State policies that promote health, education, and strong families can help the early development and school readiness of America’s youngest citizens. This profile highlights Montana’s policy choices alongside other data related to the well-being of young children.

Health and Nutrition
States can support young children’s development by making key policy choices in early health and development. This section of ITO highlights states’ policy choices for supporting young children’s wellbeing: 1) Access to and continuity of health care, including state Medicaid/CHIP eligibility levels and coverage of legal immigrant children; 2) Parents’ access to health care, including for low-income pregnant women, and access to a medical home for young children; and 3) Preventive screening and assessment, including adherence to recommended schedules for well-child visits.

Early Care and Education
States make important decisions about the early care and education services they provide to young children and families. This section of ITO highlights states’ key policy choices that affect children’s development and parents’ ability to work: 1) Access to childcare, including subsidy eligibility levels and reimbursement rates; and 2) States’ investment in Head Start, Early Head Start, pre-kindergarten, child care centers’ class size and student-teacher ratios and investment in infant/toddler specialist networks and credentials and Quality Rating Improvement Systems.

Parenting and Economic Supports
States make critical policy choices that help low-income parents effectively support young children’s healthy development. This section of ITO spotlights states’ policy choices related to important economic supports for low-income families with young children: 1) TANF requirements for parents of young children; and 2) Income support policies including tax relief, earned income and dependent care tax credits, as well as child support disregards.
HEALTH AND NUTRITION

State Choices to Promote Access

Income eligibility limit for public health insurance (Medicaid/CHIP) at or above 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) [2013]²

☐ Children <1 year
  Set eligibility at 250% (CHIP)

☐ Children ages 1-5 years
  Set eligibility at 250% (CHIP)

☐ Children ages 6-8
  Set eligibility at 250% (CHIP)

☐ Pregnant women
  Set eligibility at 150% (Medicaid)

☐ Medicaid and/or CHIP coverage for lawfully residing children [2013]³

☐ Medicaid and/or CHIP coverage for lawfully residing pregnant women [2013]³

☐ Provide temporary coverage to pregnant women under Medicaid until eligibility can be formally determined [2013]²

☐ Provide temporary coverage to children under Medicaid or CHIP until eligibility can be formally determined [2013]²

☐ Include at-risk children in the definition of eligibility for IDEA Part C. [2012]⁴

☐ Do not require redetermination of eligibility for Medicaid/CHIP more than once a year [2013]²

☐ Has adopted Medicaid expansion as part of the Affordable Care Act [2014]⁵
  Adoption of the Medicaid Expansion Under Discussion

State Choices to Promote Quality

EPSDT screening periodicity schedule meets recommendations of American Academy of Pediatrics [FY 2013]⁶

☐ 7 require screenings for children <1 year
  State requires 5 screens. 100% of eligible screens were completed in 2013.

☐ 4 require screenings for children 1-2 years
  State requires 5 screens. 100% of eligible screens were completed in 2013.

☐ 3 require screenings for children 3-5 years
  State requires 3 screens. 95% of eligible screens were completed in 2013.

☐ 4 require screenings for children 6-9 years
  State requires 4 screens. 45% of eligible screens were completed in 2013.

☐ Require newborn screening for the 31 metabolic deficiencies/disorders and core conditions [2014]⁷
  29 universally required by law or rule.
State choices to promote access

- Set the income eligibility limit for child care subsidies at or above 200% FPL. [2014]
  
  A family of three qualifies for assistance at $28,632, or 145% FPL. This reflects an increase from 141% FPL in 2013.

- Child care subsidy reimbursement rate meets the recommended 75th percentile of the market rate [2014]

- Redetermine the eligibility for child care subsidies no more than once per year [FY 2013]
  
  Eligibility redetermined every six months.

- State supplements Early Head Start [2012]

- Fund a pre-kindergarten program and/or supplement Head Start. [2013]
  
  No Program

- Requires districts to offer full day kindergarten [2014]
  
  Requires districts to offer half day kindergarten

State choices to promote quality

- Require one adult for every four 18-month-olds, and a maximum class size of eight in child care centers. [2013]
  
  Child care regulations require one adult for every 4 children, and there is no maximum class size.

- Allocate state or federal funds for a network of infant/toddler specialists that provide assistance to child care providers. [2013]

- Have early learning standards or developmental guidelines for infants and toddlers. [2013]

- Have an infant/toddler credential. [2013]

- Require through regulation that infants and toddlers in child care centers be assigned a consistent primary caregiver. [FY 2013]

- Require one adult for every 10 4-year-olds, and a maximum class size of 20 in child care centers. [2013]
  
  Child care regulations require one adult for every 10 children, and there is no maximum class size.

- Have implemented a statewide Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) [2015]
State choices to promote quality, continued

☐ Requires one teacher for every 18 students in Kindergarten classrooms [2013]^{17}
  Requires one teacher for every 20 students.

☑ State has adopted Common Core Standards [2015]^{18}
  NCCP believes that Common Core State Standards should be used in conjunction with guidelines for social emotional learning.

☐ State has comprehensive, free-standing standards for social emotional learning at the K-12 level [2015]^{19}
State choices to promote effective parenting

- Provide option to extend Medicaid coverage for family planning to otherwise ineligible low-income women [2015]\(^{20}\) 
  Eligibility based on income up to 211% FPL. The state also extends eligibility for women losing coverage postpartum.
- Exempt single parents on TANF from work requirements until the youngest child reaches age 1. [FY 2013]\(^{21}\)
  Individuals caring for a newborn child may count this activity toward participation requirements for 2 full months following the child’s birth, up to a total of 12 months in an individual’s lifetime.
- Reduce the TANF work requirement to 20 hours or less for single parents with children under age 6 [FY 2013]\(^{21}\)
  Required to work 27 hours.

State choices to support family economic security

- Established a state minimum wage that meets or exceeds $9.10/hr and is indexed to inflation [2014]\(^{22}\)
  $7.90
- Exempt single-parent families of three below the poverty level from personal income tax. [2012]\(^{23}\)
  UP to 57% FPL
- Offer a refundable state Earned Income Tax Credit. [2014]\(^{24}\)
- Offer a refundable state dependent care tax credit. [2014]\(^{25}\)
  A deduction of eligible expenses for tax filers with MT adjusted gross income under $22,800, if one child, spouse or dependent, $25,200 if two such individuals, and $27,600 if three or more.
- Keep copayments for child care subsidies below 10% of family income for families of three at 150% FPL [2014]\(^{8}\)
  Not eligible.
- Offer exemptions and/or extensions of the TANF benefit time limit for women who are pregnant or caring for a child under age 6. [FY 2013]\(^{21}\)
- Has paid family leave for a minimum of 6 weeks with full or partial replacement of wages [2013]\(^{26}\)
DATA NOTES AND SOURCES


This profile is a product of NCCP’s Improving the Odds for Young Children initiative, funded by the Alliance for Early Success. The information represents the most recent 50-state data sources and will be updated with the release of new data. See http://www.nccp.org/profiles/early_childhood.html for other state profiles.