

**Montana Early Childhood Coalition – Conference Call Minutes**  
**December 21, 2016**

- Participants on the call reviewed the updated Governor’s executive budget released December 15, 2016. There were no material changes to the budget made that impacted early childhood items of interest.
- Review of the Governor’s proposed Executive budget (Section B – DPHHS budget). The budget can be found at: [http://budget.mt.gov/Budgets/2019\\_Budget](http://budget.mt.gov/Budgets/2019_Budget)
- The DPHHS specific budget can be found at: [http://budget.mt.gov/Portals/29/execbudgets/2019\\_Budget/Section%20B%20-%202019B.pdf](http://budget.mt.gov/Portals/29/execbudgets/2019_Budget/Section%20B%20-%202019B.pdf)
- An executive summary can be found at: [http://budget.mt.gov/Portals/29/execbudgets/2019\\_Budget/2019%20Montana%20Biennial%20Budget%20Overview.pdf](http://budget.mt.gov/Portals/29/execbudgets/2019_Budget/2019%20Montana%20Biennial%20Budget%20Overview.pdf)
- Participants on the call discussed other bills or budget items or general topics to track through the session and provide updates on to coalition members. These items include:
  - LC 35
  - Primary Seatbelt Bill
  - Earned Income Tax Credit
  - Any efforts that may arise to repeal of Medicaid Expansion (unlikely to occur until Federal direction is known)
  - Any efforts that may arise to reject funding for the Montana Preschool Development Grant (as occurred previously)
  - Any efforts that may arise to reject funding for home visiting programs
- Sarah provided an updated on the Montana Advocates for Children (MAC) three top legislative priorities that include supporting the Governor’s proposed funding for preschool and STARS to Quality, and advocating for child care provider rate increases.
- Participants also had a discussion about getting information out that due to changing Head Start requirements, there will be a loss of Head Start slots for children if nothing is done to support other funding sources – such as the Governor’s proposed funding for 4 year old children for preschool.
- There was further discussion regarding issues surrounding the cost of health insurance for Head Start programs resulting in cuts to staff too. It was unknown how widespread this issue is at this time but appears to be a problem in some areas.
- Discussed events known to be occurring during the session already:
  - **Head Start day at the Capital will be February 10<sup>th</sup>**
  - **Montana Advocates for Children will have a day in the Rotunda on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. If you would like information about your local coalition or anything else at this event on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, please get it to Sarah @ HMHB to ensure it is included!!**
- Discussion also occurred about other legislative groups that may overlap issues that are important to this group – Montana Association of Christians (another MAC) and Montana

Pediatricians were brought up as groups to connect to. (Kristin Day, a Pediatrician in Bozeman, is likely a good connection for this group to make to Pediatricians as she is also on BBAC).

- The group agreed that it would like to request a one hour “insurgency” training from NAMI ED Matt Kuntz on January 24<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon while in Helena, so a request will be made by Sarah to find out if he is available on that date.
- The group reviewed the list of advocacy terms provided at the Montana Budget and Policy Center’s legislative summit (attached to reminder e-mail of the above-call).
- The group then discussed input on moving agenda items forward that they have received via local coalition members or presenters. There included:
  - Story telling is critical – use local stories for local legislators
  - Focus on the short-term benefits and emotional side v. rational, fact-based, long-term focus often used
  - Bring families and children whenever possible to hearings and the session. If they can’t come in person, have families e-mail photos and videos to law makers!
- The call finished with a discussion regarding maintaining contact about upcoming hearings and indicated that any information received would be disseminated in weekly e-mails to this group and can be shared far and wide with any interested members of your local coalitions.
- No other call was scheduled due to the fact that an in person meeting is scheduled for January 24<sup>th</sup> in Helena.