

# Info Sheet: Montana Early Care and Education Career Development

MSU Early Childhood Project                      Bozeman, Montana                      Fall 2005

## Montana Best Beginnings

### What are *Best Beginnings*?

*Best Beginnings* are programs that are funded by the federal Child Care and Development Fund through the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services/Early Childhood Services Bureau. They are designed to enhance the quality of early care and education for young children and families in Montana.

### Who is eligible?

To be eligible for Best Beginnings programs, you must be an active member of The Montana Practitioner Registry – our recognition system for early childhood professional development. To find out more information about the Montana Practitioner Registry visit [www.montana.edu/ecp/practitioner.html](http://www.montana.edu/ecp/practitioner.html) or call 1-800-213-6310 to request an application.

### What programs are out there?

Check out these options to find those that are right for your program and staff:

- **Merit Pay:** An award given for completing an annual individualized approved training plan
- **Higher Ed Merit Pay:** An award designed to help you pay for course work toward a CDA credential or a two or four year college degree in early childhood education.
- **Infant-Toddler Merit Pay:** Helps to cover your costs when completing the sixty hour Infant/Toddler Caregiving course
- **Infant Toddler Stipends:** Awards Infant/Toddler Certified Caregivers for continuing care in a program - NEW!
- **Mini-Grants:** Small grants available to help you improve your program. Application deadlines are January 1, March 1, June 1 and September 1 each year.
- **Provider Grants:** Large grants offered once a year to help you improve your program. Available in three year cycles.
- **Mentoring Grants:** Designed to promote supportive, professional relationships between new and seasoned providers.
- **Star Quality Program:** Programs awarded a star rating may apply for a one or two star designation and receive an increased reimbursement rate from the state for children on scholarships.

- **Specialized Training Grants:** Awarded for unique training proposals designed to meet specialized needs.
- **Higher Education Grants:** Supports accessibility to Montana's colleges and universities to make early childhood higher education available.

## **How Do I Get More Information About These Programs?**

Contact the Early Childhood Services Bureau (ECSB) at 1-866-239-0458 for more information about these opportunities!

ECSB staff that administer each program are listed below:

Lisa Murphy  
(406)444-1400

Merit Pay  
Mentoring Grants  
Specialized Training Grants  
Higher Education Grants  
Apprenticeship Program  
Early Learning Guidelines

Linda Kjorstad  
(406)657-2067

Child Care Provider Grants  
Infant Toddler Training and Trainers  
Mini Grants  
Star Quality Program

You may also visit the ECP website at [www.montana.edu/ecp/grants](http://www.montana.edu/ecp/grants) for more information.



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