

Communities are strengthening early childhood systems across Western Montana.



What's Happening and Why It Matters

For many families, especially in rural and Tribal communities, early childhood support can feel fragmented. Child care options are limited, services don't always connect, and navigating systems can be complicated. Families need trusted advocates and organizations that can help connect them to resources and to one another.

Local early childhood collaboratives help communities better support families. They bring together parents and caregivers, educators, service providers, Tribal leaders, nonprofit partners, and healthcare organizations to identify shared priorities and coordinate solutions. By aligning efforts around pregnancy and birth, child care, early learning, and family well-being, they strengthen connections between programs and make it easier for families to access support.

Through this work, communities identify what families need and which solutions work locally. Those lessons inform statewide policy and funding conversations through partnerships with organizations like Zero to Five Montana.



What's Changing on the Ground

With active, engaged early childhood collaboratives, meaningful change is possible. Across communities, we're seeing shifts like:

Stronger local coordination

Collaboratives serve as trusted hubs for information, connection, and shared problem-solving.

More parent and caregiver voices

Families are shaping priorities and helping guide solutions in their communities.

Expanded supports for families with young children

Communities are launching and strengthening programs that respond to local needs.

More spaces for families to connect

Communities are creating gathering places where families can build relationships and access support.

Stronger cross-sector partnerships

Health providers, schools, nonprofits, Tribal partners, and local governments are working together in new ways.

Local voices shaping statewide decisions

What communities learn through collaboratives is informing early childhood policy and advocacy conversations across Montana.

How to Get **Involved**

Connect with your local early childhood collaborative to meet others working to support young kids and caregivers in your community.

Plug into Zero to Five Montana to help shape statewide conversations on early childhood policy and systems.

Funders and state leaders can play an important role by listening to what communities are learning and investing in community-led early childhood work for the long haul.

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