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## Autism in Rural Areas: Lessons in Montana

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# Autism in Rural Areas: Lessons we have learned in Montana



- Social media and Facebook are a great way to share information and build community. Texting has not been as beneficial.
- Churches, bowling alleys and bars are good points of contact in rural and remote areas.
- Indian Health Service provides an effective connection to tribal communities.
- Local newsletters and Chamber of Commerce/community websites are good avenues for building resource awareness.

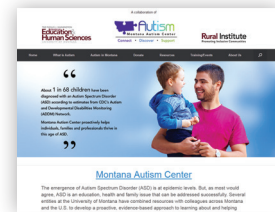
## Fast Facts:

- In 8 years, preschool age referrals are up 100%. For school age, referrals are up 150%, mostly in western MT.
- One urban Part C provider currently serves 125 families, 38% screen positive for ASD.
- “Youth Engagement through Intervention” for school age children grew from 8 to 17 children in one year. “MOSSAIC” grew from 4 to 7 young adults.
- The largest youth/adult provider in central Montana has 100 open Direct Service Providers positions.

## Text4Baby Connections (text4baby.org)

- ACL American Indian Outreach coordinator to improve Native American connections.
- Overview for State ASD team members.

The Montana Autism Center provides practical assistance such as demonstrating proven techniques and training direct service staff.



## MT Autism Center

- 1,337 unique visitors with 6,401 page views in 6 months (no advertising).
- The center is about “function,” not “place.”
- Center resources available “on demand.”

## Training & Research

- Training to 38 “very satisfied” Early Head Start providers across Montana. Six of 10 Early Head Start programs were represented.
- On-going training to Part C staff in central and eastern Montana (with Act Early Ambassador)
- UC Davis and a Montana team to implement the Early Start Denver Model project. Research sites include several Part C providers.
- Online training about early screening is co-developed with Part C.
- State ASD Plan development with 56 stakeholders across Montana.



## “Act Early” Resources

- CDC LTSAE customized brochure (trifold) 4,300.
- CDC LTSAE customized booklet (48 page) 800.

