

## The Bi-Monthly Broadcast

*Hello! I hope this latest installment of the Bi-Monthly Broadcast finds you enjoying springtime weather and increased daylight. This time, we focus on the core service of quality child care. The Early Childhood Services Bureau is committed to quality early care and providing Montana's young children with the very Best Beginnings possible. With this in mind, I've included information about a new initiative called the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Infrastructure Development Project (MIECHV ID), a checklist to share with your clients around choosing quality child care, and information about the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship. Since April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, I've included information about a new initiative from DPHHS, "Raise Your Voice for Montana Kids." You'll have the chance to learn about the Teen Success Program of Planned Parenthood of Montana in Billings in the Contractor's Corner. Finally, I have also included an update on our newest contractors to join the Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program. As always, thank you for your work serving young families in Montana.*

-Kelly Hart, Healthy Montana Teen Parent Coordinator



### CORE SERVICE: Quality Child Care

#### Do You Know About the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship?

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Do you have clients who need assistance paying for child care? The Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may be able to help them.

Child care scholarships are available to qualified low-income families whose child attends a licensed child care center, registered group or family child care home, or legally unregistered child care provider. Families provide a co-payment based on a sliding scale fee. These co-payments begin at \$10 and increase depending on family size and income.

Scholarships are available to teen parents attending high school or enrolled in a GED program.

Families in tribal communities are dually eligible for child care assistance under both the Tribal Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant and the Montana Child Care Scholarship Program. To qualify for the Montana Child Care Scholarship Program, tribal families must either

not be eligible for the Tribal Block Grant Child Care or find that the Tribal Block Grant Child Care no longer has funding. They must be able to demonstrate they cannot use funds from their Tribal Block Grant.

To learn more about this program:

- Visit the Early Childhood Services website at <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/childcare/bestbeginnings/index.shtml>;
- Contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral Office, which you can find at <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/childcare/resourceandreferral/index.shtml>; or,
- Contact your local tribal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) office.



## Contractor's Corner: Planned Parenthood of Montana

Planned Parenthood of Montana is breaking new ground in the state to address teen pregnancy. Its newest program, Teen Success, kicked off last year in Billings and is founded on a theory-based mental health model that focuses on behavior change among participants. The goal of the program is to support pregnant and parenting teen mothers and encourage them to maintain their family size, complete their education and develop future goals.

Despite the work of advocacy and health organizations, teen pregnancy is still an issue in 2012. Each day in Montana, approximately 4 teens become pregnant. Additionally, American Indian teens in Montana continue to have higher birth rates than American Indian teens in the United States overall, and than white teens in Montana. Jill Baker, Planned Parenthood of Montana's Director of Education, believes a variety of factors influence teen pregnancy. Said Baker, "Risk factors encourage behaviors that might lead to pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections. Common factors for teen pregnancy include lower socioeco-

omic status and levels of education."

PPMT's Teen Success program was designed to target teens aged 12-18 to develop the skills needed to cope with the challenges of parenthood and adolescence, complete their education and maintain their family size. Said Baker, "The Teen Success program exists to give additional help and another chance to teens who may be struggling with all the issues that go along with being a young parent. PPMT's goal is to help these young people develop skills and establish a path to success as parents, students, and as they enter the workforce."

### PPMT's Teen Success Program:

- Facilitates and guides teens through each lesson and learning exercise;
- Provides a nutritious snack (e.g., fruit, cheese and crackers, etc.);
- Ensures free childcare is available during group;
- Gives participants \$10 at the completion of each weekly group

and bonus at the end of each 25 weeks attended;

- Assists participants set and work toward achieving their goals for the future;
- Promotes easy access to family planning services; and,
- Measures short and long-term progress of participants.

Teen Success members have a repeat pregnancy rate of 4 percent, compared with national statistics of 20 percent or more. Along with comprehensive sex education and access to birth control methods, programs like Teen Success can help teens delay their sexual activity and improve the use of contraceptive methods when they do become sexually active, and ultimately reduce unplanned pregnancy rates.

For more information, contact Josh Hemsath at (406) 869-5046.

LEARN ABOUT THE FLATHEAD CITY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT IN THE NEXT ISSUE!

## Update on Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program Contractors

Since wrapping up the needs assessment last fall, we have been working to promote the Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program in tribal communities and with Urban Indian Health Clinics.

At the time of writing this, we have five contracts established with tribal programs, and two more in development. We also have one contract in place with an Urban Indian Health Clinic and two more on the way.

When all is said and done, the program

will be serving Montana's pregnant and parenting teens on each reservation and in all of the state's largest population centers.

To our new contractors, welcome! These include:

- Blackfeet Manpower, *Browning*
- Chippewa Cree Tribal TANF Program, *Box Elder*
- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Social Services, *Pablo*

- Fort Belknap Tribal Health Department, *Harlem*
- North American Indian Alliance, *Butte*
- Northern Cheyenne Tribal Schools, *Busby*

Once all contracts are set, a contact list will be provided to everyone with all sixteen programs contracted to provide services under the Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program.



Need some tips to share with teens about choosing quality child care? Family Connections offers the following checklist of things to look for when choosing

child care:

### Caregivers:

\_\_\_ Caregivers develop warm, caring, and positive relationships with children in care.

\_\_\_ Caregivers talk to children on their level.

\_\_\_ Children are treated as individuals with different abilities

\_\_\_ Children's needs are quickly met even when busy.

\_\_\_ Caregivers have received required training including CPR, First Aid, and 8 hours of early childhood education but also strive for additional professional development.

\_\_\_ Caregivers are always prepared to answer parent questions.

\_\_\_ Caregivers update parents on children's daily activities.

\_\_\_ Parent ideas and concerns are welcomed and parent involvement is avail-

## Checklist For Choosing Quality Child Care

able.

\_\_\_ Adult to child ratios are met at all times according to licensing standards. (Contact Family Connections for more info about ratios: 406-761-6010)

### Setting:

\_\_\_ The atmosphere is clean, comfortable, and child friendly.

\_\_\_ The outdoor play area is safe with a variety of activities.

\_\_\_ There is enough space for the children to be comfortable during every activity.

\_\_\_ There are multiple areas for resting, quiet play, and active play.

### Activities:

\_\_\_ There is a daily balance of play time, story times, activity times, and naptime.

\_\_\_ Activities are age appropriate.

\_\_\_ There are enough toys and materials for all children.

### Other important aspects:

\_\_\_ You agree with the discipline/guidance practices demonstrated and described in program policies.

\_\_\_ Child care has a contract that outlines policies such as sick child, emergency plans, fees, payment, hours of

operation, holidays, etc.

\_\_\_ You hear sounds of happy children when visiting the child care.

\_\_\_ Children are comforted when needed.

\_\_\_ Surprise visits are welcomed and encouraged.

\_\_\_ This could be a "home away from home" for your child.

### Warning Signals:

\_\_\_ The child care does not encourage parents to observe or requests that all visits be planned in advance.

\_\_\_ There are too many children for adequate care and supervision.

\_\_\_ There are few activities planned for children and little guidance.

\_\_\_ The facility is dirty and/or unsafe.

\_\_\_ Caregivers are physically rough, abusive, or yell at the children.

\_\_\_ The child care program seems to be on shaky ground financially and has no consistent program or schedule.

\_\_\_ The child care program is not licensed or registered with the state and thus, breaking the law.

\_\_\_ The child care has deficiencies from licensing for not meeting health or safety rules.

## Learn About A New Early Childhood Project:

### *Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Infrastructure Development*

How often is there a funded opportunity for community collaboration and planning around early childhood?

The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Infrastructure Development (MIECHV ID) Project offers funding to eligible communities to support or establish a community council and develop a plan for implementing and sustaining a comprehensive system of

early childhood services, including home visiting. Collaboration between community-level organizations and entities is an important component of successful early childhood systems.

The MIECHV ID Project offers resources to communities to develop new or enhance existing community partnerships and collaborations and conduct assessment and planning ac-

tivities. The objectives of the MIECHV ID funding are often a good fit for existing community interests and coalitions involved with other activities, such as the Pregnant and Parenting Teen grants.

For more information, please contact Dianna Frick, Maternal and Child Health Epidemiologist, at [dfrick@mt.gov](mailto:dfrick@mt.gov) or (406) 444-6940.

## UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### MAY

#### **Teenwise Minnesota (Formerly the Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention, and Parenting)- 21st Annual Conference**

May 3–4, 2012 • Brooklyn Center, MN

<http://www.moapp.org/training/conference.html>

#### **Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services– Montana Family Planning Training Conference**

May 9–10, 2012 • Helena, MT

<http://region8familyplanning.org/>

#### **Office of Adolescent Health– Collaborating with Partners and Building Program Support**

May 15 – 16, 2012 • Indianapolis, IN

#### **Women’s Health Institute- Aligning for a Healthy Future: Innovation, Collaboration, and Strategy**

May 22, 2012 • Denver, CO

<http://www.region8familyplanning.org/>

### JUNE

#### **La Leche League of Montana– A One-Day Conference with Jack Newman**

June 7, 2012 • Helena, MT

<http://www.llli.org/web/montana.html>

#### **Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program presents the Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning– Parents Interacting With Infants (PIWI)**

June 19 – 22, 2012 • Helena, MT

Contact Kelly Hart for more information: at 444-9702 or [khart2@mt.gov](mailto:khart2@mt.gov)

### JULY

#### **Office of Adolescent Health- Topic TBA**

July 10 – 11, 2012 • Portland, OR

## Raise Your Voice for Montana Kids

The Raise Your Voice for Montana Kids is a new media campaign of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services to raise awareness about the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

The campaign utilizes radio spots and posters to promote the child abuse hotline and general prevention of child abuse and neglect.

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, call the child abuse prevention hotline at 1-866-820-KIDS (5437).



If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, call our toll-free number 1-866-820-KIDS (5437)