



Partnering with Head Start

Pathways for Child Care
& Early Childhood Stakeholders





Why We're Here & Where We're Going

- Montana families navigate multiple early childhood systems
- Collaboration strengthens outcomes and reduces friction
- Our Roadmap:
 - ✓ Understanding Head Start
 - ✓ Exploring partnership possibilities
 - ✓ Considering community opportunities
 - ✓ Identifying next steps together





Who Is in the Room?

- Head Start Collaboration & Head Start Association
 - It's important to remember our roles as we go forward
- What is Your Role?
 - Child Care Provider
 - Head Start / Early Head Start
 - Early Intervention or Other Service Provider
 - Early Childhood Coalition or Other Community Convener





Head Start 101: The Basics

- Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start
- Federal-to-Local Funding
- Two-Generation Family-Focused Service Model
- Comprehensive, Wrap-Around Services
- Standardized Quality & Outcome Standards
- Community Assessment





Head Start 101: What it is...and *isn't*

Head Start Is...

- Federally-funded whole-child program
- Supporting the most vulnerable children & families
- Family support + early learning

Head Start Is Not...

- Full-day, year-round care
- Competition with local providers
- Standalone, self-sufficient support for working families





Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership

Challenge – limited infant/toddler capacity

Alignment – share quality, space, support, and funding

Results

- ✓ Increases Quality
- ✓ Improves Relationships
- ✓ Elevates Continuity of Care
- ✓ Enhances Community Expertise





Bozeman School's Early Learning

Opportunity – leverage OPI investments for 4K learning

Alignment – braided funding and service enhancements

Results

- ✓ Fully Inclusive Classrooms
- ✓ Enhance Student Experience
- ✓ Improve Outcomes for ALL Students
- ✓ Heightened Kindergarten Readiness





Billings/Lockwood & Anaconda

The Differences

- Billings started as a space sharing; Anaconda is part of City-County government
- Both were inspired to accentuate Early Learning Outcomes through OPI \$

(un)Common Outcomes

- Collaborate on best environment-student match, but also optimize learning outcomes by coordinating services





Partnership “Grab Bag”

- ✓ Coordinated Community Enrollment & Referrals
- ✓ Shared Professional Development
- ✓ Joint Screenings & Family Outreach/Support Events
- ✓ Warm Handoffs at Transitions
- ✓ Extended Hours
- ✓ Mental Health Consultation / Pyramid Model Implementation
- ✓ Crisis/Emergency Response





Deep Dive: Community Child Find

The Problem

- Montana has difficulty identifying children with special needs
- Child Find is approached as an event rather than an outlook

The Partners

- ✓ Children & Families
- ✓ Schools & Child Cares
- ✓ Early Intervention Providers
- ✓ Who else do we need at our table?





Deep Dive: Community Child Find

The Alignment

- Shared Referrals = Simplifying the process
- Warm Handoffs = Reducing the gaps
- Coordinated Screenings = Standardizing the process
- Create Feedback Loops = Continuous improvement

Always focus on realistic outcomes





**Where are the gaps in your
community?**

**What partnerships can YOU help
create?**





A Different Kind of Commitment





Where do we go from here?

- 🏠 Head Start is a federal investment and a community asset, not a competitor.
- 🏠 Montana communities can create systems that work for Montana families.
- 🏠 Partnerships improve outcomes for families and communities.





Thank You!

