

# SMART BENEFITS, STRONGER WORKFORCE:

*The Family Forward Montana Initiative*



*Solutions for Employers and Families*



Montana Child Care Business Connect is funded under a Contract with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) and the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). The statements herein do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Department.



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learn about the needs of families and the current workforce
- Become knowledgeable in the variety of family-friendly business practices
- Gain a greater understanding of why family-friendly business practices are good for businesses, families, and our economy
- Learn about Family Forward Montana



# WHY NOW?



*child care is a workforce issue*

## Labor Force Challenges

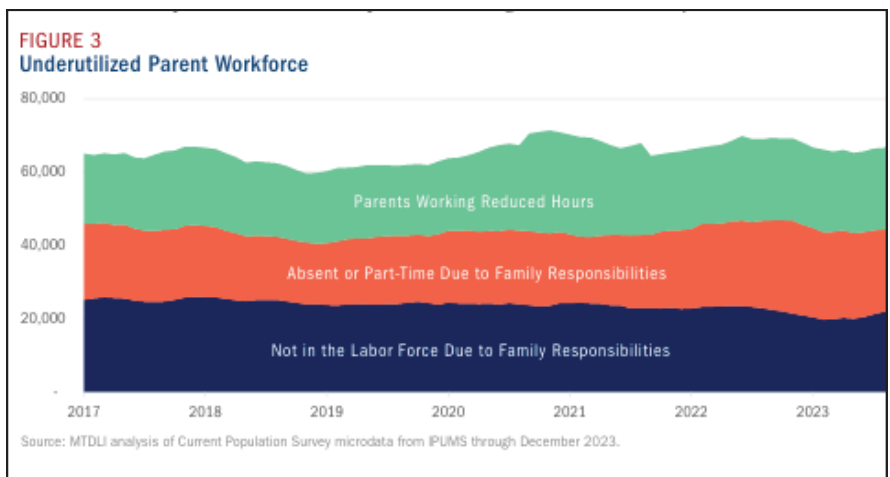
2023 an estimated **66,000** parents indicated they could not fully participate in the work force as a direct result of child care challenges.

## Workforce

**75%** of the workers in today's workforce are caregivers

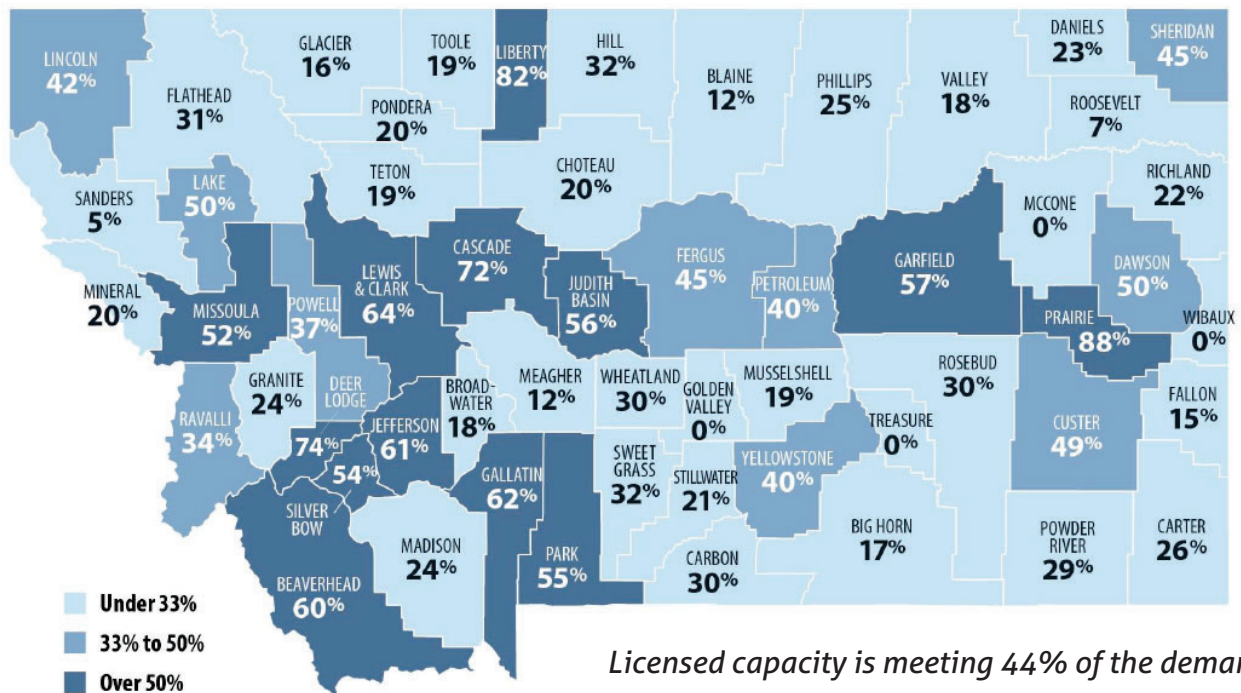
## Replacing Staff

**6-9 months of salary** is the cost of replacing an employee

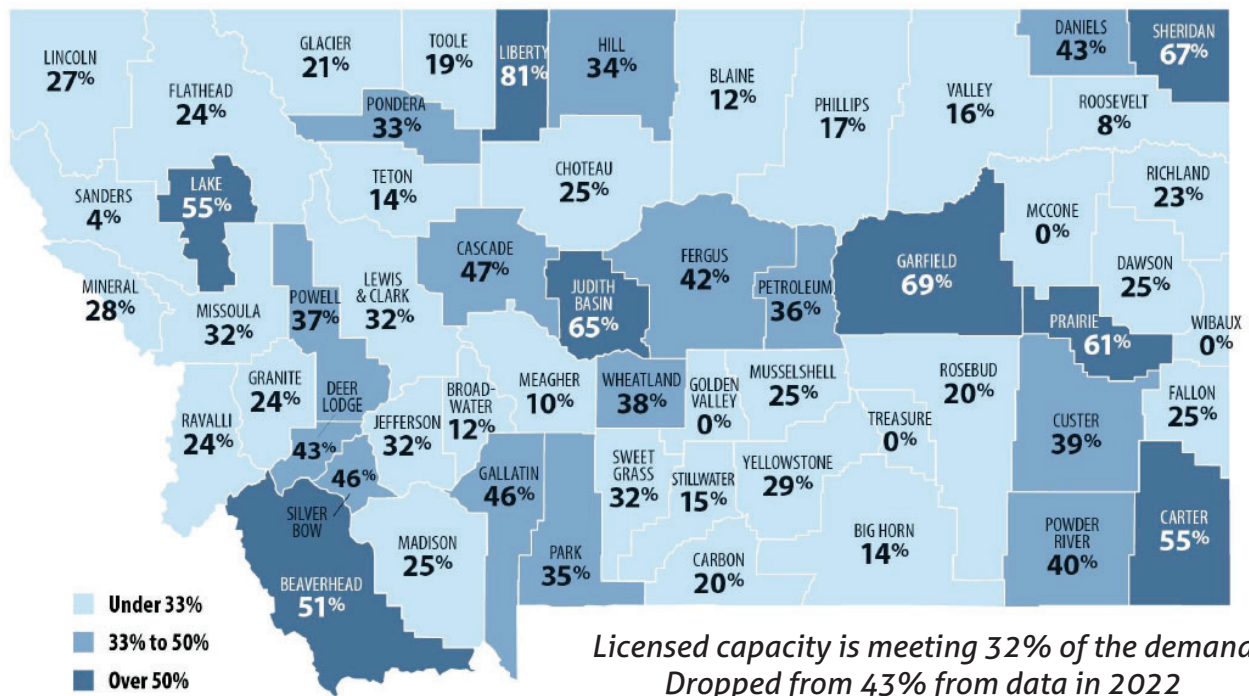


*Zero to Five Montana conducted a professionally administered survey of 600 randomly selected Montana voters about issues facing families with young children*

# CHILD CARE ACCESS IN MONTANA



# CHILD CARE ACCESS IN MONTANA (INFANTS)





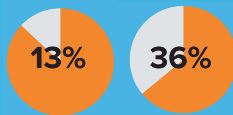
**KNOWING  
ALL OF THAT,  
WHY DONT  
WE JUST FIX  
IT?**

*The system does not work for  
families or child care providers*

## FAMILIES CANT AFFORD TO PAY

The recommendation is for families to pay **no more than 7%** of their income on child care. many families pay more than that.

In Montana, single-income families pay on average 36% of their income on child care. While dual-income families pay 13%.



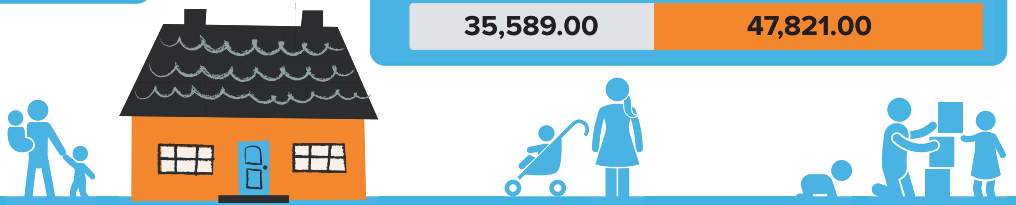
### Average annual center-based tuition



The average cost for family child care is **11,700.00 per year**



The average cost for center-based child care is **15,080.00 per year**

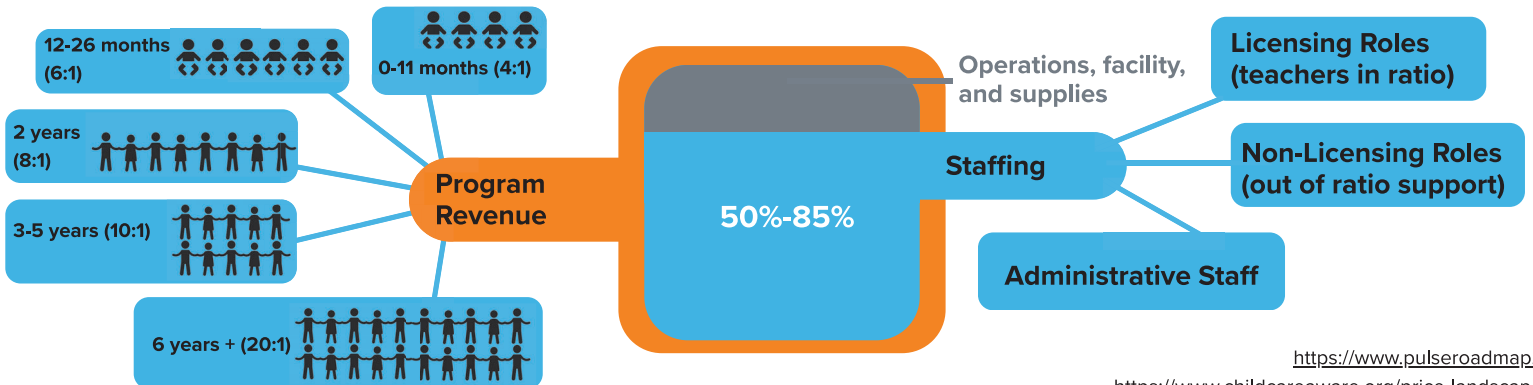


## TEACHERS CANT AFFORD TO STAY

Providers offer a vital service for children and families but are compensated far below the average wage of the Montana workforce.

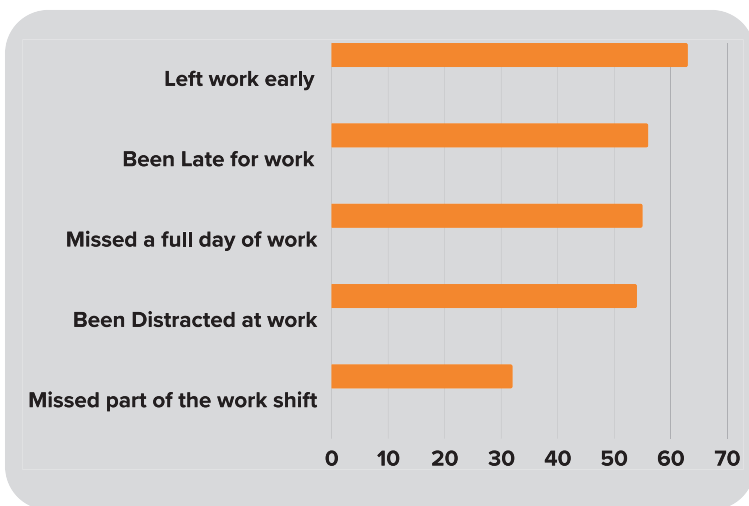
The average yearly pay for a child care worker is just 31,429.00 a year or just 15.11 an hour. While a child care teachers' average pay increases to only 17.11 an hour or 35,589 annually.

31,429.00	47,821.00
35,589.00	47,821.00



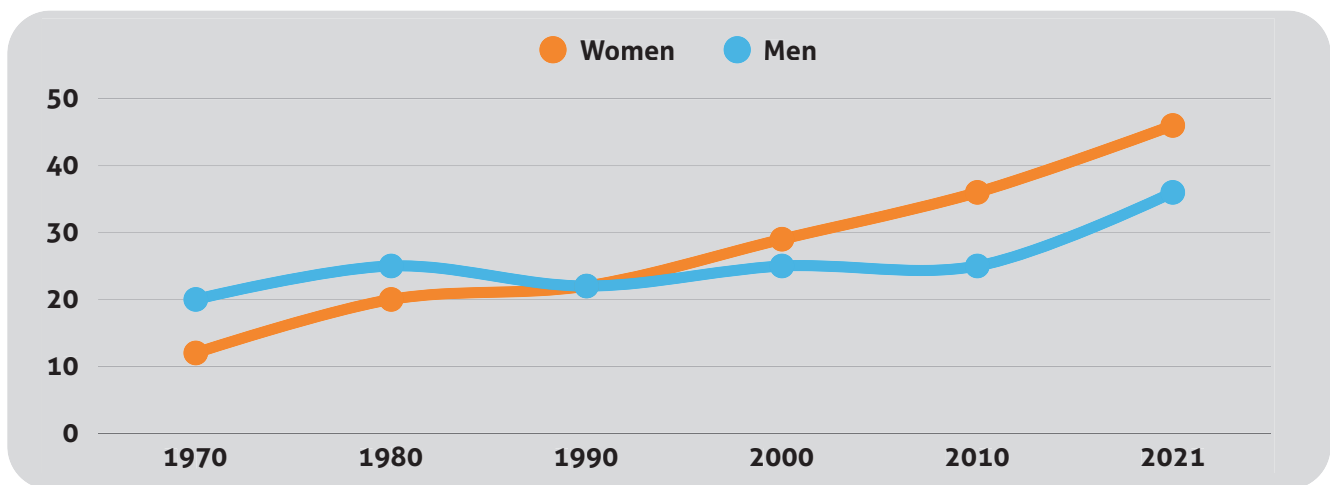
# WHAT DO PARENTS REPORT?

*As a result of child care problems have you ever ...*



## WHAT DOES OUR WORKFORCE LOOK LIKE?

*% of adults ages 25-35 with bachelors degrees.*



This trend holds for all ages 25 and up receiving bachelors degrees.

## BROADER ECONOMIC IMPACT



Taxpayers lose a total of **\$32 million annually** due to inadequate child care.

The federal government loses almost **\$23 million annually** in lower income tax receipts

The state of Montana loses **\$9 million annually** in income tax receipts.

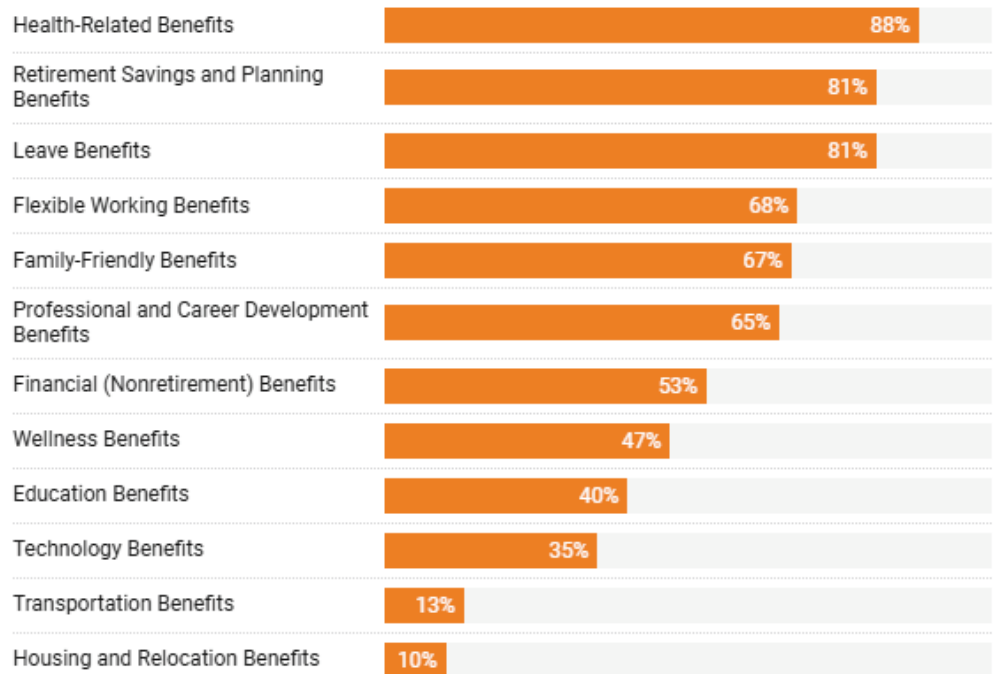
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# WHAT BENEFITS RESONATE WITH EMPLOYEES?



Percentages shown represent the number of employers who responded “very important” or “extremely important” to each benefits category.

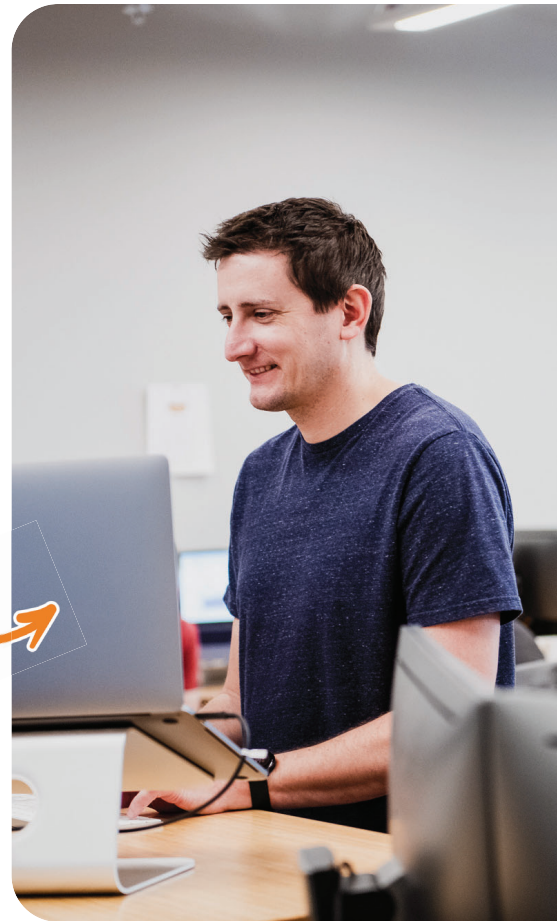
## Employer-Rated Importance of Benefits Categories, 2025



*Source: SHRM 2025 Employee Benefits Survey Created with Datawrapper*

## WHAT IS A FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE?

*A family-friendly workplace or employer is one whose policies make it possible for employees to more easily balance family and work, and to fulfill both their family and work obligations.*



# WHY BE FAMILY FORWARD

## HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE NOTICED “HELP WANTED” SIGNS AROUND TOWN?

### EMPLOYEES WILL LEAVE FOR BENEFITS THAT FIT THEIR NEEDS



83% of millennials stated that they would gladly leave their current role for a lateral move to a company with better benefits and a family friendly culture.

<https://www.oviahealth.com/blog/family-friendly-benefits-are-critical-to-employees-yet-many-organizations-are-missing-the-mark/>

### FAMILY FORWARD BENEFITS ARE NO PASSING TREND



94% of respondents named family friendly benefits at their top priority when looking for a job.

<https://www.oviahealth.com/blog/family-friendly-benefits-are-critical-to-employees-yet-many-organizations-are-missing-the-mark/>

### DISPLAYING VALUES ATTRACTS VALUES



A companies benefits reflects their values and will not only attract people to apply but attracts those with similar values

<https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/benefits-compensation/benefits-mentions-in-job-postings-jump-more-than-50-#:~:text=%E2%80%9CA%20company%27s%20benefits%20package%20also,align%20with%20the%20organization%27s%20values.%E2%80%9D>





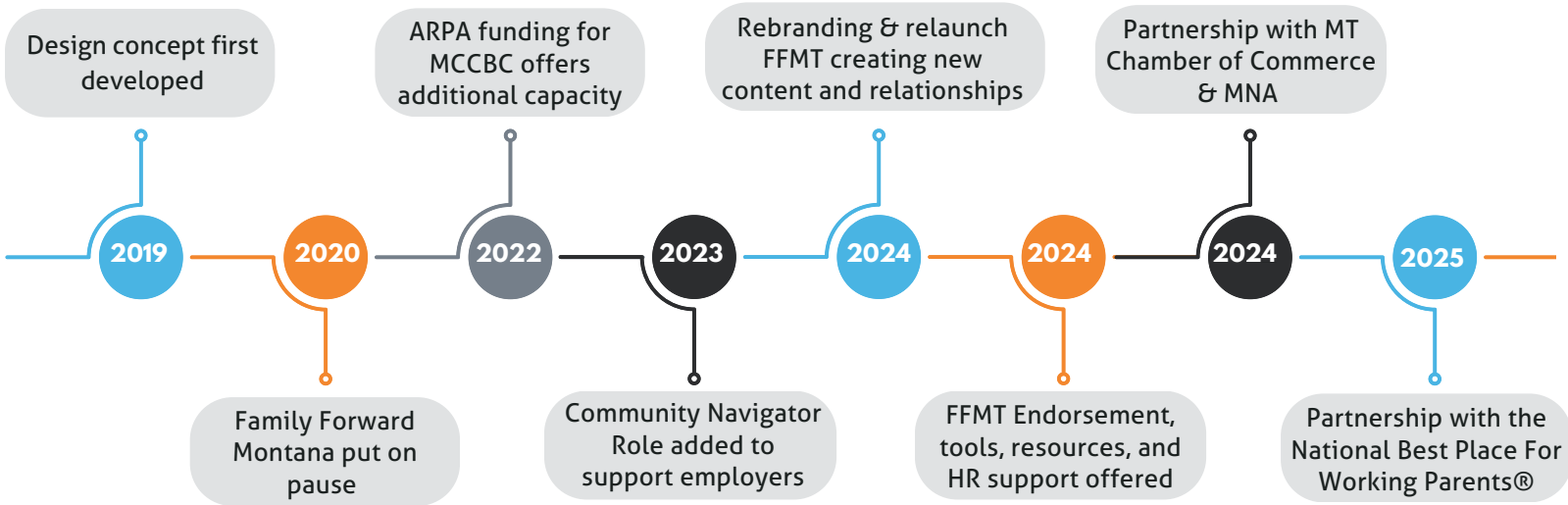
FAMILY  
**Forward**  
MONTANA

An orange arrow graphic that starts from the left, loops around the letter 'o' in 'Forward', and then points to the right towards the word 'MONTANA'.

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*Solutions for Employers and Families*

# Where We've Been & Where We're Going



**Our development and future goals will be driven by your experiences and needs!**



THE BEST PLACE FOR  
**WORKING PARENTS®**

Montana is proud to be a  
Best Place for Working Parents®

## WHAT IS FAMILY FORWARD?

A **Zero to Five Montana** initiative in partnership with the **National Best Place For Working Parents® Network** founded on the principle that the well-being of employees and their families is integral to the success of businesses/organizations, and Montana's economy.

By empowering employers across the state with resources, guidance, and a supportive community focused on implementing family-friendly workplace policies, we move toward a more sustainable future for employees & families, businesses and our state.



**Best Place for Working Parents® promotes the top 10 research-backed policies that benefit working parents and businesses' bottom line.**



**CORE BENEFITS**

1. Company Paid Healthcare Coverage
2. Paid Time Off
3. Maternity/Paternity Leave



**FAMILY RESOURCES**

4. Onsite Child Care
5. Child Care Assistance
6. Backup Child Care



**FLEXIBILITY**

7. Flexible Hours
8. Remote Work / Work from Home



**COMPANY CULTURE**

9. Nursing Benefits
10. "Best Place" Designation



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## WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE FOR YOUR COMPANY?

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### **Short, free and confidential self-assessment**

Businesses can see if they qualify for a Best Place for Working Parents® designation **AND** view how their company compares to other companies of like size and industry.



### **Achieve the Best Place Designation**

After the online self-assessment, you will be presented with digital badging to tout as your business as a “Best Place for Working Parents®” via your website, social media, and in print.



### **Boost your marketing and recruiting efforts**

The Best Place for Working Parents® designation is a quick way to boost your marketing and retention efforts to ensure you attract and keep top talent that ensures your business’s success.



**BELA BUCCIARELLI**

*Project Manager,  
Early Childhood Systems &  
Strategic Initiatives*

## TECHNICAL ASSISTENACE AND SUPPORT

Are you a business leader looking for support from our team through the process of growth or the establishment of family-friendly benefits for your staff?



**SCAN THIS QR CODE TO  
SCHEDULE TIME ON BELA'S  
CALANDAR**



# RIGHT-SIZED SOLUTIONS

## Quick Wins

*Surveying your employees about the benefit package*

*Recognizing and promoting the benefits you already have*

*Get to know and share the system with your staff!*

## Intentional Investments

*Backup Care:  
There are many apps on the market that make this easy*

*Subsidies:  
Build relationships with and learn from local providers*

*Onsite/Near-site Care:  
Build relationships with and learn from local providers*

## Community Investments

*Coops:  
There are no official child care coops in the state of MT*

*Public Advocacy:  
This is a often misunderstood system where voices are needed*

*Community Capacity:  
Partnerships, in-kind donations, ect*

Source: [US Chamber of Commerce Foundation: Childcare Solutions for Working Parents Employer Roadmap](#)

Scan Me!



# 1.) SURVEYING YOUR EMPLOYEES



## STEPS TO COLLECTING DATA

- 1 Identify and customize your collection method (virtual or paper)**  
survey, interview, focus groups
- 2 Distribute the survey**  
Be sure to consider anonymity and access for staff.
- 3 Identify themes and share your results**  
Communicate the why behind this work and your plans moving forward.
- 4 Repeat**  
Regularly collecting this data can demonstrate the impact of new benefits or show room for improvement.

## Current Benefit Assessment

Before diving into child care specifically, this section asks employees to rate satisfaction with their overall benefits package including health care, paid time off, and disability insurance.

## Child Care Needs

How many employees currently use child care, what type, and how many children are enrolled, their needs, and priorities.

## Let your staff tell their story:

**“I’m a stay at home mom of twins that would like to work full time but child care is so expensive that it’s cheaper for me to stay home with them.”**

**-Survey Participant**

## 2.) RECOGNIZING AND PROMOTING THE BENEFITS YOU ALREADY OFFER

- Many staff miss out on benefits simply because they **don't know what's available**.
- Confusing sign-up processes can discourage participation, even in valuable programs.
- Clear, regular communication builds awareness and trust.
- Employers should make benefits **easy to find, easy to understand, and easy to use**.



## 3.) GET TO KNOW THE SYSTEM



This co-created guide was created to help employees navigate the system while educating employers on how to support their staff along the way.

1

Understanding the system and the services involved

2

How to find and pay for the care you need

3

And more ways to engage with the system

### DO YOU WANT HELP FINDING OR AFFORDING CHILD CARE?



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# HAPPY TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS ANYTIME!

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MONTANA CHILD CARE BUSINESS  
**CONNECT**



**ZEROTOFIVE**  
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