



BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP *with your local school district*

Building a relationship with your local school district as an early childhood advocate is a great way to promote the well-being and development of young children. Here are some tips on how to get started.

Research the school district: Gain an understanding of the local school district's policies, programs, and initiatives related to early childhood education. This knowledge will help you identify areas where you can contribute and advocate for positive changes.

Connect with staff: Reach out to administrators or early childhood professionals within the school district. Introduce yourself, express your passion for early childhood, and inquire about ways to get involved. Establishing this initial connection is key to building a collaborative relationship.

Attend school board meetings: Attend school board meetings to understand the district's priorities, challenges, and decision-making processes. Use these meetings as opportunities to speak up about the importance of early childhood education and advocate for its inclusion in district plans and initiatives.

Engage in community partnerships: Collaborate with others in your community who focus on early childhood. By working together, you can create a network of support to advocate for high-quality early childhood education within the school district.

Provide input and feedback: Participate in public forums, surveys, or feedback sessions organized by the school district. Share your expertise, insights, and suggestions.

Stay informed and educate others: Stay updated on early childhood research, best practices, and policy developments. Use this knowledge to educate others in your community, including parents, educators, and policymakers about the importance of early childhood education.

Collaborate with educators and families: Partner with early childhood educators and engage with families within the school district. By building relationships you can gain insights, understand their needs and concerns, and work together to improve early childhood education within the district.





What is a school board and what is its role?

In Montana, communities elect people to serve on their local school board. The board makes important decisions for their local school district. The primary roles of a school board in Montana includes:

Make rules (policies): School boards create rules for how the schools should run. These rules cover things like what students should learn, how they should behave, and how teachers and staff should do their jobs.

Handle money (budget & finance): School boards help decide how the district's money should be spent. They work with the school administrators to figure out how much money each school should get and what it should be used for.

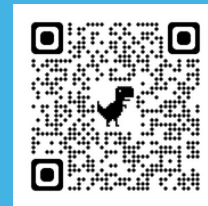
Hiring and evaluation: School boards choose the superintendent and have a say in hiring principals and teachers. They make sure the people who work in the schools are doing a good job.

Community engagement: School boards talk to parents, students, teachers, and others in the community. They want to know what people think and what they need. They take all of this information into account when making decisions.

Plan for the future (educational planning & accountability): School boards set goals and plans for the district. They want the schools to do well, so they keep track of how students are doing and make sure everyone is accountable for how well the schools are performing.

It's important to note that the specifics of a school board's structure and responsibilities may vary slightly between districts in Montana, as each district operates autonomously under the oversight of the Montana Office of Public Instruction.

Find your local school district contact information by visiting the Montana Office of Public Instruction's website at opi.mt.gov and viewing the school directory or by scanning the QR code.



Montana County Board Handbook: Overview of Boards, Districts, Commissions and Committees:
https://www.montana.edu/extension/localgov/resourcesandhandouts/publications/countyboardhandbook2021/2021boardhb_overview.html
Montana Office of Public Instruction: <https://opi.mt.gov/>

