

MONTANA CHILD CARE BUSINESS  
**CONNECT**



# THE POWER OF PEER LEARNING

*How the MCCBC Cohort Approach  
Builds Collaboration*

MCCBC Summit 2025  
Tuesday, September 23, 2025  
3:00pm-4:00pm



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.

# INTRODUCTIONS

**JASON NITSCHKE** *Senior Child Care Business Advisor*

- Assisting owners/operators start, grow, stabilize, expand, and exit in one-one-one and small group sessions (Cohorts: PEAK, Deep Dives, Peer Pods)

**KENDRA EDLIN** *Child Care Business Advisor*

- All Our Kin 10-Week Business Series  
Workforce Recruitment and Retention Cohorts  
Business Accelerator Mentorship Program

**SHELBY WHELAN** *Community Navigator*

- Community Child Care Capacity Building Cohorts



# OVERVIEW

We will be giving an overview of the MCCBC cohort models and their outcomes broadly. We will then have a panel of participants and their experiences. You will have the opportunity to ask our panelists questions directly, but if you would like to ask your questions anonymously or to just make note of them during the first half use this QR code to submit questions that will be addressed.



# GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- 1 Gain a better understand of the MCCBC cohort processes and their outcomes**
- 2 Inspire future work by hearing about local success stories**
- 3 Learn from peers by asking questions about the process and the panelists' experiences**
- 4 Share upcoming opportunities to engage**

# DEFINITIONS

## What are Cohorts?

- **Cohort Model**
  - A group of people working together over a set period of time
  - Often focused on a shared goal, topic, or learning experience
  - Encourages peer learning, support, and accountability
  - Builds relationships and fosters collaboration
- **Small Group (3 providers)**
  - Primarily made up of participants in a coaching group
  - Sessions are structured, but not built around a curriculum
  - Focused on working on a single project or improvement
- **Large Groups (10+ individuals)**
  - Primarily focused on curriculum-based learning
  - Gathering impact information is a priority
  - Typical outcome is project specific with long term efforts



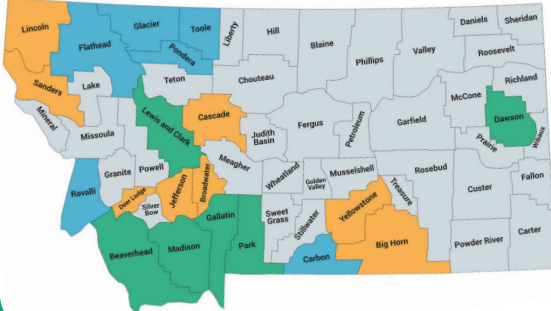
# COMMUNITY CHILD CARE CAPACITY BUILDING

This cohort gathers and supports community leaders who work to implement **data-informed and community-driven solutions to child care opportunities for growth**

**Cohort 2025 | March 2025 - March 2026**  
**Five communities:** Beaverhead/Madison County, Big Sky County, Dawson County, Lewis and Clark County, and Park County

**Cohort #2 | September 2023 - September 2024**  
**Eight communities:** Big Horn County, Broadwater County, Cascade County, Deer Lodge (Anaconda Community), Jefferson County, Lincoln County, Sanders County, and Yellowstone County

**Cohort #1 | March 2023 - September 2023**  
**Five communities:** Blackfeet Nation, Carbon County, Flathead County, Ravalli County, and Toole (Shelby Community)



# Business Accelerator Protégé/Mentor Cohorts

- Cohort One launched in May of 2023, with 7 protégés and 7 Business mentors, and Cohort Two Launched in April of 2024 with 6 protégés and 5 mentors.
- The First Cohort was a year long, and the second cohort was six months long.
- Goals: To pair a more experienced mentor with a less experienced protege, working to start a child care program.



# All Our Kin 10-Week Business Series

- Our first class kicked off the Winter of 2024 with 15 graduates, and the second kicked off that spring with 14 more graduates. We just kicked off our third class and have 10 programs participating. This class will be offered three times a year, and graduates will earn the AOK BADGE and 34 ECP credits upon completion.
- The goal of the program is to Provide Business support specific to Family and Group Child Care Programs.



Marketing Plan

Contracts



Policy and Handbooks



Risk Management

Time-Space Percentage



Income and Expenses

Financial  
management



Preparing for  
Taxes

# Leaders Revitalizing Recruitment & Retention

- Cohort One kicked off in June 2024, with 22 programs participating, and Cohort Two kicked off in April 2025. 26 programs are participating.
- The Goal of this cohort is to equip program leaders with the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to effectively work towards addressing staff recruitment and retention issues; fostering a stable and committed workforce.



# MCCBC COHORTS OVERVIEW

- **Program Excellence and Administration Knowledge (PEAK)**

- February 2025; 12 total cohorts; 33 total participants
- Duration:
  - Five Sessions for Family/Group providers (8 ECP credits)
  - Nine Sessions for Center providers (18 ECP credits)
- Goal: To improve business practices through self-assessments using:
  - Business Administration Scale Second Edition (BAS-2) for FCCs
  - Program Administration Scale Third Edition (PAS-3) for Centers



# LETS GET TO KNOW OUR PANELIST

*Who, When, & Where*

# SHAYLA MONTGOMERY

Contracted Project Manager



# ZERO TO FIVE LINCOLN COUNTY

*Community Child Care Capacity Building Cohort*

## OVERVIEW:

1. Empathy Interviews with child care providers
2. Conducted Surveys of Lincoln County parents and guardians
3. Partnered with nursing students through MSU to conduct research and present on local innovative child care models
4. Visited child care programs in surrounding communities to learn and replicate strategies
5. Developed a trifold brochure advertising local licensed and registered providers
6. Held a community conversation to inform the community of data and develop an action plan
7. Since completing the cohort process, the group created a comprehensive report that can better inform decision makers about local child care needs.
8. Continued child care and family themed work through Rapidly Vanishing Teams narrowed down to a specific focus area.

## BECCA WHITMAN

Owner/Director



## MISS BEE'S DAYCARE

*Business Accelerator Mentorship, All our Kin 10-Week Business series, Workforce Recruitment and Retention Cohort*

For the past 11 years, I have dedicated my career to childcare, beginning with caring for children in my own home and growing into operating a group-sized facility in Whitefish, Montana. This journey has allowed me to expand not only the number of children I serve but also the opportunities to create a nurturing environment where families feel supported and children feel valued. Each step along the way has been guided by a deep passion for helping children learn, grow, and thrive in every stage of their early development.

***Vision Statement:***

At the heart of our vision is the belief that children should love to learn and be excited about their future education. We work hard to create experiences that are joyful and meaningful—whether it's building confidence through new challenges, exploring creativity in hands-on activities, or simply playing in the mud and discovering the wonders of nature. Every moment is an opportunity to help children thrive, and our goal is to make learning both fun and impactful so that each child leaves with a strong foundation for their future.

# KRISTI WILSON

Owner/Director



## KRISTI'S KIDDIE KORNER

### COHORT PARTICIPATION:

- *Leaders Revitalizing Recruitment and Retention (WRR)*
- *Program Excellence and Administration Knowledge (PEAK)*

### OVERVIEW:

Kristi began her journey in early childhood education in 2008 and has since gained experience as a Family Provider, a Group Provider, and now as the owner of a Center.

Kristi's Kiddie Korner is a **STARS to Quality Level 5 program**.

Kristi holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from the University of Montana Western. She is passionate about providing high-quality care and creating strong partnerships with families to ensure each child's unique needs are supported.



**NOW WE HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS FOR  
OUR PANELISTS TO DIVE A BIT DEEPER  
INTO THEIR WORK**

*You will have time to ask your questions shortly*

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## **WHY**

*Can you tell us about the state of your business , or community that lead you to wanting to join the cohort?*

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## WHAT

*Can you paint the picture about what has changed in the community or your business after completing the programming you participated in?*

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## HOW

*Has participating in a cohort changed your view on your peers as assets instead of rivals?*

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**THIS IS YOUR TIME TO ASK ANY OF OUR  
PANELISTS A QUESTION ABOUT THEIR  
EXPERIENCES IN THE COHORT PROCESS**



# NEXT COHORT OPPORTUNITIES

Tuesdays  
6-9 PM

**For Group and  
Family Providers**

**ALL OUR KIN  
10-WEEK  
BUSINESS SERIES**

January 13<sup>th</sup> - March 17<sup>th</sup>

Take a deep dive into the  
8 best business practices  
for Family and Group  
Child Care Business owners

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**CONNECT**

  
**ZEROTOFIVE  
MONTANA**

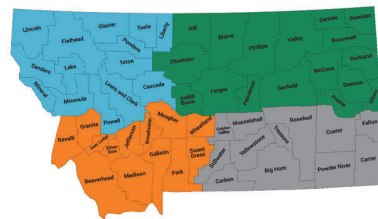


## Community Child Care Capacity Building Cohort

March 2026

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE NEXT  
COHORT? LETS HAVE A  
CONVERSATION ABOUT YOUR  
GOALS?

SCAN HERE TO SCHEDULE A  
MEETING WITH ME



# INTEGRATING PAS OR BAS

## INTERESTED IN PAS/BAS COHORTS? OPEN ENROLLMENT

Program Administration Scale (PAS)

Business Administration Scale (BAS)

**P.ROGRAM  
E.XCELLENCE &  
A.DMINISTRATION  
K.NOWLEDGE**

For Centers

Using the Program Administration Scale (PAS-3) Third Edition for Increasing Program Quality

Enrollment  
Form:



<https://forms.office.com/r/dYefYgx0J0>

**P.ROGRAM  
E.XCELLENCE &  
A.DMINISTRATION  
K.NOWLEDGE**

For Family/Group/FFN Providers

Using the Business Administration Scale (BAS-2) Second Edition for Increasing Program Quality

Enrollment  
Form:



<https://forms.office.com/r/7Ahhb8jKrM>

## COHORTS

### WHAT ARE SMALL GROUP COACHING COHORTS?

Small group coaching cohorts are groups of three programs, individuals, or leadership teams. Each cohort typically is comprised of participants from different locations in Montana. Cohorts are limited to no more than three participants or participating programs. Each cohort comes together to learn about a specific tool, resource, or to work on the same type of project at the same time. Small group cohort participants learn from each other, act as thought partners, hold each other accountable, and the cohort's coach shares best practices and provides foundational background.

### HOW DO I PARTICIPATE?

Participation in small group coaching cohorts is based on submission of an enrollment form for the type of cohort you're interested in. Enrollment for all small group cohorts is open. Enrollment forms are processed as they are received. Groups are built as enrollment forms come in. Scheduling of cohorts will vary depending on the participants in the group based on daily, weekly, and monthly availability of the individual participants.

### CAN I GET ECP CREDITS?

Yes. Participants in each cohort will receive credit at the end of the cohort for attendance at all cohort sessions, participation in all cohort sessions, and successful completion of required homework. The number of ECP credits varies based on the duration of each cohort.

### PROGRAM EXCELLENCE AND ADMINISTRATION KNOWLEDGE (PEAK)

Are you a child care provider interested in improving overall program quality? Montana Child Care Business Connect's Program Excellence and Administration Knowledge (PEAK) small group coaching cohort focuses on improving the business administration practices of your program. PEAK is led by Jason Nitschke, a certified, accredited, and nationally recognized business advisor.

PEAK uses research-backed recommendations developed and published by the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership. During these cohorts, Jason leads participants through monthly meetings, informal self-assessments, and peer-to-peer feedback to create action plans designed to increase quality business practices.

PEAK cohorts are created based on a participant's licensed or registered program type, Family-Friend-Neighbor (FFN), Family (F), Group (G), or Center (C). PEAK for F/G utilizes McCormick Center's Business Administration Scale Second Edition (BAS-2). PEAK for Centers utilizes McCormick's Program Administration Scale Third Edition (PAS-3). Both PAS and BAS are utilized in formal assessments in Montana Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).



## Next Opportunities:

- Peer Pods –  
October/November -  
open enrollment
- PEAK Deep Dives –  
open enrollment



<https://childcarebusinessconnect.com/cohorts/>

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING  
OUR SESSION TODAY!**

**VISIT THE MONTANA CHILD  
CARE BUSINESS CONNECT  
WEBSITES TO LEARN MORE**

