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Quality ECE in Montana: Why does it matter?

- Child care is a necessity for 65% of Montana children
- Children spend nearly as much time in ECE environments as in K-12th grade classrooms
- Early childhood education affects short and long term development
- Quality early childhood education is an economic investment

What makes an early childhood setting high quality?

- Safe, healthy, stimulating environment
- Quality adult-child interactions
- Comprehensive, developmentally appropriate curriculum that is linked to the Montana Early Learning Standards
- Developmentally appropriate teaching methods
- Family engagement

Barriers to providing high quality early care and education in Montana

- High staff turnover rates—quarterly turnover rates of 14% in the child care industry
- Inadequate pay—average wage for a child care teacher \$9.88
- Lack of benefits—50% of early childhood educators have no benefits
- Parents can't afford to pay more for child care
- Businesses can't afford to pay higher wages