSAGE

The earliest experiences that our children have set the stage for their entire lives. We build a stronger workforce full of talented innovators and inspiring leaders when we prioritize young children and families. We'll lay the groundwork for a stronger state and economy when every child in Montana can reach their full potential.

TALKING POINTS

- Zero to Five Montana recently commissioned a survey, representative of Montana voters (October 2022, Montana State University).
 - 74% favor a public preschool option.
 - 77% believe the Montana state government should play a role in providing a public preschool option.
- In the absence of a public preschool program, students enter kindergarten with varying levels of social and academic development, creating an educational achievement gap.
- Public preschool has been shown to reduce behavior issues in the elementary and middle school years and increase the likelihood that students graduate high school and attend college.
- 60% of Montana's 3 & 4-year olds are not enrolled in any school readiness program (early childhood education/preschool, child care, etc.)
- Montana is one of only six states without a public preschool option.
- For every \$1 spent on early education there is up to a \$16 return on investment.
- Interventions, such as on-line programs, do not address the labor shortage (parents), or support the developmental needs of children in the ways in-person preschool programs can.
- Many families are spending \$12,000 per year or more to access private early education.
- We know kids are entering kindergarten not ready to learn. Focusing our attention on young children will help us get closer to ensuring children are meeting 3rd grade reading standards.
- Montana's annual economic loss because of a lack of access to child care and early childhood education totals more than \$90 million.

Citation:

https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w28756/w28756.pdf

<https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/early-childhood/early-childhood-health-and-development/early-literacy/>