



BEST BEGINNINGS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Supporting Montana Families and Providers with Child Care Financial Assistance

The Early Childhood Services Bureau administers the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF). Through the CCDF, families and providers are supported in many ways:

- Equal access for families through the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship Program
- Reliable complaint process for families and providers
- Child Care Resource and Referral agencies across the state
- STARS to Quality, Montana's Quality Rating and Improvement System
- Health and safety standards met by all licensed providers
- Transparent licensing inspection and monitoring information

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies

The Early Childhood Services Bureau contracts with [CCR&R agencies](#) to offer the following services:

Services to Families

- **Help** low-income families find and pay for quality child care
- **Offer** referrals to licensed and registered child care programs
- **Provide** training, technical assistance, and support for child care providers
- **Initiate** projects to build quality child care
- **Inform** policy makers, businesses, and the public on child care related issues
- **Advocate** for child care providers and for families with children

Child Care Resource and Referral agencies determine eligibility for the Best Beginnings Scholarship Program for low-income families and manage state-assisted payments to providers.

Services to Providers

- **Offer** professional development and technical assistance to child care providers in the areas of child development, health and safety, infant and toddler care, and sound business practices
- **Provide** technical assistance to providers who have been referred by licensing specialists for corrective action

Child Care Licensing

The role of the Child Care Licensing Program is to regulate and monitor child care facilities. Additionally, the Program establishes guidelines for the health, safety and well-being of the children in these facilities.

Visit the [Child Care Licensing website](#) for the following information:

- **Apply** to become a child care provider
- **Search** for a child care provider
- **Learn** more about specific licensing policies
- **Understand** the health and safety requirements for all licensed and registered child care providers
- **Find** contact information for licensors and licensing program support
- **View** monitoring and inspection history for all licensed and registered child care providers, including:
 - Health and safety requirements met by the provider
 - Licensing or regulatory requirements met by the provider
 - Date the provider was last inspected, and any history of violations of these requirements

Improving Quality Through Best Beginnings STARS to Quality

STARS to Quality is Montana's voluntary quality rating improvement system to support early childhood education programs in continuous quality improvement. STARS aligns quality indicators with support and incentives for early childhood programs and early childhood professionals. To learn more about STARS, and view the current participants, visit the [STARS to Quality website](#).

Need Help Paying for Child Care?

The Best Beginnings Scholarship Program is designed to promote equal access to child care. The Best Beginnings Scholarship helps families pay for child care while they

- Work;
- Work & attend school;
- Attend school full-time
- Attend high school;
- Participate in Montana's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

For more information about how the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship can help you cover the cost of child care, visit the [Early Childhood Services Bureau website](#).

How to File a Complaint

- If you suspect a parent or provider is misusing funds from the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship, submit a complaint online by visiting the [Fraud Reporting website](#).
- To submit a complaint for a child care provider, visit the [Child Care Licensing Complaint website](#).