

2019

Community Assessment:  
Montrose/Olathe Early Childhood Centers



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# **MONTROSE/OLATHE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS**

## **COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT REPORT OCTOBER 2019**

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early Childhood Centers (ECC) is part of and coincides with the service area of Montrose County RE-1J School District (MCSD) in the state of Colorado. ECC serves those residing in/near the towns of Montrose and Olathe.

Montrose County is located in the southwestern quadrant of the state and has a population just over 41,000 residents. The county is considered rural, with residents traveling 60 miles north to Western Colorado's largest city (Grand Junction) for medical and other services.

The Montrose County economy has been slow to rebound compared to Colorado overall, with the county consistently experiencing above state average unemployment rates and lower wages. While unemployment rates in the last five months have decreased to at or below the state's average, hourly wages in Montrose County also have decreased from one year ago and are less than two-thirds of the state average.

The local housing market has slowly recovered from the 2008/09 recession, with average median sales price much lower than the state average. Affordable housing continues to be an issue for many families, with wait times as long as two years to rent affordable family units. At the same time, the Colorado Center on Law & Policy reports that Montrose County families need income nearly two-and-a-half times the federal poverty level to make ends meet.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) estimates that 20% of the children ages 15 years and younger in Region 10, which includes Montrose County, are overweight or obese. Data reported in the most recent Kids Count assessment of "overall child well-being" in consideration of health, family and economics, and education ranks Montrose County nineteenth among the 25 largest counties in the state

Healthcare is an area of significant concern for Montrose County residents. Since passage of the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid enrollment has significantly increased, with 56.4% of the county's children enrolled in Medicaid and 14.7% in Colorado's publicly-funded CHP+. However, the proportion of uninsured children in Montrose County still is higher than in Colorado overall, and the community is a federally-designated health professional shortage area so, even with insurance, accessing care providers can be difficult.

There are encouraging things happening in the community, as well:

- The percentage of uninsured children, as documented annually by Kids Count!, now is at 6.2%, down from the 8.3% reported in 2018.
- The unemployment rate in the county is 2.7%, down from 3.3% reported in June 2018 (Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, 2019).
- An estimated 70% of homes in the town of Montrose are owner-occupied, and the majority of residents (85.3%) live *and* work in Montrose County (*city-data.com*, 2019).

In response to community realities and needs, MCSD Early Childhood Centers is making a positive impact through its Head Start, Colorado Preschool Program, Children with Disabilities and tuition programming, involving a total 327 children (115 through Head Start). Along with providing educational opportunity, ECC supports family access to dental exams, immunizations, nutrition and various other programs/supports, making a profound difference in the lives of low-to-moderate income families, as seen in the following figures from school year 2018-2019:

- Just 16% of Head Start children were overweight and 13% were obese, compared to the far-higher county average of 32% (Kids Count 2016).
- 96% of ECC children were current on their vaccinations, compared to the state average of 95%.
- 99% of Head Start children have had dental care within the last 12 months, compared to 77% of children statewide.

An additional indicator of ECC success includes the involvement of fathers: The percentage of fathers who participate in their child's ECC activities was 25% in the 2018-2019 school year, with 165 of 662 total volunteers comprising fathers/father figures. And, ECC saw turnover of only three staff positions during the most recent school year.

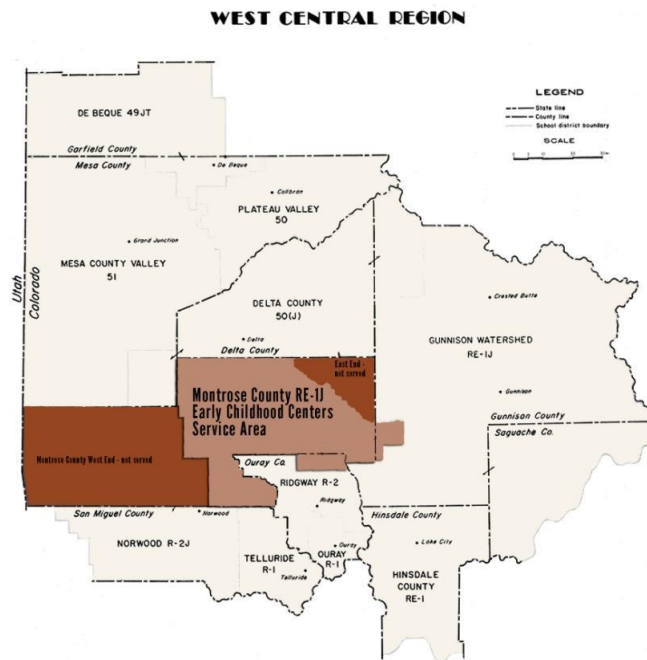
The following goals have been set for the MCSD Early Childhood Centers for the coming five years:

1. Strengthen active supervision systems.
2. Provide professional development for ECC staff members; provide educational opportunities for parents to promote development of kindergarten readiness skills in children.
3. Improve the Centers' communication systems.
4. Acquire quality and sustainable facilities.

Through active participation in the community assessment and planning processes, ECC administrators, staff, teachers and Policy Board (including parent participants) all are committed to these goals, and to providing exceptional early childhood education, including Head Start, and social supports for qualifying families and the Montrose County community at large.

## II. INTRODUCTION

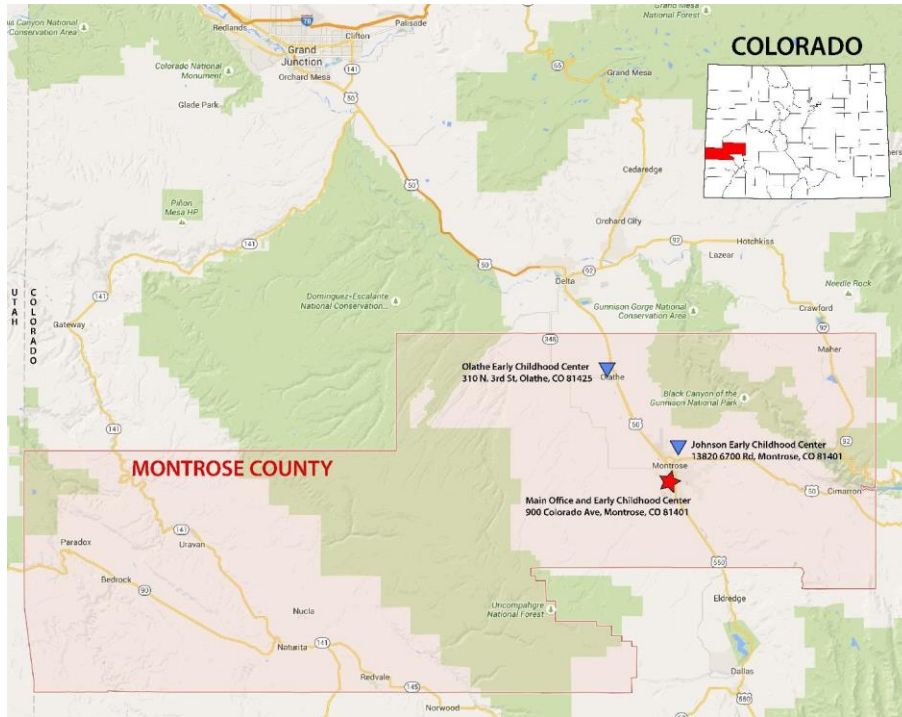
Montrose County School District RE-1J Early Childhood Centers (ECC) administers Head Start programming for the District in the state of Colorado. Preschool age children and their families are served in the communities of Montrose and Olathe, coinciding with Montrose County School District RE-1J (MCSD) boundaries. Nucla and Naturita also are in Montrose County (90 miles from Montrose) and impact countywide statistics, but are part of the RE-2 Montrose School District, currently unserved by ECC/Head Start programs. Colorado Department of Education school district boundaries depict the ECC service area (light brown):



In 1993, three MCSD programs that focused on addressing challenges to early childhood learning – Head Start, Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) and MCSD’s special needs/Children with Disabilities program – were integrated under the title Early Childhood Centers. These three programs continue to serve the community today, and are offered along with a tuition program that invites children of School District employees and community families not otherwise eligible to attend preschool at an ECC site. Thus, ECC integrates children attending via four different programs into each classroom.

MCSD serves as the Local Education Agency (LEA) for children with disabilities, qualifying these children for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and services at all three ECC sites:

- In the city of Montrose– 900 Colorado Avenue, Unit 4
- Seven miles east of the Montrose city center on the Johnson Elementary School campus – 13820 6700 Road
- Eleven miles north of Montrose in the town of Olathe on the Olathe Elementary School campus – 320 N. 3rd Street



The main office of ECC/Head Start is located in Montrose at the Family Service Center, housing administrative services and the following program support staff:

- Director and (half-time) Colorado Preschool Program Coordinator
- Colorado Preschool Program Coordinator Assistant
- Program Operations Coordinator
- Administrative Assistant
- Parent, Family and Community Engagement Coordinator
- Education Coordinator
- Health Services Technician
- Family Advocate (3 FTEs)
- Secretary
- Data Technician.

ECC employs a total 49 staff; of these, 14 are preschool teachers, 15 are classroom paraprofessionals and three are Family Advocates, all having direct involvement with enrolled children and their families.

A total 662 volunteers contributed to the program during the 2018-2019 school year, including 451 parents of current enrollees and 211 other volunteers (community members, family members of children previously enrolled). These volunteers assisted with classroom, administrative and Policy Council work. More than one-quarter (25.4%) of ECC volunteers are male.

ECC's Head Start Policy Council for the 2018-2019 school year comprised eight parent representatives and four community members. The Policy Council meets monthly and assists in

the development of goals and objectives for the program, and additionally acts as liaison to parents, staff and the community at large on matters of specific concern.

Colorado childcare licenses held for all ECC sites allow for provision of services to children 2-1/2 years to six years of age.

- If a child turns three or four years old on or before August 1 of a given year, s/he can enroll through ECC’s Head Start, Colorado Preschool Program or tuition programming. Children who are five years old, on or before August 1, are eligible for kindergarten and cannot be served through Head Start or Colorado Preschool Program funding.
  - For a three- or four-year-old child to be Head Start eligible, his/her family must be living at or below the federal poverty level, or receiving Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) or Social Security Income (SSI) for a disability; or, the child must be living with a foster family or be homeless.
  - For a three--year-old to be Colorado Preschool Program eligible, s/he must have at least three of ten risk factors outlined by State statute, while a four-year-old must have a minimum one of the ten risk factors.
- An enrollee under the Children with Disabilities program is eligible for Part B services (preschool) at the age of two years and nine months, and can be provided an additional year of preschool services beyond his/her fifth birthday, providing that policy requirements are met; two children met the criteria to extend participation this past school year.

Each child's parent(s) or guardian(s) is/are interviewed in attempt to collect information to determine risk and eligibility. Eligibility criteria assigns and accumulates points for placement. A child with the highest number of accumulated points will be placed in a program first, while the child with the second highest points will be placed in a program second, and so on, ensuring that children and families with the most need are served first.

During the 2018-2019 school year at ECC, children served included:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Registered/Placed (served minimum one day)</b>	<b>Funded</b>
ACF/Head Start	115	102
Colorado Preschool Program	142	130
Children With Disabilities	81	73
Tuition Pay	4	4
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>309</b>

Transportation services are not provided for ECC/Head Start children. Enrolled children must be dropped off and picked up by parents or care providers at the preschool site. Some ECC children attend school for 3-1/2 hours, so parents must pick up or deliver their child in the middle of the day, often posing hardship for working parents who typically enlist family members or find child care options that will deliver and/or pick up children.



### III. METHODOLOGY: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

This assessment endeavors to depict the community served, and to examine key data as indicators of overall and child well-being:

- Community Geography and Economics, including Employment and Income, and Housing
- Community Demographics, including Ethnic Composition and Languages, and Children with Disabilities
- Childcare and Preschool Programming
- Education
- Health and Nutrition
- Social Services, including Child Welfare
- Community Resources.

Specific information is provided regarding the families benefiting through ECC/Head Start during the 2018-2019 school year. Additionally, as applicable and available, county and/or school district-level data is provided and then compared with state averages.

The Colorado Children Campaign's "Kids Count! in Colorado" reports, providing widely-accepted information on overall childhood well-being, are prevalently cited within the assessment, as are U.S. Census statistics (2010 and updates) and American Community Survey projections (2013-2017). Various State of Colorado agencies provide data related to demographics, education, employment and housing, while the regional Early Childhood Council – Bright Futures – is the source of information specific to local childcare and preschool facilities. A complete list of information sources is included in the appendix to this report.

ECC conducts parent surveys on an annual basis, and this feedback helps to inform the ECC Policy Council and staff regarding satisfaction with and direction of program services. The instrument used for this survey currently is being modified for future use.

The process of community assessment began in March 2002 with discussions at Policy Council and ECC staff meetings, and other community gatherings. Reviewing the first draft and working with a document to final approval, the first Community Needs Assessment process and report were completed in September 2002.

Since then and on an annual basis, the assessment process is repeated and improved, with staff gathering much of the internal data concerning services, families and Head Start children as part of the organization's evaluative process. Other community, regional, state and national information is collected and compiled by an independent contractor, Third Sector Innovations, Inc. of Grand Junction, Colorado.

Information gathered through this assessment process reveals the ongoing and emerging challenges faced by those living in the ECC/Head Start service area, as well as the strengths of the organization in meeting and overcoming these challenges to provide services that benefit the community's children and families.

## IV. DATA AND FINDINGS

### Service Area - Geography

Montrose County is 2,241 square miles, located in the west central portion of the Colorado, a region referred to as the Western Slope. It is 269 miles southwest of the Denver metro area over the Continental Divide, and nearly 100 miles east of the Utah state line. Just fewer than half of Montrose County residents live in unincorporated areas (47%), while the City of Montrose is home to 46% of the County’s residents. Olathe (4%), Naturita (1%) and Nucla (2%) are town centers providing residence for the remainder of the County’s population (U.S. Census, 2010).

The area is considered mountain desert, experiencing four distinct seasons and a temperate climate.

### Service Area – Population, Racial/Ethnic Composition and Languages

The state of Colorado is home to 5,695,564 people (U.S. Census, 2018 estimate), the majority of whom live in the eastern portion of the state, referred to as Colorado’s Front Range. From 2010 to 2018, Colorado’s population increased by 666,368 people, or 13.3%.

Montrose County is one of 64 counties in Colorado and is ranked 17th in the state for total population. In the first 18 years of the millennium, the population in Montrose County grew from 33,432 to 42,214, or 26.3% (U.S. Census, 2018 estimate). The population of Montrose County is expected to grow by 22,669 people, or 51%, from 2010 to 2025 (*Montrose County Housing Needs Assessment*, 2009).

There currently are an estimated 2,689 children ages five years and younger in Montrose County; 1,373 of these children are preschool aged (Colorado Demographer’s Office, 2019).

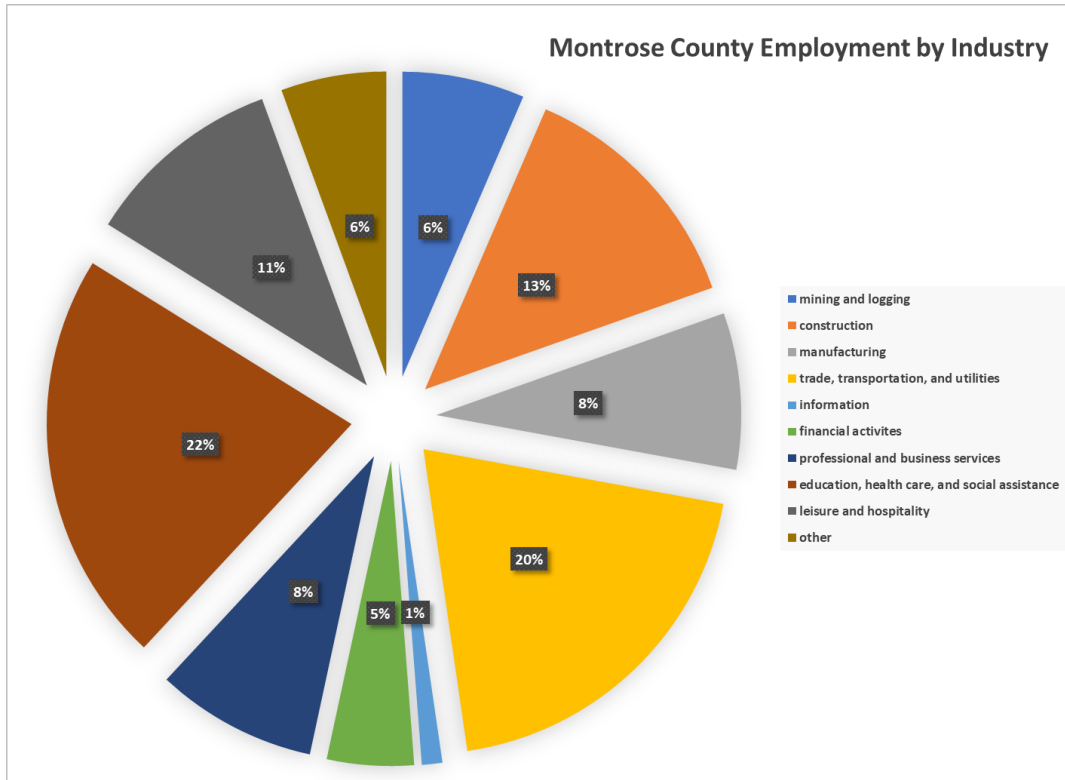
The U.S. Census American Community Survey 2013-2017 reports that, among Montrose County residents age five years or older, 16.3% speak a language other than English in the home (nearly exclusively Spanish), a figure actually lower than the statewide 16.9% of residents speaking a language other than English in the home. The same survey reports the following ethnic/racial population breakdowns for Montrose County and Colorado; due to Census data reporting methods, totals do not equal 100%:

<i>Population Geography</i>	<i>White NHO*</i>	<i>Black*</i>	<i>American Indian And Alaska Native*</i>	<i>Asian/Pacific Islander*</i>	<i>Two or More Races</i>	<i>Hispanic/Latino Origin</i>
<b>Colorado</b>	68.6%	3.9%	0.5%	3.1%	3.5%	21.3%
<b>Montrose County</b>	76.2%	0.4%	0.5%	1.0%	1.6%	20.5%

\*NHO – Non-Hispanic Origin

## Service Area - Economy, Employment and Income

The area's economy finds 73.5% of the workforce employed in the private sector, 16.0% employed by government and 10.5% self-employed (American Community Survey, 2013-2017). The private, non-farm sector is made up of those working in the following trades:



(American Community Survey 2013-2017)

According to the 2017 U.S. Census American Fact Finder, 66.8% of households in Montrose County are considered family households. Among these households:

- 27.4% of family households earn less than \$35,000 annually, while 14.9% earn \$35,000-\$49,999.
- Annual median income for all households is \$44,865, marking a 27.3% increase since the 2000 Census. The Colorado Center on Law & Policy (2018) reports the self-sufficiency standard for Montrose County at \$61,794 in annual income for a family with two adults, one preschooler and one school-aged child. (The self-sufficiency income level is based on rents of just over \$800 per month, with Montrose County's average rent for a three-bedroom home at \$1,200 or more.)

Montrose County has seen recent improvements in the unemployment rate, down to 2.7% in July 2019 from 3.3% in June 2018. However, the Average Hourly Wage in the county still is notably lower – at \$19.00 per hour – than the \$30.78 per hour state average (Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, 2019):

<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate (July 2019)</b>	<b>Average Hourly Wage (2019)</b>	<b>Per Capita Annual Income (2017)**</b>	<b>Median Household Income (2017)**</b>
<b>Colorado</b>	2.8%	\$30.78	\$34,845	\$65,458
<b>Montrose County</b>	2.7%	\$19.00	\$24,308	\$44,865

\*Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, 2019

\*\*American Fact Finder, 2019

### **Service Area - Housing**

Housing in Montrose County includes both owned and leased single- and multi-family homes, as well as small and large acreage farms. Estimated occupied households (as opposed to unoccupied dwellings) total 16,484 (suburbanstats.org 2019).

An estimated 46.2% of the community’s households spend more than 30% of income on housing (affordablehousingonline.com 2019). Housing costs in Montrose County were at an all-time high in 2007-2008, then extremely volatile during the period 2009-2011. From a low in 2011, when the average single-family house sold for \$139,495, the August 2019 year-to-date median sale price was \$260,800, a 2.0% increase from 2018 (Montrose Association of Realtors, 2019). The average rent for a three-bedroom home is \$1,200 or more per month.

Montrose County saw a 33.3% increase in foreclosure filings in the first quarter of 2019, as compared with 2018. At 0.05%, Montrose County is ranked 19<sup>th</sup> of 64 Colorado counties in percentage of foreclosures (Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing, 2019).

The availability of affordable dwellings throughout much of the service area is limited. In the past five years, Montrose County Housing Authority has seen an increase in the wait period for eligible families to receive assistance: with the capacity to serve only 265 clients through its voucher system, the Authority closed its waitlist and stopped accepting new applications in March 2019, and do not anticipate opening to new applicants before late 2020 (Montrose County Housing Authority, 2019).

### **Service Area - Social and Human Services, Child Welfare**

Among the statistics provided in the 2019 Kids Count! Colorado report, 21.8% of Montrose County children are born to single mothers. Additionally, 3.7% of Montrose County families receive TANF assistance payments and just more than 63% receive WIC vouchers.

The 2017 Kids Count! report ranked the state’s 25 largest counties (95% of the state’s population) on overall child well-being, based on 12 indicators in the areas of health, education, family and community; Montrose County ranked 19<sup>th</sup> (child well-being rankings were not included in the 2018 or 2019 Kids Count! Reports).

Montrose County also has higher rates of child abuse and neglect than state averages (*Kids Count!, 2019*):

<i>Geographic Area</i>	<i>Rates for Out-of-Home Placement (per 1,000 children)</i>	<i>Rates of Child Abuse and Neglect (per 1,000 children)</i>	<i>Students served by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program</i>
<b>Colorado</b>	8.7	9.2	22,369
<b>Montrose County</b>	14.3	19.9	460

In 2018, the Dolphin House Child Advocacy Center (Montrose) provided services for 239 primary victims and 237 secondary victims of child abuse (0-17 year olds). Dolphin House continues to provide follow-up support for 83 families from the prior year of service.

In an attempt to counter child abuse, Hilltop Community Services provides a variety of programs for Montrose County families, including services for those with open cases for reunification through Colorado Community Responsive programs (goal setting for the prevention of child abuse), the High Fidelity Wrap Around Program (family choice and voice to create a family vision while identifying natural support systems), and the Parents and Teachers program for children 0-5 years old and their parents.

A significant community gap exists in meeting the need for mental health services for children. It is particularly difficult to find and secure an appointment with a mental health professional both trained to work with children and accepting Medicaid or sliding fee scale payment. While providing a very different form of treatment, both Dream Catchers and Pegasus Equine Therapy endeavor to address the behavioral challenges presented by the community’s at-risk youth and Children with Disabilities participants.

Montrose County School District RE-1J and many human service providers in the community have long been educated in and committed to the concepts of “Bridges Out of Poverty.” This client-focused, strengths-based approach is prominent in the work of numerous local service agencies, and largely describes the experiences of families frequently interacting with Montrose’s social services providers.

**Service Area - Educational Institutions and ECC Service Delivery Sites**

Numerous entities provide educational opportunity in Montrose County. Colorado Mesa University-Montrose provides degreed higher education, while certification programs are available at Technical College of the Rockies located in neighboring Delta County. CMU-Montrose enrollment for Fall Semester 2018 was 282 undergraduates; Technical College of the Rockies 2018-2019 enrollment included nine Montrose/Olathe high school students and an additional 88 full- and part-time post-secondary Montrose County residents.

Hilltop Community Services provides space and resources at its regional office in Montrose for K-12 students to receive tutoring and assistance with academic planning and completion of homework, and to obtain the community service hours required for high school graduation.

Following are the enrollment figures for Montrose County Pre-K-12<sup>th</sup> grade students for the 2018-2019 school year:

6,154 or 89.2% of students	Montrose County School District RE-1J
285 or 4.5% of students	West End Public Schools District RE-2
337 or 4.7% of students	private K-12 institutions
111 or 1.6% of students	home schooled (does not include Pre-K children)

MCSO reports only 39.0% of fourth graders are meeting or exceeding expectations in English/Language Arts, seven points lower than the Colorado statewide average (Kids Count!, 2019) and an important indicator of child well-being.

Specific to early childhood education, the county continues to experience a shortage of licensed facilities. In September 2019, Tender Hearts – the community’s second-largest childcare facility – displaced 60 children when it closed.

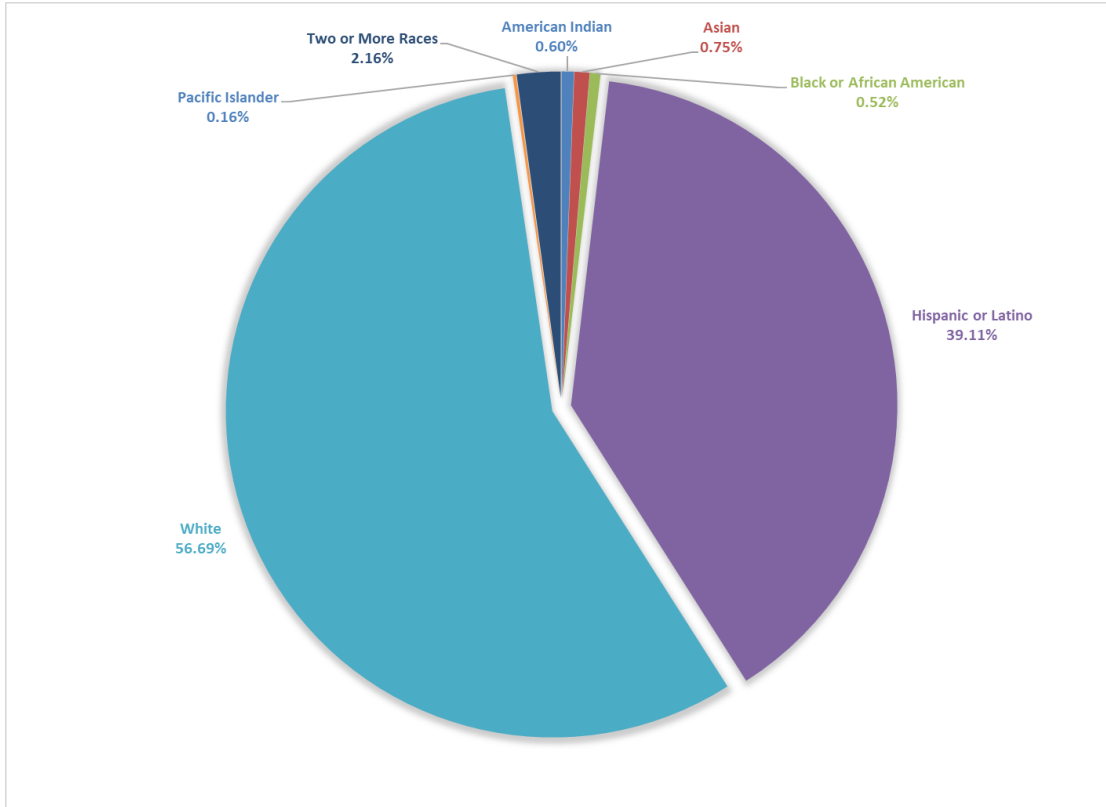
The following chart outlines the number of preschool facilities in the ECC/Head Start service area; currently none have open slots (*Bright Futures, Fall 2019*):

Geographic Area	Total # of Licensed Facilities	# of ECC/Head Start Facilities	# of Facilities Accepting CPP Children	Total # of Slots (full- and half-day)	Current # of Open Slots
Montrose County*	11 (total 27 when including private homes)	3	5	681	0
Montrose	8	2	2	613	0
Olathe	2	1	1	68	0

\*Includes two preschool programs in the towns of Naturita and Paradox, unserved by ECC

### **Families in the Service Area - Ethnic Composition and Languages**

Colorado Department of Education enrollment figures (preschool through high school) for the 2018-2019 school year show the following ethnic make-up of students enrolled in Montrose County School District RE-1J schools:



The predominant language spoken by MCSD RE-1J Early Childhood Centers' students is English (64%), while 14.5% of students' first language is Spanish.

### **Families in the Service Area - Residency/Mobility**

The majority of the local population consider Montrose County their long-term residence. 85.3% of residents live and work in Montrose County and 69.6% of households are owner-occupied (*city-data.com, 2019*).

### **Families in the Service Area - Childcare Needs**

Colorado continues to be a challenging place for those families needing childcare: Among the 41 states with state-supported preschool programs, Colorado ranks 37<sup>th</sup> in spending, 22<sup>nd</sup> in access to preschool for four-year-olds, and 10<sup>th</sup> in access to preschool for three-year-olds (*Kids Count! Data Book 2017*).

The cost of childcare is prohibitive for many of Montrose County’s low-income families. The current average cost for full-time childcare is \$36.24 per day for a child younger than two years, \$34.33 per day for a toddler or preschooler (Bright Futures, 2019). With average rent at \$1,200/month, a single-parent, female-led family with two children can easily spend 90% of family income to meet just housing and childcare expenses.

To ensure that more Colorado families have access to quality childcare, the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care oversees the state- and federally-funded CCAP (Colorado Childcare Assistance Program) to provide assistance to low-income families. CCAP is administered by individual county departments of Social or Human Services. Counties set program eligibility requirements within the federal mandate (to serve families with incomes at or below 165% of federal poverty guidelines) and reimburse participating local childcare providers according to County-defined, pre-determined rates. Participating families must meet income-qualifying guidelines, are responsible for a portion of the cost, and are required to be working, searching for employment, training, or enrolled in the Colorado Works Program (Colorado’s TANF program).

Relatedly, the State of Colorado recently implemented new education and certification standards for childcare facility staff. Educational expenses are, typically, the responsibility of the staff person and are not necessarily rewarded with a pay increase, adding to the challenge to attract and retain qualified childcare staff. In recent years, center and home-based care closures – due to a lack of qualified staff – have further depleted needed childcare slots, leaving families little choice but to leave their children in the care of friends or family in unlicensed homes.

### **Families in the Service Area - Preschool Needs**

Preschool is widely acknowledged as a critical component of early childhood education, laying the foundation for a child’s future educational success. In 1988, the Colorado General Assembly created CPP – the Colorado Preschool Program, funded through the Colorado Public School Finance Formula and administered under the Office of Teaching and Learning, Colorado Department of Education – to serve the young children in Colorado most vulnerable to starting elementary school unprepared. CPP provides preschool programming, with eligibility based on several factors: low-income family, foster care, violence/neglect in the home, parents’ educational levels, delays in language and social development.

175 of Colorado’s 179 school districts (including MCSD) participated in CPP in school year 2017-2018. Due to limited slots, Colorado Department of Education estimates that 8,202 at-risk four-year-olds had no preschool available to them through either CPP or Head Start in the same school year; Early Childhood Centers is the only CPP provider in the Montrose-Olathe community.

Early Childhood Centers provided preschool services for 45% of MCSD enrolled kindergartners during the 2018-2019 school year, when ECC conducted a survey of parents to determine the percentage of incoming kindergartners who had previous experience in a childcare or preschool setting. Of the 159 parent respondents:



- 73% indicated their kindergartner had childcare or preschool experience.
- 27% responded that their child(ren) had no childcare or preschool experience; top reasons given for lack of this experience included stay-at-home parent (53%), home schooling (14%) and no transportation (12%).

### **Families in the Service Area - Children With Disabilities**

Child Find, available for children birth to 21 years and using the Denver II screening tool, identifies Montrose County children presenting potential developmental concerns and helps to prepare them for the coming school year. The Child Find Coordinator provides screenings for individual families/children throughout the year, as needed. From June 1, 2018 to May 31, 2019, Child Find completed 235 screenings and 98 evaluations in the ECC/Head Start service region; of those evaluated, only seven did not qualify for services.

Community Options is the local agency responsible for providing therapeutic services for children with developmental delay from birth to just younger than three years. Children identified as qualified through Child Find benefit from an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and are provided services through Part C funding. Shortly before a child turns three, s/he is reassessed to determine if the developmental delay will significantly impact educational development. A child who receives an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for educational delays will receive services and preschool programming through ECC and be integrated in a classroom with children funded through Head Start, CPP and tuition programming.

### **Families in the Service Area - Health and Nutrition**

Montrose County is a federally-designated Health Professional Shortage Area for primary care providers, mental health providers and dentists (*Health Resources and Services Administration, 2019*), meaning that significant provider shortages lead to unmet demand for services.

Colorado has made significant gains in the past five years to insure the health care of its youngest residents. While the figures inconsistently trend, it is apparent that the number/percentage of uninsured children has dropped, based on annual Kids Count! data:

<b>Kids Count! In Colorado Report</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Montrose County Uninsured Children</b>	16.7%	7.4%	8.5%	8.3%	6.2%
<b>Montrose County Children Eligible but Not Enrolled in Medicaid or CHP+</b>	not reported	9.9%	5.4%	8.5%	1.5%

Income-eligible families with children younger than 18 years may qualify for Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+) or Medicaid. CHP+ allows children to receive necessary health care services, including well child check-ups, immunizations and mental health services for a reduced fee. Prescriptions, eyeglasses, hearing aids and dental services also are provided under CHP+.

The River Valley Family Health Center (formerly Olathe Community Clinic) serves low-income, under/uninsured individuals and families, as well as migrant workers. The Clinic accepts Medicaid/Medicare and CHP+, and has a sliding fee scale for payment by uninsured patients. The Clinic offers medical and behavioral health services and medications at a discounted price via a bilingual staff (Spanish) and seventeen full-time and part-time providers.

In 2018, River Valley accommodated 5,375 patients (unduplicated count) from three facilities located in Montrose, Delta, and Olathe. The Olathe facility, featuring 10 exam rooms, provided 6,354 patient visits in 2018. The Montrose facility, originally opened in 2015, featured six exam rooms and provided 8,556 patient visits in 2018; the Montrose clinic relocated to a new facility with 20 exam rooms in 2019. River Valley opened a third facility in Delta in 2017 with 10 exam rooms and provided 3,623 patient visits in 2018 (River Valley Family Health Center, 2019).

PIC (Partners in Integrated Care) Place opened in June 2017 to provide fully-integrated primary (family practice) health, preventive and restorative dental, optometric and behavioral health services to un/underserved residents of Montrose and Delta counties. The organization is an expansion of services and relocation of the former Community Dental Clinic, and includes a primary care lab, denture lab and classroom for providing accredited vocational programs in healthcare in partnership with Technical College of the Rockies. PIC Place also provides free lunch-and-learn programs of interest to the community. To be eligible for PIC Place services, patients must be at or below 250% of federal income guidelines, including all Medicaid and CHP+ clients, as well as the under/uninsured who have commercial insurance but still find healthcare unaffordable. Those without insurance can qualify for PIC Place's sliding fee schedule for discounted services (sometimes up to 100%) based on ability to pay.

Early Periodic Screening and Diagnostic Testing (EPSDT) is provided by Montrose County Health Department to identify children with unmet medical needs. These children may be eligible for TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families) and/or Medicaid benefits. Regardless, families who do not qualify for Medicaid, CHP+ or health insurance through employment often seek primary health care at local hospital emergency rooms, Urgent Care, River Valley Family Health Center and/or PIC Place.

In Montrose County, an estimated 5,099 individuals received SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits in 2017 (Hunger Free Colorado, 2019), and 63.3% of children live in homes receiving WIC vouchers (*Kids Count!*, 2019). This not only indicates the nutritional challenges of Montrose County residents, but contributes to the ever-growing concern of childhood obesity, most particularly impacting those of low-income who rely on less expensive/nutritional foods (i.e. other than lean meats, fresh fruit and vegetables). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that youth (ages 2-19) living at or below 350% of the federal poverty level are 3.5 times more likely to be obese than their more affluent peers. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment approximated in 2017 that 23% of Colorado children (ages 5-14 years) are overweight or obese; the figure is 32% in Montrose County, ranking sixth highest among Colorado's 25 largest counties (*Kids Count!*, 2016).

Knowing that many families are (financially) dependent on the schools to feed their children, and in response to the growing obesity epidemic, MCSD has created the Healthy Schools Project. The Project endeavors to improve District nutrition services (i.e. school breakfast and lunch programs) by using local and/or organic produce whenever possible, and providing fresh-made whole-grain breads for school meals. The program also increases physical education (P.E.) requirements and improves access to community health care, including primary, mental and dental care services. MCSD Nutrition Services also offers free nutritious meals to students during the summer.

The community further addresses nutritional needs through Montrose County Child and Family Services providing a "prescription" to receive fresh fruits and vegetables from the local Farmers' Market, where SNAP also provides recipes for preparation of fresh foods.

**Families in the Service Area – Adult Graduation Rates, Education Level**

Among Montrose County adults 25 years and older, 10.7% have less than a high school education, 33.5% graduated high school, 24.7% have some college/no degree, 7.7% have an Associate's Degree, and 23.4% hold a bachelor's degree or higher (American Fact Finder, 2019).

In 2017-2018, K-12 dropouts in Montrose County increased to 4.0% from 2.8% the previous year. The County's graduation rate of 78.8%, down from 80.9% in 2017, now is lower than the state average of 80.7% (Colorado Department of Education, 2019). Colorado Department of Education data provides the following details:

<i>Geographic Area</i>	<i>Total Enrollment (PK-12)</i>	<i>% Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (PK-12)</i>	<i>Graduation Rate 2018</i>	<i>Dropout Rate 2018</i>
<b>Colorado</b>	911,536	40.7%	80.7%	2.2%
<b>MCSD RE-1J</b>	<b>6,154</b>	<b>55.8%</b>	<b>78.8%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>
<b>Montrose High</b>	1,312	44.7%	90.8%	2.4%
<b>Olathe High</b>	287	53.7%	94.2%	0.6%
<b>Peak Academy</b>	187	12.8%	100.0%	0.0%
<b>Vista Charter</b>	197	60.9%	27.1%	28.2%

## **Community Resources**

A comprehensive list of community agencies currently working in collaboration with Early Childhood Centers/Head Start follows.

### **EDUCATION RESOURCES**

Community Options – developmental disabilities

Colorado Mesa University – Associates in Business Administration, Computer Information Systems, Humanities and Social Sciences; Associates and Master’s in Early Childhood Education

Technical College of the Rockies

Maslow Academy – private education, Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade

Pope John Paul II – private education, Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade

Colorado West Christian School – private education, Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade

Holy Guardian Angel School – private education, K-9<sup>th</sup> grade

Montrose County School District RE-1J – Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade public, virtual and alternative education programs; English as a Second Language (ESL), General Education Diploma (GED), Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes

### **JOB TRAINING RESOURCES**

Colorado Workforce

Community Staffing

Elwood Staffing

Vocational Rehabilitation

### **PRIMARY/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE AND HUMAN SERVICES RESOURCES**

CSU Cooperative Extension/4-H

Dolphin House Child Advocacy Center

Dream Catcher Therapy Center

Farm Workers’ Health Services – immunizations and sliding fee-scale physicals

Hilltop Community Services Montrose

The Center for Mental Health

Montrose County Department of Health and Human Services

Montrose Memorial Hospital

Northside Community Health Clinic

Over the Rainbow Behavioral Consulting – consulting, parent training, Community Resource Fair

Pegasus Equine Therapy

PIC Place

River Valley Family Health Center

Smiles 4 Kids

Solutions Wellness Center

The Center for Mental Health

Treasured Teeth

Tri-County Health Network

Urgent Care

Volunteers of America

### **DISABILITIES RESOURCES**

Community Options

Child Find

Dream Catcher Therapy Center

Montrose Memorial Hospital Rehabilitative Services – speech, motor/physical therapies

Montrose School District RE-1J Special Education

Pegasus Equine Therapy

### **FAMILY SERVICES RESOURCES**

CSU Cooperative Extension/4-H

Dream Catcher Therapy Center

Dolphin House Child Advocacy Center

The Center for Mental Health

Montrose County Department of Health and Human Services

Over the Rainbow Behavioral Consulting

Western Colorado Migrant and Rural Coalition

Hilltop Community Services Montrose

Pegasus Equine Therapy

Shepherd's Hands

Solutions Wellness Center

### **HOUSING RESOURCES**

Cottonwood Apartments – privately-owned, HUD subsidized apartments

Montrose Housing Authority – HUD rental assistance

Habitat for Humanity – homeownership through work equity

Haven House/House of Promise

Pavilion Gardens Apartments – apartments for qualified low-income families

Sunshine Peak Apartments

### **CHILD CARE RESOURCES** (located in the city of Montrose, unless otherwise noted)

Babbette's Kiddy Kampus

Black Canyon Gymnastics

Bright Futures Child Care Resource and Referral, Telluride – childcare assistance, clothing

Bright Beginnings Child Care

Creative Hands

Learning Cottage

Little Harvard

Little Sprouts

Living Word Lutheran Preschool

Migrant and seasonal Head Start, Olathe

Montrose Christian Church

Montrose County Department of Health and Human Services

Passage Charter School – for children of enrolled students, ages birth to two (2) years

Sonshine Patch, First Presbyterian Church

Tender Hearts

**CLOTHING, FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SERVICES RESOURCES**

Christ's Kitchen

Habitat for Humanity ReStore

Heirlooms for Hospice Store

Mexican American Development Association (MADA) – food, no-cost clothing, emergency assistance

The Salvation Army

Sharing Ministries Food Bank

Tom Goodrich Warm Hearts Memorial Project – coats

Kids Aid – backpack program to provide food outside school days

Colorado State University Cooperative Extension – commodities distribution, food baskets

Farmers' Market

Montrose County School District RE-1J Summer Feeding program; contracted, registered dietician/nutritionist at Early Childhood Centers

Montrose County Department of Health and Human Services – food stamps, TANF

Food SHARE America

Sharing Ministries Food Bank

Shepherd's Hands

**TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES**

All Points Transport Bus Service

Among other community organizations working in partnership with the ECC/Head Start programs are Montrose Association of Churches, Girl Scouts of America, Walmart, Office Depot, local banks and local fire, and police and ambulance services.

## V. DATA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

### Eligible Head Start Children and Families – Racial/Ethnic Composition and Languages

Percentages and actual enrollment numbers by ethnicity for the 2018-2019 school year are as follow for Early Childhood Centers, including Head Start enrollees (total 327 reporting):

	<i>White</i>	<i>Bi-Racial</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Other</i>
<b>Enrollment</b>	311	17	171	14	1	2	3
<b>% of Enrollment</b>	95%	5%	52%	4%	<1%	<1%	<1%

\*NHO – Non-Hispanic Origin. Numbers total more than 100% (enrollees can mark more than one box for ethnicity)

The dominant language spoken by children in the Montrose Early Childhood Center program is English, spoken as the only language by 64% of the children enrolled during the 2018-2019 school year. The second most common language is Spanish, spoken as the only language by 14% of children. An additional 19% are bilingual, with the remaining 3% of children speaking other languages. These percentages are in alignment with overall MCSD RE-1J figures.

### Eligible Head Start Children and Families – Economics, Employment, Income and Housing

The most recent Kids Count! Colorado data shows that the percentage of children under the age of 18 living in poverty in Colorado declined in 2017. While this is welcome news, the current estimate still is higher than in 2000, when only 10 percent of Colorado kids lived in poverty. And, Montrose County rates are far higher than statewide figures:

<i>Geographic Area</i>	<i>Children (0-18 years) Living in Poverty* 2017</i>	<i>School Children (5-18 years) Living in Poverty* 2017</i>
<b>Colorado</b>	12.2%	11.4%
<b>Montrose County</b>	18.3%	17.2%

\*Income below 100% of federal poverty guidelines

It is conservatively estimated that one-half of preschool-aged children in Montrose County are eligible for Head Start services based on economic factors alone. Of the 327 children enrolled at MCSD Early Childhood Centers during the 2018-2019 school year:

- 142, or 43% of children, were living at or below 100% of the federal poverty level
- 141, or 42% of children, were living in families with income over the poverty threshold
- 95, or 29% of children, were qualified with an individual education plan (IEP); these families are not required to provide proof of income for services.

Thirty-two (32) families automatically qualified for Head Start programming due to family homelessness, the receipt of public assistance, or foster care.

Among Head Start families, the employment situation – and thus financial difficulty – often is severe (percentages rounded):

<i>Employment Status of Head Start Parents/Guardians, 2018-2019</i>				
	<i>Two-Parent Families</i>		<i>Single-Parent Families</i>	
	<i>#</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<b>One parent is employed</b>	52	69%	25	60%
<b>Both parents are employed</b>	12	16%	n/a	n/a
<b>Neither parent is working</b>	8	11%	14	33%
<b>One parent is enrolled in training or school</b>	3	4%	3	7%

111 Head Start parent respondents to ECC’s 2018-2019 survey self-report the following educational accomplishments: 4.5% with masters and/or bachelor’s degrees, 25% with associates degrees and/or some college or advanced training, 42% with high school diplomas/GEDs, and 27% non-graduates.

Early Childhood Centers/Head Start proactively provide housing-related referrals (e.g. subsidies, repairs and/or other assistance) and referrals for health and well-being programs. During the 2018-2019 school year, the following additional referrals were documented:

- Kids Aid (student backpack food program) – 29
- Mental health services – 5
- Parenting education; child mental health – 3 each
- Tom Goodrich Warm Hearts Memorial Project (coats) – 18
- Emergency/crisis intervention; adult education – 1 each



### **Eligible Head Start Children and Families – Social and Human Services, Particularly as Regards Child Welfare**

Early Childhood Centers' staff members, including those employed via Head Start funding, are required to report suspected child abuse/neglect. There were seven cases of suspected child abuse during the 2018-2019 school year.

As part of ECC's support for its families, staff members are committed to inviting fathers/significant male role models to participate as classroom volunteers, to attend parent/teacher conferences, to utilize weekly take-home totes and otherwise get involved with committees, councils and other facility projects. In 2018-2019, 64 fathers/father figures of 115 Head Start-enrolled children participated in community celebrations or activities.

### **Eligible Head Start Children and Families – Health and Nutrition**

At the Early Childhood Centers in 2018-2019, 110 (96%) of 115 Head Start children were enrolled in Medicaid or CHP+; two had private health insurance, five were without insurance.

As an important indicator of childhood well-being, immunizations are something ECC/Head Start takes very seriously. Among ECC children enrolled during the 2018-2019 school year, 96% were up-to-date on immunizations.

ECC/Head Start registrars complete a nutrition assessment for each child at enrollment with parents, and a BMI (Body Mass Index) test is generated and analyzed by a registered dietician twice year. Parents of enrolled children are also given the option of consultation with the registered dietician, if requested. Of the Head Start children enrolled at ECC in March 2019, 16% were overweight and 13% obese.

The Montrose County School District RE-1J ECC/Head Start program implements the Healthy School practices by incorporating:

- 30 minutes of daily physical activity
- nutritious snacks
- education on healthy eating
- commitment that all Head Start-enrolled children are up-to-date on immunizations, physicals and annual dental exams (115 Head Start children received a professional dental examination during the 2018-2019 school year, and three had signed waivers from participation).
- Participation in a school garden grown by students and staff.

Data collected from the 2018-2019 registration process for MCSD RE-1J Early Childhood Centers identified the following risk factors among funded children entering preschool:

	All ECC Programs		Funded Head Start Enrollees (102)	
Free/Reduced Meals	211	73%	101	99%
Homeless	12	4%	10	10%
Domestic Violence	44	15%	19	19%
Substance Abuse	57	20%	20	20%
Teen Parent	12	4%	6	6%
Education	107	37%	48	47%
Frequent Moves	48	17%	20	20%
Social	261	91%	92	90%
Speech/Language	142	49%	69	68%
Interventions by Dept Health & Human Svcs	21	7%	10	10%

	All ECC Programs		Funded Head Start Enrollees (102)	
0 Risk Factors	2	<1%	0	0%
1 Risk Factor	16	5%	1	2%
2 Risk Factors	42	15%	8	7%
3 Risk Factors	80	28%	36	35%
4 Risk Factors	67	23%	26	25%
5 Risk Factors	33	11%	16	16%
6 Risk Factors	14	4%	8	8%
7 Risk Factors	6	2%	4	4%
8 Risk Factors	18	6%	1	2%

### **Eligible Head Start Children and Families – Childcare and Preschool**

The Montrose and Olathe communities are in need of quality early learning and care opportunities for preschool-age children. ECC's early spring registration, calls for appointments and registration, and online applications during Summer 2018 suggest that demand is increasing as families who were planning to move from the community decide to stay, while additional families with preschool-aged children move to the service area. By the end of the 2018-2019 school year, ECC had 40 children on its waiting list.

The following figures illustrate the significant need for Head Start in the ECC service area:

<i>Estimated # of children, ages 3-5 years, in service area*</i>	<i>Estimated # of Head Start-eligible children in service area**</i>	<i># of children enrolled in Head Start 2018-2019</i>	<i>Estimated # eligible but unserved Head Start children in service area</i>
1,373	686	115	584

\*American Community Survey 2013-2017

\*\*Based on economic factors' eligibility only

In any given year, Early Childhood Centers has served 45% of all children enrolling in MCSD kindergarten through one of its four programs. One of the Centers' core goals – and something it does quite successfully – is to ease the transition into kindergarten.

### **Eligible Head Start Children and Families – Children with Disabilities**

During the 2018-2019 school year, 16 Head Start enrollees had IEPs (a 15.8% decrease from the prior year), as did an additional 65 enrollees through the Children with Disabilities program (13.3% decrease from the prior year), for a total 81 children being served with IEPs.

Children with IEPs automatically qualify for preschool placement. Eligibility for other children displaying significant delay in one or more areas of development is determined based on a special needs placement assessment, involving parents and either the Early Childhood Special Education Assessment Team or the Child Find Team (including a speech language pathologist, an occupational therapist and a Special Education teacher with early childhood Special Education background).

When in-depth assessments are needed, the ECC staffing team (school psychologist, occupational therapist and speech pathologist) works with the Child Find Coordinator (master's-level education in early childhood Special Education) to conduct the assessment in a child's native language, with interpreters available for parents/guardians during the assessment and at Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings, as needed.

- A child 0-3 years of age with significant delays is referred to Community Options for the development of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Case management, early intervention work and needed therapies all are coordinated through this regional, state-mandated provider of services for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- For qualifying children ages 3-5 years, an IEP is created, including attention to specific therapy needs. Speech, motor and educational services are provided at ECC/Head Start, where these children automatically qualify for placement.

All ECC classrooms are fully inclusive; here, children with disabilities participate in all activities with their same-age peers. Accommodations of support staff and equipment ensure participation by and access for children with disabilities, and proactive outreach activities are

continuously conducted to inform families in the community of ECC's commitment to serving children with special needs.

All ECC/Head Start sites utilize the expertise of a team of educational specialists for evaluating and testing children with disabilities. Also screened and assessed are behavioral/mental health conditions, and ECC contracts with a Colorado registered psychotherapist.

### **Eligible Head Start Children and Families – Early Childhood Centers**

In response to many and various needs of the community's children and families, and in support of the MCS D RE-1J Mission Statement, ECC delivers high-quality, comprehensive, developmentally-appropriate services for young children and their families. Early Childhood Centers has been providing Head Start programming for families and children since Fall 1991, developing a strong infrastructure both within the agency and with community partners, allowing for sustained quality programming regardless of any changes in the community.

The ECC team is organized by collaborative teams that participate in the ongoing monitoring of and planning for Head Start programs. A program self-assessment is conducted annually to ensure that the requirements are known and implemented by the program staff, and to meet Head Start Performance Standards for monitoring quality of services provided. The parents, staff and community volunteers who are members of the Program Self-Assessment Team collect data that identifies areas working well or in need of improvement. Team members take pride in their participation, and ECC improves as a result of this community self-monitoring process.

Staff meeting dates and times are posted monthly, and parents are invited to attend.

### **Our Mission**

In partnership with our families and our communities, the children of the Montrose County School District RE-1J Early Childhood Centers will acquire a positive foundation for lifelong learning.

### **Recruitment Strategies, Recruiting New Students**

ECC staff, Policy Council, and Colorado Preschool Program/Education District Advisory Council continuously work to engage new methods for recruitment and retention of students, and to reach out to additional communities to encourage hosting ECC/Head Start services. A recruitment policy is in place and is followed by all staff; methods for recruitment include:

- Child Find screenings are held throughout the year. All families attending these events are provided with information on Head Start and are encouraged to enroll when eligible.
- Posters, flyers and other written materials are distributed at local grocery stores, community service agencies, post offices, libraries, medical facilities, public schools, private and public preschools and other businesses.
- Public service announcements are submitted to local newspapers, local cable access channels, radio stations and other regionally-distributed media publications.

- Facebook, Twitter, and other social media outlets disseminate program information and updates. The Montrose County School District web page provides information on the program.
- Annual re-enrollment of returning children, and discussions regarding younger siblings, are held; word-of-mouth promotion is active and encouraged.
- The Child Plus online application is available to complete in both English and Spanish.

Head Start performance standards require that no more than 30 calendar days elapse before a vacancy is filled from any existing waiting list. The policy also makes provision for 10% of total enrollment to be comprised of those served through the Children with Disabilities program. During the 2018-2019 school year, the 81 children diagnosed with an identified disability – or 24.8% of 327 enrollees – far exceeded the required minimal targeted enrollment of this specific population. Among the 115 Head Start children served, a total 16 held IEPs.

Of 40 children on the ECC waiting list at the end of the school year (May 2019), 13 were income-eligible and 27 exceeded family poverty guidelines.

Currently, there are preschool classrooms at two MCSD schools: Johnson and Olathe Elementary schools. It is convenient for parents to have their older children and preschool-aged children receive educational instruction at the same campus; this convenience has resulted in full enrollment at each of the two existing sites, including use by MCSD teachers who have enrolled their own children on these campuses.

### **Community Programs and Resources Available**

Early Childhood Centers always has worked diligently with other local/regional resources to expand, enhance and supplement the education provided through its programs. Collaboration occurs with numerous agencies to meet specific objectives for staff, parents and children.

Families and siblings of Head Start children, depending on circumstance, may be eligible for services or enrolled in programs through other early childhood service provider agencies, including Kids Thrive (a national early childhood development initiative for children ages 0-3 years), subsidized childcare through Montrose Department of Human Services, Kids Aid (backpack food program), Tom Goodrich Warm Hearts Memorial Project (coats) and the School District (free/reduced lunches).

Despite the sometimes overwhelming needs presented by the community, and particularly by ECC/Head Start families, the overall outlook in Montrose County remains positive, and community agencies work well together to find solutions to unmet needs. Early Childhood Centers continues to reach as many Head Start-eligible children as possible, while implementing programming to provide quality early childhood education for enrollees and additional resources/supports for their families.

## *Conclusions Based on Data Analysis*

Since initiating the community assessment process, Montrose County has endured the highs and lows of a boom-and-bust economy while simultaneously experiencing significant population growth. These factors strain community infrastructure as agencies have scrambled to keep up with the increased demands of hardship and population. Housing, healthcare, education and social/human services all have been impacted by changing demographics and the economy.

Employment and earnings have been and remain huge concerns, as unemployment rates and costs of living (particularly for housing) have been consistently higher than state averages, earnings and wages significantly lower. This struggle impacts not only individuals and families, but also those service providers responding to the needs of families. Further, Montrose County's isolated and rural location, combined with an unpredictable economy, makes it difficult to attract qualified professionals in health care and childcare, and preschool teachers.

ECC/Head Start identifies the following trends, concerns and gaps as most noteworthy:

- Population growth in Montrose County has been substantial over the last decade, and this is projected to continue. This presents greater problems for lower-income families, many of whom are Head Start eligible.
- Wages continue to be lower, overall, than in Colorado's more populated counties, especially on the Front Range. Lower wages result in families' inability to exist on one or even two parents working full-time jobs, especially as childcare costs increase.
- A far greater number of children are living in poverty in Montrose County than currently can be served by area resources. This includes a lack of childcare centers, preschool environments and other child development services. Services to sparsely-populated outlying communities must be partnered with other community resources/service providers to create a viable delivery system.
- Facilities must accommodate the growing number of children enrolled in programs.
- Appropriate programs must be in place for children whose families are above income guidelines – i.e. those whose families are a part of the “working poor” and unable to afford quality programming, yet who have incomes substantial enough that they do not meet eligibility guidelines.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES

Based on the results of the ongoing assessment process and updated data contained herein, as well as the needs of the community served by MCSD, Early Childhood Centers has set for following priorities for the five-year period 2019-2024:

1. Strengthen active supervision systems.
2. Provide professional development for ECC staff members; provide educational opportunities for parents to promote development of kindergarten readiness skills in children.
3. Improve the Centers' communication systems.
4. Acquire quality and sustainable facilities.

These goals are a result of the on-going assessment of ECC's philosophical and programmatic approaches, self-assessment and community assessment, child outcomes, parent involvement data and parent surveys, CLASS assessments and staff member feedback, all of which drive both long-term (five year) and short-term (specific components/programs) goals. Additionally, a formal strategic planning process occurred in 2018, involving numerous individuals representing the MCSD Board of Education and District leadership, ECC Policy Council, preschool education staff and leadership, and the community.

The following provides the plan of action for each of the goals outlined above:

**GOAL I: STRENGTHEN ACTIVE SUPERVISION SYSTEMS FOR THE MCSD RE-1J EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS**

**Objective 1:** *Complete the 2019-2020 Active Supervision Action Plan*

**Objective 2:** *Provide the Program Operations Coordinator professional development to effectively facilitate and monitor active supervision practices at the three MCSD RE-1J Early Childhood Centers sites*

**GOAL II: ADDRESS TRAINING NEEDS BY PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO MCSD RE-1J EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS STAFF MEMBERS; PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF KINDERGARTEN READINESS SKILLS IN CHILDREN**

**Objective 1:** *Provide preschool families with opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding in Pyramid Model strategies*

**Objective 2:** *Complete Year 2 of 3 of the Pyramid Model coaching and training*

**Objective 3:** *Provide Practice Based Coaching for CLASS to MCSD RE-1J Early Childhood Centers' teachers to improve Instructional Support scores*

**GOAL III: IMPROVE THE COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS OF MCSD RE-1J EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS**

**Objective 1:** *Differentiate the populations/groups (i.e. staff members, parents, governing boards, etc.) with which Early Childhood Centers currently is communicating, and those populations/groups that need to be added to the communication plan*

**Objective 2:** *Identify all forms of communications to discern which are efficient and effective for the populations/groups with which Early Childhood Centers communicates*

**GOAL IV: ACQUIRE QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE FACILITIES**

**Objective 1:** *Determine a monetary estimation of the costs to build a new Early Childhood Centers facility*

**Objective 2:** *Develop a capital campaign plan for securing a new Early Childhood Centers Facility*



## VII. APPENDIX

### *Community Assessment: Sources of Data*

Information has been obtained via scanning web sites and telephone interviews from/with the following:

Affordable Housing; Web site at [affordablehousingonline.com](http://affordablehousingonline.com)

Bright Futures; 620 Mountain Village Blvd, Telluride, CO 81435; (970) 369-1312  
Web site at <http://www.brightfuturesforchildren.org>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention; Web site at <https://www.cdc.gov.html>

Colorado Children's Campaign, Kids Count in Colorado!, 2000-2019 reports  
1120 Lincoln Street, Suite 125, Denver, Colorado 80203  
Web site at <http://www.coloradokids.org>

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE); Web site at <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe>

Colorado Mesa University, Montrose Campus  
234 S. Cascade, Montrose, CO 81402; (970) 249-7009  
Web site at <http://www.coloradomesa.edu>

Colorado Health Institute; Website at [www.coloradohealthinstitute.org](http://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org)

City Data; Web site at <http://www.city-data.com>

Data USA; Web site at <https://datausa.io>

Dolphin House Child Advocacy Center; 236 S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. #311, Montrose, CO 81401; (970) 240-8655  
Web site at [www.montrose-child-advocacy.org](http://www.montrose-child-advocacy.org)

Early Childhood Centers Montrose-Olathe, Head Start  
P.O. Box 10,000, Montrose, Colorado 81402; (970) 249-5858  
Web site at <http://ecc.mcsd.org>

Health Resources and Services Administration; Web site at <https://www.hrsa.gov>

Housing Colorado; 225 East 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 575, Denver, CO 80203; (303) 863-0123  
Web site at <http://www.housingcolorado.org>

Hunger Free Colorado; Web site at <https://www.hungerfreecolorado.org/>

The Center for Mental Health: Montrose Clinic  
605 East Miami Road, Montrose, CO 81401; (970) 249-9694

Montrose County Health & Human Services, 2015 Annual Report  
Web site at <http://www.co.montrose.co.us/107/Health-Human-Services>

Montrose County Housing Authority; 222 Hap Court, Olathe, CO 81425; (970) 323-5445

Montrose County School District RE-1J; P.O. Box 10,000, Montrose, Colorado 81402  
Web site at <http://www.mcsd.org>

Montrose Economic Development Corporation  
100 Tessitore Court, Suite A, Montrose, Colorado 81401; (970) 270-0211  
Web site at <http://www.montroseedc.org>

Montrose Realty Association; 1519 E. Main St #200, Montrose, Colorado 81402; (970) 249-6213  
Web site at [www.montroseassociationofrealtors.com](http://www.montroseassociationofrealtors.com)

National Research Center; 3005 30<sup>th</sup> Street Boulder, CO 80301; (303) 444-7863  
Web site at <http://www.n-r-c.com>

PIC Place; 87 Merchant Drive, Montrose, CO 81401; (970) 252-8896

River Valley Family Health Center; 308 Main Street, Olathe, CO 81425; (970) 323-6141  
Web site at <http://www.rivervalleyfhc.com>

State of Colorado, Demographer's Office; Web site at <https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/>

State of Colorado, Department of Education, Colorado School Districts  
Web site at <http://www.cde.state.co.us>

State of Colorado, Department of Labor and Employment  
Web site at <https://www.colorado.gov/cdle>

State of Colorado, Department of Local Affairs  
Web site at <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dola>

Suburban Stats; Web site at <https://suburbanStats.org>

Technical College of the Rockies; 1765 Hwy 50, Delta, CO 81416; (970) 874-7671

*The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado 2018*, Colorado Center on Law & Policy  
789 Sherman Street #300, Denver, CO 80203; (303) 573-5669 ext. 314  
Web site at [https://cclponline.org/pub\\_library/self-sufficiency-standard-for-colorado-2018/](https://cclponline.org/pub_library/self-sufficiency-standard-for-colorado-2018/)

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; Web site at <http://www.bea.gov>

U.S. Census Bureau; Web site at <https://www.census.gov/>

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/>

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services; Web site at <https://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/>

Zillow, real estate search engine; Web site at <https://www.zillow.com/>