

I Am Not An Island



Creating a more connected community.

Presenters



Systems Navigator



TA Specialist



Connection before content activity

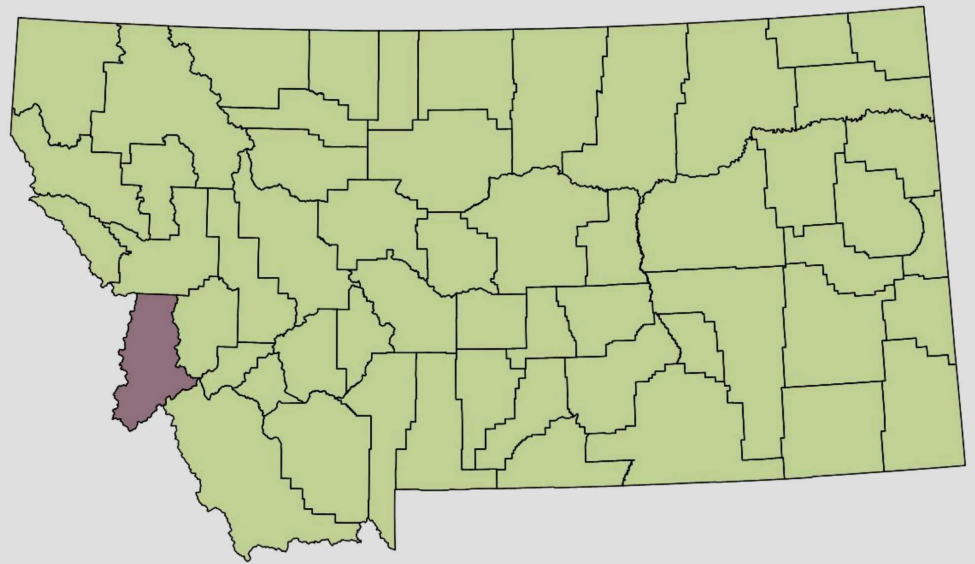
What
are your
Big
Rocks?





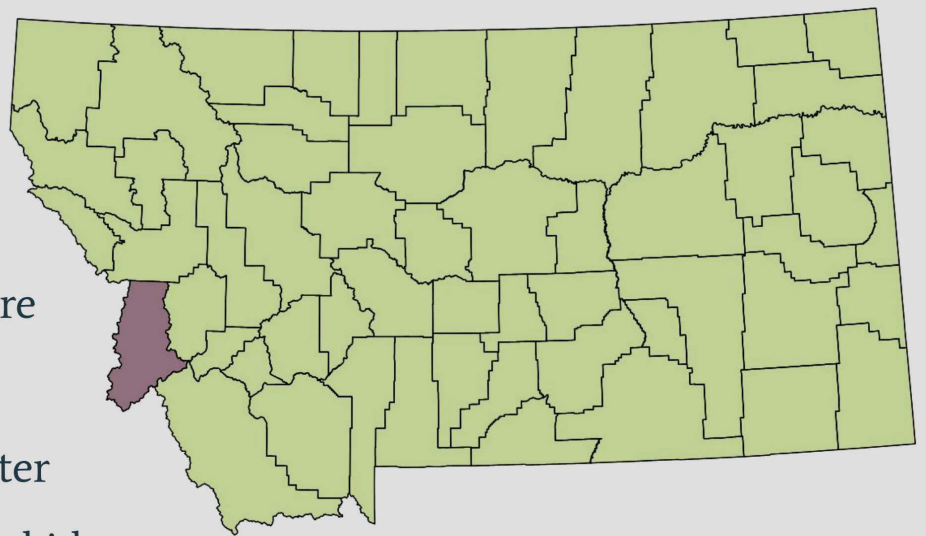
Agenda

- The Context
- The Challenge
- The Response
- The Framework
- The Practice
- The Future



The Context

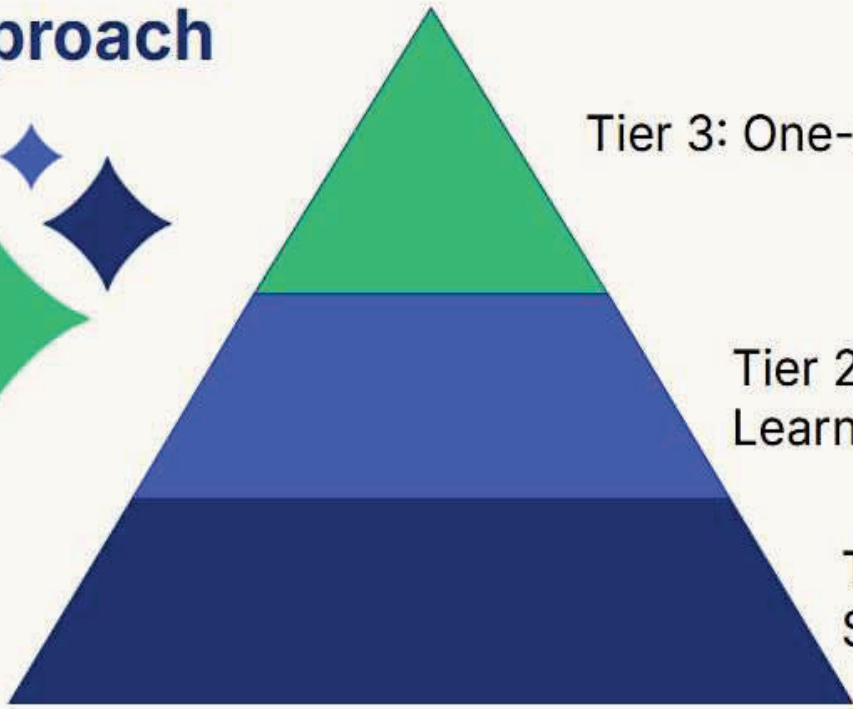
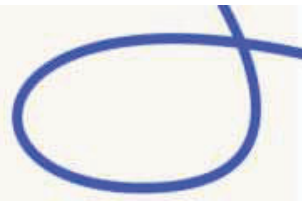
- Ravalli County
- "Childcare desert"
- Approximately 20 child care providers
 - Family, Group, & Center
- Serving approximately ____ kids
- Years of service



Since October of 2024, SPARK Montana has been commissioned by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) to provide **quality technical assistance services** to child care programs and professionals across the state.



Approach



Tier 3: One-on-One

Tier 2: Group and Peer Learning

Tier 1: Universal Support & Self-Directed Learning

Goal: Deliver varying intensities and dosages of support using multiple modalities to meet providers where they are.



SPARK Services



Help Desk

- Live Chat



Coaching



Cohort Learning Opportunities



Learning Communities



Resources

- Knowledge Center



Training

- Online (with 24-hr access)
- Live Digital
- In-Person



"Empowering children and families within a secure, respectful, and celebratory learning environment, while strengthening our wider community."

Children. Families. Providers. Community.

BELN Roots



Bitterroot Early Learning Network (BELN) began in 1980 as Bitterroot Preschool, founded by a group of dedicated parents seeking quality early childhood education for their children. By 1984, our collective passion and commitment led us to become a nonprofit, named Evergreen Kids Corner, and in 1989, we proudly purchased the schoolhouse where EKC stands today.

For decades, EKC operated as a parent cooperative, deeply involving families in the fabric of our programs. In 2018, we began shifting from this model to better support and extend our reach within the community. This evolution culminated in 2023 when we rebranded to the Bitterroot Early Learning Network, a name that reflects our broadened scope of services and our commitment to enhancing early —childhood education across the Bitterroot Valley.

BITTERROOT EARLY LEARNING NETWORK

Theory Of Change



Inputs → Change Mechanisms → Outputs → Outcomes →

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff expertise • Educational Materials • Safe learning environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored educational programs • Child-centric activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of children served • Hours of educational activities provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved educational achievements • Enhanced developmental milestones • Stronger family units • Increased parental support for child education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent workshops • Family sessions • Community resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased parental involvement • Strengthened family dynamics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of families attending workshops • Feedback scores from support sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher quality of early childhood education provided.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development sessions • Networking events • Support materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced teaching skills • Better resource allocation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of ECE providers trained • Improvements in teaching methods. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy efforts • Partnerships with local organizations • Policy development initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger community ties • Better-informed policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies influenced • Partnerships formed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More supportive legislative environment for early childhood education

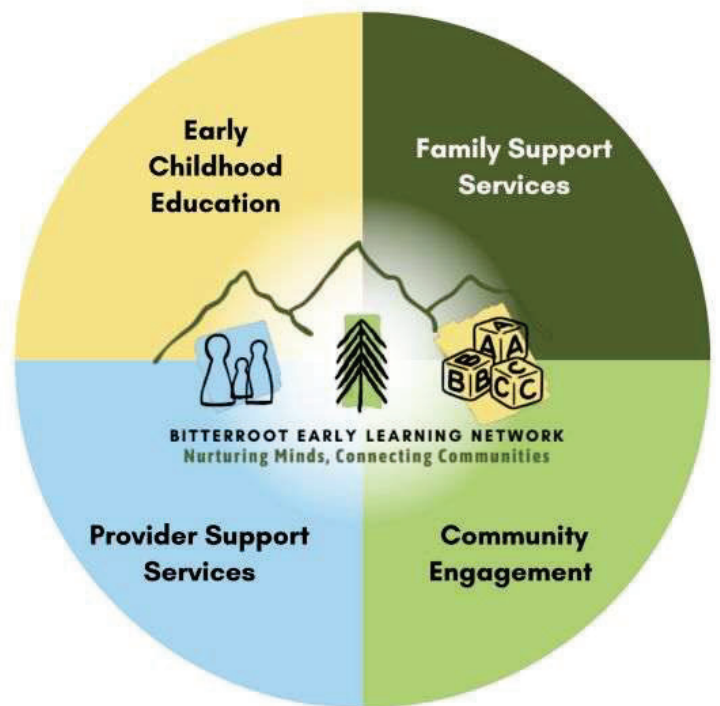


Impact

An educated, well-supported, and interconnected community that fosters optimal child development and educational outcomes across all settings.



BELN's "Buckets" of Service



BELN's "Buckets" of Provider Support Services



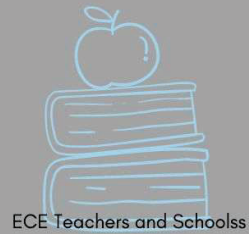
BELN's "Buckets" of Community Engagement



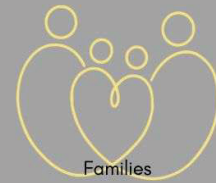
Our systems based approach to proactive partnerships begins with our focus on the child(ren).



Community and Policy



ECE Teachers and Schools



Families



Children



The Challenge

- Our child care owners & providers are BUSY
- Multiple well-meaning state & local service providers attempting contact
- Finding other service providers to partner with - opportunity for specialization & meeting child care providers individual needs
- Consolidating communications, streamlining efforts, producing more effective interactions
- Providers' time away from children - they benefit from the thoughtful respect of their time & needs



The Response

- Serving through the lens of business development
- Nature of team building
- Represent the best interest of the client
- Being authentic, collaborative, knowledgeable



The Response: Building Trust

- Finding Common Ground
- Collaborating & Recognizing
- Finding the Root Cause
- Systems Based Problem Solving
- Proactive Framework
- Engaging Partnerships



The Response: Finding Common Ground

- Serve early learning providers throughout Ravalli County
- Provide evidence based professional development
- Coaching & Consulting
- Resource Sharing
- Family Mental Health Support
- Community Events & Advocacy
- Serve early learning providers throughout Ravalli county & surrounding areas
- Provide licensing & other consultation
- Practice Based Coaching
- Provide referrals to state resources
- Classroom and director support



The Framework: Proactive



PROACTIVE

VS

REACTIVE

Anticipates and plans for potential challenges

Reacts after challenges arise

Takes initiative to address issues

Waits for problems to escalate before taking action

Seeks opportunities for growth and improvement

Responds defensively to criticism or setbacks

Takes responsibility for own actions

Blames external factors for failures

Acts with intention and purpose

Acts impulsively without considering consequences

Focuses on solutions and possibilities

Dwells on problems without seeking solutions

The Framework: Finding the Root Causes

Addressing Root Causes make programs:

- More Sustainable
- More Strategic
- More Proactive
- All about understand the 'WHY'
- Addresses the root causes not the symptoms



The Framework: Systems-based Problem Solving

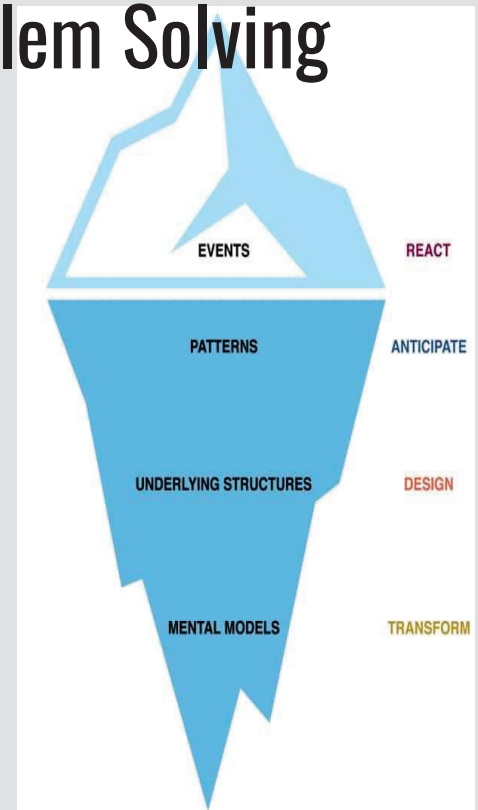
Curiosity- willingness to look deeper at the issue and want to start the problem solving process.

Clarity- the ability to step back and view the situation more clearly and accurately.

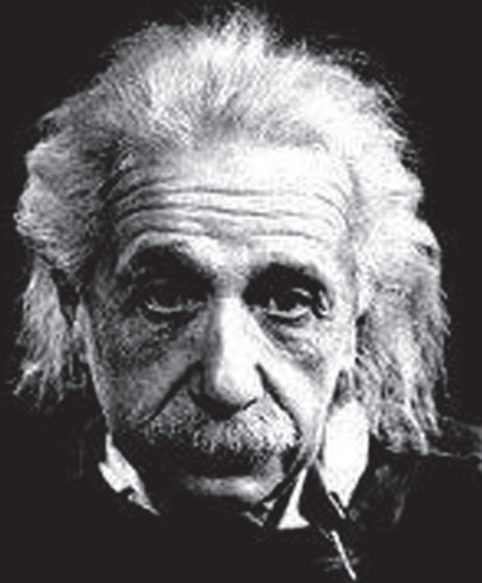
Compassion- is the understanding that one individual is not to blame and that we must work collaboratively and collectively to find alternative solutions.

Choice- the understanding that decisions have consequences and that issues are often best addressed by the combination of solutions

Courage- the capacity to implement the best solutions not the easy one.



"WE CANNOT
SOLVE OUR
PROBLEMS
WITH THE SAME
THINKING WE
USED WHEN WE
CREATED THEM"



Why a Systems Based approach?

Problem-Solving

Working *inside* the system

Parts (and smaller parts)

Taking things apart (analysis)

What's wrong here?

Deficit-Based: What we don't want, don't have, can't do, what's not working, what constrains us

Reactive and retrospectively-oriented

Growing away from something

Makes things better

Systems-Building

Working *on* the system itself

Wholes (and larger wholes)

Putting things together (synthesis)

What do we want to create here?

Asset-Based: What we do want, do have, can do, what is working, what matters

Proactive and prospectively-oriented

Growing toward something

Changes the nature of things

The Practice: Engaging partnerships

- Montana Zero to Five
- Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC)
- Child Care Licensing
- BELN



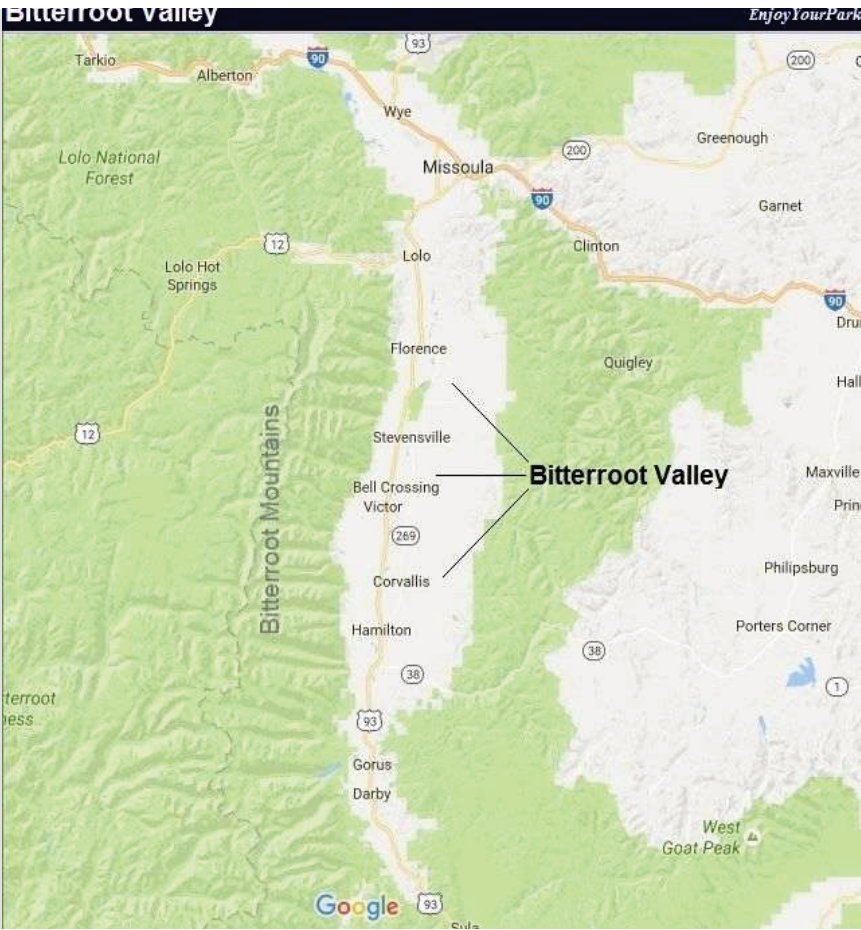
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH &
HUMAN SERVICES



ZEROTOFIVE
MONTANA



The Practice: Ravalli Child Care Examples





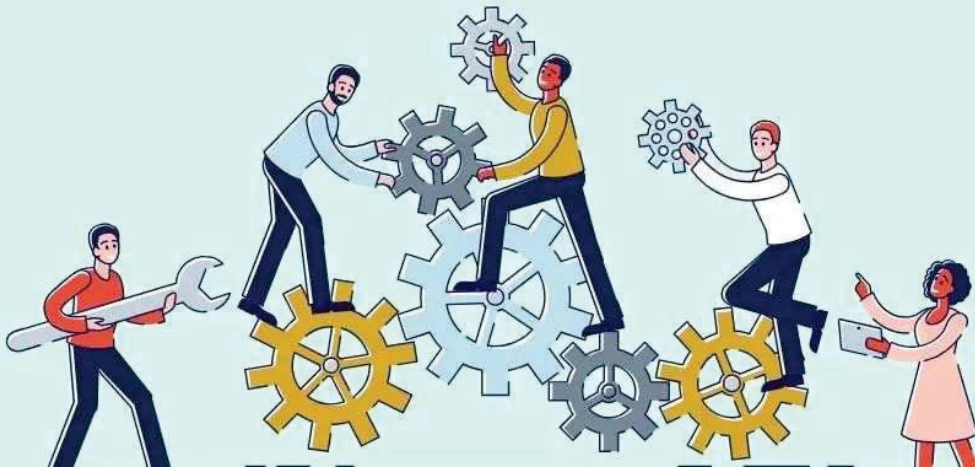
The Future: Looking Ahead, Forward Together



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**Coming together is a beginning,
staying together is progress, and
working together is success**

- Henry Ford -



Let's work together

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