



## **Welcome to the Family Support Services Advisory Council**

### **What is the FSSAC?**

The Montana Family Support Services Advisory Council is Montana's Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) and exists by the Executive Order of the Governor of the State of Montana through the authority of Public Law 108-446, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 2004 and 2011.

The FSSAC serves as Montana's ICC to advise and assist the Part C Montana Milestones Infant and Toddler Early Intervention Program (part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - IDEA), to plan, develop, and implement Montana's comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, coordinated program of early intervention and family support services for children, aged birth to three, with disabilities and their families.

The Council consists of approximately twenty-five members appointed by the Governor, all of whom have an interest in and expertise about the provision of services to families of children with disabilities.

The Council meets in Helena quarterly and is comprised of parents, professionals and providers. It includes:

- six members who are parents of children with disabilities,
- six members who are providers of Part C services,
- a legislative representative who provides liaison with the Montana State Legislature,
- a representative from Parents Let's Unite for Kids, and
- several state and local agency members who represent local, state, and federal government services (Child & Family Services/Child Care, Special Health Services/Public Health, Children's Mental Health Services, Quality Assurance Division, Medicaid, Child Protective Services, Montana School for the Deaf and Blind, Office of Public Instruction, Early Head Start) which have a related interest in service provision to children with disabilities.

It is important that voices from all of these perspectives are shared and valued.



## **The Role of Parents**

**As a parent of a child who has received Early Intervention services, you have a unique perspective on how the Early Intervention system operates. Parents are encouraged to share their views and their opinions.**

**Parents -- would you like to have a voice in the future planning and policy decisions for the Early Intervention system?**

**As a Parent Representative of the FSSAC or as a member of one of the committees of the FSSAC, you will learn how the Early Intervention system works and be on the forefront of receiving information that affects the Early Intervention system.**

**Parents have the opportunity to "sit at the table" and voice their opinions with other key advisors to the Department of Public Health and Human Services, the lead agency for the Early Intervention program.**

### **FSSAC Parent Representatives**

**Parent representatives are voting members of the FSSAC, and as such are required to attend meetings four times a year. There is one parent representative from each of the five regions of the state and one at-large parent representative. Regional representatives must live in the region and have a child who is receiving or has received Early Intervention services.**

**Parent Participation on the FSSAC is encouraged and supported. Stipends are available for parents who attend meetings on a regular basis and mentoring support is available.**

**For parents who cannot attend meetings, there are alternate ways to participate (via email, review of mailed materials, conference calls).**

**What to do next?**

**See what it's all about -- come and observe a FSSAC Meeting**