



Early Childhood Development: Challenges and Opportunities for Montana's Workforce

Julie Ehlers, Montana KIDS COUNT
and the Bureau of Business and
Economic Research





Future Workforce

- Nobel Prize winning University of Chicago Economics Professor James Heckman
- Great gains are to be had by investing in early childhood development- from birth to age five.
- www.heckmanequation.org





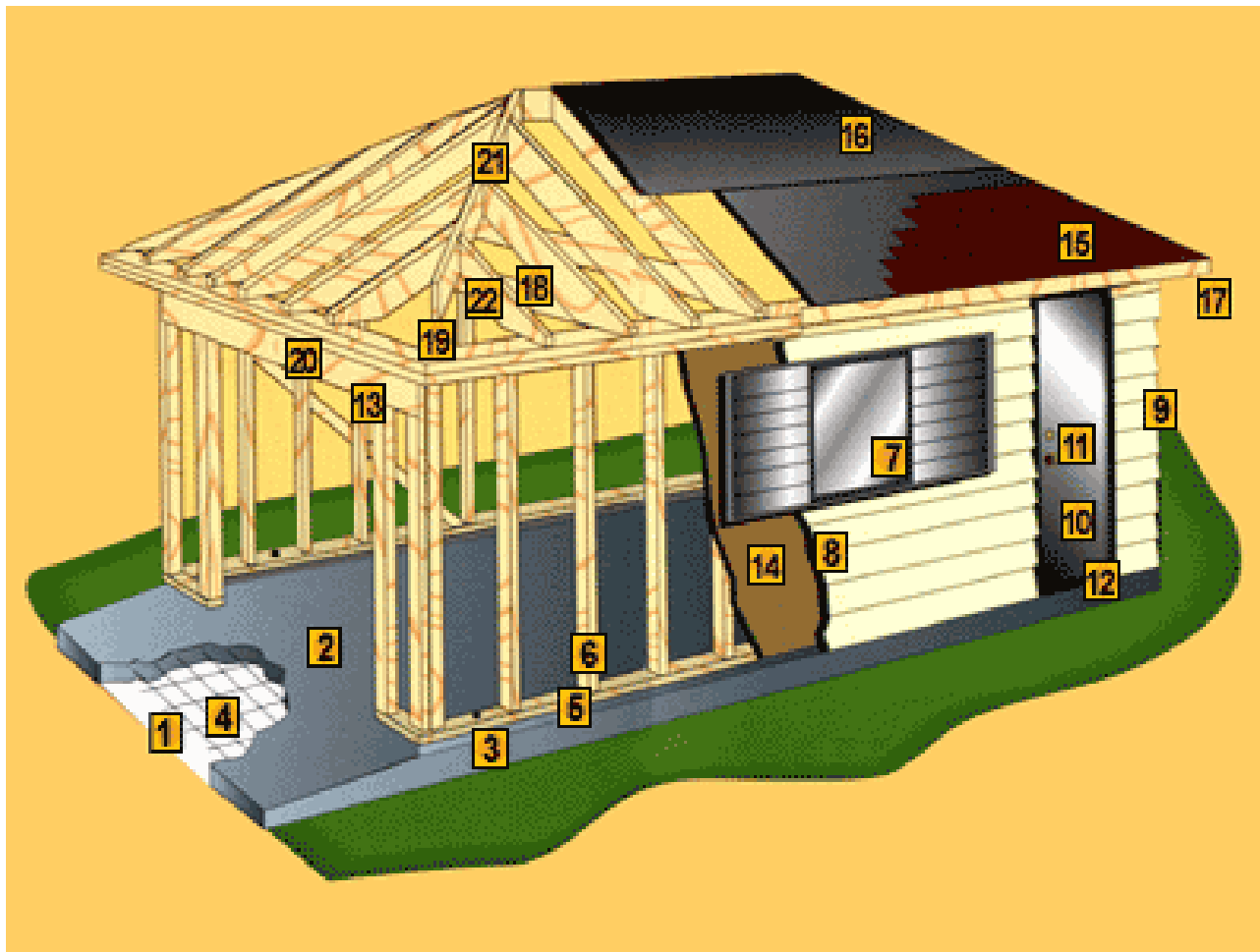
Investment in Early Childhood

- Investing in early childhood has proven to have a large rate of return- 10% up to 16% ROI in model early childhood programs for low-income children and families.
- ROI comes from decreases in crime, increased tax revenues from higher earnings, and decreases in public assistance to the participants.





Early Foundations





Building the Foundation

- Serve and Return
- Building Soft Skills
- Toxic Stress

Early years builds foundation for future learning= future workforce






**MT CHILDREN UNDER 6 IN NEED OF CARE:
41,000**

14,000 - SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS

27,000 - BOTH PARENTS WORKING



**Montana Child
Care Center Slots:
12,500**

**Montana Family-Based
Child Care Center Slots:
12,500**

**Children in Non-Licensed
Child Care:
8,200**

**Children Cared for by Family,
Friends & Relatives:
7,800**



Montana's Child Care Industry

- Contributes \$143 million annually and provides more than 6,600 full-time equivalent jobs.
- Benefits all industries throughout Montana by enabling parents to work, attend school or training.





Balancing Work and Family

- Recent study in July 2009 reports that 82 percent of parents, when faced with a child care crisis in the past year, solved the problem by missing work.
- Stress leads to a costly rise in absenteeism and impacts work performance.
- Special considerations for Montana given small business environment.





What Companies Can Do?

- Family-friendly practices have potential to significantly impact both the role of the employee in the organization and the health of the company overall.

For more information contact
your local Child Care Resource and
Referral Office





Early Childhood Business Summits

- Breakfast meeting with invited business leaders in Missoula, Hamilton, Billings, Kalispell and Havre
- Presentation from Montana Kids Count, local early childhood expert, and facilitated discussion.





Next Steps

- Online survey for small businesses
- Resource guides for business leaders and early childhood advocates
- Work with business and economic development associations





Initiatives in Montana

- Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program- Administered by the MT Early Childhood Services Bureau
 - Workforce development
 - Quality Rating Improvement System with monetary incentives
 - Infrastructure to administer the programs and to provide training and technical assistance





Questions?

Julie Ehlers,

Montana KIDS COUNT and BBER

[Email: Julie.ehlers@umontana.edu](mailto:Julie.ehlers@umontana.edu)

www.montanakidscount.org

www.bber.umt.edu

