



# Montana Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program Child Care Development Specialist

**The Montana Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program (MECAP)** is a training program for people in the field of early care and education that includes on-the-job training with the support of a mentor and college-level classroom instruction. The result is that an apprentice learns both the theoretical and practical aspects of the job, earns a Child Care Development Specialist Certificate from the Department of Labor and Industry, and achieves Level 4 on the Montana Practitioner Registry.

## Benefits for the Apprentice:

- Will have the support of a skilled early childhood mentor
- Earn 24 college credits from Dawson Community College, Flathead Community College, or University of Montana Western
- Earn a nationally recognized credential: Child Care Development Specialist
- 2 years of documented work experience aligned with national early childhood standards
- Move to Level 4 on the Practitioner Registry Career Path
- Qualify for financial incentives
- Increase marketability and job security

## Benefits for the Employer/Sponsor:

- An opportunity to build a strong and open relationship with the apprentice
- Apprenticeships foster loyalty and may provide a significant return on investment
- Will have a competent, committed and well-trained employee
- Qualify for financial incentives to support the apprentice

## To Qualify for the Program

### The Apprentice:

- Minimum of 16 years of age
- Physically capable
- Have the basic occupational aptitudes and language skills to be a child care specialist
- Willing to commit to the program

### Sponsoring program:

- Licensed with MT DPHHS or Tribal Agency, Head Start, or Public PreK program
- Qualified on-site mentor

**For more information about the Montana Apprenticeship Program contact:**  
Christy Hill-Larson, Early Childhood Project  
[christyhl@montana.edu](mailto:christyhl@montana.edu), 406-444-7067