

# Missoula County Media Release

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## Events to Recognize Week of the Young Child, Child Abuse Prevention Month

MISSOULA – In honor of the Week of the Young Child and Child Abuse Prevention Month, Healthy Start Missoula will host two events this week to raise awareness about issues affecting young children and families in Missoula.

Events kick off Tuesday, April 17, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. with a free family night at A Carousel for Missoula. As a show of support for local families, Healthy Start Missoula is offering free carousel rides for kids of any age and their families thanks to the support of A Carousel for Missoula.

Healthy Start Missoula, a collaboration between the Missoula Forum for Children and Youth and the Missoula City-County Health Department, will then celebrate the work and dedication demonstrated by community childhood professionals at the State of the Young Child Dinner and Training from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 18, at the DoubleTree Hotel.

At the dinner, Healthy Start Missoula will present the inaugural Early Childhood Champion Awards to local individuals and organizations who have gone above and beyond to improve the quality of life for young families and children in the community. Julie Bullard, a University of Montana professor who helped launch the master's program in early childhood education and has worked at the state level to find innovative solutions to early childhood issues, will receive the Early Childhood Leadership Award. Lolo Preschool will receive the Early Childhood Direct Service Award in recognition of its high-quality early childhood services and involvement in the state STARS preschool pilot program.

The dinner also will feature several speakers, including County Commissioner Jean Curtiss, Missoula Mayor John Engen and a representative from U.S. Sen. Jon Tester's office. Amy Foster Wolferman, assistant director of UM's Institute for Educational Research and Service, will present a training on effectively managing challenges while working with young children and the importance of self-care in preventing burnout.

State of the Young Child, sponsored this year by Montana Educators of Young Children, Child Care Resources and the Montana Children's Trust Fund, will hold two additional trainings before and after the dinner. More information and registration are available at <https://conta.cc/2H76sUf>.

For more information, call Anna Semple, Healthy Start Missoula coordinator, at 406-258-3021 or email [asemple@missoulacounty.us](mailto:asemple@missoulacounty.us).

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