

# ZEROTOFIVE MONTANA

Working Together  
For Our Children, For Our Future

Zero to Five Montana is a statewide early childhood organization focused on increasing access to early care and education, supporting and strengthening families, uplifting voices, communities and small businesses.

Our promise is to stabilize, innovate, and build the early childhood system in Montana so all families and communities can thrive

# Working together to elevate the early childhood system across Montana through policy and programs, rooted in community and cross-sector collaboration

## POLICY

Working in partnership with communities, tribes, policymakers, employers, parents and an array of organizations, Zero to Five Montana promotes a nonpartisan agenda to advance early childhood policy strategies through innovative partnerships, collaboration and sustainable solutions. Zero to Five Montana offers legislative tracking, policy research, and policy briefs as accessible resources to citizens in Montana.

- Montana Parent Voice
- Legislative support (state and federal)

## PROGRAMS

### **Montana Child Care Business Connect:**

Montana's statewide hub for child care business development and innovation. This program aims to make lasting change in the state by supporting the success of child care providers and inspiring others to invest in child care systems in their communities. [ChildCareBusinessConnect.com](https://ChildCareBusinessConnect.com).

- Child Care Community Capacity Building & Innovation Pilot
- Tribal Language Pilot and Tribal Coalition Strategy
- Family-centered Early Childhood Policy Pilot

# Who We Are



ZEROTOFIVE  
MONTANA



**Caitlin Jensen**  
Executive Director



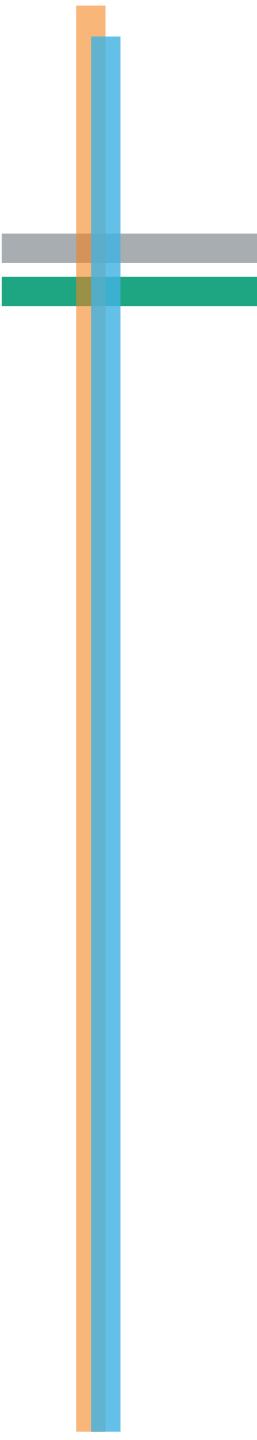
**Alex DuBois**  
Business and Community  
Engagement Manager



**Karen Gilbert**  
Communications Manager



**Carrie Spotted Bear**  
Early Childhood Tribal  
Policy Coordinator



# Who We Are

MONTANA CHILD CARE BUSINESS  
**CONNECT**



**Rhonda Schwenke**  
Program Director



**Jason Nitschke**  
Senior Child Care  
Business Advisor



**Kendra Edlin**  
Child Care Business  
Advisor



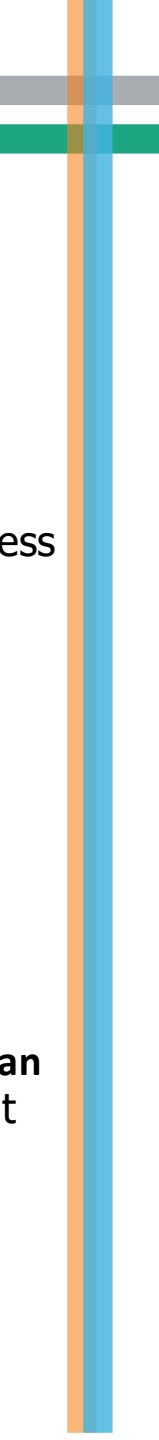
**Heide Borgonovo**  
Communications and  
Outreach Coordinator



**Shelby Whelan**  
Community Navigator



**Richard Heitstuman**  
Program Assistant





# ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILD CARE IMPACTS CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND EMPLOYERS

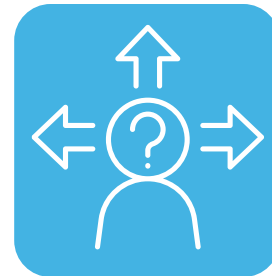


## Child Care Workforce

Current child care wages contribute to turnover and instability in the child care workforce.

Recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce is a barrier for many employers.

One facility or one new child care provider can open the door for many families.



## Options for Parents

When child care is not available, parents make difficult decisions.

Access to quality child care gives families options.

Quality child care ensures children are not only safe, but are supported in school readiness and later success in life.



## Workforce Stability

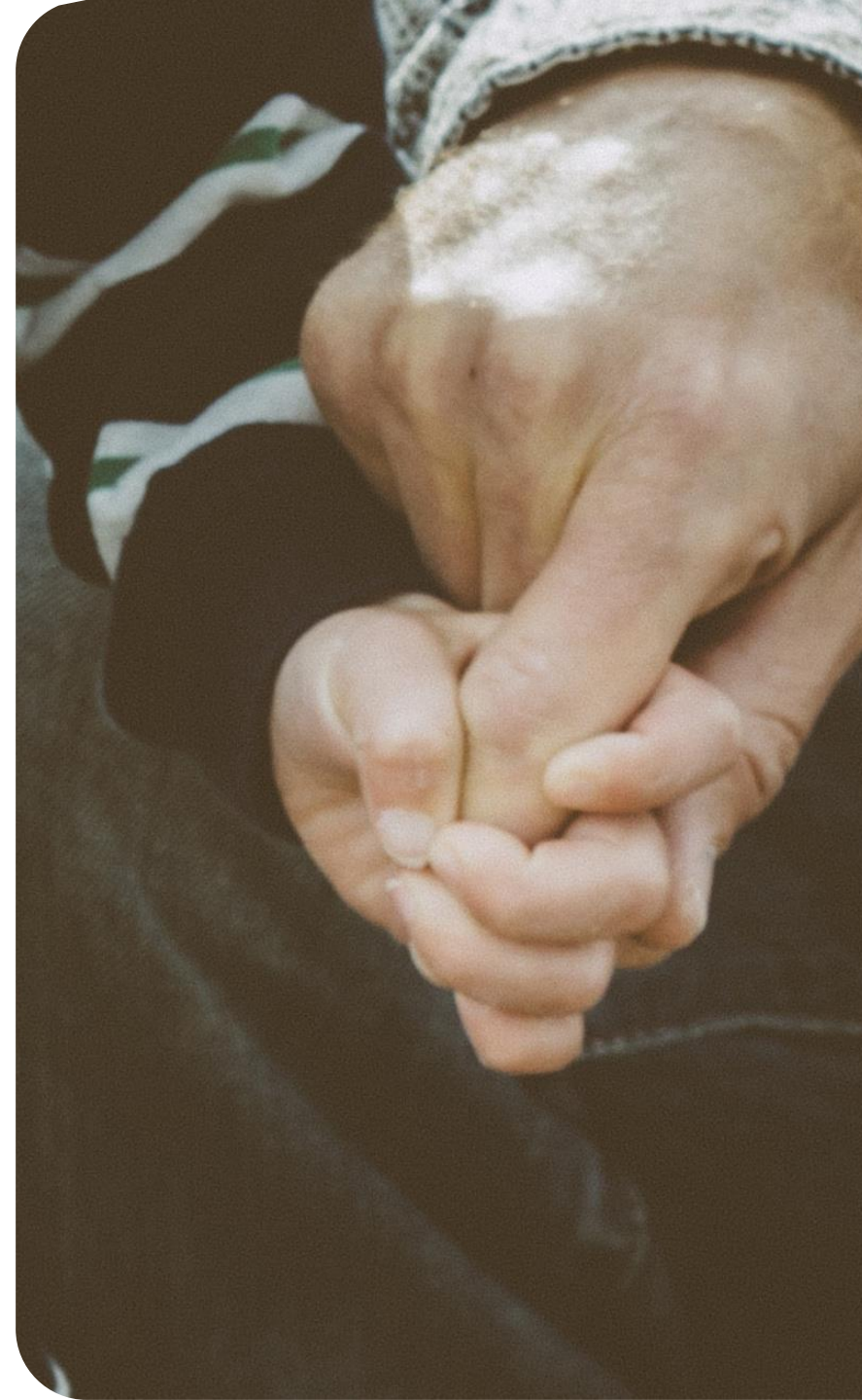
Inadequate child care contributes to parent participation in the workforce.

Labor force participation can increase if parents who want to work are able to access more affordable child care.

An estimated **6%** of the labor force relies on child care to remain employed.

*Yet*

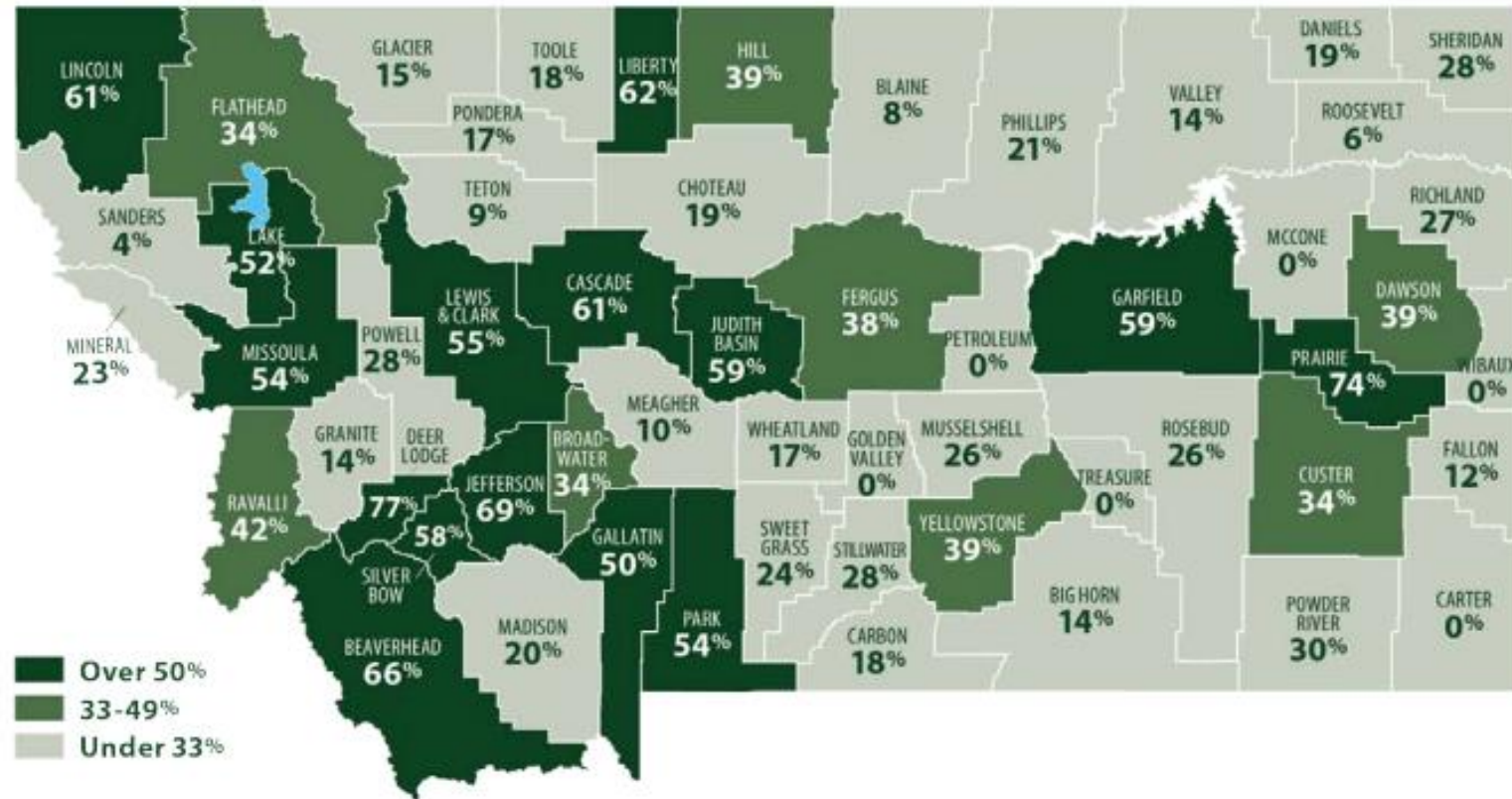
Licensed child care capacity meets only about **43%** of the estimated demand. Child care shortages exist in every county, with **59%** of counties identified as child care deserts.



# CHILD CARE DESERTS:

Not enough child care available to meet the workforce demand across Montana

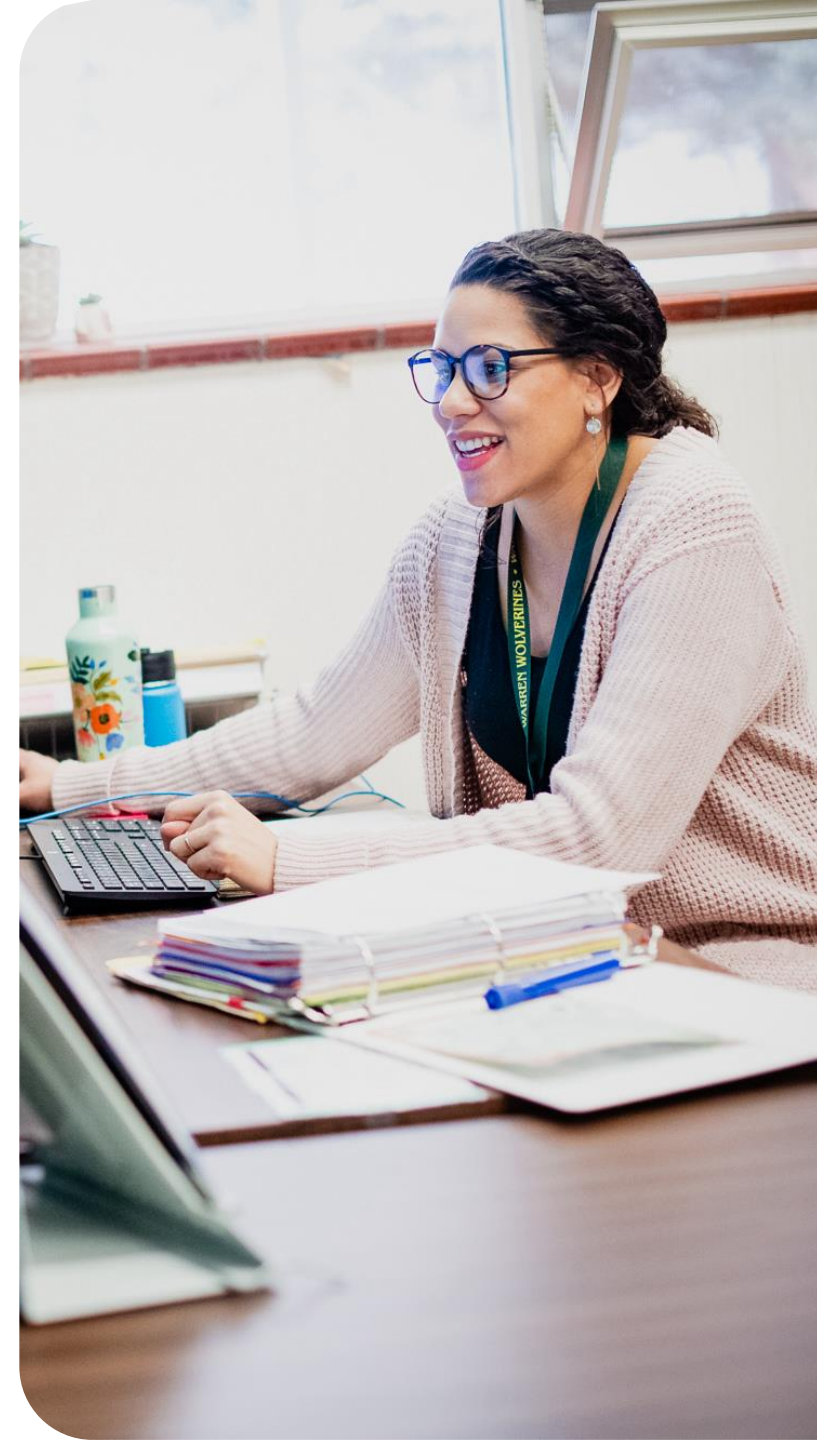
Childcare Capacity as a Percent of Demand by County



Produced by the MTDLI. Childcare Capacity Data Provided by MT DPHHS as of 12/2022. Demand is equal to the number of children under age six living in working parent households.

## Workforce Impacts

- **45,000** Montana parents working reduced hours – which accounts for 8% of the labor force. **68,000** of Montana parents are unable to fully engage in the workforce.
- **40%** of Montana businesses report *difficulty recruiting or retaining qualified workers* due to a lack of child care.
- ***MT DLI estimates 743 annual job openings for children care workers through 2031. Low wages prevent many from entering the field.***
- ***\$55 million lost business revenue annually.***





# MOVING PROBLEMS INTO SOLUTIONS : MONTANA'S EFFORTS TO ADDRESS SYSTEMIC CHILD CARE CHALLENGES

This grid identifies the Essential Elements for sustainable child care supply:

- An effective assessment and planning tool (map, analyze, plan, implement, improve)
- Informed by 30 years of work from FCF at all three levels of business, community & systems
- Framework for reform



# ANALYSIS OF THE CHILD CARE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## Business

+ : Training, practitioner registry, incentives

▲ : Consultation, capacity building, small business supports and resources, shared services, workforce pathways

## Community

+ : Workforce, higher education

▲ : Supply-building through business models (i.e. child care cooperatives, hub models, facilities planning, access to capital, subsidy increases)

## Systems

+ : Private-public partnerships and data collection

▲ : Licensing system review, quality expansion, subsidy expansion, centralized hub for resources and model expertise (agency/organization), cost of quality care and financial modeling



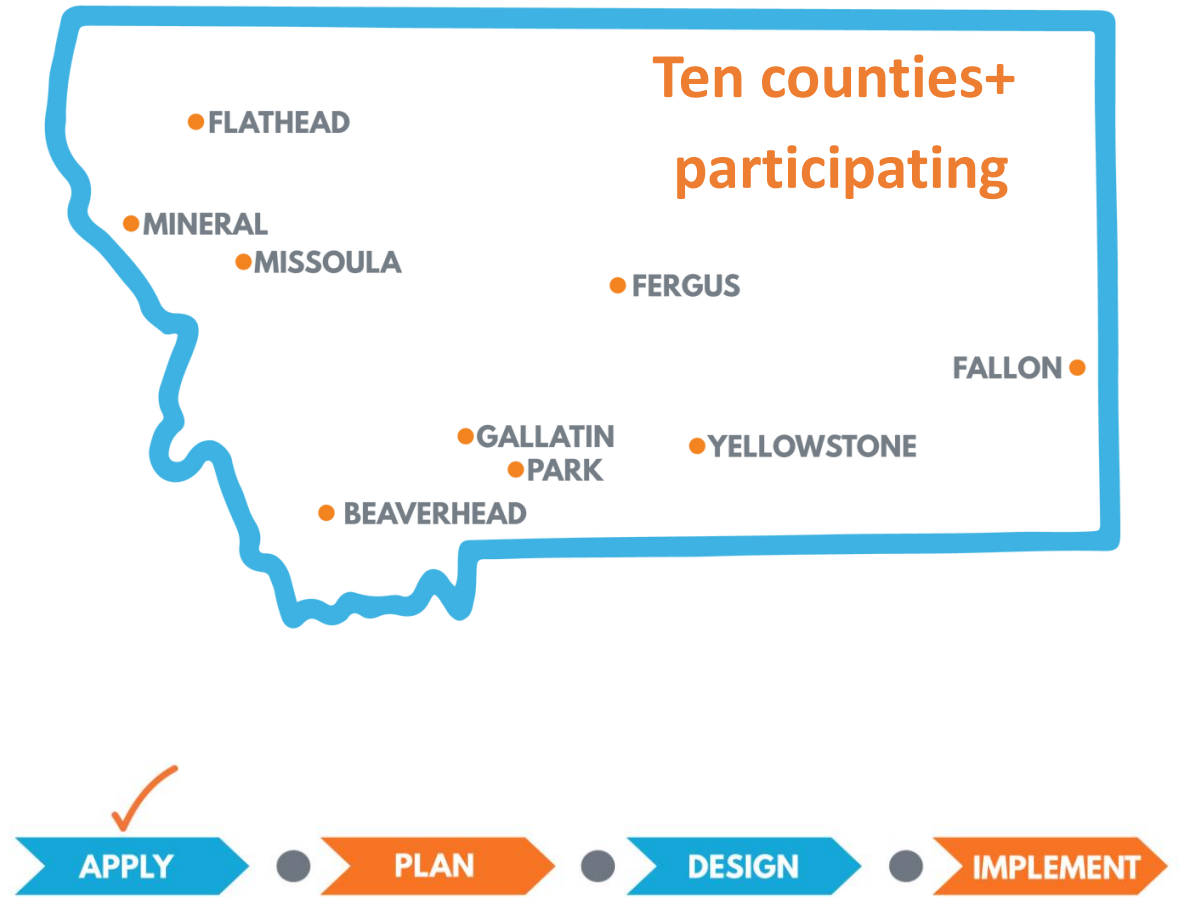
## HOW DO WE HELP BUILD MORE CHILD CARE CAPACITY ACROSS MT?

- Partnership with the Montana Cooperative Development Center, as well as several other early childhood and economic development partners
- 2021 Pilot aimed to guide community and employer-led strategies to implement child care solutions that work for families, employers, and the community
- Nine communities participated across the state, and additional partners joined webinars and the roundtable sessions (3 with an infant/toddler child care focus)
- Resource toolkit, business planning and case studies that are all being integrated into the new MCCBC resource hub



# Community/Employer Child Care Innovations Pilot

- Communities exploring the feasibility of a variety of child care business models, including cooperative child care, employer partnership models to hold slots, on-site child care, co-located child care, HUB models
- **Budgeting tools to help aid in business model and facility types**
- Access to partner organizations and services to support planning, design and implementation
- **Developing case studies and readily available resources**
- Underscore the importance of employer, parent and provider participation in child care expansion planning and identification of revenue or in-kind facility contributions.
- **Collective identification of funding needs and strategies to promote business growth locally**



# What is:

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Launched in: 2022

Focusing on: Supporting communities and entrepreneurs with business elements of starting, owning and operating child care programs. We are Montana's statewide hub for child care business development and innovation.

Critical Areas: Training & Technical Assistance, Mentorship, Individual Business Consultation, Community Capacity building, Web-Resource Hub

**Montana Child Care Business Connect is the statewide hub for child care business development & innovation.**

MONTANA CHILD CARE BUSINESS  
**CONNECT**

We are here for you!

## Montana Child Care Business Connect

- Rhonda Schwenke, Program Director [rhondas@zerotofive.org](mailto:rhondas@zerotofive.org)
- Jason Nitschke, Senior Child Care Business Advisor [jasonn@zerotofive.org](mailto:jasonn@zerotofive.org)
- Kendra Edlin, Child Care Business Advisor [kendrae@zerotofive.org](mailto:kendrae@zerotofive.org)
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- Jennifer Owen, Project management/Mentoring Program Manager [connect@zerotofive.org](mailto:connect@zerotofive.org)

Visit us at [www.childcarebusinessconnect.com](http://www.childcarebusinessconnect.com)

MONTANA CHILD CARE BUSINESS

# CONNECT

## External State & National Partners

- MT DPHHS Early Childhood & Family Support Division
- Program & Policy Insight, LLC – project strategy & evaluation
- First Children’s Finance
- Prenatal to 5 Fiscal Strategies
- MT Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
- RAISE Montana
- MT Small Business Development Center
- MT Cooperative Development Center
- UM Center for Children, Families, & Workforce Development
- MT Department of Labor & Industry
- MT Department of Commerce
- State and local Chambers of Commerce
- Child Care Aware of America

More to come!

# MT Child Care Business Connect Theory of Change

By focusing on training, consultation, communities, mentorships, and resources we will meet our goals of having a well-respected ECE industry in MT with increased slots for children and more stable policies and investments.

