



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

- Parents and caregivers have the greatest impact on their child's development. The better able we are to connect and provide parents and caregivers with support, resources, and guidance, the greater the positive impact on children.
- Early identification of developmental issues and partnered with a system of support to intervene, can help children access the services they need to reach their full potential.
- Early intervention can make the difference between a strong start and a fragile beginning for children who have or are at risk for developmental delays.
- Approximately 1 in 4 children under age 5 are at moderate or high risk for developmental or behavioral delays. Yet only 46% of infants and toddlers, ages 9 to 35 months, received a developmental screening in the past year in Montana.
- Fewer than 50 percent of children facing a developmental disability or disabling behavioral problem are identified before they start school.
- 2.4% of young children in our state are receiving Part C services – which means there are likely many children left behind.

"Montana Milestones/Part C of the IDEA Early Intervention Program is Montana's comprehensive system of early intervention services and supports for families who have infants or toddlers, from birth through three who have significant developmental delays or disabilities or have been diagnosed with an established condition associated with significant delays in development" (Department of Health and Human Services, 2023, para. 1).

References:

Department of Public Health and Human Services (n.d.). *Montana milestones*. <https://dphhs.mt.gov/ecfsd/childcare/montanamilestones/index>.
KIDS COUNT. (n.d.-a). *Children ages 9 months to 35 months who received a developmental screening*. <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/9814-children-ages-9-months-to-35-months-who-received-a-developmental-screening?loc=28&loct=2#detailed/2/28/false/2043,1769,1696,1648,1603/any/19102,19103>.
Zero to Three. (2023, March 6). *Montana (MT) - State of Babies Yearbook 2023*. State of Babies Yearbook 2023. <https://stateofbabies.org/state/montana/>.