



MONTANA EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCOUNT (MECA) BOARD TIMELINE

DECEMBER 5, 2025

- Board Appointments are made by Governor

JANUARY 7, 2026

Major Accomplishments

- Board convened for the first time.
- Board members received orientation on
 - House Bill 924
 - MECA Responsibilities
 - Allowable uses of funds
- Began initial review of draft bylaws.

Board Decisions

- No formal votes taken
- Directed staff to revise and bring updated bylaws to

FEBRUARY 3-4, 2026

Major Accomplishments

- Elected Officers and set 2026 meeting schedule
- Reviewed Early Childhood Strategic Plan
- Identified priorities for future funding

Board Decisions

- Spend \$3.5 million for the rest of FY2026.
- Approved the Bureau Chief and Program Manager charging time to the MECA budget.
 - Bureau chief 10%
 - Program manager 15%

FEBRUARY 19, 2026

Major Accomplishments

- Received legislative intent remarks from Senator Laura Smith
- Finalize priority buckets for spending in FY26 and FY27
- Present information on Child Care Worker (CCW) Options

Board Decisions

- Table CCW options until March meeting



MARCH 11, 2026

Major Accomplishments

- Reviewed CCW pilot data and implementation considerations
- Identify first areas of priority for proposal development
 - Training and incentives for serving children with special needs.
 - Quality Incentives for Providers

Board Decisions

- Amend previous vote on spending \$3.5 million in FY26 to spending up to \$3.5 million for the rest of fiscal year 2026.
- Explore option 3 of the CCW proposals further.
- DPHHS staff to develop proposals on:
 - early child-care facility improvement
 - workforce retention incentives
 - Developmental screening training

MARCH 26, 2026

Major Accomplishments

- Subcommittees provided updates
 - Special Needs Training
 - Quality Incentives Implementation
- Appoint an evaluation subcommittee

Board Decisions

- Develop in-depth a proposal to support child care providers in accessing training to understand and use standardized screening tools more effectively.
- Continue to develop a proposal that strengthens child care capacity and quality through construction, expansion, licensing, and safety grants, and provides targeted stipends to experienced providers, supported by a research study that will guide long-term, data-driven solutions to systemic workforce challenges.

APRIL 16, 2026

Major Accomplishments

- Received guidance from Lieutenant Governor on the Board's responsibility as stewards of the trust to take time to make funding decisions and not rush to spend money.
- Begin development on the Flexible Workforce Support Grant (Option 3 from CCW proposals)

Board Decisions



- Allocated \$1.5 million for statewide implementation of the Special Needs Training Initiative.
- Authorized up to \$200,000 for research and data collection to inform future quality incentive investments.
- Direct the Quality Incentives Committee to continue development of an Infant-Toddler Quality Incentive proposal.
- Directed staff to utilize internal evaluation capacity for funded initiatives at 25 percent of time and effort.
- Created and appointed committee members to develop the flexible workforce support grant.

MAY 21, 2026

Major Accomplishments

- Reviewed multi-year revenue projections and projected trust earnings through SFY 2029 based on information provided by the Governor's Office.
- Received implementation updates from all active committees.

Board Decisions

- Adopted revised grant guidance and application language for the Special Needs Training Initiative
- Authorized use of a 0.25 full time internal evaluator from DPHHS to support project evaluation.
- Direction to the Flexible Workforce Support Grant to do a fiscal analysis of funding scenarios of \$2M, \$2.5M, and \$3M.
- Direction to Quality Initiatives Committee to continue development of a grant proposal focused on infant-toddler support.