

Making **KIDS COUNT** in the 2017 Legislative Session

Senate District 8 Sen. Lea Whitford



POPULATION	District	State
Total population	19,469	1,014,699
Children ages 0-4	1,655	60,882
Children ages 5-17	4,381	163,367
Median age	32	40



ECONOMIC WELL-BEING	District	State
Median household income (2015 \$)	\$28,860	\$47,169
Children in poverty (<100% FPL) [§]	44%	20%
Children ages 0-17 who have public health insurance	53%	37%
Tax return filers who would qualify for a state EITC ^{1§§}	2,597	76,267



SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION	District	State
Preschool-age children NOT enrolled in school	53%	60%
Children enrolled in grades K-12	4,310	160,628
Graduation rate, all students ²	N/A	86%
Graduation rate, disabled students ²	N/A	75%



SAFETY	State
High school students texting/emailing while driving ³	55%
High school students talking on a cell phone while driving ³	58%
High school students driving after drinking alcohol ³	11%
Traffic crash fatalities and incapacitating injuries ⁴	1,224

The best way to ensure that children get ahead is to make sure that they never fall behind.

Sources: Data source is the 2011-2015 American Community Survey, unless otherwise noted.

¹ Earned Income Tax Credit; Brookings Institution.

² 2015, Montana Office of Public Instruction.

³ 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, OPI; High school students who have engaged in behavior on at least one occasion during the past 30 days.

⁴ 2015, Montana Department of Transportation.

[§] Below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level;

\$20,090 for a family of 3 in 2015.

^{§§} Tax return filers who currently qualify for the federal EITC.

** Rate withheld due to low count.



www.montanakidscount.org



EDUCATION

Early Childhood

Children who attend preschool are more likely to perform better in school and have better employment and health outcomes later in life.



Child care consumes a significant portion of annual household budgets.



\$8,942* \$8,115* \$6,446**

WHAT WORKS

- Expand access to high-quality early education programs.

2016 Market Rate Survey, January 2017, ECSB; Heckman, 2008. *Child care centers. **2016-17.



HEALTH

Mental Health

Montana has the highest youth suicide rate in the U.S. Historical trauma and lack of opportunities underlie some painful disparities for American Indian youth. Prevention is possible.

High school students who report they have attempted suicide at least once during the past year.



10%

All students

18%

American Indian students

Students who feel sad or depressed on most days during the past year.



41%

All students

53%

American Indian students

- Provide training to community and clinical service providers on the prevention of suicide and related behaviors.
- Develop, implement and monitor effective, culturally relevant programs that promote wellness and prevent suicide and related behaviors.

WHAT WORKS

Prevention Needs Assessment Survey, 2016; Montana OPI, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015.



ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

EITC Benefit to the Montana Economy

\$175 million

Federal EITC benefit to Montana families.

\$9 million

Potential benefit of state EITC at 5%.

Working Families



Children benefit

The EITC is linked to decreased poverty, better health, higher educational attainment and improved chances of success as adults



Working parent's benefit

EITC increases employment and reduces the need for public assistance; moving families out of poverty



Local economies benefit

Most EITC recipients spend their credit in local businesses; paying for things like groceries and car repairs.

WHAT WORKS

- Establish a state EITC so families can keep more of what they earn.

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2016; EITC Research Findings, March 2015; Brookings Institute.