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Governor Gianforte, DPHHS Increase Support for Families' Child Care Costs

Improve access to child care across Montana

HELENA, Mont. – Together with Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Director Charlie Brereton, Governor Greg Gianforte today announced increased support for families' child care costs through the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship Program (BBCCS).

“Montana’s early childhood providers support hardworking families, strengthen our economy, and build a brighter future for our state,” Gov. Gianforte said. “This is a crucial investment in our child care system to ensure providers and families have the support they need to get the services they require.”

The DPHHS Early Childhood and Family Support Division offers the BBCCS to qualified low-income families whose child receives care from a licensed or registered center, group or family child care home, or Family, Friend, and Neighbor provider.

Beginning March 1, the [increased subsidy rate](#) allows all licensed and registered child care providers who accept BBCCS to receive the rate increase for eligible clients the program serves.

With the increased rate, an additional 15 percent premium will be added for providers operating in areas identified as high growth counties. The high growth designation applies to Flathead, Gallatin, Missoula, Ravalli, Yellowstone, and Lewis and Clark counties.

The increased rates will help child care providers better cover costs associated with the care they provide, while also stabilizing the child care workforce and providing families with improved access to child care.

“Ensuring Montana families have access to high-quality child care is a major component to their overall prosperity,” Dir. Brereton said. “While all participating child care providers and families across Montana will benefit from our rate increases, those living in high growth areas will receive an additional boost to ensure that child care provider doors stay open and access to services increases. We’re looking forward to monitoring and measuring the impact of these rate increases over time.”

The rate increase comes after Gov. Gianforte signed House Bill 648 into law in 2023 to increase funding for the Best Beginnings Scholarship program, expanding access to child care for hundreds of young Montanans.

To increase access to quality child care, promote strong, healthy families, and address child care workforce availability, recruitment, and retention, the governor and DPHHS announced last year a \$24 million investment in the state’s early childhood system.