

Child Care Centers in Montana

Overall Score: 86/150 (57%)

Rank*: 32

	Score	Percent	Rank
Oversight	37/50	74%	9
Regulation	49/100	49%	39

Child Care Center Costs in 2009

Average annual fees paid for an infant in a center	\$7,512
Average annual fees paid for a 4-year-old in a center	\$6,911

Child Care Center Oversight

Benchmarks for Ranking	Meets
1. All centers and family child care homes caring for unrelated children for a fee are licensed.	
2. Child care centers are inspected at least four times a year, including visits by licensing, health and fire personnel. Some visits are unannounced.	
3. Programs to licensing staff ratio does not exceed 50:1.	
4. Licensing staff have a bachelor's degree in ECE* or a related field.	
5. Online inspection and complaint reports are available to parents.	



Child Care Center Regulations

Benchmarks for Ranking	Meets	Benchmarks for Ranking	Meets
1. Staff:child ratios are in compliance with NAEYC** accreditation standards.		6. Lead teachers are required to have 24 hours or more of annual training.	
2. Group size requirements are in compliance with NAEYC accreditation standards.		7. Background checks require use of fingerprints to check state and FBI records and checks of state child abuse registry and sex offender registry.	
3. Center directors are required to have a bachelor's degree or higher in ECE or a related field.		8. Programs are required to address six developmental domains.***	
4. Lead teachers are required to have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or an associate degree in ECE or related field.		9. . Programs are required to address 10 basic regulations of health and safety standards.**** Corporal punishment is not allowed.	
5. Lead teachers have initial training, including orientation and training in fire safety and other health and safety issues. One staff member on duty must be certified in first aid and CPR.		10. Programs are required to encourage parent involvement, communicate with parents daily or on an ongoing basis and allow parental visits.	

Key



Fully Meets



Substantially Meets



Partially Meets



Marginally Meets



Does not meet

N/A = Not Available

*Out of 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Department of Defense. **Early childhood education **National Association for the Education of Young Children. ***Six developmental domains are language/literacy, cognitive/intellectual, social, emotional, physical and cultural. ****Ten areas are immunizations, guidance/discipline regulations, diapering and handwashing, fire drills, medication administration, incident reporting, placing infants on backs to sleep, hazardous materials, playground surfaces under outdoor equipment and emergency preparedness.

Source for cost information: National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies. *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2010 Update* - based on 2009 data.

All WCDB data is sourced from a survey of state licensing directors conducted by the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies in December 2010. Note: Information was also verified against state regulations.

Child Care Centers in Montana

Strength

- ✓ Routine monitoring inspections are unannounced.
- ✓ Complaint inspections are unannounced.
- ✓ Program activities must address five of the six developmental domains.
- ✓ Health and safety standards address nine of 10 basic standards; programs are not required to have playground surfaces under outdoor equipment.
- ✓ Inspection and complaint reports are available online.
- ✓ Child care licensing staff are required to have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related field.

Weakness

- X Center directors are not required to have any college credits/courses.
- X Lead teachers in centers are not required to have a high school diploma or GED before working with children.
- X Center staff are required to have initial training in orientation but are not required to have training in fire safety or other health and safety topics.
- X Center staff are required to complete only 12 hours of annual training.
- X Center staff are required to undergo background checks, but these checks are completed without using fingerprints to check either state or federal records for all staff. A check of the child abuse registry is required, but the background check does not include a check of the sex offender registry.
- X Parent involvement is not specifically addressed.
- X Child care licensing staff have an average caseload of 101 programs.

Recommendations

- Require every child care center and family child care home caring for one unrelated child or more for pay to be licensed.
- Require center directors to have a bachelor's degree or higher in early childhood education or a related field.
- Increase the education requirements for lead teachers to a CDA credential or an associate degree in early childhood education.
- Require center staff to have training in fire safety and health topics before caring for children.
- Increase the annual training requirements for teachers to 24 hours including CPR and first-aid renewal.
- Require the use of fingerprints for checking individuals' criminal history.
- Require a check of the sex offender registry.
- Require programs to encourage parent involvement.
- Reduce the caseload for licensing inspectors.