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# COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT:

CHARACTERIZATION OF HEAD START  
ELIGIBLE FAMILIES AND FUTURE  
NEEDS IN CARBON, STILLWATER AND  
YELLOWSTONE COUNTIES

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## SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

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Billings Head Start provides preschool and family services for eligible families in Carbon and Yellowstone counties. This assessment characterizes likely population needs in these two counties and in Stillwater County.

Yellowstone County, especially Billings, has the largest and most concentrated population of children who would be eligible for Head Start services. Yellowstone County as a whole is younger, growing faster and has areas with the highest amount of economically based eligibility in the three county area.

Carbon County and Stillwater County both have much smaller populations and a somewhat older population than Yellowstone County, but are also growing, albeit at a slower pace. Both counties have pockets of relatively high proportions of children who are likely income eligible under current guidelines, but the overall numbers are small.

**In Carbon County**, it is unlikely that the two current classrooms will consistently fill their class slots solely with income eligible children at current levels. Based on Census estimates, it appears that about 96% of all age and income eligible children would have to be identified and enrolled in order to fill all slots at current income eligibility. Raising overall income eligibility from 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL) to 130% FPL does appear to raise the total number of households that could be eligible by about 48%, making a goal of serving children within income eligibility more likely. However, Joliet, one of the two current sites, is not the highest poverty region within the county and may need to draw significant numbers of children from the Bridger/Fromberg area to ensure that enough income eligible children are served.

There are growing numbers of preschool services, with Bridger, Roberts, and Belfry all offering school-based preschool. Joliet has an affordable church-based preschool and paid child care facility. Red Lodge has a paid child care facility as well, but it does appear that accessing that additional care is difficult for parents at the Red Lodge Head Start. It isn't clear if or how many preschool age children with special needs attend the special needs co-op preschool in Laurel, but consistent preschool services for children with special needs appear to be lacking.

**In Stillwater County**, the low poverty rate and relatively small number of total young children suggest that hosting even one class at current income eligibility levels is not a likely possibility. However, it appears that there are many more households that have an annual income from the 100-130% FPL. If eligibility requirements were raised to 130%, it appears that it would probably be possible to site at least one class, especially if transportation were provided to gather students from outlying areas.

Absarokee and Columbus both appear to have child care and preschool options, though cost may be an issue. Park City has child care and a preschool, but the principal reports that only about 1/3 of incoming kindergartners have attended preschool and high need exists among children of families experiencing poverty. Reed Point is reported to have a school-based preschool.

For children with special needs, there are no preschool-based services in Stillwater County, so this is an area where Head Start services could fill a gap.

**For both Carbon and Stillwater counties,** it appears that Head Start could provide identification and referrals to additional services that are available but difficult to access in the two counties.

**In Yellowstone County,** the need for Head Start services is large and continues to grow, especially within the city of Billings. Raising income eligibility from 100% of FPL to 130% FPL appears to have a limited increase (14%) in overall eligible households, but that increase represents a total number of households greater than the total number of households that would be eligible in Carbon and Stillwater Counties combined.

In the county as a whole, the Huntley Project areas has a relatively high concentration of income eligible children, but the overall population numbers suggest a classroom just serving that area would not be feasible. Lockwood has high need within its school district boundaries, but much lower income eligibility in the core area covered by the Census tract. Continuing to attract eligible children from outside the Lockwood and most likely school district boundaries will probably need to continue to fill the current number of slots with income eligible children. If serving more Huntley Project area children is a priority, recruiting and bussing them to Lockwood might be a possibility. Shepherd is expected to have fewer children who are income eligible in the future, since the demographics of young families appear to be changing. There are relatively few child care facilities in Lockwood, but there appears to be better coverage in the Shepherd/Huntley area.

The Laurel area, including the area between Laurel and Billings, has a relatively large population, though the proportion of children who meet current income eligibility requirements is lower than in many other parts of the three county area. It might be helpful to extend its ability to serve children across county lines to include Park City.

The northwest part of Yellowstone County has few children and not enough projected eligibility to have a class. However, in looking at limited English proficiency, this is the only area within the three county area that does have a substantial minority of school-aged children who do not speak English well. (OPI, 2014-2015) This may be an area to watch for the future.

In Billings, the neighborhoods vary greatly in both the concentration of income eligible families and in the total estimated number of young children. West Billings, particularly the areas just north of Interstate-90, appears to be experiencing rapid growth in the number of income eligible families living there and also in the number of families with one or more family members working in the area. South Billings also appears to be experiencing high numbers of young, income eligible children, followed by growth in the Heights, particularly in the area near the main transportation corridor into the Heights and portions of the west. Both the demographics from Riverstone Health home visiting and survey returns from the Head Start survey suggest that South Billings and perhaps the Heights may be under-represented in accessing Head Start and other income-based services, but more investigation would be needed to give a definitive answer.

Yellowstone County is the only area where there are enough foster children to potentially increase the overall pool of eligible children.

## **Additional Factors that May Affect Head Start Recruitment**

**Population transience** was cited by several interviewees as a factor in planning and population in any given year. Lockwood, Park City, and Bridger stood out as communities where transience among income eligible families was highlighted. However, this can be an issue for many families who are income eligible. 62% of the survey participants live in rentals and another 5% did not rent or own their home and are likely to be homeless or vulnerable to a move. When rental rates rise or income changes, it becomes more likely that people will move, at least within the area. Many survey participants, with the exception of Red Lodge, also appear to live and work in different towns or neighborhoods.

**Transportation** is also noted as a possible difficulty for many families. A substantial minority of survey participants across all locations (a quarter to a third in most locations) found getting children to child care or activities difficult, even if they had personal transportation. All of the survey work was also done at sites where services were offered. It is likely that this source missed families whose transportation needs are so great that they can't access services, whether those are WIC, Head Start or something else. In those cases, siting Head Start services as close to populations in need as possible may help, but the size of most likely pockets of greatest gaps in transportation need can't be characterized with available data.

**Child Care and Preschool Services** are available throughout the region, but vary by area. The emergence of school-based preschool services for district children in Lockwood, Shepherd/Huntley Project Bridger, Roberts, Belfry and Reed Point appear to increase preschool services to four year old children, regardless of income eligibility. Absarokee, Joliet, Red Lodge, Park City, Columbus and most of Yellowstone County have private child care and preschool options, but the affordability and ability to use Best Beginnings Scholarships appears to vary widely. Lockwood, South Billings, Park City, and the most rural parts of all three counties appear to have relatively few child care options.

The survey Head Start conducted indicates that the majority would be or might be interested in additional child care services at Head Start sites.

**Other services:** All three counties theoretically have the same basic set of services, often provided by the same service provider. However, the reality of access in more rural areas that include all of Carbon and Stillwater counties and the more outlying areas of Yellowstone County means that access outside of Billings is more difficult. Even within Billings, the 2012 early childhood community assessment noted that some neighborhoods have better access than others to services. Head Start does provide a valuable service both in the services it provides to its children and families and in its work to identify and refer families to needed services. This critical service Head Start provides is needed at every site, but it probably is more critical in the more rural areas, since fewer substitutes and access points to services are available.

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Billings Head Start serves young children in Yellowstone and Carbon Counties through its preschool and family engagement services. Head Start currently has 360 slots for preschool aged children in Yellowstone County (Billings, Lockwood, Laurel) and Carbon County (Joliet, and Red Lodge.) This assessment is intended as an aid for decision-making about the future distribution of slots and sites in Carbon, Stillwater, and Yellowstone data.

This community assessment answers three major questions:

- How many Head Start eligible young children (ages 0-4) live in Carbon, Stillwater, and Yellowstone Counties?
- Where Head Start children living and what can be characterized about their need for preschool and child care services?
- What can we tell about the availability and use of services that may be accessed by Head Start eligible families in these three counties?

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## ASSESSMENT METHODS

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This assessment relied on three major approaches:

- Quantitative data from established sources. Some, such as the US Census and the Montana Office of Public Instruction have published sources. Most others have data that were shared if available and could be shared within the timeframe of this assessment.
- Parent/caregiver survey: A qualitative survey was administered to current Head Start parents and other parents of young children through willing. Two student interns from Rocky Mountain College assisted this process. This was distributed in Yellowstone and Carbon counties. 84 responses from 7 sites were analyzed.
- Calls and interviews with community professionals who shared perspectives and specific information on young children, families, and their communities.

These three sources of information were then analyzed to 1) develop estimates of the distribution of Head Start eligible children, and 2) to characterize services available to young Head Start eligible children and their families.

There are some holes in the available information, particularly in estimates related to rural areas, because of the small number of children involved and in service estimates, since several sources either could not share information or where only to provide very general data.

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## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

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The current service area stretches from the eastern part of Yellowstone County to the border with Wyoming, south of Red Lodge in Carbon County. The population on the Crow reservation in Yellowstone County is served through the Tribal-run Head Start based in Hardin. Though Stillwater County is not currently served, Billings Head Start is investigating whether or not enough children in that county would qualify for Head Start services.

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## OVERALL POPULATION COMPOSITION

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The counties and areas of counties vary significantly by population density and overall characteristics.

Comparing the three counties directly has some difficulties. The total population of Carbon or Stillwater County is roughly 10% of the population of Billings, the largest city in Montana. Outlying areas in Yellowstone County: Laurel, Lockwood and the Shepherd/Huntley area are somewhat similar to Stillwater and Carbon Counties in population, though much closer to many services that are located in Billings.

When comparing population characteristics data, it is important to keep this distinction in mind because

- 1) Data for neighborhood or CCD in Billings is roughly comparable in size to Carbon or Stillwater County or larger geographic regions within Yellowstone County, and
- 2) The precision of estimates of characteristics for Yellowstone County or Billings is usually better than estimates for all outlying areas or for an individual Census tract because the sample size is smaller.

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## POPULATION GROWTH

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In any estimate of future children, an estimate of the rate of growth is helpful, since it can help refine information about whether current need is likely to be sustainable. One difficulty is that economic reversals (positive or negative) may happen quite quickly, especially in smaller towns with economies that aren't diversified, so all projects are somewhat tentative. Still, it is helpful to keep in mind the direction and general magnitude of recent population change trends.

### County Population Change

Montana has counties experience rapid growth, some growth, flat and falling populations. Yellowstone county is growing faster than most other counties in Montana. Carbon and Stillwater counties are experiencing moderate growth.

Table 1: Estimate of Population Growth								
Geography	April 1, 2010		Population Estimate (as of July 1)					Estimated Total Population Growth, 2010-2014*
	Census	Estimates Base	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Carbon County	10,078	10,075	10,057	10,076	10,109	10,305	10,399	3.2%
Stillwater County	9,117	9,117	9,111	9,162	9,195	9,310	9,290	1.9%
Yellowstone County	147,972	147,975	148,398	149,845	151,888	154,060	155,634	5.1%

Source: US Census, 2010-2014

\*Derived from Census Estimates

Overall growth is not the only measure of growth. A community rapidly adding retirees will have falling preschool services while one with relatively flat growth, but a very young population, may see increasing need for preschool services.

### Median Age and Population Composition

In these three counties, age composition is somewhat different. In 2013, the median age in Carbon County was 48. In Stillwater, the median age was 46, and in Yellowstone County, the median age was 37. The Montana median age was 39 that year (city-data.com, derived from Census)

The proportion of young children, ages 0-4, is also different:

- Carbon County: 4.1 % of population
- Stillwater County: 5.0% of population
- Yellowstone County: 6.6% of population

Birth and death rates can also give a sense of what proportion of the population growth is due to new children and what proportion is due to in-migration of a combination of adults and children.

Table 2: Birth and Death Rates		
Location	Birth/1,000 people	Deaths/1,000 people
Carbon County	9.2 (2007-2013)	9.2 (2007-2013)
Stillwater County	11.5 (2000-2006)	9.0 (2007-2013)
Yellowstone County	13.4 (2013)	9.3 (2013)
Montana	12.2 (2013)	9.4 (2013)

Sources: City-data.com, from Vital Statistics

Carbon County has the same birth and death rates, so in-migration accounts for essentially all of its growth. Stillwater has a higher birth than death rate, so some growth is coming from new births, but the effect is fairly modest. For Yellowstone County, a larger proportion of population growth is coming from new births than in Stillwater or Carbon counties.

### EXPECTED TRENDS IN THE POPULATION OF YOUNG CHILD

It is expected that the number of children ages 0-4 in Carbon and Stillwater counties will grow slowly compared to current levels, though there may be pockets of growth or decline and natural variation from year to year will occur. In Stillwater County, growth for children, judging from school enrollment trends, is most likely to in and around Columbus. Park City is reported growing, but the school enrollment, though variable, is fairly flat, according to its principal. (Southworth, 2015)

In Yellowstone County, there will be additional growth in the number of young children ages 0-4 as well as in-migration. Because the total population is so large, even a small change in overall population growth adds several more additional children each year. Currently, over 2,000 children are born each year in this county. This is about 20 times more children than are born in Stillwater or Carbon County each year.

Economic conditions drive a lot of growth. If conditions change, positively or negatively, and it could affect both the growth rate in the number of young children in an area and the total population.



Transience and turnover in a population can also have significant influence on the population of children in a given location. Transience and movement was frequently mentioned as a prevalent factor for many families. Transience, particularly for income-eligible families was mentioned as a significant factors in Lockwood, Bridger, and Park City. For purposes of planning, it is one more source of uncertainty in the overall Head Start eligible population in any given year.

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## ESTIMATE OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN

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### ESTIMATE OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN UNDER CURRENT INCOME GUIDELINES

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The main eligibility factor for Head Start is poverty status. Head Start has the potential to change eligibility to accept children that are in families that are above the Federal Poverty Line, but below 130% of the Federal Poverty Line.

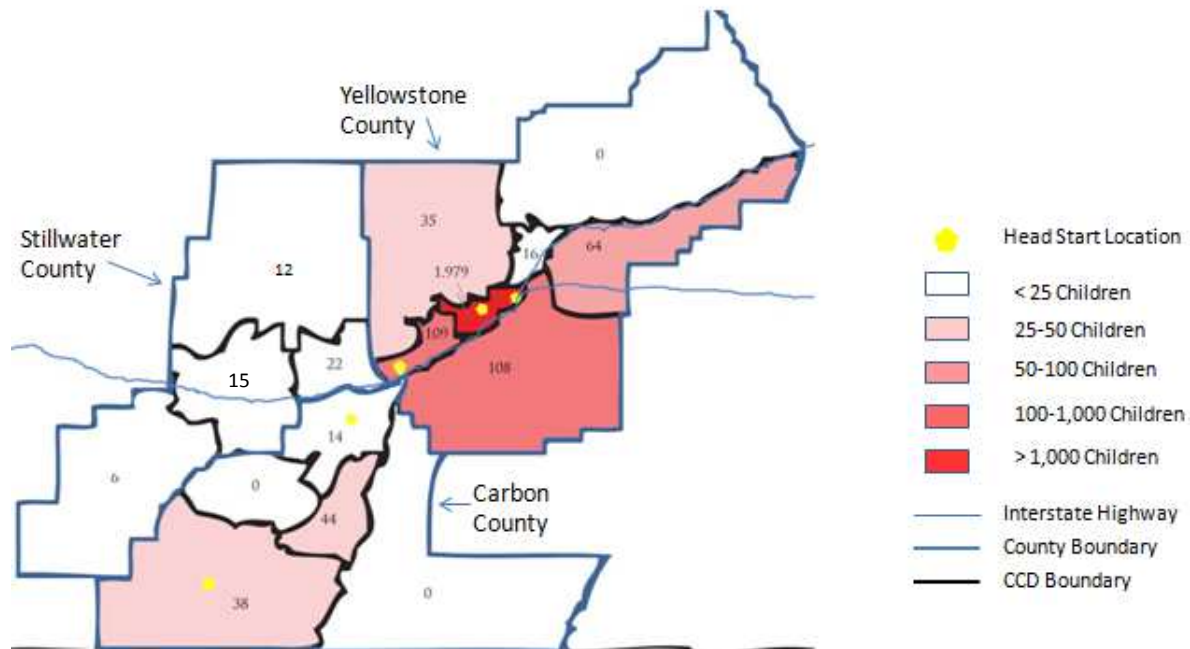
Any determination of the eligibility of the group is necessarily an estimate. The U.S. Census is the most complete source of estimates of children in poverty, but its estimates in the tri-county area can be fairly broad because of the uncertainty associated with sampling low populations.

<b>Table 3: Overall Population Characteristics &amp; Children in Poverty</b>					
<b>Location</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Population &lt; 5</b>	<b>Percent of Total Population &lt; 5</b>	<b>Children &lt; 5, in poverty</b>	<b>% in Poverty &lt; 5</b>
<b>Yellowstone County</b>	150,156	9,910	6.6%	2,299	23.2% (+/- 3.6%)
<b>Carbon County</b>	10,126	415	4.1%	94	22.7% (+/-11.3%)
<b>Stillwater County</b>	9,173	459	5.0%	54	11.8% (+/- 3.4%)

Source: US Census, ACS 2009-2013

# Potential Head Start Eligible Children

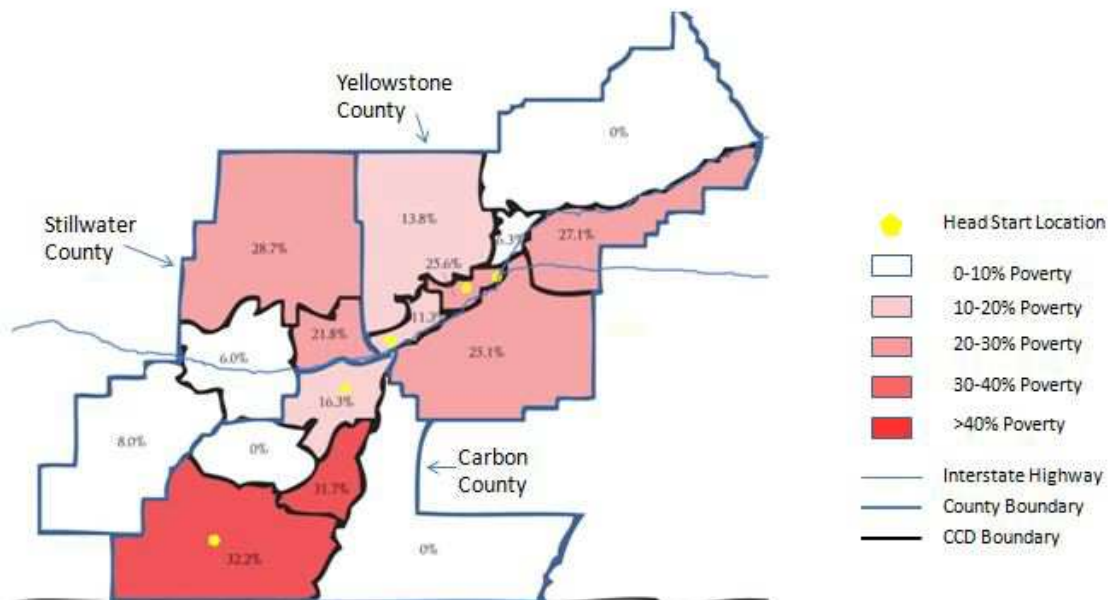
Three County Area, number of children under 5



Source: US Census, ACS 2009-2013

# Potential Head Start Eligible Children

Three county area, percent in poverty under 5



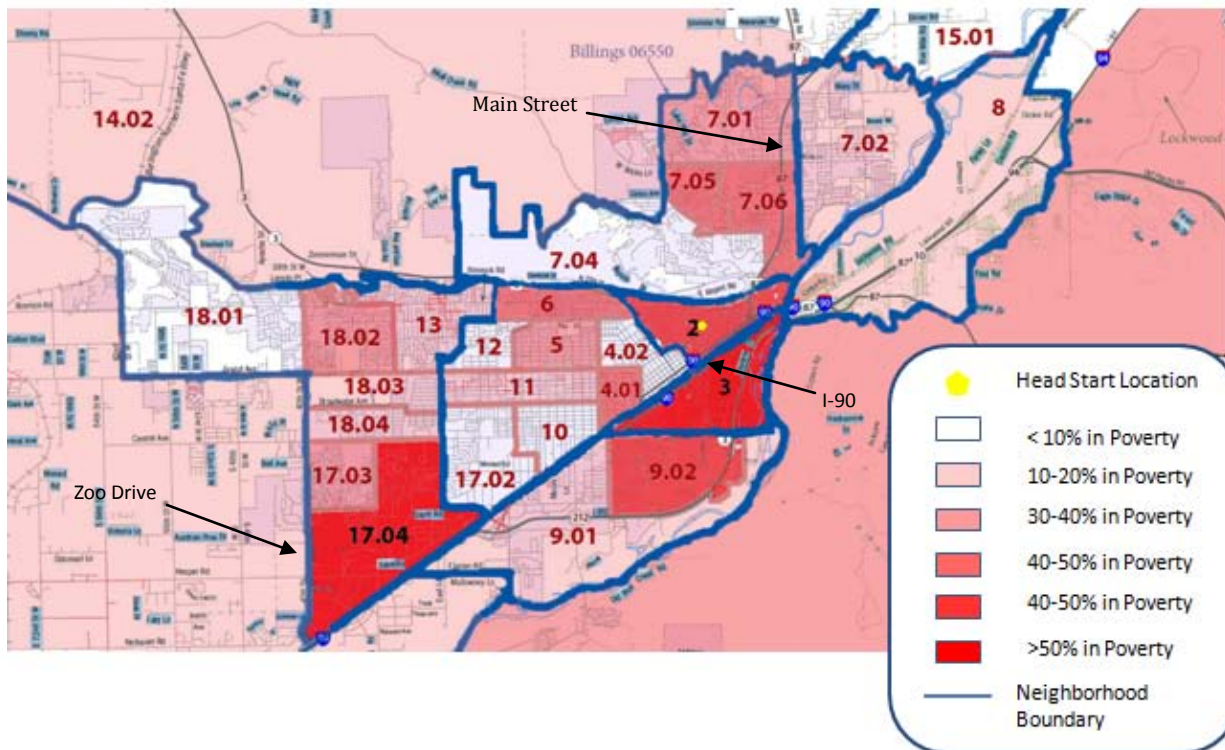
US Census, ACS 2009-2013

## Billings Area

Billings is both the largest community in the state and has the most children who are income eligible for Head Start services. It also has a higher proportion of young children and neighborhoods with very high proportions of income-eligible children in some neighborhoods.

# Potential Head Start Eligible Children

Billings, percent in poverty under 5

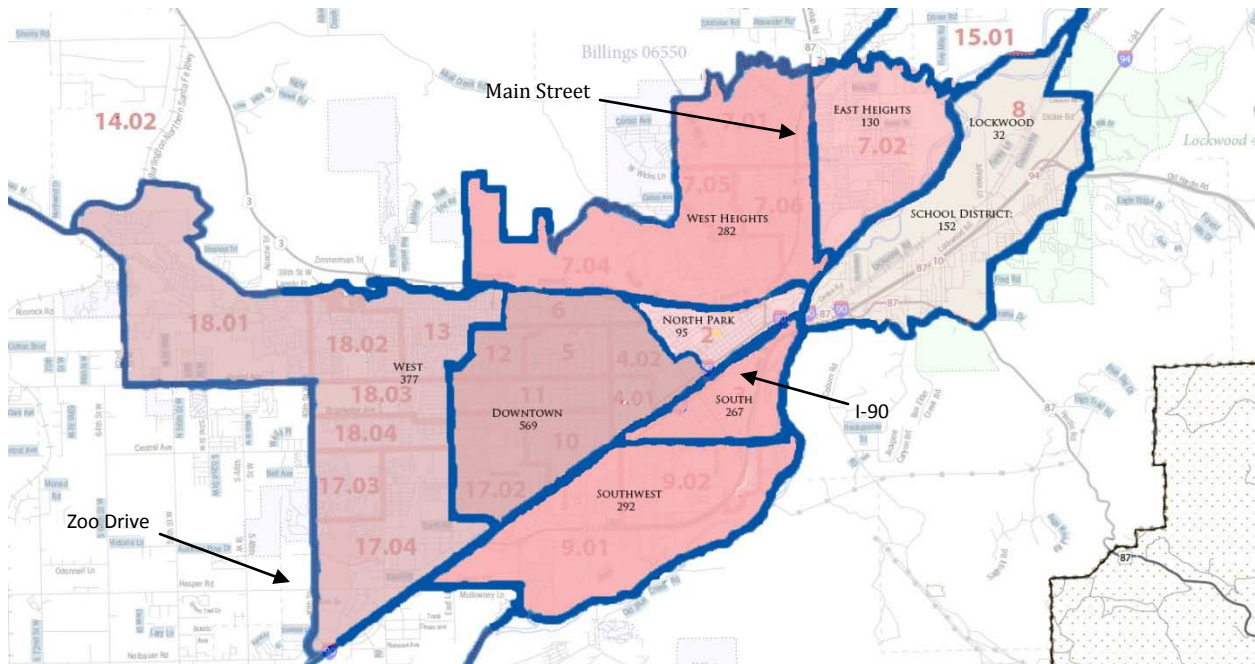


Source, US Census, ACS 2009-2013

\* Numbers on this map represent individual Census tracts.

# Potential Head Start Eligible Children

## Estimated Number by Neighborhood



Source: US Census, ACS 2009-2013, United Way Neighborhood Divisions

The data represented in the maps come directly from the US Census estimates. The age range is 0-4 years of age, so only about 40% of that total will be age eligible for Head Start. In addition, because most of these number represent small populations, the variance in both the total estimated population and the number of children in any particular year could vary significantly.

The following tables show these population numbers and an estimate of the likely age eligible population for each of the three counties, following the demarcations shown on the maps:

<b>Table 4: Estimate of Eligible Children in Carbon County &lt; 100% FPL</b>						
<b>Location</b>	<b>Total Population (2013)</b>	<b>Population under 5 (%)</b>	<b>Population &lt; 5</b>	<b>Children &lt; 5, &lt; 100% FPL</b>	<b>% &lt; 100% FPL &lt; 5</b>	<b>Children 3-5, &lt; 100% FPL</b>
<b>Carbon County</b>	10,126	4.1%	416	94	22.70%	38
<b>East Carbon CCD</b>	788	4.8%	38	0	0%	0
<b>Bridger-Fromberg CCD</b>	2,194	6.4%	140	44	31.70%	18
<b>Joliet CCD</b>	2,408	3.6%	86	14	16.30%	6
<b>Red Lodge CCD</b>	3,633	3.2%	117	38	32.20%	15
<b>Roberts CCD</b>	1,103	3.2%	35	0	0%	0

Source: US Census, ACS 2009-2013

<b>Table 5: Estimate of Eligible Children in Stillwater County &lt; 100% FPL</b>						
<b>Location</b>	<b>Total Population (2013)</b>	<b>Population &lt; 5 (%)</b>	<b>Population &lt; 5</b>	<b>Children &lt; 5, &lt; 100% FPL</b>	<b>% &lt; 100% FPL &lt; 5</b>	<b>Children 3-5, &lt; 100% FPL</b>
<b>Stillwater County</b>	9,173	5.0%	459	54	11.80%	22
<b>Absarokee CCD</b>	2,088	3.6%	75	6	8.00%	2
<b>Columbus CCD</b>	3,895	6.2%	242	15	6.00%	6
<b>North Stillwater CCD</b>	998	4.2%	42	12	28.65	5
<b>Park City CCD</b>	2,192	4.6%	100	22	21.80%	9

Source: US Census, ACS 2009-2013



<b>Table 6: Estimate of Eligible Children in Yellowstone County &lt; 100% FPL</b>						
<b>Location</b>	<b>Total Population (2013)</b>	<b>Population &lt; 5 (%)</b>	<b>Population &lt; 5</b>	<b>Children &lt; 5, &lt; 100% FPL</b>	<b>% &lt; 100% FPL &lt; 5</b>	<b>Children 3-5, &lt; 100% FPL</b>
<b>Yellowstone County</b>	150,156	6.6%	9,978	2,315	23.20%	926
<b>Huntley Project CCD</b>	3,171	7.4%	236	64	27.10%	26
<b>Laurel CCD</b>	16,875	5.7%	963	109	11.30%	44
<b>Northeast CCD</b>	573	3.1%	18	0	0%	0
<b>Northwest CCD</b>	7,375	4.7%	256	35	13.80%	14
<b>Shepherd CCD</b>	4,979	5.1%	256	16	6.30%	6
<b>South Yellowstone CCD</b>	7,864	5.5%	430	108	25.10%	43
<b>Billings CCD*</b>	109,319	7.1%	7,729	1,979	25.60%	791
Billings Heights East	7,489	9.3%	693	130	18.8%	52
Billings Heights West	16,846	6.8%	1,147	282	24.6%	113
Billings N. Park	3,391	6.7%	227	95	41.9%	38
Billings South	4,370	9.5%	414	267	64.5%	107
Billings Southwest	8,470	9.8%	828	292	35.2%	117
Billings Downtown	31,538	6.9%	2,172	569	26.2%	228
Billings West	32,761	5.9%	1,926	377	19.6%	151
Lockwood**	4,454	7.2%	322	32	10.0%	13

Source: US Census, ACS 2009-2013. Children 3-5 estimated at 40% of the total eligible population < 5.

\* Billings CCD contains all the neighborhood demarcations listed below it.

\*\* The Lockwood census tract listed here is significantly smaller and higher income than the Lockwood school district. The estimated number (using OPI data and projecting downward in age) is more like 152 children ages 0-4 who would be income eligible.

Other services that focus on the provision of resources to those in poverty can give a clearer picture of the likely population ages 0-4 at less than 100% FPL. However, it is important to keep in mind that all voluntary services will undercount the total number of people who are income eligible since some families will not or cannot access each service.

#### **ESTIMATE OF HOUSEHOLD INCREASE IF ELIGIBILITY IS INCREASED TO 130% FPL**

One option available would be to increase the income eligibility from 100-130% FPL. Data are not available to give an accurate estimate of the number of children, but the number of households are tracked, so a reasonable estimate of the percent increase in eligible households can be made.

In Carbon County, approximately 48% more households with children ages 0-4 would be income eligible, for a total of 73 households.

In Stillwater County, 407% more households would be eligible, for a total of 74 households. Stillwater County appears to have a very small number of households below the poverty level eligibility, but many in the income category 100-130% FPL.

In Yellowstone County, the estimated number of households would rise by 14%, which would increase the total households to 2,126.

<b>Table 7: Households with Children under 5 with Household Income below 130% FPL</b>						
<b>County</b>	<b>Current Income Eligible Children &lt; 5 (&lt;100 FPL)</b>	<b>Total Households with at least one child under 5</b>	<b>Total Households with children under 5 under &lt; 100% FPL</b>	<b>Total Households with child under 5 &lt; 130% FPL</b>	<b>Estimated Households between 100-130% FPL</b>	<b>Percent Increase in Eligible Households</b>
<b>Carbon County</b>	94	271	50	<b>74</b>	24	<b>48%</b>
<b>Stillwater County</b>	55	400	14	<b>73</b>	59	<b>407%</b>
<b>Yellowstone County</b>	2,315	7486	1,872	<b>2,126</b>	255	<b>14%</b>

Source: US Census, ACS 2009-2013. Estimate of different in households derived from these data.

#### SURVEY DATA ON HOUSEHOLD INCOME ELIGIBILITY

As part of this assessment, a survey was distributed to families at Head Start sites and partner sites. Participants were asked to identify household income in income bands.

<b>Table 8: Household Income among Survey Respondents</b>				
<b>Site</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>Responses to Income Question</b>	<b>Number in Category at or Below FPL</b>	<b>Percent Households in Category at or Below FPL</b>
<b>Head Start</b>				
North Park	15	10	7	70%
Laurel	6	6	4	67%
Lockwood	21	17	11	65%
Red Lodge	11	11	9	82%
<b>Other Sites</b>				
WIC Billings	14	12	9	75%
Early Head Start	14	11	9	82%
HRDC	3	1	1	100%

Source: Billings Head Start Survey, 2015

In all sites, the majority of respondents are in households that reported income in a category at or below the 2015 federal poverty level. The percentage of currently income eligible households was similar between Head Start sites and other survey sites.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH QUALIFICATION

Looking at the elementary age cohort can be useful, since school districts are required to track and report the number of school-aged children that eat free or reduced rate lunch. Free lunch is of most interest, since eligibility is 100% of the FPL or less. Reduced lunch fees, like WIC, does go to 185% of the FPL, so only a portion of those children would be eligible for a potential 101-130% FPL eligibility range. However, it is clear that only a small proportion of families who would qualify for reduced lunch rates actually apply.

All three counties are growing, but neither Stillwater nor Carbon County are growing so fast that classes are seeing rapid shifts in class size. Yellowstone County is growing faster, but still, the rate is not so fast that most schools are adding more than a few children per year. Variability from year to year and class to class actually drowns out most of the differences, so there are likely to be more children in the total 0-4 cohort, but not enough to seriously alter the relationship between elementary figures and very young children.

<b>Table 9: 2014-2015 Elementary School Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility, 2014-2015</b>					
<b>School Year</b>					
<b>School District</b>	<b>Total School Population</b>	<b>% Eligible for Free Lunch (2014-2015)</b>	<b>Number Eligible for Free Lunch (2014-2015)</b>	<b>% Eligible for Reduced Lunch (2014-2015)</b>	<b>Number Eligible for Reduced Lunch (2014-2015)</b>
<b>Yellowstone</b>					
<b><i>Billings Public Elementary</i></b>					
Alkali Creek School (K-5)	398	18.1%	72	6.6%	26
Arrowhead School (K-5)	455	6.4%	29	2.4%	11
Beartooth Elementary (K-5)	526	41.6%	219	7.0%	37
Bench School (K-5)	409	54.1%	221	8.5%	35
Big Sky Elementary (K-5)	493	25.6%	126	7.2%	36
Bitterroot School (K-5)	359	29.2%	105	9.5%	34
Boulder School (K-5)	460	15.9%	73	4.5%	21
Broadwater School (K-5)	366	56.8%	208	8.8%	32
Burlington School (K-5)	299	31.1%	93	9.5%	28
Central Heights School (K-5)	400	32.3%	129	5.8%	23
Eagle Cliffs Elementary (K-5)	454	14.2%	65	9.2%	42
Highland School (K-5)	304	27.7%	84	9.1%	28
McKinley School (K-5)	319	59.9%	188	5.4%	17
Meadowlark School (K-5)	496	28.3%	140	5.9%	29
Miles Avenue School (K-5)	329	49.1%	162	10.7%	35
Newman School (K-5)	258	61.0%	157	12.8%	33
Orchard School (K-5)	395	75.1%	296	9.8%	39
Poly Drive School (K-5)	370	18.7%	69	3.8%	14
Ponderosa School (K-5)	382	64.1%	245	10.7%	41
Rose Park School (K-5)	276	32.3%	89	10.1%	28
Sandstone School (K-5)	486	33.9%	165	11.0%	53
Washington School (K-5)	268	72.5%	195	7.2%	19
<b><i>Other Yellowstone County</i></b>					
Elysian School (K-8)	123	30.5%	60	6.6%	13
St. Francis Primary (K-2)	283	6.3%	18	0.0%	0
Elder Grove School (K-8)	368	14.4%	53	3.1%	11



<b>School District (cont.)</b>	<b>Total School Population</b>	<b>% Eligible for Free Lunch (2014-2015)</b>	<b>Number Eligible for Free Lunch (2014-2015)</b>	<b>% Eligible for Reduced Lunch (2014-2015)</b>	<b>Number Eligible for Reduced Lunch (2014-2015)</b>
Blue Creek Elementary (K-8)	201	11.8%	24	5.1%	10
Broadview School (K-6)	64	35.8%	23	0.0%	0
Mountainview Attendance Center (in Broadview District)	15	100%	15	0.0%	0
Custer School (K-6)	30	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Canyon Creek Elementary (K-6)	193	20.2%	39	7%	13
Independent School (K-8)	297	13.1%	39	7.3%	22
Lockwood Primary (K-2)	414	47.1%	195	11.6%	48
Lockwood Intermediate (3-5)	419	43.6%	183	15.1%	63
Pioneer School (K-6)	-	-	-	-	-
Trinity Lutheran School (K-8)	186	8.4%	17	0.0%	0
<b>Laurel School District</b>					
Laurel South	186	33.5%	62	6.5%	12
Laurel West	347	28.6%	99	8.0%	28
Huntley Project (K-6)	398	39.7%	158	7.8%	31
Shepherd School (K-6)	435	35.9%	156	4.5%	20
<b>Carbon County</b>					
Belfry School (K-6)	-	-	-	-	-
Joilet Elementary (K-6)	181	20.3%	37	9%	16
Red Lodge Elementary (K-5)	189	27.4%	57	9.1%	19
Luther Elementary (K-6)	24	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Bridger Elementary (K-6)	115	47.8%	55	8.9%	10
Fromberg Elementary (K-6)	49	49.4%	24	0%	0
Roberts School (K-6)	71	38.3%	27	0%	0
<b>Stillwater County</b>					
Absarokee Elementary (K-6)	119	18.7%	22	0%	0
Columbus School (K-6)	328	20.0%	66	5.2%	17
Fishtail Elementary (K-8)	-	-	-	-	-
Park City Elementary (K-6)	195	22.5%	44	6.8%	13
Rapelje Elementary (K-6)	45	29.0%	13	0.0%	0
Reed Point Elementary (K-6)	37	35.2%	13	0%	0

Source: Office of Public Instruction, 2014-2015

The overall household poverty level tends to decline as children get older, but it is another indication of approximate participation in another service with eligibility for free lunch at the same level as current Head Start eligibility.

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## ELIGIBLE FOSTER CHILDREN

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Foster children are automatically eligible for Head Start services.

<b>Table 10: Non-Tribal Children in Foster Care Under the Age of Five</b>			
<b>Foster Children</b>	<b>SFY2013</b>	<b>SFY2014</b>	<b>SFY2015</b>
<b>Carbon County</b>			
Total Starting Caseload	4	4	2
Total Caseload during time period (SFY)	7	6	6
Caseload at end of period	4	3	6
<b>Stillwater County</b>			
Total Starting Caseload	0	0	2
Total Caseload during time period (SFY)	0	2	3
Caseload at end of period	0	2	3
<b>Yellowstone County</b>			
Total Starting Caseload	140	150	173
Total Caseload during time period (SFY)	261	279	340
Caseload at end of period	175	194	214

Source, DPHHS Child and Family Services, 2015

Yellowstone County is the only county with a discernible upward trend. It isn't possible to say how many of these children may already have been counted under income eligibility, but it is reasonable to think that some portion of additional children who qualify for Head Start services may be in foster care.

Caseload numbers indicate that there is high turnover in the number of children in foster care, so it is likely that Head Start services will see similar high turnover in children who are in foster care who are enrolled in preschool services.

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## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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Children with special needs are a federally recognized category of needs. Head Start has a priority for children with special needs, ranging from social/emotional disturbances to cognitive delays and learning differences.

For children ages 0-4, it is thought that special needs are under diagnosed. For children 0-36 months, Part C services can provide services for a variety of special needs, if a child meets threshold criteria for a diagnosis. STEP, Inc., based in Billings with a satellite office in Red Lodge, provides these services for all three counties.

At the age of 3, children transition, if need is indicated, to Part B services. Children also continue to be screened and can enter that program between the ages of 3 and 5. School districts or one of three special education cooperatives provide services. Minimum services are designated by law, but some locales provide more intensive services, including special education preschools.

For children who receive a several emotional disturbance (SED) diagnosis, other mental health resources may be indicated. AWARE and Youth Dynamics both work with many children on Medicaid who qualify for services.

In addition to these services, private therapeutic services for children with special needs are available in Billings. However, for Head Start families, one of the major barriers can be whether or not they can cover service costs via Medicaid or other coverage.

Several services for children with special needs offered estimates, observations or exact data on the number of children they see in this area:

**AWARE** estimated that it saw about 40 referrals to its intensive Successful Starts services in the last year for children who were not yet in school. Of those, Billings Head Start referred the most at about 21 kids, 18 of whom lived in Yellowstone County. Between 5 and 10 were referred from STEP, or local doctors. Screening events yielded another 7-8 and the rest were self-referrals by families. Of these children, 7-8 were from outside Carbon or Stillwater County. It was noted that Head Start referrals had higher in the past, around 35-40 referrals, but no explanation for the change was offered. (AWARE, November, 2015)

**STEP, Inc.** handles all children who meet diagnostic thresholds for Part C special needs services from ages 0-36 months. Total children served were:

<b>Table 11: Children Receiving Part C Services, Ages 0-36 Months</b>		
	<b>FY 2015 (July 2014-June 2015)</b>	<b>July-November 30</b>
<b>County</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Carbon County</b>	5	2
<b>Stillwater County</b>	3	2
<b>Yellowstone County</b>	81	20

Source, STEP, December, 2015

### **School Based Services for Children with Special Needs**

School districts are the major provider of special needs services from age 3 up to age 21. Part B services are preschool services for children ages 3-5 who have not entered kindergarten. School aged children ages 6-21 are also provided services through schools.

School districts provide a range of services for children with special needs from ages 6-21. These services vary from extensive interventions to assistance in mainstream classes to short-term interventions designed to address an issue. The percentage of the school-age population that has special needs does not correspond perfectly to younger children, but is the one source of information that does access almost all children.

This is a selection of the percentage of elementary level children who participated in special needs programs in 2014-2015. These are reported as percentages across several grades, so it isn't appropriate to assign a number of students for each grade, but it does give an indication of the percentage of children with special needs that are also likely to be found in the preschool population of the community.

<b>Table 12: Part B Services for Children with Special Needs</b>			
<b>School Agency</b>	<b>Total Students with Special Needs Services (PreK-8th grade) 2014-2015</b>	<b>Percent School Population Using Special Needs Services (PK-8)</b>	<b>Preschool Age (3-K) Enrollment 2014-2015</b>
<b>Carbon Total</b>	<b>125</b>		<b>11</b>
Bridger Schools	26	12.80%	0
Joliet Elem	21	9.00%	0
Roberts Schools	17	14%	3
Fromberg	19	19%	0
Belfry Schools	*	22.90%	0
Luther Elementary	*	3.10%	0
Red Lodge Elementary	42	13.80%	8
<b>Stillwater Total</b>	<b>160</b>		<b>10</b>
Park City Elementary	34	14.10%	4
Columbus Elementary	60	12.30%	5
Reed Point Elementary	*	6.80%	0
Molt Elementary	*	20%	1
Fishtail Elementary	*	0%	0
Nye Elementary	*	0%	0
Rapelje Elementary	*	9.10%	0
Absarokee Elementary	35	20.70%	0
<b>Yellowstone Total</b>	<b>2,680</b>		<b>205</b>
Billings Elementary	1,264	11.30%	163
Lockwood Elementary	145	12.10%	11
Blue Creek Elementary	20	10.30%	1
Canyon Creek Elementary	26	12%	0
Laurel Elementary	173	12.10%	20
Elder Grove Elementary	58	11.50%	1
Custer Schools	*	3.90%	0
Broadview Elementary	10	9.50%	0
Elysian Elementary	19	7.50%	2
Huntley Project Schools	111	14.40%	3
Shepherd Elementary	82	14.90%	1
Pioneer Elementary	*	7.70%	0
Independent Elementary	35	11.40%	3

\* Fewer than 10 students. OPI masks results.

Source: OPI SPED Student Count, GEMS, 2014-2015

<b>Table 13: Selected Special Needs Services for Children ages 3-5</b>	
<b>Yellowstone County</b>	
Billings School District, 20-14-2015 School Year	168
Lockwood School District – special needs preschool, 2015-2016 school year	6
Laurel School District	Not available
Eastern Yellowstone Special Services Co-op	Average 24/yr.
<b>Carbon County</b>	0
<b>Stillwater County</b> , through the Stillwater Sweetgrass Special Education Co-op (estimate of 2015-2016 school year)*	12 (2-3 each in Columbus, Park City, and Absarokee. Reed Point)

Sources: Lockwood Elementary, Office of Public Instruction, 2014-2015, Stillwater Sweetgrass Special Services Co-op

### ESTIMATE OF TOTAL PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The total number of children with special needs is never exact. Many different challenges qualify under federal guidelines. Parents may choose or not choose to have their children screened. Additionally, once children are identified, they may use a variety of services. Since services are not centrally tracked, it is not possible to identify an exact number of children who could use special needs services. However, public schools do have strong programs to identify children, so a fairly good estimate can be extrapolated by looking at the percentage of children who have been identified through school-based services and extending that to preschool-age children.

The overall percentage of children with special needs who have been identified in the three county areas varies, but is generally between 11-14% of the school population. Part B services to preschool children are also tracked. At 12% prevalence, it suggests that about 25% (roughly 57 preschool children) of preschool students who have a special need are not receiving Part B services. It is possible that some of the children who aren't receiving Part B services are receiving services from other sources, but there is no source of data to answer that question.

In addition to the children who do not receive Part B special needs services, not all communities have a Part B special needs preschool. There is no preschool based special needs services in Stillwater County. The Laurel Special Needs Co-op preschool does have a preschool based in Laurel, but the Co-op did not respond to identify how many of those students are from Carbon County. The Eastern Yellowstone Coop provides services in Eastern Yellowstone County, but only Lockwood preschool in the area. Monica Pugh, director of the Sweetwater Stillwater Special Needs Coop, said that "preschool would better," to have in addition to specific one on one services. (Pugh, 2015)

### NUTRITIONAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Families with young children are eligible for services related to nutrition, insurance, and supplemental income, depending on their income level.

### WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC PROGRAM)

WIC is a program to ensure that pregnant women and children ages 0-4 have adequate access to healthy foods, since nutrition in the first years has life-long impacts on health. Additionally, WIC provides periodic health screening that helps catch potential problems early. Because it is a nutritional program, rather than a poverty program, eligibility goes to 185% of the FPL, a level of

income equated with continuous food security. Because of this, WIC enrollment only partially corresponds to Head Start eligibility.

<b>Table 14: Average Number of Woman, Infants, and Children Enrolled in WIC July-Sept. 2015</b>			
	<b>Pregnant</b>	<b>Infants</b>	<b>Children (2-4)</b>
<b>Yellowstone County</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>1,460</b>
Billings	298	751	1,412
Laurel	14	18	56
<b>Carbon County</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>
Red Lodge	3	4	19
Joliet	1	2	2
<b>Stillwater County</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>

Source: Riverstone Health, 2015.

Riverstone Health WIC, which supplies WIC services for all three counties, noted that WIC participation has declined in recent years, but no cause has been pinpointed. (Riverstone Health, November, 2015) WIC participation is voluntary, so only a portion of the eligible population participates, even though the program has no cap.

Stillwater County has fewer children and families at or below 100% of the FPL than Carbon County, but more children in the WIC program. It appears that a higher proportion of women and children on WIC are above the poverty line in Stillwater County, compared to Carbon County. However, the exact proportion of families above and below the poverty line isn't known, since WIC does not share details of eligibility.

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#### SUPPLEMENTAL ASSISTANCE (SNAP, SSI, MEDICAID, TANF)

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The Office of Public Assistance does run programs aimed at alleviating poverty. The programs provide food assistance, medical insurance assistance, and supplemental income.

Families need to be able to document eligibility and voluntarily participate. This program is always an undercount of the total number of people, who are income eligible for services, but there has historically been a strong link between these services and Head Start because families enrolled in one would almost always be eligible for the other services.

The Office of Public Assistance was not able to share overall data on children eligible for the three county areas. However, January 2015, OPA did share a list of children in Carbon and Yellowstone County who were 4 and eligible receiving SNAP benefits. SNAP benefits are available to households with up 130% FPL income. In Carbon County, the total was 12 children. In Yellowstone County, the total was about 461 households. (OPA, 2015)

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#### HOUSING, WORK AND TRANSPORTATION

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##### HOUSING

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Housing is the largest expense most families have. It is often reported as a factor in where and whether families have adequate housing and is a factor in both transience and where they live.

In the Billings area, housing is perceived as both expensive and relatively difficult to procure. Home ownership programs, like those run by HRDC 7 offer help with home buying, but families who are income eligible for Head Start services fall into the “very low income” category under HRDC’s programs and aren’t able to afford much of the affordable housing offered for sale.

Rental availability is another issue. Public housing is available, as is housing under low-income tax credit programs that are privately owned. However, it is limited and mostly unavailable in the more rural areas of Yellowstone County and Stillwater and Carbon counties. This means that families may not be able to find housing, use sub-standard housing, or live with other families.

<b>Table 15: Living Situation among Survey Respondents</b>				
<b>Sites</b>	<b>Total Survey Responses</b>	<b>Rent</b>	<b>Own</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Total, All Sites</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Head Start</b>				
North Park	15	8	6	1
Laurel	6	5	1	0
Lockwood	21	10	11	0
Red Lodge	11	8	3	0
<b>Other Sites</b>				
WIC Billings	14	11	2	0
Early Head Start	14	7	4	3
HRDC	3	3	0	0

Source: Billings Head Start Survey, 2015

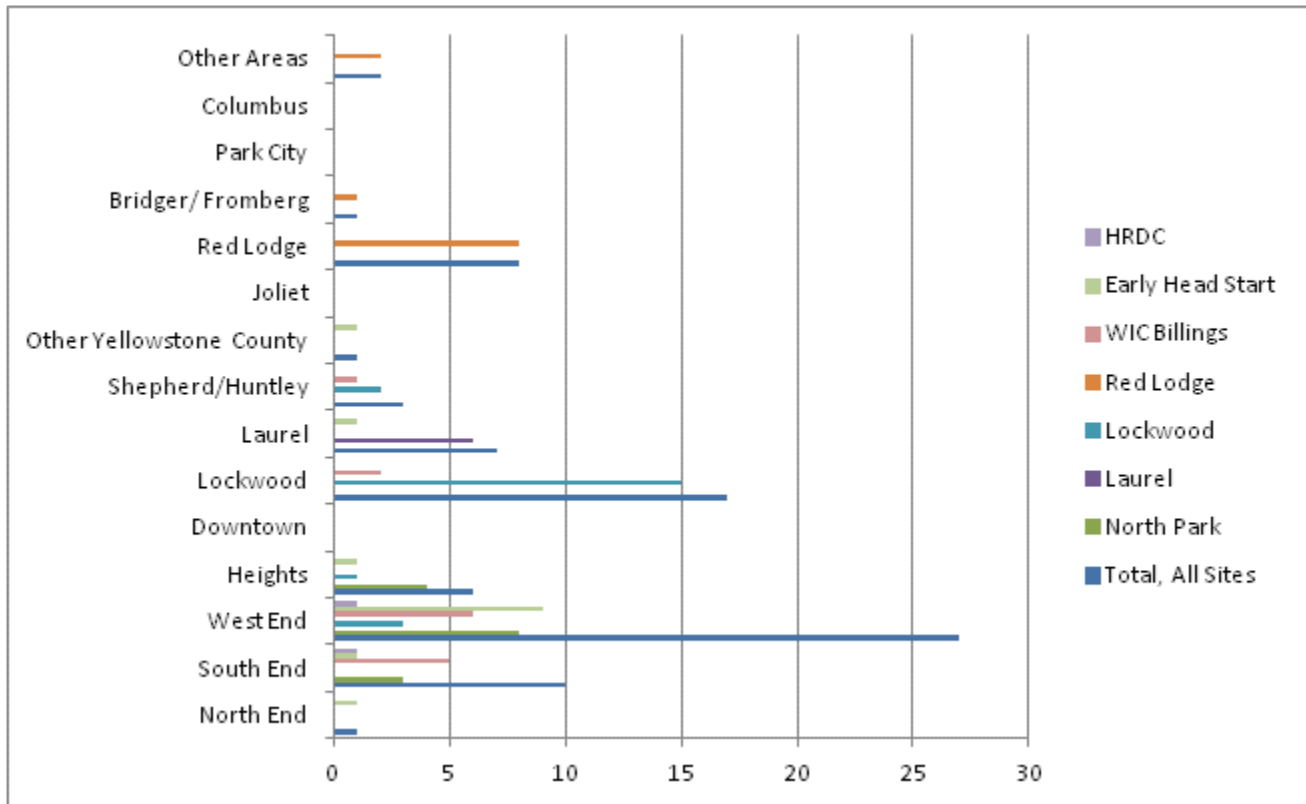
In all sites, the majority of respondents rented, with the exception of Lockwood. Other encompasses both homelessness and transitional housing.

## LIVING AND WORK LOCATIONS

Survey respondents were also asked to identify the area they lived in and where all adults in their household worked. Two findings stand out:

- People live and work all over Billings, but the West End has the highest number of people who live or work in the area.
- Many families live in one location and commute to work in one to several different neighborhoods or towns.

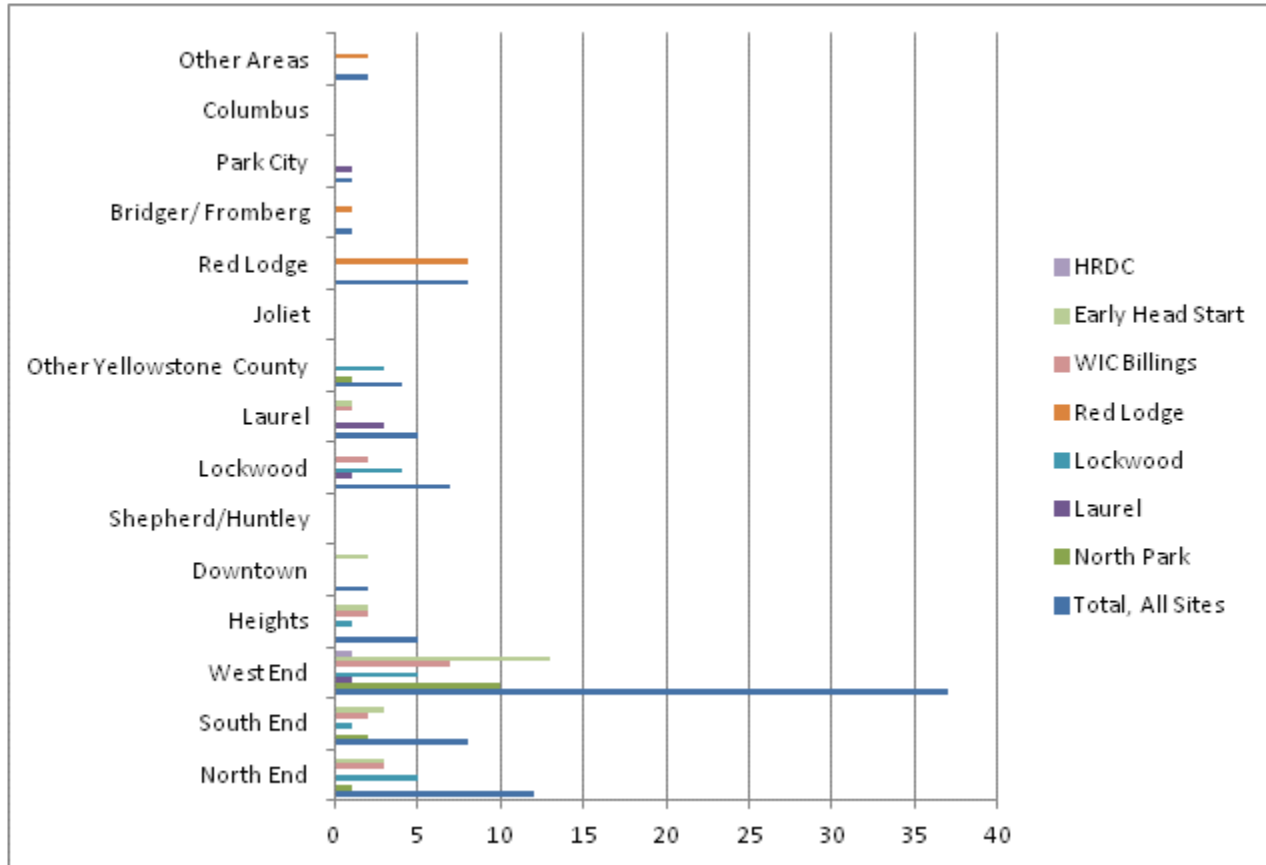
**Figure 5: Living Locations among Survey Respondents, by Survey Site**



Source: Billings Head Start Survey, 2015



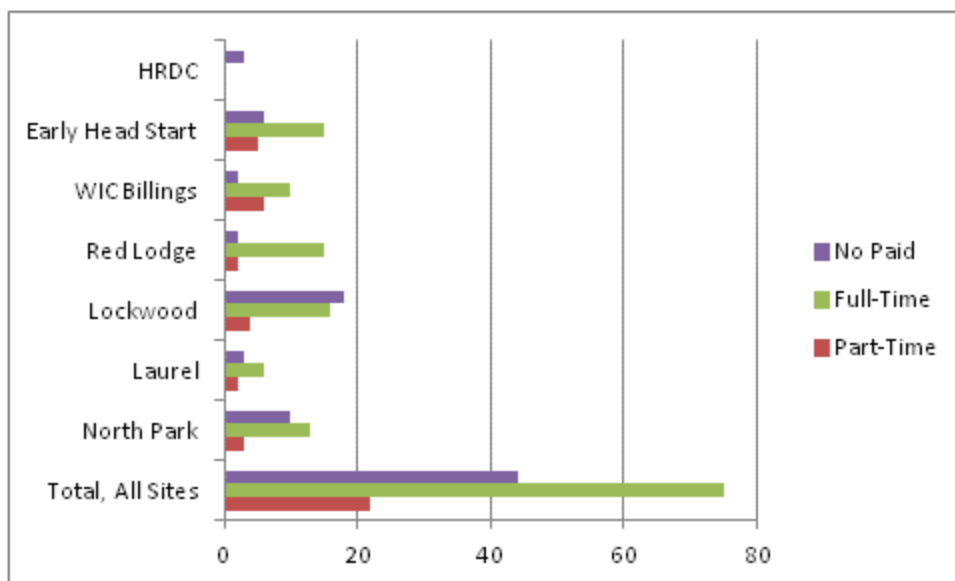
**Figure 6: Work Locations among Survey Respondents by Survey Site**



Source: Billings Head Start, 2015

Survey participants also identified whether and how much paid work adult members of the household participated in. The majority do work part or full time outside the home.

**Figure 7: Paid Work Status in Survey Participant Households**



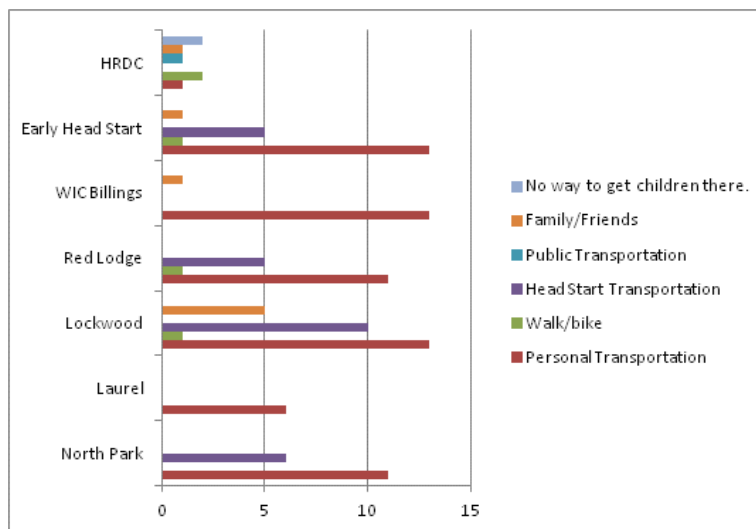
Source: Billings Head Start Survey, 2015

One implication is that many families do have the need for child care at some point during the day. Additionally, many families could qualify for Best Beginnings Scholarships. For a more detailed description of those scholarships and factors that affect enrollment, see the section on them. Finally, transportation to and from work is a necessity for most families.

## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is important throughout the region because home, work and child care are relatively spread out.

**Figure 8: Transportation Types Used among Survey Respondents**

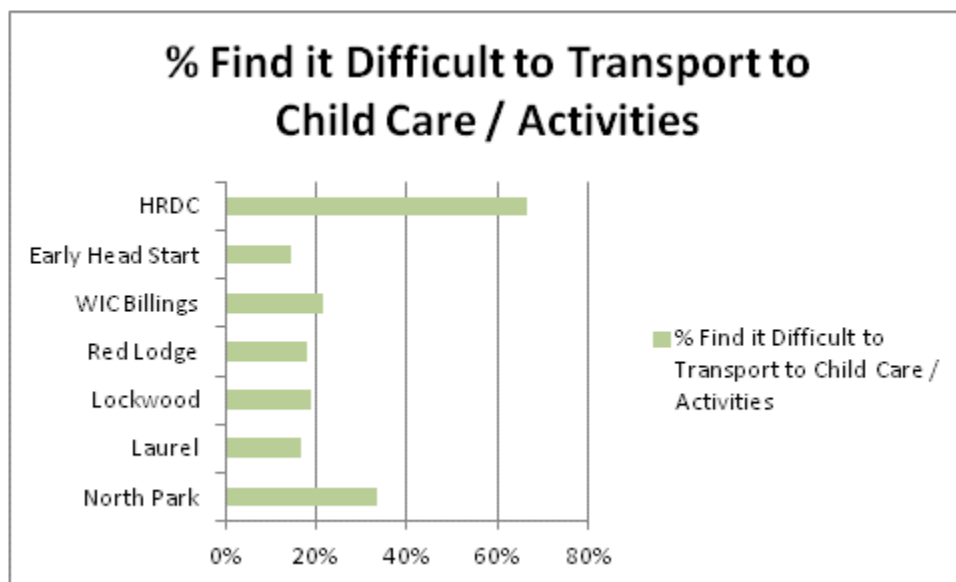


Source: Billings Head Start Survey, 2015

Personal transportation is the most common and often only transportation option survey respondents listed. 68 of the 84 total respondents used personal transportation.

Survey participants were also asked about the level of difficulty they experienced in getting their children to child care and activities. The majority found it easy to get their children to child care and activities, but a significant minority identified transport to child care and activities as difficult.

**Figure 9: Survey Participants Who Find Transportation Difficult**



Source: Billings Head Start Survey, 2015

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## HOME VISITING SERVICES

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Riverstone Health offers home visiting services, primarily to families with children ages 0-3, in the Billings area. Services include the Parents as Teachers (PAT) model, Nurse Family Partners (NFP), and traditional home visiting. Income eligibility varies between the programs, though many families in these programs would be eligible for Head Start. The programs' other risk factors used to determine eligibility are similar to the types of needs that Head Start seeks to address.

These programs serve families throughout the greater Billings area. To help Head Start, they sampled where current families live (as of December 2015). The percent breakdown is:

Doug Anderson, program manager, points out that this may not reflect the underlying population need, since this is a voluntary service. The neighborhood boundaries are slightly different than United Way uses, but it is clear that the West End and South End both have a significant number of families receiving services. The North Side, Lockwood and Laurel all appear somewhat underrepresented compared to the underlying population.

<b>Table 16: Riverstone Health Home Visiting Family Locations, 2015</b>		
<b>Location</b>	<b>Pregnant Women</b>	<b>Children 0-4 Years Old</b>
West Billings (Division St to 24 <sup>th</sup> St. W.)	33%	18%
Far West Billings (24 <sup>th</sup> St. W. to Laurel)	19%	9%
Northside Billings (East of 27 <sup>th</sup> St. N. and north of 6 <sup>th</sup> Ave. N)	4%	6%
South side Billings (all area south of railroad tracks)	22%	27%
Heights Billings (all area of northeast Billings)	11%	31%
Huntley/Shepherd/Worden area	7%	5%
Laurel	4%	2%
Lockwood	0%	2%

Source: Riverstone Health, Home Visiting Programs, 2015

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## CHILD CARE AND EARLY EDUCATION SERVICES

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Child care services are one of the most expensive and potentially difficult to find services for families with young children. Preschool education is both the formal option for early education and also seen as a type of child care. In Montana, licensing barely deals with questions of quality care; rather it focuses on health and safety issues. Additionally, preschools do not need to be licensed at all. STARS to Quality does offer a way to build and evaluate high quality child care and preschool programs, but it has only recently been rolled out state-wide and can be a cumbersome and resource intensive program.

So, parents have the difficulty of finding, affording, and evaluating quality care and early education options. In many more rural areas of the tri-county area, no near-by options exist.

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## CHILD CARE AND EARLY EDUCATION

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Child care and early education is served through licensed care, unregistered child care and preschools (both private and school based) and through informal means. Licensed care is the easiest to identify, though licensing does not distinguish between preschool and child care services. Private unlicensed child care and preschool are more difficult to identify, since there is no tracking mechanism for programs. Finally, informal care can't be tracked, though an attempt to evaluate use rates among survey respondents provides a glimpse of how Head Start and potential Head Start eligible families use informal care.

## LICENSED CHILD CARE AND PRESCHOOL

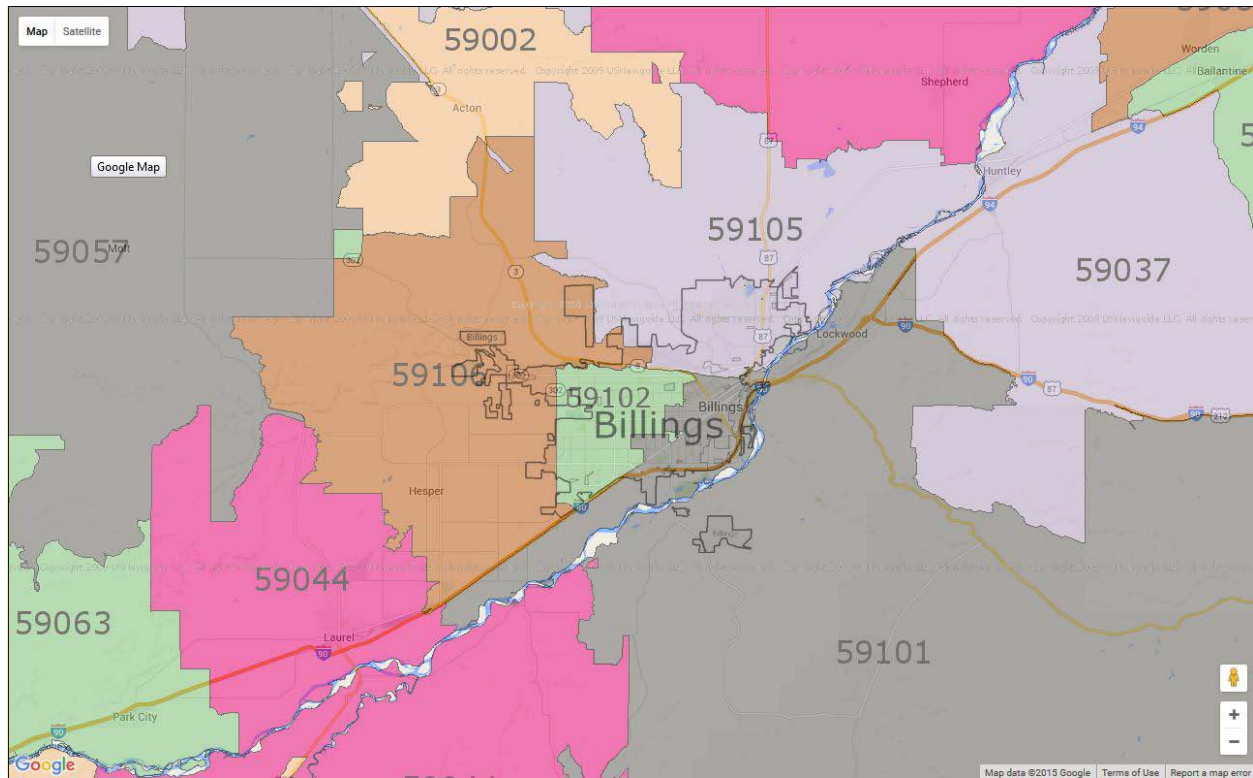
The number of licensed options for child care and preschool options vary greatly by community. Billing has 183 options, while many communities have no registered child care or preschool offerings. Here is summary of selected community child care availability:

<b>Table 17: Total Registered Child Care Slots and Facilities by Location, 2015</b>		
<b>Location</b>	<b>Total Registered Slots</b>	<b>Number of Facilities</b>
<b>Carbon County</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>4</b>
Bridger	6	1
Fromberg	12	1
Red Lodge	48	1
Roberts	6	1
<b>Stillwater County</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>5</b>
Absarokee	12	1
Columbus	72	4
<b>Yellowstone County</b>	<b>3,577</b>	<b>198</b>
Ballantine	18	2
Billings, Total	3,323	183
Billings, 59501	1,358	65
Billings, 59502	1,190	73
Billings, 59505	733	39
Billings, 59506	42	6
Lockwood	54	6
Billings, South	68	6
Billings, West (South Portion)	227	11
Heights (East and West)	346	18
Huntley	24	2
Laurel	148	8
Shepherd	52	1
Worden	12	2

Source: DPHHS, Child Care Inspection/Licensing Reports, November 2015

<http://ccubs-sanswrite.hhs.mt.gov/MontanaPublic/ProviderSearch.aspx>

**Figure 10: Map of Greater Billing Zip Codes**



Source: [http://www.zipmap.net/Montana/Yellowstone\\_County/Billings.htm](http://www.zipmap.net/Montana/Yellowstone_County/Billings.htm)

These numbers represent all licensed child care facilities active in November 2015. They may offer preschool services. Not all slots are available to children of preschool age. The state of Montana has different requirements for infants and a facility may license up to age 12. However, this gives an indication of the range of possible sites. Family Connections, the organizations that handles referrals, was not able to break down their site data by age in this assessment region.

The United Way has mapped about 135 of the total list of licensed child care facilities. Looking at key areas, Lockwood, South Billings, and parts of West Billings appear to have fewer facilities on-site than are needed.

The full list of providers can be found in Appendix A

## SCHOOL-BASED PRESCHOOL SERVICES

In addition, there are school-based preschool opportunities in some school districts in the tri-county area. Schools may have preschools that serve children with special needs who qualify for Part B services, other preschools, both or neither.

<b>Table 18: Selected School-Based Preschools in Carbon, Stillwater, and Yellowstone Counties</b>		
	<b>Preschool (Estimate of Children)</b>	<b>Part B Special Needs Preschool</b>
<b>Yellowstone</b>		
Billings (2014-2015)	0	168
Laurel (Co-op Preschool – estimate)	0	Not available
Lockwood (Jan-June only – A/B schedule for classes)	12-20	6 (2015; average is 12)
Shepherd/Huntley Project (based at Huntley Project site in Worden)	12-15	None
<b>Carbon</b>		
Joliet	0	None
Red Lodge	0	None
Bridger (charging for services, hope to be free in future)	12-14	None
Belfry		None
Roberts		None
<b>Stillwater</b>		
Absarokee (private preschool adjacent to school)	0	None
Columbus	0	None
Park City	0	None
Reed Point	5	None

Sources: OPI (Billings, Columbus, Joliet, Laurel), 2014-2015; Lockwood, Mike Bowman; Shepherd/Huntley Project, Clint Croy; Bridger, Bill Phillips; Park City, Reed Point, Monica Pugh.

The school-based preschools are in flux right now. Several schools started new preschools, so presence or absence of a preschool does not show up in the OPI GEMS database reliably. One school principal reported that they had looked at the potential for universal preschool funding that brought forward in the 2015 legislative session as a call for setting up a preschool. In general, principals were very interested in preschool being served in some form, but it was difficult to tell what the future of this particular set of preschools will look like without additional funding.

Part B services are also covered in the section on special needs. Only some districts provide services to preschool aged children (ages 3-5) through school preschool-based services. The rest provide appropriate therapies to children who meet the thresholds for a diagnosis in one or more of the special needs categories.

## UNREGISTERED CHILD CARE AND PRESCHOOL SERVICES

In Montana, preschool services do not need to be licensed by DPHHS. Billings Head Start is one of the preschool programs in the area that is not licensed by the State. Many others exist. In addition, drop-off child care is not licensed through the State of Montana. This means that it is very difficult to make any kind of comprehensive determination of the total number of preschools and child care services that might be available in a given location.

Concentrating on more rural regions, here is a partial list of unregistered preschools that are providing early education services in the tri-county area:

**Stillwater County:**

- Absarokee: A private preschool is adjacent to the elementary school and offers preschool services.
- Columbus: In addition to registered services, a private academy offers preschool services.
- Park City: The only preschool reported was a private one located across the street from the elementary school. The principal of Park City School reported roughly 1/3 of entering kindergarten students have experience with preschool.

**Carbon County:**

- Joliet has an affordable church-based preschool.

**Yellowstone County:**

- A church-based preschool is in Shepherd.
- Nine of the twenty-four provider contacts on the 2015 Head Start family provider list in Billings use in addition to Head Start either could not be matched to a licensed facility or were identified as a drop-in center. Drop-in centers do not offer preschool education, but are not required to be licensed.

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**COSTS OF CHILD CARE**

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Child care can be a major expense for families with young children. Costs can be prohibitive, but also vary widely.

DPHHS completes a cost study every two years for regions across the state and sets Best Beginnings Scholarships rates at 75% of the average market value for the region. For the region that includes Carbon, Stillwater, and Yellowstone counties, the 2009 regional survey set prices at:

<b>Table 19: Best Beginnings Scholarship Reimbursement Rates, Billings Area</b>		
	<b>Market survey rate, 2-12 yrs. old (102% of the 2009 market rate, daily &gt; 2)</b>	<b>Market survey rate, &lt; 2 yrs. Old (102% of the 2009 market rate, daily)</b>
<b>Child Care Center</b>	\$29.38	\$33.66
<b>Child Care Group</b>	\$26.52	\$29.58
<b>Child Care Family</b>	\$25.50	\$27.54

Source: DPHHS 2014 Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship Policy Manual

Rate set for Sweet Grass, Stillwater, Carbon, Yellowstone, Big Horn, and Treasure Counties.

**BEST BEGINNINGS SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Best Beginnings Scholarship program is designed to help families with incomes up to 150% pay for child care. This means that not all scholarship recipients will qualify for Head Start services.



Best Beginnings Scholarships also have restrictions on who can use them, so there are also Head Start families who might not qualify for these scholarships, but do have a need for child care.

The program helps to pay for care when parents are not available to care for their children:

- During working hours;
- During school or training hours, if meeting work requirements;
- If they are a teen parent attending high school; or
- If they are a parent receiving TANF who is participating in family investment agreement activities.

( DPHHS Best Beginnings Scholarship Program, 2015)

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/BestBeginningsScholarships.aspx>)

These numbers do give an indication of the number of young children in the tri-county area who make sure of this service.

Individual child care facilities can choose whether to accept scholarships. If a facility charges more than Best Beginnings scholarships reimburse, the facility may also choose to the difference to families. As a practical matter, this means that many of the facilities, even those that accept scholarships, are likely to be too expensive for many Head Start families.

HRDC's Best Beginnings scholarship program was not able to share specific facility data with Billings Head Start, due to confidentiality issues. However, Head Start is able to look at information families provided about where they go for child care, and a former Head Start VISTA was able to call several sites in 2014 to determine whether some sites accepted Best Beginnings scholarships.

### **Estimate and Child Care Availability**

An estimate of the exact number of slots available to Head Start eligible families is not possible, given available data. However, a rough estimate suggests that only  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of current Head Start Families would be able to access the Best Beginnings Scholarships and adequate child care because one or more barriers to entry would make it difficult to stay on:

- **Eligibility requirements:** Best Beginnings Scholarships are not available to those who are unemployed and not currently enrolled in qualified work program.
- **Change in Status:** When a family changes its work status, the family does need to reapply. While in theory, this is easier than the first time, the application process takes significant time.
- **Availability of Child Care:** Facilities voluntarily decided whether to enroll in the program or not. In addition, facilities have the option to charge the difference between the reimbursement rate and the facility fees. Finally, in some rural areas, the child care which would qualify simply isn't available. The exact gaps in this system could not be assessed, since the program was not allowed to share that data.
- **Application Process:** The paper version of the application is about 36 pages long. There is a new online system that will hopefully alleviate some of the issues associated with the long

application process, but the length can be time consuming and intimidating, particularly for those applicants with limited literacy or English language skills.

## SURVEY RESULTS: EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE NEEDS

Surveys were distributed to current Head Start families and at sites where families who are likely to be income eligible would go for other services.

Surveys were analyzed from the following sites:

Yellowstone County:

- North Park Head Start
- Laurel Head Start
- Lockwood Head Start
- Billings WIC office
- HRDC - in person contacts

Carbon County:

- Red Lodge Head Start

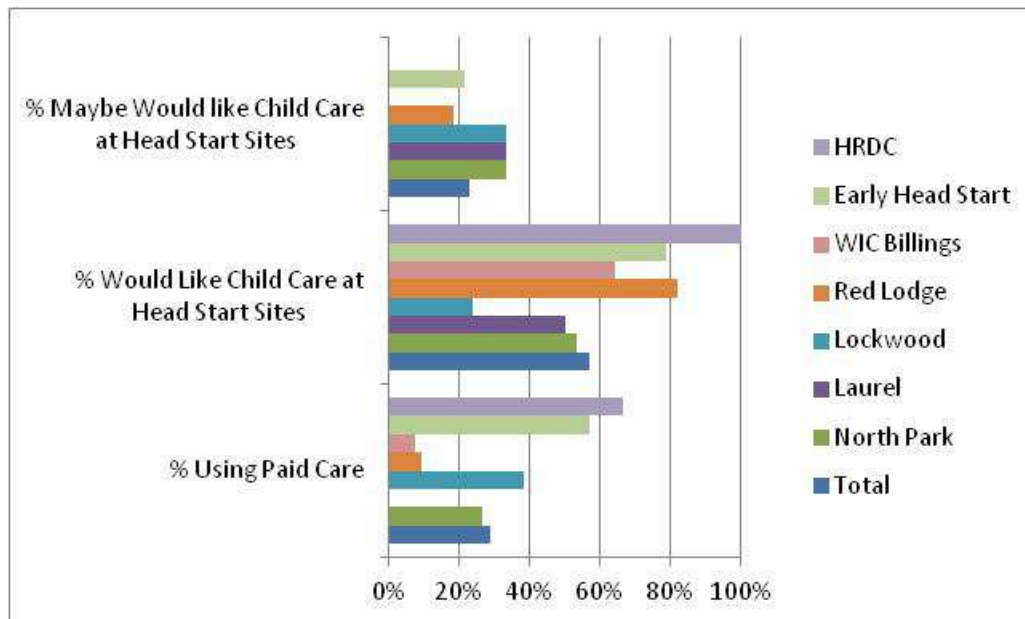
Table 20: Child Care Usage, by Type						
Head Start	Use Paid Child Care	% Using Paid Care	Preschool	% Preschool	Informal Care	% Informal Care
North Park	4	27%	12	80%	4	27%
Laurel	0	0%	6	100%	5	83%
Lockwood	8	38%	14	67%	3	14%
Red Lodge	1	9%	9	82%	3	27%
<b>Other Sites</b>						
WIC Billings	1	7%	3	21%	5	38%
Early Head Start	8	57%	7	50%	0	0%
HRDC	2	67%	1	33%	1	33%

Source: BHS Survey, 2015

Respondents were given the opportunity to choose all child care and preschool options that apply. It is interesting that fewer than 100% of respondents at three of the four Head Start sites presented identified that their child or children were in preschool. It isn't clear whether Head Start is a different category for some parents or some other factor.

At all sites except Lockwood, more survey respondents thought having Head Start and additional child care services at the same site would be helpful, compared to the number of families with children currently in paid child care.

**Figure 11: Current Paid Child Care Use and Desired Child Care at Head Start Sites**



Source: BHS Survey, 2015

The percentage who would be interested in child care at Head Start sites is in all cases higher than the total currently using paid child care. The Red Lodge Head Start site appears to have the largest difference between current use of paid care and interest in child care at the site.

In all cases, except for the very small sample collected at HRDC (3 responses), fewer than 100% of survey participants thought it would helpful to have both child care and Head Start at the same site. The total who thought that this would be an asset was about 50%.

## APPENDIX A: LIST OF LICENSED CARE SITES IN THE THREE COUNTY AREA

The following list is all licensed providers that appear in the Department of Health and Human Services list as of November 23, 2015. It has been reported that one additional licensed facility exists in Joliet that does not appear on this list.

Provider	City	Zip	Facility Description	Capacity
<b>Carbon County</b>				
Diana Wham / Diana's Lil' Darlins'	Bridger	59014	Family Child Care	6
Ashley Engelke	Fromberg	59029	Group Child Care	12
Beartooth Children's Center	Red Lodge	59068	Child Care Center	48
Tiffany Morehouse / Tiffany's Daycare	Roberts	59070	Family Child Care	6
<b>Stillwater County</b>				
Stephanie Raville	Absarokee	59001	Group Child Care	12
Kids Club	Columbus	59019	Child Care Center	48
Julie Ludwig / Little Bear Daycare	Columbus	59019	Group Child Care	12
Traci Osborne / Cougar Cubs Childcare	Columbus	59019	Family Child Care	6
Stephanie Gibson / Daisy Patch Daycare	Columbus	59019	Family Child Care	6
<b>Yellowstone County</b>				
Ninette Johnson / Nina's Daycare	Ballantine	59006	Group Child Care	12
Paulina Aplin / Nina's Daycare 2	Ballantine	59006	Family Child Care	6
Bibs To Books	Billings	59105	Child Care Center	30
Michelle D Cantrell	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Kid Kollege	Billings	59105	Child Care Center	115
Linda Vogl	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Ivalie Wood / Kids R Us Home Care	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Mary Reese / Grandma's House	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Renee Bechtold / NayNay's Daycare	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Little Sprouts Playhouse/Monica Tavenner	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Jackie Jeanette Hoke	Billings	59105	Family Child Care	6
Heather Loar/ It's Just Like Home	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Jamie Hass / Step by Step Childcare	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	11
A Small World Early Childhood Center	Billings	59105	Child Care Center	70
Aimee Hauber / In HIS Hands Childcare	Billings	59105	Family Child Care	6
Dawn Ikener / Lil' Cupcakes Childcare	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Megan Gray / Kids Castle	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Christine Dorris/It's Just Like Home Too	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Debbie Dorsey	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Shelly Pitsch	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
April Peterson / April's Daycare	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Charity Rohrbaugh	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Jamey Mooney / Happy Munchkins	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6

<b>Yellowstone County</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Zip</b>	<b>Facility Description</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Sierra M Davis / Kiddie Kingdom Daycare	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Diane Albright / Sunrise Daycare	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Crystal Bohn / Crystal's Infant Toddler	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Bright Little Stars Inc #2	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	26
Meghan Wyman / A Kid's Life Childcare	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Sheanna Reiser / Happy Home Daycare	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Carrie Agnew / Shenanigans Child Care	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Jodi White	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Janee Rae Leibrand	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Christine Muri	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Kid Kountry Child Dev. Center	Billings	59102	Child Care Center	99
Michelle Contreras / Busy Bees Daycare	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Jan Litton	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Nicole Moberly / Little Monsters	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Bright Little Stars Inc #4	Billings	59102	Child Care Center	44
Tiffany Lynn Vandever/ Buggy Bear	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Lacey Daun Senter / Love Laugh & Learn	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Elise M Murray / Babies N Beyond Childca	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Sharon Adams	Billings	59105	Family Child Care	6
Cindy C Brey	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Michelle Clark	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Community Day Care	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	90
Cindy Cuellar	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Myrna F Custer	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Discovery Day Care	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	170
Jane Reusink / Giggles, Games & Guidance	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
April Marie Frank	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Friendship House Child Care Center	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	100
Karen Howell	Billings	59106	Family Child Care	6
Carla LaFurge	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Carol Lawson	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Little Seeds	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	87
Log Cabin Day Care Center	Billings	59102	Child Care Center	28
Mary Ann Mills / Cottonwood Daycare	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Lori Miller	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Eldora Shartzter	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Deborah Rickey	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Debbie Turner	Billings	59105	Family Child Care	6
Darlene Wanner	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Debbie Wood	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6

<b>Yellowstone County</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Zip</b>	<b>Facility Description</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Young Families Early Head Start, Inc	Billings	59102	Child Care Center	40
YWCA	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	49
YWCA Billings Child Center 2	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	28
Diana / Anton Feller	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Debra Welch	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Little Rascals DCC - Lake Elmo	Billings	59105	Child Care Center	51
Jo Rae Sarsten / Happy Jo's	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Laura Lisa Hanke	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Joyce Hein	Billings	59106	Family Child Care	6
Terri Redmond	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Teresa Seward	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Pooh's Too	Billings	59102	Child Care Center	120
Linda Sue Carlson	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Linda Atkinson / Tiny Treasures Day Care	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Jan Hefner / Jan's Daycare	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Michelle Brown Repeta	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Angela Anderson/ Lil' Angels Preschool C	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Janet Lynn Abdallah	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Aurora Jean Gunville	Billings	59105	Family Child Care	6
Center For Generations	Billings	59102	Child Care Center	137
Becky Skogas / Camp Becky's	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Sue Davis Sherman	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Marion Denk	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Cari LeDosquet / Grandma's Place	Billings	59105	Family Child Care	6
Angela Christena Keller	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Millicent R Wine	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Alisa Clarke	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Cindy Trumbo	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Corinna Hamwey	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Carole Hammeren	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Lecia Holbert / Watch 'Em Grow Daycare	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Amie Childers / Lil' Ducks	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Shelly Stanley-Lehman / Family Tree	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Teresa Bidleman / Country Bumpkins	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Diane Elliott / Peep Squeeks	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Stacy Wegner/Teddy Bear Junction Daycare	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Kimberly Jane Redding	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Ramona Murphy	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Shirley's Place / St. Vincent Healthcare	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	52

<b>Yellowstone County</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Zip</b>	<b>Facility Description</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Kids-R-Us Childcare Center	Billings	59105	Child Care Center	40
Brenda Opitz / Brenda's Busy Bodies	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Rhonda Meyer / Our Home Daycare	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Tammi Russell	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Cheryl Bradley	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Misty Rae Harris	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Ashley Hanson / Appleseed	Billings	59106	Family Child Care	6
Rene Johnson	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Sheryl Hutzenbiler	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Bright Little Stars Inc #1	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Pam Le'Mons	Billings	59105	Family Child Care	6
Carie LaFranier / Carie's Day Care	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Story Book Hollow, Inc.	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	40
Trinity Lutheran Childcare / Jodi Kesler	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Marcia Jamison	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Nancy Jo Martin / ABC Daycare	Billings	59105	Family Child Care	6
Velma Seymour / Charlie Highsmith	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Erica J Dement	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Ann Davis / Grammy Ann's	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Erica Lehfeldt / Waddlers to Toddlers	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Lori Catalano	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Crystal Bohn / Crystal's Preschool Progr	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Karen Bloomenrader /Bloomenrader Daycare	Billings	59105	Family Child Care	6
Jameliah Nelson / Bumble Bee Childcare	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Crystal Bohn / Crystals' Afterschool Prog	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Christine Grant / Second Home Daycare	Billings	59106	Group Child Care	12
Cara Hornung	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	10
Danylle King / Spoiled Rotten Daycare	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Tabitha Frasca / Runamuck Manor	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Tabitha Steiner / Tinkering Tots	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Suzanne Macht	Billings	59105	Family Child Care	6
Natasha Nelson / Lil Munchkins Inc.	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Penni Hoagland /Adventures in Montessori	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Christopher Waller/Little Acorns	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Corrine McDonald	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	5
Kids World Child Enrichment Center, Inc	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	70
Brigida Chavoya	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Summer Schoer / Diapers 2 Denim	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Patti Gross / Ready-Set-Grow Childcare	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6

<b>Yellowstone County</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Zip</b>	<b>Facility Description</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Kody Porter / Candy Land Childcare	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Abigail Waller / Little Acorns 2	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Lisa Van Setten/ Step by Step Child Care	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Priscilla's Place Pre-School Center	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	52
Denae Ronish	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Luanne Cook / The Learning Ladder	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Julie Stethem	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Colleen Krebs / Little Bear's Care	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Jamie Redding / Apple of Your Eye Daycar	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Erin Cofer/ Wee World Child Care	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Christine Mock / Christian Care	Billings	59105	Family Child Care	6
Heather Tallman-Girvin / Happy Lanes	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
William R. Lowe CC & E Center	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	50
Carrie Roberts / Cradles to Crayons	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Little Dreamers Daycare Learning Center	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	49
Billings Catholic Schools E C C	Billings	59101	Child Care Center	39
Toddle Town Children's Academy, LLC	Billings	59102	Child Care Center	44
Jessica Nava / Little Rhythms Daycare	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Ada Dede / Namaste Daycare	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Melissa Kamp / Creative Minds	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Jamie Stumpf	Billings	59105	Family Child Care	5
Jacqui Helzer / Buttons & Bows	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Kountry Kare Inc.	Billings	59105	Child Care Center	75
Rana M Rasmussen / Little Peoples	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Jaimi Christina Murray / Tyke Town	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Lynn Roach / The Best of Both Worlds	Billings	59106	Family Child Care	6
Erin Moots	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Cornerstone Kids, LLC/ Shawna Vezey	Billings	59105	Child Care Center	42
Cheryl Eileen Emmons / Apple Academy Inc	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Jackie Walby / Stepping Stones Academy	Billings	59106	Family Child Care	6
Mary Rager / Open Bible Christian	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Sarah L Alden / Sarah's Lil Monkies	Billings	59105	Group Child Care	12
Little Minions Childcare / Laurie Welch	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Heather Holland / Leap to Learning	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Brooke K Cecil / Awesome Day Child Care	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Alayna Foster / Boogers & Band-aids	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Melissa A Scheer / Munchkin Land	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Tiffany Vandever / Buggy Bear 2	Billings	59101	Group Child Care	12
Toby Ellithorpe / Papa's Daycare	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6



<b>Yellowstone County</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Zip</b>	<b>Facility Description</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Christina Miller	Billings	59101	Family Child Care	6
Alicia Schettler / Licia's Littles	Billings	59102	Family Child Care	6
Billings Montessori School Inc	Billings	59102	Child Care Center	63
Alayna Foster / Boogers and Band-aids 2	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Erica R Lehfeltdt / Waddlers to Toddlers	Billings	59102	Group Child Care	12
Shae Kautz / Little Buckaroos	Huntley	59037	Group Child Care	12
Dawn Hampton	Huntley	59037	Group Child Care	12
Nancy Hogg	Laurel	59044	Family Child Care	6
Annette Vanderloos / Annette's Busy Bees	Laurel	59044	Family Child Care	6
Barbara Shick / Anna's Childcare	Laurel	59044	Family Child Care	6
Jamie Pluhar	Laurel	59044	Family Child Care	6
The Sunshine Academy/Sara Schreiner	Laurel	59044	Child Care Center	100
Jackie Johnson / Jumpin Jax	Laurel	59044	Group Child Care	12
Heather Wilkerson / Little Sunshine	Laurel	59044	Family Child Care	6
Kasey Felder	Laurel	59044	Family Child Care	6
Connie Jimison - Kid Corral Childcare &	Shepherd	59079	Child Care Center	52
Lynne Remington	Worden	59088	Family Child Care	6
Diane L Morehouse	Worden	59088	Family Child Care	6

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## APPENDIX B: BILLINGS HEAD START DETAILED SURVEY RESULTS

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The Billings Head Start administered a survey to current Head Start parents and at partner services in Yellowstone and Carbon counties.

Surveys were administered in November of 2015, returned and analyzed for the following sites:

Yellowstone County:

- HRDC: 3
- Billings WIC: 14
- Young Families Early Head Start: 14
- North Park Head Start: 15
- Lockwood Head Start: 21
- Laurel Head Start: 6

Carbon County

- Red Lodge Head Start: 11

In all, 84 surveys were returned and analyzed. There were additional surveys administered at the Joliet Head Start site and more reported at the North Park Head Start site, but those were not returned to the investigator and thus could not be analyzed.

When interpreting these results, it is important to keep in mind that these are not statistically validated, but instead represent a sample of families that are do or are likely to use Head Start services. Since surveys were not administered in Stillwater County or northern, eastern or south of Billings and not returned from Joliet, the survey results should not be considered indicative of possible responses for those areas.

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### SURVEY RESULTS

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Most of these results are reported in the body of this report. This section gathers them together and offers additional detail.

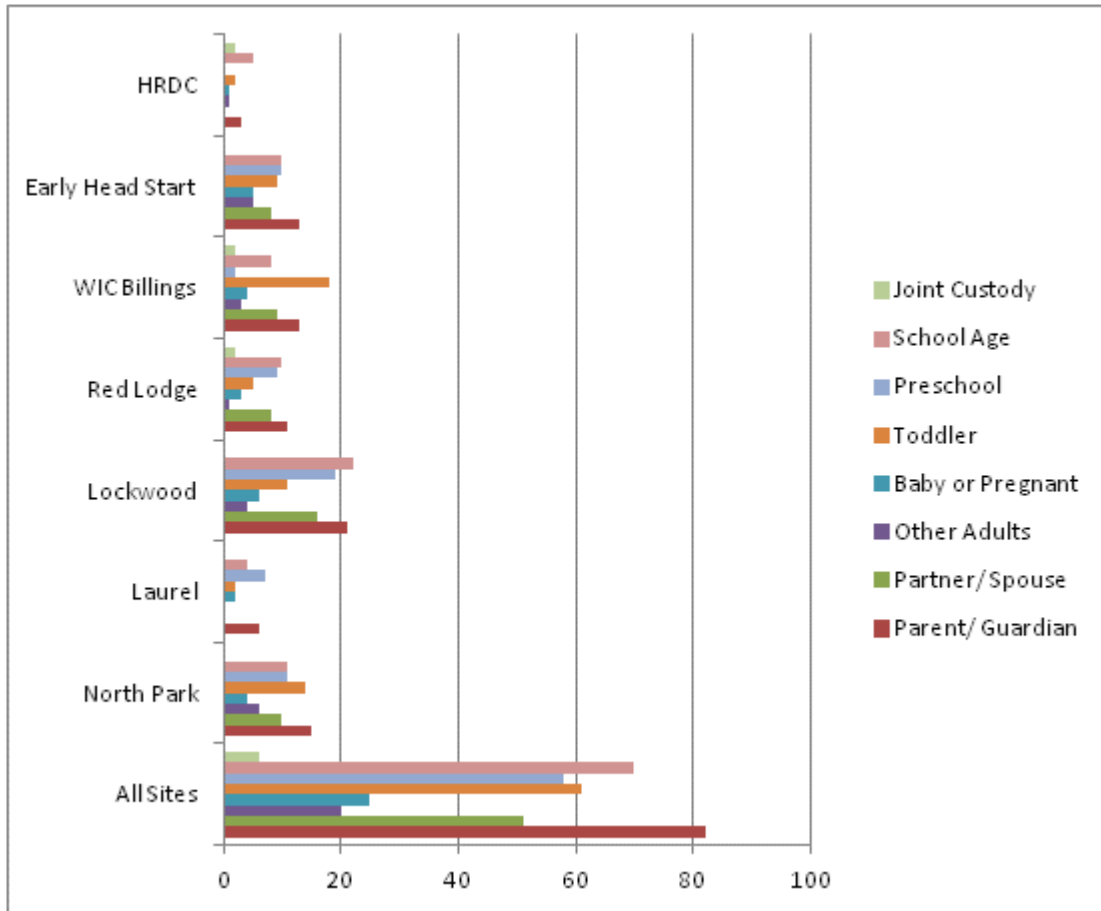
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### HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

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Survey participants were asked to identify household members and those with joint custody.

**Figure B-1: Household Composition among Survey Participants**



Source: BHS Survey, 2015

**Table B-1: Household Composition among Survey Participants**

Sites	Total Surveys	Parent/ Guardian	Partner/ Spouse	Other Adults	Baby or Pregnant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age	Joint Custody
All Sites	84	82	51	20	25	61	58	70	83%
Head Start									
<b>Total</b>		82	51	20	25	61	58	70	6
North Park	15	15	10	6	4	14	11	11	0
Laurel	6	6	0	0	2	2	7	4	0
Lockwood	21	21	16	4	6	11	19	22	0
Red Lodge	11	11	8	1	3	5	9	10	2
<b>Other Sites</b>									
WIC Billings	14	13	9	3	4	18	2	8	2
Early Head Start	14	13	8	5	5	9	10	10	0
HRDC	3	3	0	1	1	2	0	5	2

Source: BHS Survey, 2015

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Household income was reported in bands of annual income. Participants were also given the option of not answering this question.

- < \$15,000
- \$15,000 -20,000
- \$20,000-25,000
- \$25,000-30,000
- \$30,000-35,000
- \$35,000-40,000
- \$40,000-45,000
- > \$45,000

This approach was used because it is often difficult for families to report exact annual income.

The reported income and household size was then compared to the 2015 Federal Poverty Level guidelines. If a family's reported income was in a band that either contained the FPL or was below that level for that household size, the family was reported as in or near poverty and likely income eligible for Head Start services. If the reported income was in a higher band, the family was not considered in or near poverty.

<b>Table B-2: Households at or Near Poverty Level among Survey Respondents</b>				
<b>Site</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>Responses to Income Question</b>	<b>Number in Category at or Below FPL</b>	<b>% in Category at or Below FPL</b>
<b>Head Start</b>				
North Park	15	10	7	70%
Laurel	6	6	4	67%
Lockwood	21	17	11	65%
Red Lodge	11	11	9	82%
<b>Other Sites</b>				
WIC Billings	14	12	9	75%
Early Head Start	14	11	9	82%
HRDC	3	1	1	100%

Source: BHS Survey, 2015

## LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

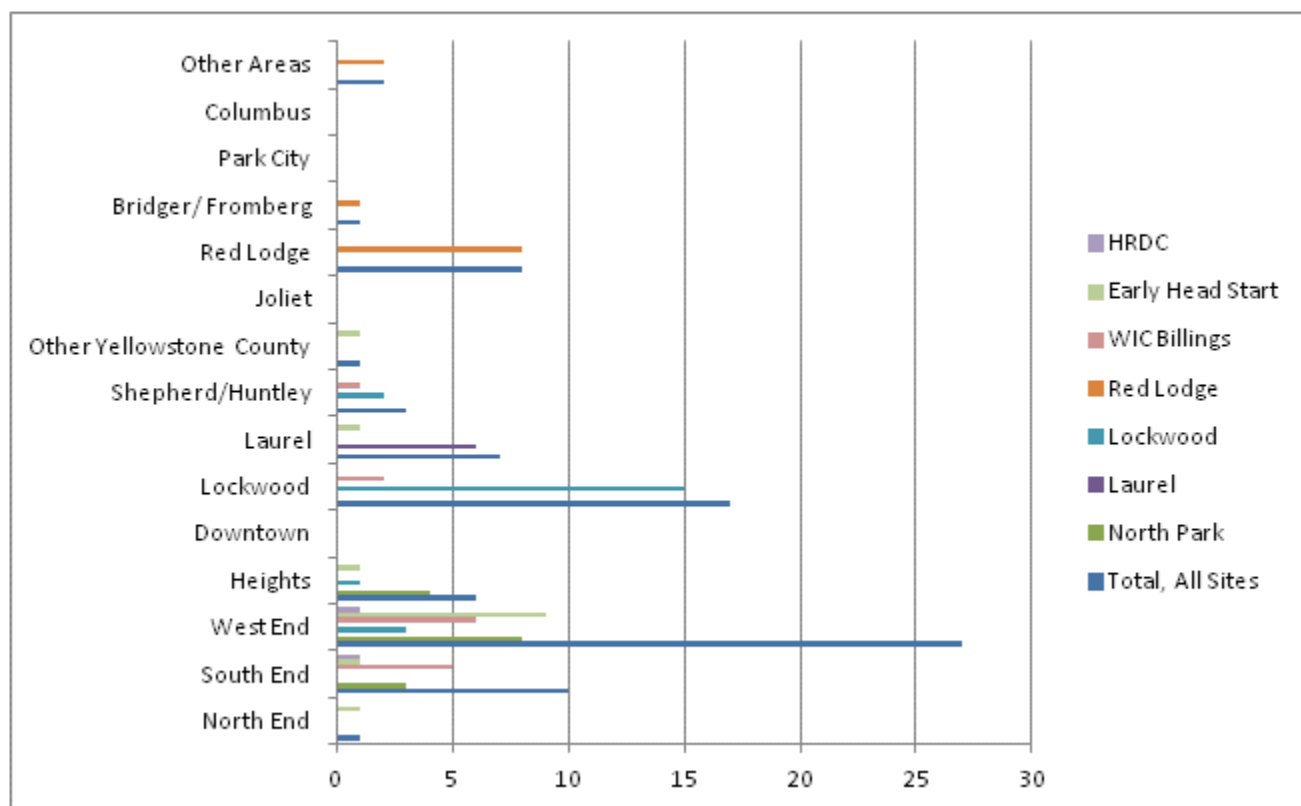
Survey respondents were asked to choose the category of housing they lived in and to identify the neighborhood or town where they lived.

<b>Table B-3: Survey Participant Housing Status</b>			
<b>Sites</b>	<b>Rent</b>	<b>Own</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Total, All Sites</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Head Start</b>			
North Park	8	6	1
Laurel	5	1	0
Lockwood	10	11	0
Red Lodge	8	3	0
<b>Other Sites</b>			
WIC Billings	11	2	0
Early Head Start	7	4	3
HRDC	3	0	0

Source: BHS Survey, 2015

The majority at every site except Lockwood live in rental housing.

**Figure B-2: Survey Participant Living Locations**



Source: BHS Survey, 2015

It is important to keep in mind that these results do not show where all potentially qualified families live, since biases exist in the locations where collections were made and survey respondents were not randomized.

These data do show that people who are using these services do not necessarily live right next to the services provided. The West End is particularly striking, since none of the service sites are located there, but the greatest numbers of survey respondents live in that area.

<b>Table B-4: Survey Participant Living Locations</b>								
<b>Sites</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>North Park</b>	<b>Laurel</b>	<b>Lockwood</b>	<b>Red Lodge</b>	<b>WIC Billings</b>	<b>Early Head Start</b>	<b>HRDC</b>
Total Surveys	84	15	6	21	11	14	14	3
North End	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
South End	10	3	0	0	0	5	1	1
West End	27	8	0	3	0	6	9	1
Heights	6	4	0	1	0	0	1	0
Downtown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lockwood	17	0	0	15	0	2	0	0
Laurel	7	0	6	0	0	0	1	0
Shepherd/ Huntley	3	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
Other Yellowstone County	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Joliet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red Lodge	8	0	0	0	8	0	0	0
Bridger/ Fromberg	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Park City	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Columbus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Areas	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0

Source: BHS Survey, 2015

## WORK LOCATION AND STATUS

Survey participants were asked to identify whether each adult member of the household worked and whether that work was full or part time.

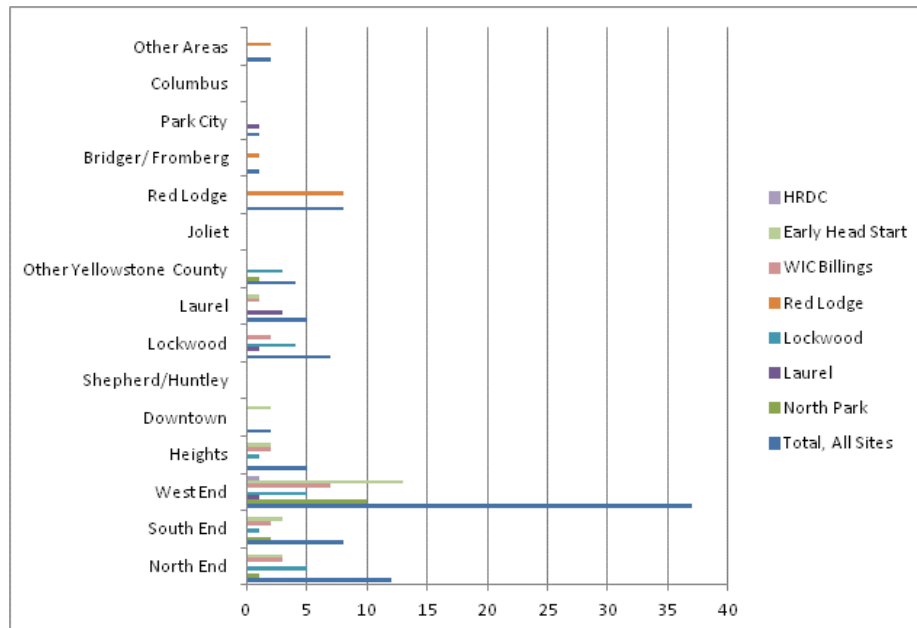
<b>Table B-5: Work Status in Survey Participant Households</b>				
<b>Sites</b>	<b>Total Surveys</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>No Paid</b>
<b>Total, All Sites</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Head Start</b>				
North Park	15	3	13	10
Laurel	6	2	6	3
Lockwood	21	4	16	18
Red Lodge	11	2	15	2
<b>Other Sites</b>				
WIC Billings	14	6	10	2
Early Head Start	14	5	15	6
HRDC	3	0	0	3

Source: BHS Survey, 2015

Because households often have more than one adult, there are always more responses than the total number of surveys for each site.

Survey respondents were also asked to list work locations for each of adults who worked part or full time. In many households, adults worked in different towns or neighborhoods. In many cases, work locations were different than living location.

**Figure B-3: Work Locations among Survey Respondents**



Source: BHS Survey, 2015

<b>Table B-6: Locations Where Adults in Survey Participant Households Work</b>								
<b>Sites</b>	<b>Total, All Sites</b>	<b>North Park</b>	<b>Laurel</b>	<b>Lockwood</b>	<b>Red Lodge</b>	<b>WIC Billings</b>	<b>Early Head Start</b>	<b>HRDC</b>
<b>Total Surveys</b>	84	15	6	21	11	14	14	3
North End	12	1	0	5	0	3	3	0
South End	8	2	0	1	0	2	3	0
West End	37	10	1	5	0	7	13	1
Heights	5	0	0	1	0	2	2	0
Downtown	2			0	0	0	2	0
Shepherd/Huntley	0			0	0	0	0	0
Lockwood	7	0	1	4	0	2	0	0
Laurel	5	0	3	0	0	1	1	0
Other Yellowstone County	4	1	0	3	0	0	0	0
Joliet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red Lodge	8	0	0	0	8	0	0	0
Bridger/ Fromberg	1				1	0	0	0
Park City	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Columbus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Areas	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0

Source: BHS Survey, 2015

## TRANSPORTATION

Survey Participants were asked about the types of transportation they use to get children to child care and other activities and about the difficulty of getting to children places.

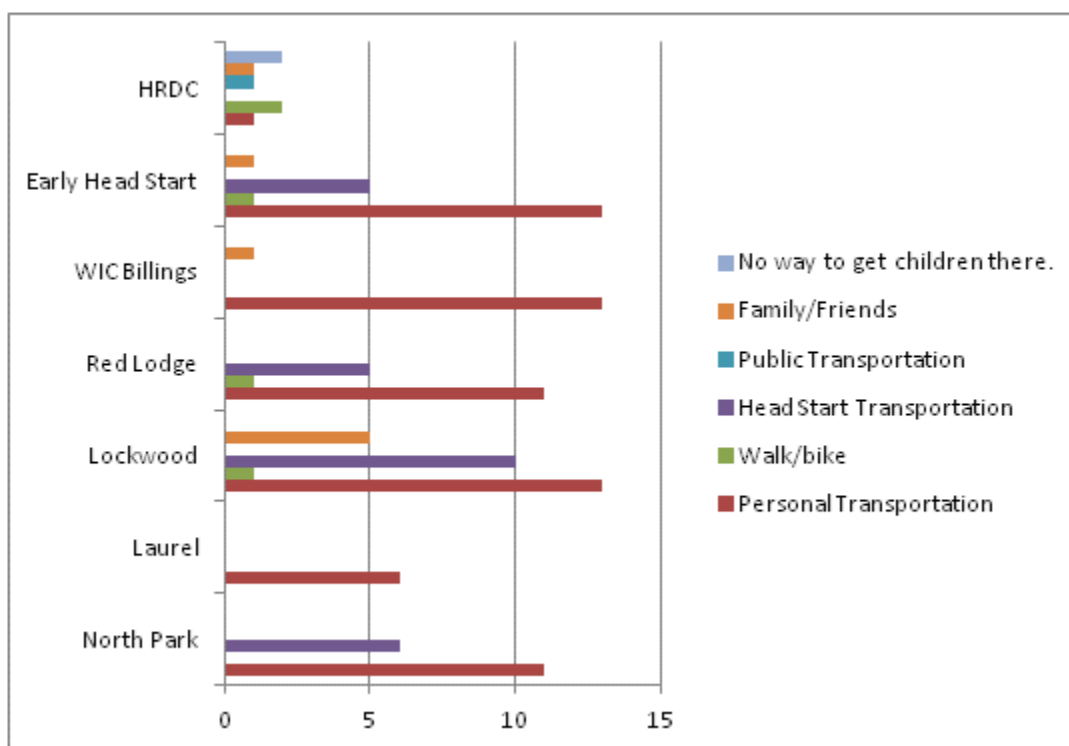
Most respondents use personal transportation. The survey does have a bias toward people who are able to access some form of transportation because no surveys were administered door to door, so it is likely that there is a higher proportion of families that would be eligible for services that have no transportation options.



Table B-7: Transportation Options Used among Survey Participants							
Sites	Total Surveys	Personal Transportation	Walk/Bike	Head Start Bus	Public Transport	Family/Friends	No option
<b>Head Start</b>							
North Park	15	11	0	6	0	0	0
Laurel	6	6	0	0	0	0	0
Lockwood	21	13	1	10	0	5	0
Red Lodge	11	11	1	5	0	0	0
<b>Other Sites</b>							
WIC Billings	14	13	0	0	0	1	0
Early Head Start	14	13	1	5	0	1	0
HRDC	3	1	2	0	1	1	2

Source: BHS, 2015

**Figure B-4: Transport Options Uses among Survey Participants**



Source: BHS Survey, 2015

Survey respondents were also asked about difficulty in getting children to care and activities.

<b>Table B-8: Ability to Transport Children to Care and Activities among Survey Participants</b>			
<b>Sites</b>	<b>Total Surveys</b>	<b>Number with Difficulty Getting to Child Care and Activities</b>	<b>% Find it Difficult to Transport to Child Care / Activities</b>
<b>Head Start</b>			
North Park	15	5	33%
Laurel	6	1	17%
Lockwood	21	4	19%
Red Lodge	11	2	18%
<b>Other Sites</b>			
WIC Billings	14	3	21%
Early Head Start	14	2	14%
HRDC	3	2	67%

Source: BHS Survey, 2015

## CHILD CARE

Survey participants were asked about current child care arrangements, whether on-site child care at Head Start would be helpful and times child care would be helpful.

<b>Table B-9: Child Care Usage, by Type</b>						
<b>Head Start</b>	<b>Use Paid Child Care</b>	<b>% Using Paid Care</b>	<b>Preschool</b>	<b>% Preschool</b>	<b>Informal Care</b>	<b>% Informal Care</b>
North Park	4	27%	12	80%	4	27%
Laurel	0	0%	6	100%	5	83%
Lockwood	8	38%	14	67%	3	14%
Red Lodge	1	9%	9	82%	3	27%
<b>Other Sites</b>						
WIC Billings	1	7%	3	21%	5	38%
Early Head Start	8	57%	7	50%	0	0%
HRDC	2	67%	1	33%	1	33%

Source: BHS Survey, 2015

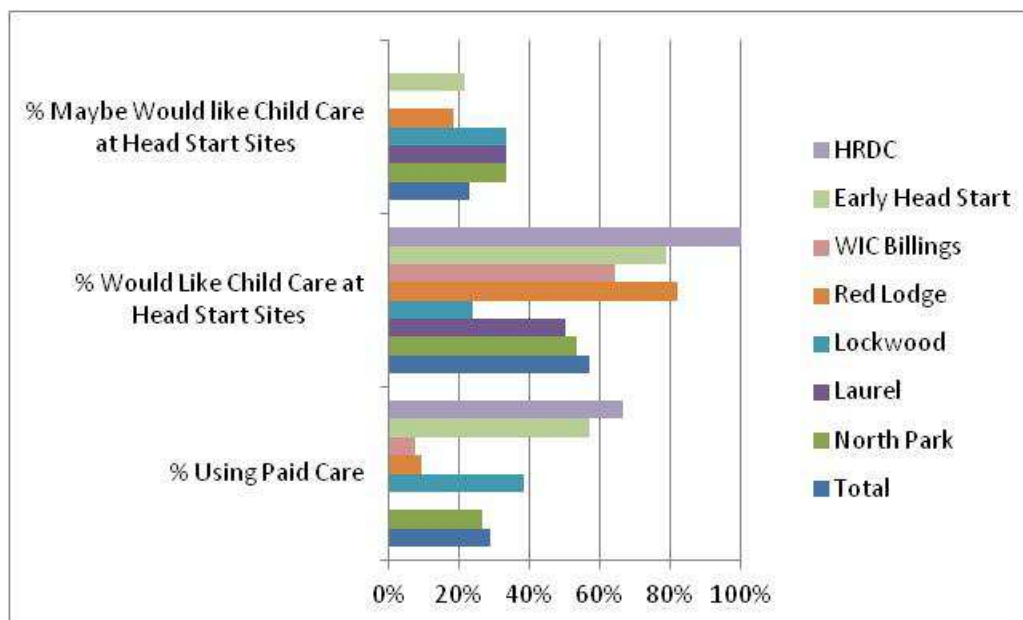
Respondents were given the opportunity to choose all child care and preschool options that apply. It is interesting that fewer than 100% of respondents at three of the four Head Start sites presented identified that their child or children were in preschool. It isn't clear whether Head Start is a different category for some parents or some other factor.

<b>Table B-10: Need for Paid Head Start and Child Care Services on the Same Site</b>			
<b>Site</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Maybe</b>
<b>Head Start</b>			
North Park	8	2	5
Laurel	3	1	2
Lockwood	5	9	7
Red Lodge	9	0	2
<b>Other Sites</b>			
WIC Billings	9	0	0
Early Head Start	11	0	3
HRDC	3	0	0

Source: BHS Survey, 2015

At all sites except Lockwood, more survey respondents thought having Head Start and additional child care services at the same site would be helpful, compared to the number of families with children currently in paid child care.

**Figure B-5: Current Paid Child Care Use and Desired Child Care at Head Start**



Source: Billings Head Start Survey, 2015

The percentage who would be interested in child care at Head Start sites is in all cases higher than the total currently using paid child care. The Red Lodge Head Start site appears to have the largest difference between current use of paid care and interest in child care at the site.

In all cases, except for the very small sample collected at HRDC (3 responses), fewer than 100% of survey participants thought it would helpful to have both child care and Head Start at the same site. The total who thought that this would be an asset was about 50%.

Participants were also asked about times child care is needed as well as other potential services that would be helpful.

<b>Table B-11: Child Care Times Needed among Survey Participants</b>				
<b>Site</b>	<b>Weekday Mornings</b>	<b>Weekday Afternoons</b>	<b>Evenings</b>	<b>Weekends</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Head Start</b>				
North Park	8	9	3	2
Laurel	1	3	2	1
Lockwood	7	9	3	2
Red Lodge	4	8	4	5
<b>Other Sites</b>				
WIC Billings	6	5	2	1
Early Head Start	8	8	0	1
HRDC	1	1	0	0

Source: BHS Survey, 2015

Few participants listed additional service needs, but there were some requests for longer hours (7-8am to 5pm or slightly later) and a request for transportation.

### HEAD START KNOWLEDGE

The final question survey participants were asked was where they learned about Head Start, if anywhere. Almost all participants did know about Head Start.

<b>Table B-12: How Survey Participants Learned about Head Start</b>						
<b>Site</b>	<b>Total Surveys</b>	<b>Child in HS</b>	<b>HS as a Child</b>	<b>Heard from Friends/Family</b>	<b>Seen Information/Signs</b>	<b>Do not know about it</b>
<b>Head Start</b>						
North Park	15	15	3	0	0	0
Laurel	6	5	0	1	0	0
Lockwood	21	20	2	3	1	0
Red Lodge	11	10	2	3	0	0
<b>Other Sites</b>						
WIC Billings	14	4	4	4	2	1
Early Head Start	14	8	4	7	4	0
HRDC	3	0	0	0	2	1

Source: BHS Survey, 2015

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## SURVEY QUESTIONS

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# Help Decide Head Start Preschool Locations and Services!

**Please participate if you are pregnant or have a  
child between the ages of 0 and 4.**

Billings Head Start is dedicated to giving kids the best start in life and learning. Head Start would like your help to determine locations, times and mix of preschool and child care services that will work best for families. Your survey is completely anonymous and confidential.

This survey has 10 questions and will take about 5-10 minutes.  
Thank you so much for your help!

### 1. How many adults and children are living with you? Adults:

Me. Are you a parent/legal guardian? ☐ yes ☐ no. In addition to me, my family includes:

☐ Partner/Spouse

☐ Other adults (grandparents, adult children, or other adults living with you – write in the total number)

**Children (write in number in each age group):** ☐ Baby or pregnant (0-1) ☐ Toddler (1.5-3)

☐ Preschool (4-5) ☐ School Age (5-18).

☐ I also share joint custody for my child or children.

### 2. Home: Where do you live? ☐ Rent ☐ Own ☐ Other

**What area do you live in? (Check the neighborhood you live in)**

☐ North End ☐ South End ☐ West End ☐ Heights ☐ Lockwood ☐ Sheppard/Huntley Area

☐ Laurel ☐ Other areas of Yellowstone County

☐ Joliet ☐ Red Lodge ☐ Fromberg/Bridger Area ☐ Park City ☐ Columbus

☐ Other area: In or near \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Employment: How are you and each adult in your house employed? (fill in the line for you and each other adult you live with)

**Adult 1 (you):** ☐ Full-time employment ☐ Part-time employment ☐ No paid employment

**Adult 2 (partner/spouse):** ☐ Full-time employment ☐ Part-time employment ☐ No paid employment

**Adult 3 (others):** ☐ Full-time employment ☐ Part-time employment ☐ No paid employment

**Where do you work? (Check all the neighborhoods you and other adults in your home work)**

☐ North End ☐ South End ☐ West End ☐ Heights ☐ Lockwood ☐ Sheppard/Huntley Area

☐ Laurel ☐ Other areas of Yellowstone County

☐ Joliet ☐ Red Lodge ☐ Fromberg/Bridger Area ☐ Park City ☐ Columbus

☐ Other area: In or near \_\_\_\_\_

**4. What is your approximate household income per year?**

☐ less than \$15,000 ☐ \$15,000-\$20,000 ☐ \$20,000-25,000 ☐ \$25,000-30,000 ☐ \$30,000-35,000  
☐ \$35,000-40,000 ☐ \$40,000-45,000 ☐ more than \$45,000 ☐ I'd prefer not to identify a household income

**5. How do you get your child/children to child care/preschool or other activities for children?**

☐ I have personal transportation ☐ I walk or bike ☐ Head Start has transportation we use  
☐ I use public transportation ☐ I rely on family/friends  
☐ I do not have a way to get my child to child care/preschool or activities.

**How easy is it to get to child care/preschool or activities?** ☐ Easy ☐ Difficult ☐ Impossible

**6. Do you currently have children in child care or preschool? Please check all that apply.**

☐ Child care at a center or established in-home day care business  
☐ Preschool  
☐ Informal care – family/friends that you don't live with

**7. When do you need child care? (check all that apply)**

☐ Weekday mornings ☐ Weekday afternoons ☐ Evenings ☐ Weekends

**8. Would it help you to have child care and a free Head Start ½ day preschool at the same site so that your child would stay in one place all day?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe – it would depend on the hours or other details

Optional: What hours or other services would make this combination easier? \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Which of these types of services does your family need? (check all that apply)**

☐ Health Care (doctor, dentist, insurance) ☐ Housing or Housing Assistance ☐ Food Assistance  
☐ Income assistance ☐ Job Training/Further Education ☐ Services for child with special needs  
☐ Services to help a child with social or emotional challenges ☐ Helping child get ready for school  
☐ Other Services (Please List): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. How do you know about Head Start preschool? (Check all that apply)**

☐ Have a child that is/was in it ☐ I was in Head Start as a child ☐ Heard of it from friends/family  
☐ have seen information/signs ☐ do not know about it

**Thanks for your participation! You are helping Head Start serve children and families better!**

Optional: Fill in your name and phone and/or email on the entry slip to be entered in a drawing for \$25 gift certificate to Walmart. (Two will be awarded)

## APPENDIX C: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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The following bibliography lists the principal sources that were used in this needs assessment. Annotations give more information about that data and updates. In addition, several local professionals offered information directly.

### Selected Data Sources

1. **U.S. Census Bureau:** American Fact Finder and American Community Survey; Demographic, employment, and economic data from the 2010 and 2009-2013 American Community Survey were used in compiling information on counties, communities, and CCD units. The ACS is particularly valuable and updates for Yellowstone County are available directly from United Way.  
See: <http://factfinder.census.gov/>
2. **Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS): Child Care Licensing.** The online service provided information about licensed child care facilities, by town.  
See: <http://ccubs-sanswrite.hhs.mt.gov/MontanaPublic/ProviderSearch.aspx>
3. **Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services: Best Beginnings Scholarship Program.**  
See: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/BestBeginningsScholarships.aspx>
4. **Office of Public Instruction, GEMS Database.** Public schools in Montana keep detailed records which are placed on the public website. Information on enrollment, special needs, free and reduced lunch rates, and limited English proficiency are all useful, especially in areas where small number make Census estimates broad.  
See: <http://gems.opi.mt.gov/Pages/Default.aspx#>
5. **United Way of Yellowstone County.** Work with data from many of the sources using in this assessment, especially Census data. United Way will provide updated and customized data, often in map format for partners.  
See: <https://www.unitedwayyellowstone.org/>

In addition to these online sources of data, several partners and professionals working in the region shared data that are not publicly available.

6. AWARE: Estimate of children under 5 in three counties that receive services annually; Danielle Eldridge.
7. Absarokee Elementary District: preschool and local need information; Meredith Feddes, Principal.
8. Bridger School District: Preschool and local need information; Bill Phillips, Superintendent.
9. Eastern Yellowstone Special Services Co-op; Special education information; Leonard Orth, Director.
10. DPHHS; Child and Family Services Division; Joanne Oreskovich, PhD, Research and Data Analyst.
11. HRDC 7; Best Beginnings Scholarship Program; Barb Perzinski. Source of scholarship information in the three county area.
12. Huntley Public Schools: Preschool and local need information; Clint Croy, Principal.
13. Lockwood Schools; Preschool, special education and local need information; Mike Bowman, Principal
14. Park City Elementary: Preschool and local need information; Janet Southworth, Principal.
15. Riverstone Health:

- a. WIC data and survey partner: Gayle Espeseth, Manager
  - b. Home Visiting Programs: Doug Anderson, Manager
- 16. Stillwater County, Marissa Hauge, Economic Development Coordinator and Webmaster.
- 17. Stillwater Sweetgrass Special Services Co-op: special education needs; Monica Pugh, Director.
- 18. STEP: Data on children ages 0-36 who receive Part C services in the three county area: Chelsie Guilford.
- 19. United Way of Yellowstone County; data and map services; Silvana Esposito Hackett, Impact Analyst.



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