**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – Part B Section 619**

**Preschool Program**

**PURPOSE**

The Preschool Grants Program (also known as Section 619) is intended to help states ensure that all preschool-aged children (3-5 years of age) with disabilities receive special education and related services. In 1986, before this program existed, only half of the states provided services to preschoolers with disabilities. Since 1987, however, when this expanded program began operating, the number of children served has increased from 265,000 to an estimated 710,400 in fiscal year 2011.

**WHO RECEIVES FUNDING**

State education agencies (SEAs) receive this funding, and through them, local education agencies (LEAs) and educational service agencies are eligible for grants under this program.

**ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED**

Funds are used to provide the full range and variety of appropriate preschool special education and related services to children with disabilities 3 through 5 years of age.

**FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS**

Over the last two decades, the enrollment of preschool children with disabilities receiving services provided by IDEA has grown by over 420,000 or 60%, while federal funding has only increased by 25%, without taking into account inflation. Over the last decade alone, funding has decreased by over $15 million. In 1992, the federal government spent $803 dollars per child by 2010 it was only spending $527 dollars per child, a decrease of 34%. While ARRA infused a substantial and needed amount into this program, without a sustained commitment to funding, children will fail to receive appropriate services especially in these difficult economic times. Thus, the reality is that when federal funding fails to keep pace with program growth, children, families, schools and states bear a disproportionate share of the financial burden.

![Decreasing Commitment: Decline in IDEA Preschool Funding](chart.png)
Montana State Profile

How Many Children in Montana Receive Preschool Services?

In 2008, 1,954 Montana children ages 3-5 received preschool services

What was the federal IDEA Part B Section 619 allocation awarded to Montana in 2010? What was the ARRA appropriation?

In 2010, Montana received $1,162,982 for IDEA Part B Section 619; and in 2009 Montana received $1,260,947 for Part B Section 619 under ARRA.

How is Montana’s IDEA preschool program administered?

The state education agency special education unit administers preschool special education.

How does Montana use federal IDEA preschool funds?

Direct services, accountability and outcomes activities and state level administration.

How is Montana’s IDEA preschool program involved in comprehensive services for all young children and their families?

Montana’s program is engaged in Early Reading First and Early Childhood Partnerships for Professional Development (ECPPD) that support comprehensive services for all young children and their families.

What training opportunities are provided for preschool personnel that support inclusive settings?

Montana's comprehensive system of professional development has an ad hoc committee that focuses on early childhood concerns, the Early Childhood Partnership for Professional Development. This group consists of representatives from each of Montana's vast regions, who in turn, represent early childhood partners in Montana's communities. These local and regional units identify professional development needs and satisfy those needs with their resources or through collaborations with state-level partners. Continuation and/or expansion of community based inclusive settings is one of many areas of activity that several local/regional groups addressed.

Has Montana developed preschool policies to enhance parent involvement?

Yes, Montana has developed preschool specific policies and strategies to enhance the involvement of parents.

How does the Montana work with federally funded parent information centers?

Montana’s state educational agency works with parent information centers through special projects, technical assistance, as well as other services.

Does Montana have a pre-kindergarten program?

Yes, Montana has the following general education pre-kindergarten programs: locally funded Pre-K; and Pre-K Early Reading.

Source: National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center http://www.nectac.org/~pdfs/pubs/q1-44.pdf