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Quality Progress Report (QPR)

For

Montana

FFY 2023

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The Quality Progress Report (QPR) collects information from states and territories (hereafter referred to as lead agencies) to describe investments to improve the quality of care available for children from birth to age 13. This report meets the requirements in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 for lead agencies to submit an annual report that describes how quality funds were expended, including the activities funded and the measures used to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services.

For purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions of applicable laws printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text. The lead agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to the applicable laws regardless of these modifications.

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

The Quality Progress Report (QPR) collects information from lead agencies to describe investments to improve the quality of care available for children from birth to age 13. This report meets the requirements in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 for lead agencies to submit an annual report that describes how quality funds were expended, including the activities funded and the measures used to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services. Lead agencies are also required to report on their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) quality improvement investments through the CCDF Plan, which collects information on the proposed quality activities for a three-year period; and through the ACF-696, which collects quarterly expenditure data on quality activities.

The annual data provided by the QPR will be used to describe how lead agencies are spending a significant investment per year to key stakeholders, including Congress, federal, state and territory administrators, providers, parents, and the public.

Specifically, this report will be used to:

- Ensure accountability and transparency for the use of CCDF quality funds, including a set-aside for quality infant and toddler care and activities funded by American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act
- Track progress toward meeting state- and territory-set indicators and benchmarks for improvement of child care quality based on goals and activities described in CCDF Plans; and
- Understand efforts in progress towards all child care settings meeting the developmental needs of children
- Inform federal technical assistance efforts and decisions regarding strategic use of quality funds.

What Period Must Be Included: All sections of this report cover the federal fiscal year activities (October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023), unless otherwise stated. Data should reflect the cumulative totals for the fiscal year being reported, unless otherwise stated.

What Data Should Lead Agencies Use: Lead agencies may use data collected by other government and nongovernment agencies (e.g., CCR&R agencies or other TA providers) in addition to their own data as appropriate. We recognize that lead agencies may not have all of the data requested initially but expect progress towards increased data capacity. The scope of this report covers quality improvement activities funded at least in part by CCDF in support of CCDF activities. Lead agencies must describe their progress in meeting their stated goals for improving the quality of child care as reported in their FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

How is the QPR Organized?

2

The first section of the QPR gathers basic data on the population of providers in the state or territory and goals for quality improvement and glossary of relevant terms. The rest of the report is organized according to the ten authorized uses of quality funds specified in the CCDBG Act of 2014:

1) Support the training and professional development of the child care workforce
2) Improve the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines
3) Develop, implement, or enhance a quality rating improvement system for child care providers
4) Improve the supply and quality of child care for infants and toddlers
5) Establish or expand a lead agency wide system of child care resource and referral services
6) Support compliance with lead agency requirements for licensing, inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety
7) Evaluate the quality of child care programs in the state or territory, including how programs positively impact children
8) Support providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation
9) Support the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development
10) Other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry.

The Office of Child Care (OCC) recognizes that quality funds may have been used to address the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. These activities should be reflected in the relevant sections of the QPR.

Reporting Activities Related to ARP Act Child Care Stabilization Grants

The ARP Act included approximately $24 billion for child care stabilization grants, representing an important opportunity to stabilize the child care sector and do so in a way that builds back a stronger child care system that supports the developmental and learning needs of children, meets parents' needs and preferences with equal access to high-quality child care, and supports a professionalized workforce that is fairly and appropriately compensated for the essential skilled work that they do. Lead agencies must spend stabilization funds as subgrants to qualified child care providers to support the stability of the child care sector during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency. Please refer to the information memorandum [ARP Act Child Care Stabilization Grants](CCDF-ACF-IM-2021-02) for further guidance on the child care stabilization grants made available through the ARP Act.

While the OCC has established a new data collection form, the ACF-901 – American Rescue Plan (ARP) Stabilization Grants Provider-Level Data, as the primary data collection mechanism for reporting related to ARP stabilization grants, Section 13 of the QPR asks about activities related to stabilization grants made possible through ARP funding. The OCC will inform lead agencies if the data reported through the ACF-901 is complete enough to warrant skipping Section 13 of the QPR. The following information is requested in Section 13:

- If the lead agency ran more than one grant program;
- How stabilization grants were used to support workforce compensation; and
- Methods to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse when providing stabilization grants

Section 13 should be used to report on ARP Stabilization Grants ONLY. Other child care sustainability or stabilization grant programs established or ongoing using other funding mechanisms (i.e., CCDF or other supplemental funding e.g., CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary Funds) should be reported in Section 11.

When is the QPR Due to ACF?

The QPR will be due to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) by the designated lead agency no later than December 31, 2023.

Glossary of Terms

The following terms are used throughout the QPR. These definitions can also be found in section 98.2 in the CCDBG Act of 2014. For any term not defined, please use the lead agency definition of terms to complete the QPR.

Center-based child care provider means a provider licensed or otherwise authorized to provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a non-residential setting, unless in care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work. Associated terms include "child care centers" and "center-based programs."

Director means a person who has primary responsibility for the daily operations and management for a child care provider, which may include a family child care provider, and which may serve children from birth to kindergarten entry and children in school-age child care.

Family child care provider means one or more individuals who provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a private residence other than the child's residence, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work. Associated terms include "family child care homes."

In-home child care provider means an individual who provides child care services in the child's own home.

4

License-exempt means facilities that are not required to meet the definition of a facility required to meet the CCDF section 98.2 definition of "licensing or regulatory requirements." Associated terms include "legally exempt" and "legally operating without regulation."

Licensed means a facility required by the state to meet the CCDF section 98.2 definition of "licensing or regulatory requirements," which explains that the facility meets "requirements necessary for a provider to legally provide child care services in a state of locality, including registration requirements established under state, local or tribal law."

Programs refer generically to all activities under the CCDF, including child care services and other activities pursuant to §98.50 as well as quality activities pursuant to §98.43.

Provider means the entity providing child care services.

Staffed family child care (FCC) networks are programs with paid staff that offer a menu of ongoing services and resources to affiliated FCC educators. Network services may include individual supports (for example, visits to child care homes, coaching, consultation, warmlines, substitute pools, shared services, licensing TA, mental health services) and group supports (for example, training workshops, facilitated peer support groups).

Teacher means a lead teacher, teacher, teacher assistant or teacher aide who is employed by a child care provider for compensation on a regular basis, or a family child care provider, and whose responsibilities and activities are to organize, guide and implement activities in a group or individual basis, or to assist a teacher or lead teacher in such activities, to further the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children from birth to kindergarten entry and children in school-age child care.

1) Overview

To gain an understanding of the availability of child care in the state or territory, please provide the following information on the total number of child care providers.

1.1 State or Territory Child Care Provider Population

1.1.1 Total Number of Licensed Providers:

Enter the total number of licensed child care providers that operated in the state or territory as of September 30, 2023. These counts should include all licensed child care providers, not just those serving children receiving CCDF subsidies.

[x] Licensed center-based programs **316**
   [ ] Unable to provide number. Indicate reason:

Additional clarification: Based on most recent submission of the FY 2023 ACF-800 data there were 264 licensed center-based programs receiving CCDF funding. Please report the number of ALL licensed center-based programs operating in the state here, regardless of receipt of CCDF funding.

[x] Licensed family child care homes **579**
   [ ] Unable to provide number. Indicate reason:

Additional clarification: Based on most recent submission of the FY 2023 ACF-800 data there were 127 licensed family child care homes receiving CCDF funding. Please report the number of ALL licensed family child care homes operating in the state here, regardless of receipt of CCDF funding.

2) Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce

Goal: *Ensure the lead agency's professional development systems or framework provides initial and ongoing professional development and education that result in a diverse and stable child care workforce with the competencies and skills to support all domains of child development.*

2.1 Lead Agency Progression of Professional Development

2.1.1 Professional Development Registry:

Did the lead agency use a workforce registry or professional development registry to track progression of professional development during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023?

[x] Yes. If yes, describe: **Montana Early Childhood Practitioner Registry**
[ ] No. If no, what alternative does the lead agency use to track the progression of professional development for teachers/providers serving children who receive CCDF subsidy? Describe:

2.1.2 Participation in Professional Development Registry:

Are any teachers/providers required to participate?
[x] Yes. If yes, describe: **Yes, all licensed center based childcare and family childcare providers are required to participate.**
[ ] No. If no, describe:

2.1.3 Number of Participants in Professional Development Registry:

Total number of participants in the registry as of September 30, 2023 **4809**

2.1.4 Spending - Professional Development Registry:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[ ] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds

[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary

[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

2.2 Workforce Development

2.2.1 Professional Development and Career Pathways Support:

How did the lead agency help teachers/providers progress in their education, professional development, and/or career pathway between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023 (check all that apply)? If selected, how many staff received each type of support?

[x] Scholarships (for formal education institutions) **119**

[x] Financial bonus/wage supplements tied to education levels **7**

[x] Career advisors, mentors, coaches, or consultants **24**

[x] Reimbursement for training **130**

[ ] Loans

[ ] Substitutes, leave (paid or unpaid) for professional development

[ ] Other. Describe:

[ ] N/A. Describe:

2.2.2 Spending - Professional Development and Career Pathways Support:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds

[ ] Non-CCDF funds

[ ] CARES funds

[ ] CRRSA Funds

[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary

[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

2.3 Child Care Provider Qualifications

2.3.1 Number of Licensed Child Care Programs Qualifications:

Total number of staff in licensed child care programs with the following qualification levels as of September 30, 2023:

[x] Child Development Associate (CDA) **124**
[x] Associate's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **213**
[x] Bachelor's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **465**
[x] State child care credential **492**
[x] State infant/toddler credential **526**
[ ] Unable to report this data. Indicate reason:

2.3.2 Number of Licensed CCDF Child Care Programs Qualifications:

Total number of staff in licensed CCDF child care programs with the following qualification levels as of September 30, 2023:

[x] Child Development Associate (CDA) **107**
[x] Associate's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **147**
[x] Bachelor's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **292**
[x] State child care credential **377**
[x] State infant/toddler credential **456**
[ ] Unable to report this data. Indicate reason:

2.4 Technical Assistance for Professional Development

2.4.1 Technical Assistance Topics:

Technical assistance on the following topics is available to providers as part of the lead agency's professional development system (can be part of QRIS or other system that provides professional development to child care providers):

[x] Business Practices
[x] Mental health for children
[x] Diversity, equity, and inclusion
[x] Emergency Preparedness Planning

[x] Other. Describe other technical assistance available to providers as part of the professional development system: **Montana's Child Care Training site includes classes for child care providers on all the above topics. For each class, we assign an instructor who is available to answer questions and offer clarifications. These instructors are vetted and trained specialists in the topics to which they are assigned.**

2.4.2 Spending - Technical Assistance for Professional Development:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

    [x] CCDF quality funds
    [ ] Non-CCDF funds
    [ ] CARES funds
    [ ] CRRSA Funds
    [ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
    [ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
    [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

2.5 Spending – Training and Professional Development

2.5.1 Spending – Training and Professional Development:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to support the <u>training and professional development</u> of the child care workforce during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? $**1000770**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

2.6 Progress Update

2.6.1 Progress Update – Training and Professional Development:

Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 6.3.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

The STARS to Quality team looks several data sets within the Practitioner Registry. STARS to Quality program staff are required to participate on the Registry, which helps the STARS to Quality team collect valuable data about professional development and education based on individuals' levels on the Career Path. The Career Path promotes professional development for early care and education practitioners by providing a framework for recording and recognizing experience, training, and educational accomplishments. The Career Path outlines eleven levels of career development based on training, education, and experience in the field. The Membership Level, formerly the Early Childhood Practitioner level, was removed for a brief time and then modified and added back to the Career Path in 2018, when Child Care Licensing implemented rule that all individuals in licensed and registered programs must be current on the Career Path. Any individual developing a plan for professional growth in early care and education can chart a course on the Career Path. From 2019 to 2020, there was a 4% increase in STARS Registry participants and nearly a 17% increase in all current Registry Participants. The following shows Practitioner Registry participant numbers for FY2020 by Registry level.

Membership Level

STARS to Quality: 62

Statewide workforce: 202

Level 1

STARS to Quality: 383

Statewide workforce: 1,428

Level 2

STARS to Quality: 622

Statewide workforce: 1,213

Level 3

STARS to Quality: 195

Statewide workforce: 312

Level 4

STARS to Quality: 88

Statewide workforce: 165

Level 5

STARS to Quality: 100

Statewide workforce: 152

Level 6

STARS to Quality: 34

Statewide workforce: 71

Level 7

STARS to Quality: 29

Statewide workforce: 59

Level 8

STARS to Quality: 98

Statewide workforce: 172

Level 9

STARS to Quality: 30

Statewide workforce: 65

Level 10

STARS to Quality: 2

Statewide workforce: 3

Educational Growth

From 2019 to 2020 there was nearly a 7 % increase in Bachelor's degrees attained among STARS to quality Registry participants.

Number of STARS to Quality providers with increased educational levels in FY2020:

Associate degree: 163

Bachelor's Degree: 371

Master's Degree: 65

Doctorate: 3

Some College: 232

High School + MACTE (Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education) certification and/or CDA (any type): 79

High School + MT Infant Toddler Certification and/or MT Preschool Certification: 309

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 6.3.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: As of September 2023, the following data details the number of participants at each of the 11 levels of the practitioner registry. Note that there is a participant level

before Level 1 called Membership (Membership + 10 Levels = 11 Levels).

Total registry registrants: 4,809
Membership: 386
Level 1: 1962
Level 2: 1417
Level 3: 311
Level 4: 204
Level 5: 164
Level 6: 52
Level 7: 47
Level 8: 187
Level 9: 66
Level 10: 4

The data shows an increase of 117 total users particularly at levels 4, 6 and 8. The data demonstrates the State's success in training practitioners to progress through the registry. Additionally, in 2023, the Early Childhood Project (ECP) convened a stakeholder group to help redesign the career path. Changes would now consider career longevity and approved trainings as a justification to move up the pathways criteria.

Detailed quarterly reports are submitted to the Lead Agency by the ECP that indicate data regarding the Practitioner Registry, the Professional Development Approval System, and incentives and awards. Customized reports about the workforce, including wages, are available upon request and developed as needed. The Career Development Advisory Board receives a full annual report of ECP operations for review at their annual spring meeting. The ECP develops an annual Work Plan that identifies goals, objectives and activities for each year. The ECP and each CCR&R agency is monitored by the Lead Agency on a regular basis to ensure completion of goals, objectives and activities and to address successes, challenges and needs related to performance. For the reporting timeframe, 4,809 individuals are current on the ECP Registry. The ECP received a total of 5,176 registry applications, up from 5,032 applications in 2022. ECP also approves individuals for a Director's Credential - there are 34 current. ECP approved 1,052 technical assistance events, completed 842 training events, and facilitated 391 events in collaboration with CCR&Rs. The total number of training hours across all events amounted to 4,266 for the 2023 reporting year.

3) Improving early learning and development guidelines

Goal: To ensure the lead agency has research-based early learning and development guidelines appropriate for children birth to age 12, including children with special needs and dual language learners that are used to inform practice and professional development.

3.1 Early Learning and Development Guidelines

3.1.1 Spending - Early Learning and Development Guidelines:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to improve early learning and development guidelines during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

[ ] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

> [ ] CCDF quality funds
> [ ] Non-CCDF funds
> [ ] CARES funds
> [ ] CRRSA Funds
> [ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
> [ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
> [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on improving upon the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines? $

> [ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not capture in the item already reported:

[x] No

3.2 Progress Update

3.2.1 Progress Update - Early Learning and Development Guidelines:

Improving upon the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 6.4.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. Quality funds are used to maintain and implement early learning and development guidelines. ECSB looks at website analytics pertaining to MELS, including the link to the electronic version of the MELS. ECSB reviews the number of printed copies distributed each year. An online course is available for the MELS through ChildCareTraining.org. The training is a required course in STARS to Quality at STAR 2 for lead teachers, and is open for all other child care providers to take. Number of individuals completing the course, in addition to course evaluations, are reviewed to measure progress and quality of the MELS.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 6.4.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

During FFY23, 367 individuals took online MELS training - a decrease from the previous fiscal year due to a planned 2-year redesign of the Lead Agency's QRIS system. Although practitioners are not required to take the MELS training during this time, The Lead Agency still recommends participation in these free, valuable trainings.

Hours of training taken to support the 11 knowledge base areas: 3,943.25

Website hits for MELS: 1440

Website hits for Professional Training Materials: 4310

16

4) Developing, implementing, or enhancing a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) and other transparent system of quality indicator

Goal: To ensure the lead agency implements a quality rating and improvement system, or other quality rating system, to promote high-quality early care and education programs.

4.1 Quality rating and improvement system status

4.1.1 QRIS or other system of quality improvement status:

Indicate the status and include a description of the lead agency's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

[x] The lead agency QRIS is operating state- or territory-wide.
- General description of QRIS: **Montana has a five tiered rating system. Montana defines high quality care as programs achieving a STAR 3, 4 and 5 in STARS to Quality, Montana's QRIS. All levels are determined based on programs meeting a variety of criteria including, for levels 2-5, assessment scores. Environment Rating Scales and Program/Business Administration scales are administered by contracted assessors. Each level of STARS requires different thresholds of achievement.**
- How many tiers/levels? **5** [insert number of tiers below as required and describe each tier and check off which are high quality]
  - Tier/Level 1: **Programs must serve a minimum 10% of children with high needs in their programs**
    [ ] High Quality
  - Tier/Level 2: **Assessment scores. Environment Rating Scales and Program/Business Administration scales are administered by contracted reliable assessors. Quarterly incentives. Programs must serve a minimum 10% of children with high needs in their programs.**
    [ ] High Quality
  - Tier/Level 3: **STAR 3-5 requires an Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) and a Business management Assessment (PAS- Program Administration Scale (center) or BAS-Business Administration Scale (Family/Group). Quarterly incentives. Programs must serve a minimum 10% of children with high needs in their programs.**
    [x] High Quality

17

- Tier/Level 4: **STAR 4 requires programs to offer developmental screening using a valid and reliable tool at the chosen tool's recommended intervals for all children enrolled. Screening data must be entered in to the STARS application site. Quarterly incentives. Programs must serve a minimum 15%.**
  - [x] High Quality
- Tier/Level 5: **STAR 5 requires a program to be NAEYC, NAFCC, or Montessori Accredited. Quarterly incentives. Programs must serve a minimum 15%.**
  - [x] High Quality
- Tier/Level 6:
  - [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 7:
  - [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 8:
  - [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 9:
  - [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 10:
  - [ ] High Quality

- Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition: **70**
- Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition: **43**
- Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition: **90**
- Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition: **1084**

[ ] The lead agency QRIS is <u>operating a pilot</u> (e.g., in a few localities, or only a few levels) but not fully operating state- or territory-wide.
- General description of pilot QRIS (e.g., in a few localities, or only a few levels):
- Which localities if not state/territory-wide?
- How many tiers/levels? [insert number of tiers below as required and describe each tier and check off which are high quality
  - Tier/Level 1:
    [ ] High Quality
  - Tier/Level 2:
    [ ] High Quality

- Tier/Level 3:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 4:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 5:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 6:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 7:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 8:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 9:
  [ ] High Quality
- Tier/Level 10:
  [ ] High Quality

- Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:

- Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:

[ ] The lead agency is operating another system of quality improvement.
- General description of other system:
- Describe assessment scores, accreditation, or other metrics associated with this system:
- Describe how "high quality" is defined in this system?
- Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:

- Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:

[ ] The lead agency does not have a QRIS or other system of quality improvement.
- Do you have a definition of high quality care?
  - [ ] Yes, define:
    - Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:

- Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:

[ ] No

4.1.2 Spending - Quality rating and improvement system status:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[ ] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

4.2 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems participation

4.2.1 QRIS or other system of quality improvement participation:

What types of providers participated in the QRIS or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023 (check all that apply)?

[x] Licensed child care centers
[x] Licensed family child care homes
[ ] License-exempt providers
[x] Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy
[x] Early Head Start programs
[x] Head Start programs
[ ] State Prekindergarten or preschool programs
[ ] Local district-supported Prekindergarten programs
[x] Programs serving infants and toddlers

[x] Programs serving school-age children
[x] Faith-based settings
[x] Tribally operated programs
[ ] Other. Describe:

4.3 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits

4.3.1 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits:

What types of financial incentives or technical assistance are available for providers related to QRIS or other system of quality improvement? Check as many as apply.

[ ] One-time grants, awards or bonuses
- o Licensed child care centers
- o Licensed family child care homes

[x]On-going or periodic quality stipends
- o Licensed child care centers **114**
- o Licensed family child care homes **90**

[x]Higher CCDF subsidy rates (including tiered rating)
- o Licensed child care centers **96**
- o Licensed family child care homes **68**

[ ]Ongoing technical assistance to facilitate participation in QRIS or improve quality of programs already participating in QRIS (or some other technical assistance tied to QRIS)
[ ]Other. Describe

4.3.2 Spending - Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[x] CCDF quality funds
[ ] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

4.4 Spending – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

4.4.1 Spending – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) related to **QRIS or other quality rating systems** during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? $**57612**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **Branagh ($55,488) - this database houses the assessment data and reports for QRIS participants that received assessments as part of their participation in QRIS. Zendesk ($2,124) ☐ Help button feature that supports the STARS Applications.**

4.5 Progress Update

4.5.1 Progress Update – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems:

Developing, implementing, or enhancing a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) or other transparent system of quality indicators.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.3.6 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **For STARS to Quality, ERS baseline assessments are conducted upon a program's acceptance into STARS. This allows the STARS to Quality team to gather baseline data and track progress as the program moves up in the framework. From FY2018-FY2020, there were 38 ECERS-R, 40 ITERS-R, and 49 FCCERS-R baseline assessments completed. Montana reviews STARS to Quality program movement in the framework. Beginning at STAR 3, the indicators are embedded into the framework to collect data and measure program progress towards increased quality. From FY2018-FY2020, 70% of ECERS-R assessments completed had a score of 4.0 or above. 80% of those scored a 4.0 or above in Language & Reasoning, and 84% scored a 4.0 or above in Interaction. 45% of ITERS-R assessments had a score of 4.0 or above. 70% of those scored a 4.0 or above in Listening & Talking, and 73% scored a 4.0 or above in Interactions. 58% of FCCERS-R**

assessments had a score of 4.0 or above. 88% of those scored a 4.0 or above in Listening & Talking, and 86% scored a 4.0 or above in Interactions. Data for training, technical assistance, and coaching within STARS programs is tracked and used to inform and build upon the overall system. In FY2020, individuals completed 36,646 hours of STARS to Quality qualified training. Currenting in STARS to Quality programs, there are 116 EC teachers that have an Associate's Degree, 284 have a Bachelor's Degree, 33 have a Master's Degree, and 443 teachers have Higher Education qualifications.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.3.6 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: For STARS to Quality, ERS baseline assessments are conducted upon a program's acceptance into STARS. This allows the STARS to Quality team to gather baseline data and track progress as the program moves up in the framework. From FFY2022-FFY2023, there were 5 ECERS-3, 6 ITERS-3, and 15 FCCERS-3 baseline assessments completed. Montana saw an increase in the overall FCCERS-3 baseline scores of 16%. This increase consisted of over a 20% growth in 18 items out of a total of 33 scored items. ITERS-3 baseline assessment scores showed an increase in the interactions subscale of 15%, Program Structure of 58% and Language and Books by 41%. Beginning at Star 3, the indicators are embedded into the framework to collect data and measure program progress towards increased quality. High stakes assessments are conducted for programs renewing or applying for a Star 3-5. Star 3 is the baseline for high quality. The average overall score for all high stakes ECERS-3 assessments was 4.93 with a 16% increase in "Helping Children Expand Their Vocabulary", and an increase of 45% in the "Appropriate Use of Technology". The overall average score for the ITERS-3 assessments maintained about a 5.0. An increase of 16% was observed in the "Display for Children" item which recognizes the value of displayed items in learning. There was also a 17% growth seen in the "Promotion of Acceptance and Diversity". Assessments that occurred in Family/Group homes (FCCERS-3) maintained an average score of 5.0. There was also growth in the areas of "Responding to Children's Communication" and "Supervision" with scores for all tools averaging near 5.0. This shows that quality is being maintained at the higher STAR levels with specific improvements in the areas of "Interactions, "Language Development", and "Program Structure". Data for training, technical assistance, and coaching within STARS programs is tracked and used to inform and build upon the overall system. In FY2023, the number of completed STARS to Quality qualified trainings was 3,472. Currently there are 140 EC teachers with an associate's degree, 318 with a bachelor's degree, and 52 with a master's degree in the STARS to Quality program - a numerical increase in all categories.

5) Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers

Goal: Ensure adequate and stable supply of high quality child care with a qualified, skilled workforce to promote the healthy development of infants and toddlers. Please report on all activities funded by quality dollars and infant toddler set-aside.

5.1 Infant/Toddler Specialists

5.1.1 Infant/Toddler Specialists:

Did providers have access to infant/toddler specialists during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

[ ] Yes
- Number of specialists available to all providers
- Number of specialists available to providers serving children who receive CCDF
- Number of specialists available specifically trained to support family child care providers
- Number of providers served
- Total number of children reached

[x] No, there are no infant/toddler specialists in the state/territory.
[ ] N/A. Describe:

5.1.2 Infant/Toddler Specialists Supports Provided:

If yes, what supports do the infant/toddler specialists provide?

[ ] Relationship-caregiving practices (or quality caregiving/developmentally appropriate practices)
[ ] On-site and virtual coaching
[ ] Health and safety practices
[ ] Individualized professional development consultation (e.g., opportunities for or awareness on career growth opportunities, degreed/credential programs)
[ ] Group professional development
[ ] Family engagement and partnerships
[ ] Part C early intervention services
[ ] Mental health of babies, toddlers, and families
[ ] Mental health of providers
[ ] Behavioral Health

[ ] Other. Describe

5.1.3 Spending – Infant/Toddler Specialists:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[ ] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

    [ ] CCDF quality funds
    [ ] Non-CCDF funds
    [ ] CARES funds
    [ ] CRRSA Funds
    [ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
    [ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
    [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[x] No

5.2 Staffed Family Child Care Networks

5.2.1 Number and Description of Staffed Family Child Care Networks:

How many staffed family child care networks operated during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

[x] Number of staffed family child care networks: **1**
    o Describe what the network/hub provides to participating family child care providers: **Montana contracts with RAISE Montana to support the single family child care network.**

    Through their work, they strive to enhance the overall quality of early childhood programs, expand access to high-quality care, and ensure that Montana's early childhood workforce is confident, effective, and supported. They are committed to promoting equity, inclusion, and justice in all aspects of their work and strives to create a coordinated and effective early childhood system in Montana. The Network provides several specific services for family child care providers such as shared services: substitute service, telehealth for all staff, payroll processing, management software to test, resource library, ECE friendly business directory, discounts and grants, and full access to our ECE job board. The

Network also provides a sliding fee scale to ensure all shared services are affordable and accessible. With shared services, the Network also provides emergency preparedness resources and supplies as well as trauma-informed care and professional development. Lastly, the Network also offers a Linking Systems of Care professional development series and an All Our Kin Business Series.

[ ] No staffed family child care networks operate in state/territory

5.2.2 Spending - Staffed Family Child Care Networks:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?
       [ ] CCDF quality funds
       [ ] Non-CCDF funds
       [ ] CARES funds
       [ ] CRRSA Funds
       [x] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
       [ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
       [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

5.3 Spending - Programs and services for infants and toddlers

5.3.1 Spending - Programs and services for infants and toddlers:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside), above and beyond to the 3% infant and toddler set-aside, to <u>improve the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers</u> during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? $**85814**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

5.4 Progress Update

5.4.1 Progress Update - Programs and services for infants and toddlers:

Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.4.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. STARS to Quality tracks data for programs receiving ITERS and FCCERS assessments. Data is tracked on the number of individuals completing the Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver course. Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver Course All CCR&Rs in MT offer a 60-hour Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver (CITC) course. This course is required of Lead Teachers working with infants and/or toddlers in STAR 3 and above programs. Following is the number of individuals that have completed this course over the past 2 federal fiscal years:

FFY2019: 147
FFY2020: 165

Upon completion of the CITC course, individuals are eligible for a one-time $500 completion award. Individuals are also eligible for a Continuity of Care stipend if they remain in the same licensed program, working with infants and/or toddlers, for an 18-month period. There are 3 payments every 6 months, for a total of $1600. Following is the number of individuals awarded either the Completion award or the stipend award. Numbers may be duplicated as individuals can receive both if eligible.

Course Completion Award

FFY2019: 135
FFY2020: 118

Continuity of Care Award

FFY2019: 65
FFY2020: 98

STARS to Quality programs self-report enrollment and high needs numbers when submitting for a STAR level. Programs must serve 10% high needs children at STAR 1 through STAR 3, and 15% at STAR 4 and STAR 5. As of April 2021, it is reported that there are 429 infants and 617 toddlers enrolled across currently rated STARS to Quality programs. There are 79 infants and 309 toddlers reported to be enrolled in STAR 3-5 programs.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.4.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: The Lead Agency continues to support infant toddler practices amongst providers through voluntary participation in the QRISs ITERS and FCCERS assessments. The Lead Agency completed their final round of 60 hour Certified Infant/Toddler/Caregiver courses taught by the regional Resource and Referral agencies last reporting period. Previously the lead teachers in all STARS programs level 3 and above were required to take this course. The numbers reported for this period are significantly lower due to this years trainees being the last individuals to be paid for participating in the training. 81 participants took the Infant/Toddler and received reimbursement for the course completion. The Lead Agency submitted a state plan amendment and we are awaiting final approval. Additionally, the Lead Agency began the rebuild process for QRIS during this reporting period and will continue this work over the coming years. During this time, the Lead Agency will engage in stakeholder work and develop new strategies to support Infant/Toddler initiatives. The course completion awards were all paid out and discontinued prior to the current QPR period, therefore, we will not have data to report for Continuity of Care Awards.

6) Establishing, expanding, modifying, or maintaining a statewide system of child care resource and referral services

Goal: Lead agency provides: services to involve families in the development of their children, information on a full range of child care options, and assistance to families in selecting child care that is appropriate for the family's needs and is high quality as determined by the lead agency.

6.1 Spending – Child Care Resource and Referral Services

6.1.1 Spending – Child Care Resource and Referral Services:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to establish, expand, modify, or maintain a statewide CCR&R during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

    [x] CCDF quality funds
    [ ] Non-CCDF funds
    [ ] CARES funds
    [ ] CRRSA Funds
    [ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
    [x] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
    [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to **establish, expand, modify, or maintain a statewide CCR&R** during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? $**3725290**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent
ARPA Stabilization grant was used to distribute $167,000, to recognize the Montana Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies to assist them in retaining their staff.

[ ] No

6.2 Progress Update

6.2.1 Progress Update – Child Care Resource and Referral Services:

29

Establishing, expanding, modifying or maintaining a statewide system of child care resource and referral services.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.5.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

Montana has 7 Child Care Resource and Referral agency regions. The CCR&Rs submit quarterly reports which include a great amount of data. Reports must be submitted no later than October 15, January 15, April 15, and July 15 for the preceding quarter. Each agency reports on the following data points, as well as other information requested by ECSB: Number of on-site visit with new providers; Number of new and closed providers in the region; Recruitment methods and results; Professional development; Number of programs receiving TA related to specific topics (i.e. health & safety, inclusion, emergency preparedness, etc.); STARS to Quality QRIS data, including number of programs recruited in the region; Meetings with Best Beginnings Scholarship families; Eligibility determination data; Referral data Consumer Education and Collaboration and referral to Family Engagement coordinator to support family needs.

Data reported includes:

Number of visits to the agency website
Events attended
Electronic media publications or broadcasts
Locations of written material distribution
Community service events
Names of organizations collaborated with as well as the type of collaboration and the results/outcomes.

Quarterly reports are reviewed by the Lead Agency quarterly and considered part of desk monitoring. Feedback is provided via a desk monitoring form and clarifications and/or additional information is requested as needed. The Lead Agency schedules on-site contract monitoring visits annually and focused on areas of concerns that have been discovered in the Quarterly Reports and /or fiscal reviews. The Lead Agency also used the Quarterly Reports as an opportunity to share success and promote best practices across the state. Additional information, such as movement of STARS to Quality programs, recruitment efforts and kinds of TA provided to individual providers are also discussed during these monitoring visits. Montana also has a CCR&R network. The Montana Child Care Resource & Referral (MT CCR&R) Network is a statewide network of 7 community-based child care resource and referral agencies who

work to improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability of child care for all Montana's families. The mission of the Network is to support member organizations, advance the early childhood profession, and improve the quality, affordability, and accessibility of child care. This is done by providing training and support to member agencies; initiating projects to build child care supply and quality in urban and rural areas; educating policy makers, businesses, and the public on child care issues; advocating for child care professionals and families. The MT CCR&R Network meets quarterly, and often invites the Lead Agency to attend the meetings to provide updates, answer questions, and to collaborate together as a partnership.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.5.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: The Lead Agency continues to have 6 Childcare Resource and Referral agencies, serving 7 local regions in Montana. All regions submitted quarterly reports timely. Additionally, all regions received on-site monitoring from the Lead Agency. The on-site monitors prepared questions from each regions submitted Quarterly Reports and asked CCRRs to provide information for file reviews on-site.

Quarterly Reports were updated for this QPR year to focus on the areas of data that match the priorities of Montana's work. The Lead Agency continues to hold training sessions with the regions and the network to ensure data is collected consistently across regions when the Scope of Work and Quarterly reports are updated. In addition, the Lead Agency provided feedback to each CCRR after the submission of the first submitted quarterly report, providing examples of things that needed to be reported in a different way as well as distributing to all regions things that were working well. The following data points were collected from the CCRR quarterly reports.

Number of visits to the CCRR agency websites: 49111

Events attended: 126
Women Who Wine, LEPC meetings in Flathead, present at Rotary, HeadStart, Child and Family Services, Zero to Five Lake County, International Refugee Association Partner Meeting, Maternal Child Health Advisory Meeting, Community Management Team (Missoula and Ravalli), HeadStart Advisory Council (Missoula and Ravalli), Child and Family Services Family Support Meeting, Missoula County Public School Community of Practice, 0-5 Family Engagement Subcommittee, Healthy Start Early Childhood Coalition, Missoula Health Department NACCHO SPACECAT Coalition, Early Learning Fellows, Sentinel Kiwanis ⍰ including allocations committee to distribute funds to orgs serving young kids, Mayoral Candidate Forum to raise CC issues, Meeting with County Commissioners regarding child challenges, Missoula

Child Care Advantage ⬚ innovation grant project planning meetings, Missoula YWCA innovation grant presentation of their expansion project, 0-5 early learning fellows , United Way Executive Director Affinity Group, Missoula AEYC, Treat Street, Winter Market-once a month, Um Western Wellness Fair, Powell County Health Fair, Farmer's Market- once a month, Santa at the Carousel, 2 Read and Screen Events, Spring Resource Fair, Mental Health Fair, Butte High School Career Fair, Fun on the Flats, Have a Heart for Kids, Early Headstart Anniversary Celebration, Silver Bow County Fair children's day table, Healthy Kids Day, Kids Outdoor Day, Salvation Army, Great Northern Fair, Malta Kids Club BBQ, National Night Out, HRDC 4/ NMCDC (Head Start) back to school event, HRDC 4/ NMCDC (Head Start) community BBQ event, HRDC Trunk or Treat, Havre Chamber of Commerce annual meeting, Mama's Helping Mama's/ Touch a Truck Event in Sidney, MSU-N Career Event, Holiday Village Shopping Mall Job Fair, City of Malta: Malta Swim Event, Job Fair- Holiday Village Shopping Mall, Billings Public Library Resource Fair, Underriner Trunk or Treat, Retiree Brunch with the Chamber, Hardin Helping Hand Food Bank Distribution, First Interstate Bank Center Community Resource Fair, Fit4MOMS Preschool Fair, Metra Park Jobs Jamboree, United Methodist Church, Free Store Event, Billings Public Schools Career Fair, HRDC Family Fun Fair, Fit4MOM Resource Event, Safe Kids, Community Safety Event, NADC Health Fair and Resources, Hardin Family Fun Day, United Way of Yellowstone County Care Carnival, Forsyth Family Fun Fair, Billings Juneteenth Event: Wave of Freedom, Hardin, Father's Day Event, Red Lodge Farmer's Market, Laurel Farmer's Market, Billings Healthy by Design, Gardener's Market, Billings Balloon Glow, Billings Food Truck Battle and Community Resources, P66 Meet in the Park, School District 2, Grandparents Night, CASA, Native American Development Council, Hardin Resource Partner Day

Electronic media publications or broadcasts: 7287
Facebook, Instagram, KGEZ Radio, Twitter, CCR e-newsletters, CCR group texts, Cherry Creek Radio ⬚ 4 stations, Missoula Community Access TV, Missoulian, KGVO radio, Gap Broadcasting, MT Kaimen, KBGA ⬚ student radio station, KUFM ⬚ public radio, Yellowstone Public Radio - In Gallatin County, childcare options fall short of demand | YPR (ypradio.org), Bozeman Daily Chronicle, KTVH, MT Parent Articles, Geotarget campaign, Hello Montana, 98.5 the Wolff

Locations of written material distribution:
Job Service Flathead, Lake, and Lincoln County, Sanders County Public Library, Oxytocin, Parents as Teachers, Flathead, Lake, and Lincoln County WIC, United Way, Safe Harbor Lake County, Lincoln County Schools, Child and Family Services, Helping Hands Lake County, Flathead County Libraries (Bigfork, Columbia Falls, Kalispell), Well Child Wellness Council, Zero to Five Lincoln County, McCormick Schools, Yaak Schools, Lincoln County Farmers Markets, Helping hands Lake County, Sanders County Schools, Heart Locker, Flathead Food Bank, food banks, YWCA shelter,

OPA, high school guidance counselors, health department, Partnership Health Center, Job Services, probation and Parole offices, Butte, Dillon, Phillipsburg, Deer Lodge, Anaconda, Sheridan, Livingston, Bozeman, Helena, Belgrade, Agusta, Townsend, West Yellowstone, 406 Childcare, A Child's Place, A Healthy Horizon, Action for Eastern Montana Glasgow, Action for Eastern Montana Glendive, Action For Eastern Montana Malta, Alliance for Youth GF, Alluvion Health at CCHD, Alluvion Health Dental Clinic, Annie's House, AWARE GF, Benchmark Human Services, Benefis Community Care, Benefis Pediatrics | Therapy Center Benefis West, Benefis Teton Medical Center, BestMed Urgent Care formerly Nova Health Urgent Care, Big Brothers and Big Sisters GF, Big Dreams Daycare, Big Sky Therapeutic Services, Blackfeet Child Support Enforcement Program, Blackfeet Early Childhood Center Browning Piegan, Blackfeet Manpower Training Center, Box Elder School, Boys and Girls Clubs GF, Bright Starts, Busy Bee, Busy Bees Child Care, Carly's House, CASA-CAN (GF CASA-CAN), Cascade County Law Clinic ⏹ A Pro Bono Project, Cascade County Self Help Law Center (GF Public Library), Center for Mental Health Chinook, Center for Mental Health Shelby, Central Montana Coalition for Family Health/Family Planning, Child and Family Services Conrad, Child and Family Services Glasgow, Child and Family Services Glendive, Child and Family Services GF, Child and Family Services Wolf Point Fort Peck, Child Care Licensing GF, Child Support Enforcement GF, Children's Museum of Montana, Chinook Ace, Chinook Pharmacy, Chinook Post Office, Choteau County Health Department, Choteau Food Bank, City County Health Department GF, Conrad City Hall, Conrad Public Library, Country Home, Country Kids / Country Kids 2, Crystal's Daycare, Dandelion Foundation, Dawson County Health Department, Debbie's Daycare, Denise's Daycare, Developmental Disabilities Program Glasgow, Dibble Dopp, Disaster and Emergency Services Choteau, Disaster and Emergency Services Conrad, Disaster and Emergency Services Fort Benton, DPHHS Glasgow, DPHHS GF, D's Daycare, Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center Glasgow, Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center Sidney, Echoz Pregnancy Center, Emily Wish, LLC, Family Promise, Feed My Sheep, Finley's Food Market Chinook Food Farm, Flippin Family Fun, Foundation For Community Care, Garfield County Health Center/Department, GFPS Administration, GFPS Chief Joseph Elementary, GFPS Early Learning Family Center, GFPS Giant Springs Elementary, GFPS Lewis & Clark Elementary, GFPS West Elementary, Golden Triangle Gym, Granny B's Drop In Care, GF Clinic Family Medical Center, GF Clinic Pediatrics Main, GF Clinic Pediatrics Weekend Walk-in, GF College MSU, GF Community Recreation Center, GF Ice Plex, GF Police Department, GF Public Library, HANDS GF, Harada Dental, Harlem Albertsons, Havre Pediatric Dentistry, Hays Community Recreation Center, Hays Lodgepole School, Hays Martin's Grocery Store, Hays Post Office, Heisey Youth Center, Hi-Line Homes Programs, Hi-Line Pediatric Therapy, Home sweet home, Honey Hippo Play Café, HRDC VI & WIC, Hub International Wolf Point, Inner Reflections Healthcare, Jen's Daycare, Job Service GF, Job Service Sidney, Job Service Wolf Point, Joyce's Daycare, Kaboom, Kairos Youth Services,

Khrissy's Delicate Angels, Kiddie College, Kiddie Daze, Kiddie Korner, Kiddie Korral, Kids's Korner, Kim's Kiddie Korner, Lambert Lion Cubs, Laverdure Psychiatry, Liberty County Library, Lil Busy Bees, Lindsey's Daycare, Little Hands, Little Learners Academy, Little Miracles, Little Miracles Too, Little Monkeys, Little Orchard, Little Ponies, Little Rascals, Little Sprouts, Logan Health ⬚ Cut Bank, Logan Health ⬚ Shelby, Lolly's Daycare, Lori's Little People, Manic Munchkins, Many Rivers Whole Health Havre (Bear Paw Community Recovery Center), Marias Healthcare Conrad, McCone County Health Center, McCone County Public Library, Miss Aimie's, Miss Bobbie's Little School, Montana Kinship Navigator GF, MSU Extension & 4H & CFS & OPA Shelby, MSU Extension & 4H Circle, MSU Extension & 4H Conrad, MSU Extension & 4H Glendive, MSU Extension & 4H GF, MSU Extension & 4H Jordan, My Neighbor/My Student in Need GF, NeighborWorks GF, Neumiller's Family Daycare, Northern Montana Child Development Center EHS, Northern Montana Child Development Center Hillview, Lincoln, Wilson, Northern Montana Health Care (Family Medical Center), Office of Public Assistance Glendive, Office of Public Assistance GF, Office of Public Assistance Sidney, Office of Public Assistance Wolf Point, Opportunities Inc Head Start Shelby, Opportunities Inc. | Head Start, Our Saviors Lutheran, Pay-n-Save Grocery, Peggy's Daycare, Pumpkin Patch, Quality Life Concepts, Raiders Mart, Rescue Mission ⬚ Cameron Family Center, Richland County Health Department, Richland County Library, Richland Opportunities, Inc., River Run Apartments, River's Edge Early Learning Academy, Riverside Family Clinic, Rocky Boy Early Headstart, Rocky Boy Headstart Classrooms, Rocky Boy Health Clinic, Rocky Boy Housing Authority, Rocky Boy Public Library, Rocky Boy WIC, Rural Dynamics GF, Saco Branch Library (Phillips County), Salvation Army Family Service Center Havre, Salvation Army Family Store GF, Score's Daycare, Scottish Rite Childhood Language Disorders Clinic, Scotty Daycare, Shandra's Child Care, Shannon's Daycare, Sidney Health Center, Sidney IGA, St. Vincent DePaul, Stone Child College (SCC), Stygles Clubhouse, Sue's Sunshine Kids, Sunshine Daycare, T-Day's Kids Childcare, Teton County Health Department, The Peak Main, Thundering Buffalo Health & Wellness Center, Tiny Tots Childcare, Tiny Tots Daycare, Toby's House Crisis Nursery, Toole County Health Department Shelby, Toole County Library Shelby, Town Pump Chinook, Tracy's Tykes and Tots, University of Providence, USPS Glasgow, USPS Hinsdale, USPS Sidney, Valley County Health Department, Verne E Gibbs Health Center, Wee Care, White Sky Hope Lodge, WIC Shelby, Wolfe's Daycare, Young Parents Education Center (YPEC), Youth Dynamics GF, Youth Dynamics Shelby, Youth Dynamics Sidney, Youth Dynamics Wolf Point, YWCA, Ekalaka, Hysham, Miles City, Hardin, Riverstone Health, Center for Generations, Friendship House

Community service events: 89
Blue Ribbon, Picnic in the Park, Baby Fair, Trego Community Center, Family Strong in Eureka, CSKT Baby Fair, Parent Café, Sanders County Baby Shower Event, Imagination Library Event

Polson, Youth Dynamics Family Fun Fest, Hockaday Moving and Flathead Alliance to Stop Trafficking, School District 5, Rural Employment Opportunities for Migrant Farmers, New Childcare kids fair, New Childcare open house, Trego Back to School event, United Way Back to School Bash, Libby's Kiwanis Back to School Event, Hot Springs and Noxon Back to School Events, McCormick and Yaak Back to school events, Evergreen and Marion Back to School Events, Great Fish Fun Run Event, Postpartum Resource Group Fun Run, . Food Bank ⬜ thanksgiving meal distribution, UW ⬜back to school backpack program ⬜ stuff backpacks, Week of the Young Child, Child Abuse Prevention Week, Imagination Library Promo event at Msla County Public Library, UM Resource Fair, United Way Day of Caring, Butte Cares Color Run, United Way Stone Soup, Dress a Child, Exchange Club Field of Honor, Path Program Community Dinner, Week of Compassion-Butte Rescue Mission, Morning Star Bike Rodeo ⬜ Bozeman, Fall Resource Fair with Family Outreach ⬜ Bozeman, Evening Lecture ⬜ Livingston, Halloween Carnival ⬜ Livingston, Christmas Stroll ⬜ Bozeman, Winter Resource Fair ⬜ Belgrade, Babes in Bozeman ⬜ Bozeman, Agusta Elementary Screening ⬜ Agusta, Bike Rodeo ⬜ Helena, WYOC Carnival, Rodney Street Block Party, Bike Rodeo, Bike Rodeo, Family Promise Summer Kick Off, Helena Food Share Block Party, United Way Picnic, Bike Event with LINKS, St. Peters Family Fun Fest, Potato Festival, Farmers Market, ECCC Family Event, Bike Rodeo, Northern MT Child Development Center, CASA, Salvation Army, Great Northern Fair, Malta Kids Club, Touch a Truck Event (Sidney); Mama's helping Mama's, National Night Out; HRDC 4, Havre Chamber of Commerce, Plant a Seed Read!, United Way of Yellowstone County, Community Day of Action, United Way of Yellowstone County/ AWARE, Poverty Simulation, Educator for a Day

Names of organizations - Type of collaboration - Results/Outcomes: 163

Salvation Army   Presentation to Salvation Army clients Provided information about the BB scholarship to families and Resource Guides for additional services

NMCDC Community BBQ Event & Back to School   Table   Provided information for families

Great Northern Fair   Booth with FC and BB application info   Provided information for families

Malta Kids Club BBQ   Presentation and Table with FC and BB application info   Provided information for families

National Night Out   Table with FC and BB application information   Table with information for families

HRDC 4/ NMCDC (Head Start) Table with FC and BB application info   Was able to give information to families

HRDC Trunk or Treat   Table with FC and BB application info   Table with information for families

Havre Chamber of Commerce   networking with local businesses regarding the BB scholarship   Was able to give information to employers for employees

Mama's Helping Mama's/ Touch a Truck Event in Sidney   Table with FC and BB application information   Was able to give families information

MSU-N Career Event   Table with FC information, Child Care Provider tools kits and BB Application info   Was able to give families information about being a child provider and FC info and BB application info

Holiday Village Shopping Mall Job Fair   Table with FC information, Child Care Provider tools kits and BB Application info   Was able to give families information about being a child provider and FC info and BB application info

Malta Swim Event   Table with FC and BB application info   Provided information for families

Family Strong Eureka Model Playgroups and Give resources to families   Playgroups continue in Lincoln County, 17 families got resources

Trego Community Center   Model Playgroups and give resources to families   We continue to work with them to get resources to families

Kalispell Parks and Rec   Provide childcare scholarships and marketing opportunities   Participated in 12 concerts handing out resources to kids and families.

Zero to Five Lincoln County   Mobile Outreach with resource van, connecting families to services   Able to reach many families that we wouldn't otherwise

Healthy Beginnings Pediatric Therapy   Parent Café   Continue to schedule Parent Cafés

36

to help connect families

CSKT   Attended Baby Fair   Connected families in Lake County to resources

Kalispell Chamber of Commerce   Childcare Capacity Cohort   Helped with Childcare study and increased capacity of childcare in Flathead. Created Infographics about growing a childcare business

Logan Health   Created New Baby Kits   New moms can receive new baby kit with referral and completion of parenting class

LEPC   Childcare Mapping and awareness   First responders know where childcares are located and can notify in emergencies

SKC   Talked in EDEC Class about professions outside of childcare work   Students were able to think about other professions their degree could be used for

Postpartum Resource Group   Collaborate to help new families and give resourcesReferrals back and forth

Bigfork Food Bank   Working together to provide backpack snacks for Bigfork Childcare Providers   Relationship is made between providers and food bank

Healthy Start Missoula   Partnership/work on EC issues   Coordination of Week of Young Child implementation

Child and Family Services Division, Family Support Team   Family Support with CSFD   Families connect to necessary services and stabilize families

Lifelong Learning Center   Share updates, around ESL classes, offeringsCoordinated Services for Refugees

International Rescue Committee   Meeting of Community Partners working with Refugees   Informed Navigation of child care issues and BB child Care scholarship

Maternal Child Health Advisory Council   Discuss child and maternal health in Missoula County   More awareness of programs and resources amongst partners

Missoula Chamber of Commerce   Focus on EC childcare issues, from a business lens
          0-5 partner, involved in the Cold Springs innovation grant, promote referrals and scholarships via chamber newsletter

Missoula City-County Health Dept   Maintaining Partnerships   Increased referrals to partners for teen parents

Missoula CMT   Resource sharing/updates from various partners   Awareness of workforce development opportunities and employment barriers

Missoula County Public Schools   Sharing and partnership development with Family Resource Specialists   Involvement in Cold Springs Innovation Grant

Missoula Food Bank Network Discussion around Food Bank and CCR collaboration to provide services to mutual clients. Set up two pilot times to have a CCR representative at the Food Bank to provide information to Food
Bank clients at intake.   Monthly tabling event to assist families with BB scholarship

Montana Trauma Informed Early Childhood Advisory Council   Quarterly meetings   Gather and create statewide resources on Trauma Informed practices for Early Childhood.

Family Support Team   To provide resources and services to families that have had contact with CFSD.

Coordinated Entry   Collaborate for wrap around services for homeless families in the community

Established Organization Partnership   Coordination Efforts   Goals and Objectives

Career Futures   Quarterly Meeting   Board of Directors member

Silver Bow Development Council   Share resources available to families

Head Start Policy Council   Monthly Policy Council Meeting   Early Childhood Advocate on policy making in Butte Head Start

Southwest Montana SUD/OUD Coalition   Attending monthly calls and in person meetings
        To promote prevention and support for pregnant and parenting mothers with substance use disorders

Communities that Care   Attending monthly meetings Promote healthy youth development

Community Management Team   Attend quarterly meetings   Develop collaborative community workforce invest.

Children's Mental Health   Attend monthly meetings   To provide mental health resources for Southwest Montana

BBAC Deer Lodge County   Attend monthly meetings   Support Early Childhood and families in Deer Lodge County

Family Outreach   As needed meetings to plan   Set up community screenings

Butte Cares   As needed meetings to plan prevention strategies   Promote prevention in our community

Butte Community Council   Monthly meetings   Coordinate and work with county agencies to share resources

Zero to Five Collaborative   Attend monthly meetings, help with facilitation, fiscal agent, offer meeting space Stay informed of early childhood efforts, provide input to projects and programs, and strengthen our partnership.

United Way   Partner for projects and programs   Maintain our strong partnership

Healthy Family Network   Attend monthly meetings   Stay informed of home visiting efforts.

Eagle Mount   Resource sharing/collaboration   Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer.

Museum of the Rockies   Resource sharing/collaboration   Providing information about

CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer. Gathering information for providers on ways to enhance curriculum.

Gallatin Valley Food Bank   Resource sharing   Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer while gaining information about current local resources for children and families.

Gallatin Valley McDonalds   Resource sharing   Providing information regarding Best Beginnings Scholarship to HR representatives. We received new applications from these outreach efforts.

ECC/0-5 Helena Coalition   Monthly Meeting   Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer while gaining information about current local resources for children and families.

Gallatin Community Collaboration Team   Monthly Meeting   Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer while gaining information about current local resources for children and families.

Gallatin ECC   Monthly Meeting   Information gathering and gaining strategies for successful coalition facilitating which includes statewide system building

Statewide ECCC   Monthly Meeting   Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer while gaining information about current local resources for children and families.

Montana Advocates for Children Meeting   Bi Weekly Meeting   Providing information about CCC services and gaining information about current local resources for children and families.

Thrive Community Partner Meeting   Collaboration with business and economic professionals to identify innovative approaches to solving the child care issues.

Zoe Care Community Partner Meeting   Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer while gaining information about current local resources for children and families.

Child Taskforce Meeting   Providing information about CCC services and how to

collaborate and/or refer while gaining information about current local resources for children and families.

Family Support Team Meeting   Creating a collaborative system of support for our migrant community.

Helena Resource Advocates   System building in Emergency Preparedness efforts highlighting the unique needs of child care.

Livingston CRC   Meeting   Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer while gaining information about current local resources for children and families.

Migrant Community Coordination   Meeting   Sharing resource and enhancing collaboration.

Family Outreach-Helena   Back to school event   Facilitated conversation about employer supported child care, workforce retention, and child care policies. Started a strategic plan.

Bryant School Family open house   Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer while gaining information about current local resources for children and families.

CCAoA Focus group   Executing a plan for a community led child care program.

PCECC Monthly Meeting   Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer while gaining information about current local resources for children and families.

Zero to 5   Community Partner Meeting Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer.

Raise and Empower MT   Coach Training   Gathering additional resources to share with providers on enhancing curriculum offered to children in their setting.

Statewide ECCC Meeting   Monthly Meeting   Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer.

Gallatin CHILD Taskforce & ECCC   Strategic Visioning Session   Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer. Gathering information for providers on ways to enhance curriculum.

West Yellowstone Early Childhood Coalition Monthly Meeting   Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer while gaining information about current local resources for children and families.

Townsend Community   Meeting   Providing information regarding Best Beginnings Scholarship to HR representatives. We received new applications from these outreach efforts.

United Way Bozeman Luncheon   Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer while gaining information about current local resources for children and families.

Lewis & Clark Public Health   Community Partner Meeting Emergency preparedness

Exploration Works   Community Partner Meeting Providing information about CCC services and how to collaborate and/or refer while gaining information about current local resources for children and families.

Yellowstone LEPC   Attend LEPC meetings to stay connected with the community and help support the Guardianship program   Presentation on Guardianship programs. Work together to reach out to other communities and
educate the county on services.

LEPC's across the state   Attend meetings to collaborate across the state and support all LEPC's. Getting involved with other counties Emergency Response plans across the state.

Red Lodge Community Foundation   Support the foundation in applying for the Innovation Grant. Attend meetings to stay connected within the community of Red Lodge.   Innovation Grant application.
Create other partnerships, inform businesses of our services, support early childhood.
     Carbon County Needs Assessment

Special Needs Billings   Supporting the need and growth of having a special needs child care facility. To create a child care for special needs children and their families. Many children are

not able to attend ⍰standard⍰ child care facilities based on their needs or behaviors.

Billings Adult & Community Education   Working on a class about new providers 101 a class that we could teach for them that we are creating.   Partner and approve select Billings Adult & Community Education courses

Carbon County/Red Lodge Early Childhood Coalition   Meetings to support the needs in the community and creating work groups.   Create more Child Care Slots. Connect group with Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies.

Yellowstone County Best Beginnings Coalition   United Way: Work Groups- Financial Stability, Healthy Start, School Readiness   Decrease, child abuse and neglect, stabilize parents in economic crisis while increasing access to quality affordable childcare to support today's and build tomorrow's workforce, ensure all children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

Yellowstone Best Beginnings Coalition Cohort #2   Providing information to the group about licensed child care and family needs.   Support the group and come up with ideas on creating quality child care slots

Big Horn County Best Beginnings Coalition   Working closely with Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies. One Health. IHS.   Create more Child Care slots, support child care providers, support health topics, and connect with other businesses to support the needs within the community.

Rosebud County Best Beginnings Coalition   Meetings to support the needs in the community and creating work groups.   Promoting licensing facilities and providing training for the Boys and Girls Club in Lame Deer.

Billings Chamber   Networking with the Chamber and other businesses   Create other partnerships, inform businesses of our services, support early childhood.

Big Horn County Life Learning Coalition   To have Lifeways training available to child care programs.   Provide the opportunity for programs to be able to take Lifeways training and to count towards their education.

Miles City Community Management Team   Connect with the Community in Miles City and the surrounding areas.   Create a relationship with the community and learn how we can best

support them.

The Network (RAISE) supports the CCRRs to coordinate community of practice meetings with service providers from each region to ensure equity of services to all providers. RAISE has the same expectation of quarterly report submissions. Both RAISE and CCRRs have regularly scheduled meetings with contract leads.

7) Facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspection, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards

Goal: To ensure child care providers maintain compliance with lead agency licensing, inspection, monitoring, and health and safety standards and training.

7.1 Complaints about providers

7.1.1 Number of Complaints about providers:

How many complaints were received regarding providers during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **227**

7.1.2 Spending - Complaints about providers:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity (including maintaining a hotline)?

[ ] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

    [ ] CCDF quality funds
    [ ] Non-CCDF funds
    [ ] CARES funds
    [ ] CRRSA Funds
    [ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
    [ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
    [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[x] No

7.2 Licensing Staff

7.2.1 Number of Licensing Staff:

How many licensing staff positions were there in the state or territory during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023? Number of staff **21**

7.2.2 Spending – Licensing Staff:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

> [x] CCDF quality funds
> [ ] Non-CCDF funds
> [ ] CARES funds
> [ ] CRRSA Funds
> [ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
> [x] ARP Stabilization 10% set aside
> [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

7.3 Health and Safety Standards Coaching and Technical Assistance

7.3.1 Coaching or technical assistance on health and safety standards as a result of inspection:

How many child care programs received coaching or technical assistance to improve their understanding and adherence to CCDF health and safety standards as a result of an inspection or violation during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023? **24**

7.3.2 Spending - Coaching or technical assistance on health and safety standards as a result of inspection:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

> [x] CCDF quality funds
> [ ] Non-CCDF funds
> [ ] CARES funds
> [x] CRRSA Funds
> [x] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
> [ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
> [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

7.4 Spending - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards

7.4.1 Spending - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on <u>facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspections, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards</u> during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? $**790888**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **Licensors salaries & benefits and background checks/fingerprints**

7.5   Progress Update

7.5.1   Progress Update - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards:

Facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspection, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.6.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.
In FY2020, over 10,000 individuals completed the required orientation courses which are all offered free of charge. From FY2019 and FY2020, 50 programs were supported with direct Support Plan Referrals through the CCR&Rs to address serious and/or continued licensing deficiencies. In FY2020, 13 programs received Emergency grants for a total of $31,702.81, which supported programs to address licensing deficiencies. Seventy one programs received Start Up grants, which support programs starting a new childcare business to ensure that health and safety standards are being met prior to opening or within the first few months of operation. The total awarded for Start Up grants was $184,186.44. CCR&R agencies track the total number of programs that technical assistance is provided for in certain areas for each quarter (the total annual number is a duplicated count). FY2019 and FY2020 over 3,800 programs statewide requested and were provided technical assistance specific to health and safety from their CCR&R agency.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.6.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
In FY2023, the Lead Agency disbursed workforce grants, extending a secondary payment to childcare personnel who actively engaged in licensing training, and background check prerequisites. This initiative supported 3,076 child care facility staff members employed across

752 child care centers and home-based child care facilities in Montana.

The Lead Agency offered free fingerprinting at each of the regional CCRR agencies funded through ARPA Supplemental and CRRSA.

During FFY23, 24 programs received support plan referrals, signifying instances where child care providers were directed by the Child Care Licensing Program to address serious and persistent licensing shortcomings. Additionally, a total of 426 technical assistance requests were made by child care providers seeking guidance on health, safety, and licensing standards.

In FFY2023, the Lead Agency issued four emergency grants and 66 Start Up grants.

During FFY23, the Lead Agency hired three additional full time administrative technicians using ARPA funds to help process applications and track training and background check requirements. As a result, background checks and new hire processing times improved from two weeks to one week. The processing times for new applications and renewal applications improved from 30 days to around 2 weeks. The Lead Agency also created an additional full time licensor position to focus on the on-site monitoring for FFN inspections and provide additional field support for licensors statewide.

The Lead Agency purchased fingerprint printers to work with the Livescan machines in each CCR&R office. The printers assist in interstate checks when hard copy fingerprints are required for other states. Furthermore, the Lead Agency acquired a fingerprint scanner, enabling the electronic transmission of hard copy fingerprints to the MT Division of Criminal Investigation office reducing the time to receive fingerprint-based FBI and MT criminal history results when hard copy prints are used instead of Livescan.

8) Evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs and services, including evaluating how programs positively impact children

Goal: Lead agency investment in effective quality improvement strategies using reliable data from evaluation and assessment

8.1 Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs

8.1.1 Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs:

What measure(s) or tool(s) were used to evaluate and assess the quality of and effective practice in center-based programs during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

[x] QRIS
[ ] CLASS
[x] ERS
[ ] FCCERS
[x] ITERS
[ ] State evaluation tool. Describe
[ ] Core Knowledge and Competency Framework
[ ] Other. Describe
[ ] Do not evaluate and assess quality and effective practice

8.1.2 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

    [x] CCDF quality funds
    [ ] Non-CCDF funds
    [ ] CARES funds
    [ ] CRRSA Funds
    [ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
    [ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
    [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

8.2 Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs

8.2.1 Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs:

What measure(s) or tool(s) were used to evaluate and assess the quality of and effective practice in family child care programs during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

[x] QRIS
[ ] CLASS
[ ] ERS
[x] FCCERS
[x] ITERS
[ ] State evaluation tool. Describe
[ ] Core Knowledge and Competency Framework
[ ] Other. Describe
[ ] Do not evaluate and assess quality and effective practice

8.2.2 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

   [x] CCDF quality funds
   [ ] Non-CCDF funds
   [ ] CARES funds
   [ ] CRRSA Funds
   [ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
   [ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
   [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

8.3 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs

8.3.1 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on <u>evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs, practice, or child development</u> during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? $**286719**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **The state contracts with UM Western to perform assessments of quality that are part of Montana's QRIS. Additionally, these funds pay for the QRIS assessors to become and remain reliable.**

8.4 Progress Update

8.4.1 Progress Update - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs:

Evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs and services, including evaluating how programs positively impact children.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.7.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **The Lead Agency collects the scores of all of the Environment Rating Scales and measure progress of STAR Level 3, 4, and 5 programs within a determined time period. Programs must achieve a certain score within the Environment Rating Scales in order to advance or   maintain levels from STAR 3 and up. The number of programs receiving STAR 3, 4, and 5 will be a measure toward achieving the quality of child care. From FY2018-FY2020; 70% of ECERS assessments, 45% of ITERS assessments, and 58% of FCCERS assessments had an overall score of 4.0 or above. There was an average of 80% of programs that had a score of greater than 4.0 in the Environment Rating Scale items of Listening and Talking and Language and Reasoning. Data also shows there was an average of 80% of programs that scored greater than a 4.0 in Interactions. Overall BAS scores increased from an average of 4.2 in FY2020 to an average of 5.15 in FY2021. Overall PAS scores increased from an average of 4.8 in FY2020 to an average of 5.66 in FY2021. Montana had 22 STAR 4 programs in 2020 and there are projected to be 19 in 2021. There were 5 STAR 5 programs in 2020 and there are projected to be 19 in 2021. A survey is conducted for all programs who receive program assessments to collect information on the benefits of receiving an assessment, how programs use the information from their assessment and the resources they used to guide their quality improvement to achieve higher quality scores. The last complete responses from our Assessment Survey are from the July 2019 application period before the pandemic halted all assessments, as they are conducted in person. 80% of survey respondents felt the frequency of assessments have been helpful. Montana sends out resources for all STARS programs in the form of Guidance and Procedures; the ERS, PAS, BAS scale books; and the All About ECERS & ITERS books. 97% of respondents**

utilize the STARS Guidance and Procedures, 86% reference the scale books and 67% utilize the All About books. Additionally, survey respondents indicated the Resource & Referral Agencies STARS consultants and coaches were instrumental and valuable resources for STARS program participation.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.7.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: The Lead Agency collects the scores of all the Environment Rating Scales to measure progress of STAR Level 3, 4, and 5 programs within a determined time period. Programs must achieve a certain score within the Environment Rating Scales in order to advance or maintain levels from STAR 3 and up. FFY2023 showed 88% of programs achieving a score of 4.0 or higher in the ECERS-3 tool. 85% of programs received a score of 4.0 or higher in the ITERS-3 tool and 86% of programs received a score of 4.0 or higher in the FCCERS-3 tool. The data showed high scores in the areas of Language and Literacy (encouraging vocabulary development, using and encouraging books and becoming familiar with print), Interactions (Individualized teaching and learning, staff child interactions, and peer interactions), Space and Furnishings (indoor space used for child care, room arrangement for play and supervision, display for children, and furnishings for care, play and learning) and Program Structure (transitions and wait times, free play, and whole group play and learning). Children learn best when they feel safe and cared for. High scores in interactions help build the foundation for a strong, caring relationship. We saw larger growth in scores in the Language and Literacy subscale which indicates more open communication between staff and children that leads to a greater vocabulary development and back and forth conversations that lead to learning and relationship building.

The Lead Agency collects the scores of the Program and Business Administration Scales to measure progress of STAR Level 3, 4, and 5programs. Programs must achieve a designated score within PAS and BAS to advance levels from STAR 3 and up. Typically, programs are only required to have this assessment every 3 years, or if they submit to move up a STAR level. There were 9 PAS assessments conducted in FFY2023 with 88% of them scoring a 4.0 or higher. The data showed a 37% increase in scores for the Compensation item with an average score of 5.67 out of a possible 7. An increase of 49% was observed in the Risk Management category with an average of 5.3 and also a 22% increase in Family Communication scores. The rise in Compensation can enhance workforce recruitment and retention in the Early Childhood field. Enhanced Risk Management scores suggest an increase in the focus on health and safety for staff, children and families. 7 BAS assessments were conducted in FFY23 with an average score of 4.56, an increase of 17% over FFY22's scores. There were high scores in Risk Management and Family Support and Engagement. The highest increase was seen in Risk Management with a growth of 136%. The average in this item in FFY22 was a 2.0 with the average now being a 5.0.

52

As with PAS, this indicates an increased awareness by providers of the importance of health and safety at a program level.

9) Supporting child care providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation

Goal: Support child care programs and FCCs in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation by a national accrediting body with demonstrated, valid, and reliable program standards of quality

9.1 Accreditation Support

9.1.1 Accreditation Support:

How many providers did the lead agency support in their pursuit of accreditation (e.g., financial incentives, technical assistance with the accreditation process, coaching/ mentoring by accredited programs) during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

[x] Yes, providers were supported in their pursuit of accreditation
   a. Licensed center-based programs **4**
   b. License-exempt center-based programs **0**
   c. Licensed family child care homes **2**
   d. License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home) **0**
   e. Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy **0**

[ ] No lead agency support given to providers in their pursuit of accreditation.
[ ] N/A. Describe:

9.1.2 Spending – Accreditation Support:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

   [x] CCDF quality funds
   [ ] Non-CCDF funds
   [ ] CARES funds
   [ ] CRRSA Funds
   [ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
   [ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
   [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on **accreditation** during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? $**2890**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent
[ ] No

9.2 Progress Update

9.2.1 Progress Update – Accreditation Support:

Supporting providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.8.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **The Lead Agency will use the following additional criteria to evaluate progress in improving quality of child care programs and services in Montana: Number of NAEYC and NAFCC accredited programs that reach a STAR 5 level; Number of programs accessing and using available funds through the Early Childhood Project accreditation scholarships. In FY2020, 8 licensed programs statewide were supported through ECP with an accreditation scholarship. There are currently 6 programs at STAR 5, which means they are accredited through either NAEYC or NAFCC. It is projected that by 6/30/2021 there will be 19 programs at STAR 5. Of those, 11 would be nationally accredited.**

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.8.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **In FY 2023, six licensed programs statewide were supported through ECP with an accreditation scholarship, NAEYC 4 and NAFCC 2. The Lead Agency maintained 17 programs at STAR 5, even with the high rate of staff turn-over within those facilities. Of those, ten are either accredited through NAEYC or NAFCC. Seven Head Starts are at level 5. The Lead Agency has not had a significant increase or decrease in STAR 5 participation. The goal of 19 STARS 5 programs remains.**

10) Supporting providers in the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development

Goal: Assist programs to meet high-quality comprehensive program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development

10.1 High-Quality Program Standards

10.1.1 High-Quality Program Standards:

How did the state or territory help providers develop or adopt high quality program standards during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023?

[x] QRIS, check which indicators the lead agency has established:
    [x] Health, nutrition, and safety of child care settings
    [x] Physical activity and physical development in child care settings
    [ ] Mental health of children
    [x] Learning environment and curriculum
    [ ] Ratios and group size
    [x] Staff/provider qualifications and professional development
    [x] Teacher/provider-child relationships
    [x] Teacher/provider instructional practices
    [x] Family partnerships and family strengthening
    [ ] Other. Describe:
[x] Early Learning Guidelines
[ ] State Framework. Describe
[x]Core Knowledge and Competencies
[ ] Other. Describe
[ ] N/A – did not help provider develop or adopt high quality program standards

10.1.2 Spending - High-Quality Program Standards:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

    [x] CCDF quality funds
    [x] Non-CCDF funds

[ ] CARES funds

[ ] CRRSA Funds

[ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary

[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to <u>support providers in the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development</u> during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? $**1020000**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **Quarterly incentive payments (STARS). $345,914 QTRLY STARS payments went to State Special Revenue.**

[ ] No

10.2 Progress Update

10.2.1 Progress Update - High-Quality Program Standards:

Supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.9.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **A basic three-hour Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS) course is required for STARS to Quality program staff and is available on-line. This course was developed to ensure MELS is integrated into the QRIS system and can be utilized to support the state's progress in improving quality overall. Additionally, course approval requires training sponsors to identify specific MELS domains and subdomains that are addressed in the course. This information is included on the Statewide Training Calendar posting of the event. Child Care Resource & Referral agencies provide individualized technical assistance upon request. The Early Childhood Project is also available for support as trainings are being developed (i.e. training approval guide) and track the number of trainings when submitting a course for approval required to Identify the sub-domains in the early learning standards that apply to the course. The Early Childhood Project also tracks the number of participants that take the course and the number of**

57

standards exposed to, which region the training is occurring in, and the type of sponsoring agency (i.e. Head Start or a CCR&R). The targeted outcome is all early childhood provider are familiar with the standards and integrate the MELS to their curriculum. Tracking of the domains and subdomains in courses and training are used to evaluate state's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.9.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: STARS to Quality is open to any licensed/registered child care program to participate. STARS to Quality professional development opportunities will continue to be available to providers in Montana whether they are participating in STARS to Quality. Data collected and evaluated includes: number of STARS providers signing up for STARS required professional development, number of STARS providers completing professional development opportunities, role types of providers signing up for and completing professional development opportunities. Professional development completion is not tracked separately for individuals in STARS to Quality programs, versus non-STARS to Quality programs. A total of 3,472 individuals across all role types completed at least one STARS to Quality training during the reporting year. This number has again decreased from previous reporting year. This is a decrease from last year but as reported earlier, Montana has put their QRIS on hold and although providers are encouraged to take STARS courses, they are not required. The target outcome in 7.9.2 of the state plan was that all providers are familiar with the standards and integrate the Montana Early Learning Standards to their curriculum. Last year, 367 providers completed the MELS course

11) Other activities to improve the quality of child care services

Goal: To improve the quality of child care programs and services related to outcomes measuring improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry

11.1 Sustainability funding to child care providers

11.1.1 Sustainability funding to child care providers:

Did the state or territory continue to provide stabilization grants to child care providers using funds other than the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Stabilization funds during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

[ ] Yes. If yes, describe and check which types of providers were eligible and number served.
    [ ] Licensed center-based programs
    [ ] License-exempt center-based programs
    [ ] Licensed family child care homes
    [ ] License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home)
    [ ] In-home (care in the child's own home)
    [ ] Other (explain)
[x] No.
[ ] N/A.   Describe:

11.1.2 Spending – Sustainability funding to child care providers:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[ ] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

    [ ] CCDF quality funds
    [ ] Non-CCDF funds
    [ ] CARES funds
    [ ] CRRSA Funds
    [ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
    [ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
    [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[x] No

11.2 Data Systems Investment

59

11.2.1 Data Systems Investment:

Did the state/territory invest in data systems to support equitable access to child care (e.g., modernizing and maintaining systems; technology upgrades and data governance improvements to provide more transparent and updated information to parents; a workforce registry; updated QRIS systems; CCR&R updates; monitoring systems) from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

[x] Yes. Describe: **The State's Child Care Licensing program works with the vendor, Outlier Technologies Sanswrite. It is an inspection software tool. This tool allows licensors to document their inspections while visiting facilities. The licensor can use Sanswrite to ensure provider compliance with each Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM). If not in compliance, the licensor documents what was observed during the inspection directly in Sanswrite. Sanswrite is aligned with ARM to determine compliance. Also, within Sanswrite is the ability to create a Plan of Correction to address any noncompliance. Once the inspection is complete, the licensor publishes the inspection and Sanswrite creates a document that is sent to the public portal allowing others to see the results of the inspections.**
[ ] No

11.2.2 Spending - Data Systems Investment:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

    [x] CCDF quality funds
    [ ] Non-CCDF funds
    [ ] CARES funds
    [ ] CRRSA Funds
    [ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
    [ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
    [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

11.3 Supply and Demand Analysis

11.3.1 Supply and Demand Analysis:

Did the state/territory conduct an analysis of supply and demand or other needs assessment to identify areas of focus to build supply or target funding from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

[ ] Yes. Describe findings:
[x] No

11.3.2 Spending - Supply and Demand Analysis:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[ ] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

    [ ] CCDF quality funds
    [ ] Non-CCDF funds
    [ ] CARES funds
    [ ] CRRSA Funds
    [ ] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
    [ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
    [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[x] No

11.4 Supply and Demand Initiatives

11.4.1 Supply and Demand Initiatives:

Did the state/territory implement initiatives designed to address supply and demand issues related to child care deserts and/or vulnerable populations (such as infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, English language learners, and children who need child care during non-traditional hours) during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? Check all that apply.

[x] Child care deserts
[x] Infants/toddlers
[ ] Children with disabilities
[ ] English language learners
[x] Children who need child care during non-traditional hours
[ ] Other. Describe:

11.4.2 Spending - Supply and Demand Initiatives:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

    [ ] CCDF quality funds
    [ ] Non-CCDF funds
    [ ] CARES funds
    [ ] CRRSA Funds
    [x] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
    [ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
    [ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

11.5 Provider Compensation and Benefits

11.5.1 Spending - Provider Compensation and Benefits:

What compensation and benefits improvements did teachers/providers receive between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023 (check all that apply)? If indicated, how many providers received each type of support?

[x] Financial bonuses (not tied to education levels) **752**
[ ] Salary enhancements/wage supplements
[ ] Health insurance coverage
[ ] Dental insurance coverage
[ ] Retirement benefits
[ ] Loan Forgiveness programs
[ ] Mental Health/Wellness programs
[ ] Start up funds
[x] Other. Describe: **Eleven innovation grants use funds to reimburse for payroll/fringe, bonuses, and/or child care discounts.**
[ ] N/A. Describe:

11.5.2 Spending - Provider Compensation and Benefits:

Were funds from <u>any sources</u> (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

[x] Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

[ ] CCDF quality funds
[ ] Non-CCDF funds
[ ] CARES funds
[ ] CRRSA Funds
[x] ARP Supplemental Discretionary
[ ] ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
[ ] Unable to report. Indicate reason:

[ ] No

11.6 Spending – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services

11.6.1 Spending – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on <u>other activities to improve the quality of child care services</u> during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? $**149345**

[ ] Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

11.7 Progress Update

11.7.1 Progress Update – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services:

Other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.10.1 of the 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:
Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.
The Center for Health and Safety Culture (⬜Center⬜) at Montana State University partnered with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services in their efforts to support

63

positive early childhood development for Montana's young children (birth to age 5) and their families. Specifically, this project created resources (including universal media to reach families and caregivers and training for Montana's early childhood system) to engage families in best practices to improve early childhood learning and development, health, and family support. The resources developed are based on Center's Positive Culture Framework. Montana made certain resources were available for families for young children with special needs and built on the previously completed work that provided supports for children ages 5-21.

The Center for Health and Safety Culture collects and reviews analytics pertaining to parentingmontana.org, a website created to easily provide resources and consumer education to Montana families. This data is regularly shared with ECSB. The Center for Health and Safety Culture receives input from the general public, and sends out regular surveys to parents in order to learn how to improve their resources and meet the needs of Montana families. CCR&R distribute these resources, and report data quarterly to ECSB through their CCR&R quarterly reports. ECSB reviews the data to ensure consumer education is provided consistently and effectively throughout the communities in each CCR&R region.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.10.2 of the 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: Montana has implemented the Program Administration Scale (PAS) for Centers and the Business Administration Scale (BAS) for family/group programs into the QRIS standards at all levels. Programs requesting to earn a Star 1-2 are required to do a self-assessment with the tool based on their program type. The self-assessment score sheets must be uploaded into the criteria and are required yearly. Programs requesting a Star 3-5 are required to receive a formal assessment completed by a certified assessor and achieve a minimum score of 3.0, 4.0 or 5.0 based on the Star level requested. These assessments are done on a 3-year cycle. The PAS and BAS tools address provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, and kindergarten-entry within the subscales and indicators. Examples include scoring on the number of staff in a classroom to maintain quality supervision as a safety measure; Risk Management addresses fire, storm, and indoor emergency drills, Certified CPR/1st Aid, children's health and risk management plans; Family Communications pertains to communicating with families in various modes, family's perspectives as their child's first teacher, and formal conferences to help with developmental progress leading into kindergarten. Montana collects and analyzes this data on an annual basis for those programs who receive an assessment in that year to make decisions regarding program and provider professional development and to determine potential supports. Parentingmontana.org continues to be an active consumer education for to Montana families.

12) Annual Report

Lead agencies must submit an annual report, as required at 45 CFR § 98.53(f) (4), describing any changes to lead agency regulations, enforcement mechanisms, or other lead agency policies addressing health and safety based on an annual review and assessment of serious child injuries and any deaths occurring in child care programs receiving CCDF, and in other regulated and unregulated child care centers and family child care homes, to the extent possible.

12.1 Annual Report and Changes

12.1.1 Annual Report:

Describe the annual review and assessment of serious injuries and any deaths occurring in child care programs receiving CCDF, and in other regulated and unregulated child care centers and family child care homes, to the extent possible. **During FY23, the Lead Agency continued to work with Bloom Consulting as part of the Child Care Licensing Business Process Review project to respond to findings from a prior assessment. As a result the Lead Agency included a section to review deaths, serious injuries, and child abuse and neglect in child care settings. The Lead Agency revised the complaint process as a result of this work. When a complaint is made against a child care provider a combination of child care licensing (if it is a licensed provider), the state's Child and Family Services Division (CFSD/CPS), law enforcement (if it is a complaint of child maltreatment), and local health and safety agencies are involved in the investigation. In focus groups, Child Care Licensing program (CCLP) staff and CFSD/CPS staff noted a lack of direct access to relevant information to investigate complaints. The assessment highlighted the necessity for a shared understanding of what qualifies as a violation of childcare licensing regulations. Greater clarity assists CFSD/CPS staff in discerning whether complaints, below the threshold of child neglect, should be directed to a licensor. Similarly, CCLP staff noted ambiguity about the respective roles and jurisdictions of CFSD/CPS particularly when sharing information and enforcing rules. However, according to CCLP and CFSD/CPS stakeholders communication between the two programs is improving.**

12.1.2 Annual Report Changes:

Describe any changes to lead agency regulations, enforcement mechanisms, or other lead agency policies addressing health and safety based on the annual review and assessment. **To help identify needs for preventative measures and improve the investigation process CCLP and**

CFSD/CPS staff are working on a process to support ongoing communication and team work. This process involves identifying assigned licensors and CPS workers from the outset to facilitate continuous communication and aid in joint assessments and safety concerns at child care facilities. CFSD staff and CCL staff are creating a better system for sharing information throughout the assessment process. A flow chart was created for cases related to child care to make the investigation process more standardized and efficient. Consequently, there was an increased commitment among child care licensors to enhance the consistency of communication, especially in instances of staff turnover. CCRR staff consistently emphasize their role as a support unit to guide providers rather than to validate or approve. CCRR staff consistently said they explain their role to providers as complementary to licensors, emphasizing that they are there to provide support and guidance, not validate or approve anything. They highlighted the challenges in providing technical assistance when there is not a consistent starting point for providers, especially in terms of up-to-date paperwork and information being available. CCRR staff and providers emphasized the need for consistency between technical assistance and expectations, especially when addressing deficiencies. More detailed plans and a more robust policy manual to clarify licensing regulations would improve consistency and decrease negative licensing actions.

CCRR staff and CCL staff are now working together in a partnership to help providers succeed. Over the last six months, CCL implemented Voluntary Support Plans to guide providers to appropriate training and technical assistance, unite the CCRR and CCL staff, and preempt a deficiency or a negative licensing action. The updated procedure ensures statewide consistency in making referrals, specifying the type, documenting the plan's details, and outlining subsequent follow-up steps.

An Interpretive Guide is being developed to better explain ARM rule. Each topic in the Guide consists of the ARM rule, the relevant provider type, a rational for the rule, a compliance guideline for the parent/provider, the risk level, and the applicable corrective action. The Guide will clarify the interpretation and application of child care licensing regulations, ensuring providers and licensors apply regulations uniformly. The Guide delineates the process following non-compliance with child care regulations, promoting transparency for providers.

During FY23, the Lead Agency continued to work with Bloom Consulting, as part of the Child Care Licensing Business Process Review project, to respond to finding from a prior assessment. As a result, the Lead Agency developed and implemented a new enforcement matrix. All licensors were trained on how to use the new matrix. The Lead Agency continued its development of a comprehensive new rules package and successfully submitted it to the

secretary of state before the end of FFY23. Work groups met to revise other parts of the licensing system. New forms were created. Data system enhancements were made to help automate the tracking of child care staff training and background check requirements.

13) American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Child Care Stabilization Grants

Goal: To ensure the lead agency implements an equitable stabilization grant program. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act included approximately $24 billion for child care stabilization grants, representing an important opportunity to stabilize the child care sector and do so in a way that builds back a stronger child care system that supports the developmental and learning needs of children, meets parents' needs and preferences with equal access to high-quality child care, and supports a professionalized workforce that is fairly and appropriately compensated for the essential skilled work that they do. Lead agencies must spend most stabilization funds as subgrants to qualified child care providers to support the stability of the child care sector during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency. Section 13 should be used to report on ARP Stabilization Grants ONLY.

13.1 Multiple Grant Programs

13.1.1 ARP Act Stabilization multiple grant programs:

Did you run more than one grant program? If so, list the number of separate grant programs and describe their uses.

[ ] Yes. Describe:
[x] No

13.2 ARP Act Stabilization Grants workforce compensation

13.2.1 ARP Act Stabilization Grant strategies for workforce compensation:

Which of the following methods were used to support workforce compensation (e.g., bonuses, stipends, increased base wages, or employee benefits) with stabilization grants? (check all that apply)

[ ] Targeted grants to support workforce compensation (no other allowable uses)
[ ] Providing bonus funds to providers that increased child care staff compensation through stabilization grants
[ ] Requiring a specific percentage or amount of stabilization grant funding go toward child care staff compensation increases. Percent or amount for staff compensation:
[x] Other (Describe): **Stabilization grant allowable operating expenses included child care workforce bonuses, increased wages, and benefits.**