

**District 4 HRDC- Child Care Link**  
**Child Care Resource & Referral Program**  
*“We’re Your Child Care Experts”*

Child Care Link provides comprehensive Child Care Resource and Referral services to parents and families in Hill, Liberty and Blaine Counties.

Good child care is an important step to school success. Studies show that children who get quality child care enter school with better math, language, and social skills. Most American families are using child care — 75 percent of children under age five are in some type early care setting. Good child care is often hard to find and afford. For most families in this region, child care is the second largest expense in their budget after rent or mortgage, easily costing \$4,200 or more per year.

Even families who can afford it struggle to find quality care. One major national study found that only one in four preschool classrooms and one in 12 infant classrooms in child care centers were of good quality.

**From July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004**

- Child Care Link helped 152 families take the guesswork out of finding child care by providing 1231 referrals to registered facilities for 234 children in need of child care.
- Child Care Link helped increased the supply of quality child care. By providing training to 335 participants this past year and; Assisting in development of 3 new child care facilities offering 18 new regulated child care spaces.
- Child Care Link helped create child care solutions for families by serving an average of 296 children per month from 178 families through Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships resulting in \$403,651 spent in Child care payment assistance dollars.
- Child care resource and referral meets a need that no one else does by providing the bridge between parents, providers, community leaders, and policy makers. By offering a unique blend of direct services and planning expertise, Child Care Link helps families and communities ensure that their children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.

Montana’s child care industry contributes directly and indirectly to this region’s economy. The industry not only directly supports child care jobs and the jobs of parents who rely on child care. It indirectly supports jobs created by the goods and services that child care providers procure.

<b>Approximate number of children who can be served in state regulated full-time slots in region . . . . .</b>	<b>436</b>
<b>Cost of full-time infant care per month in a child care center . . . . .</b>	<b>\$368</b>
<b>Maximum gross monthly income for a family of three to be eligible for child care payment assistance . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,878</b>
<b>Total number of child care businesses in region . . . . .</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Number of workers employed in child care . . . . .</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Average annual earnings of child care providers . . . . .</b>	<b>\$14,020</b>
<b>Local spending generated last year by child care payment assistance . . .</b>	<b>\$686,206</b>

## Business Profile – Hill County



Meet Northern Montana Health Care's Darlene Morehouse, a certified nurse's aide, and Wanda Allison, Director of Obstetrics and Employee Health. Northern Montana Health Care is a business entity that encompasses more than 120 different types of job positions in the city of Havre serving north central Montana. They employ approximately 650 individuals to fill the diverse needs of the organization

Wanda Allison states, "NMHC is proud to recruit qualified and highly skilled personnel to meet the various needs of our customers. Many of our people utilize the childcare system, whether it is in a preschool, childcare setting, or the services of a family member or friends. Others stagger shifts to enable one parent to be home with the children, in an attempt to avoid the staggering costs of quality child care.

"These elements are critical if our employees are to be at their best each day at work. A sick child can really cause an increased burden that has a domino effect. If a child is sick and the employee cannot attend work, then others are forced to assume extra responsibilities in their job setting. This is also the same if the parent is uneasy about their childcare arrangement or has difficulty locating quality care.

"In addition, there are a huge number of two-parent families where both parents work full time and still are barely able to make ends meet after bearing the burden of the cost for child care."

Darlene Morehouse is fortunate to have her mother nearby to care for her 18-month-old twins and 3-month-old infant, since she has explored many options through Child Care Link in finding regulated child care that can accept three infants on a rotating schedule as well as assistance in paying for their care while she works. Her family of five does not meet eligibility requirements to obtain assistance, even though this assistance would most likely be short term until her children reach school age. Darlene wonders how long her mother will be able to continue to care for her three infants and what her family will do when Grandma decides they are too much to manage.

## **Family Profile – Hill County**



**Meet Sandy Derry and her daughter Kiara. They live in Havre.**

Sandy currently receives a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship that averages approximately 178.00 per month. This scholarship covers a portion of her child care expenses she incurs while working and attending college. Sandy states, “This scholarship is essential for me and Kiara. I am a single mom who is going to school full time and working. Without this program, I would not be able to go to college and get my degree. I could not afford it. Without this program I would be working a minimum wage job and would never get off of TANF. Because of the Best Beginnings Scholarship Program I am going to be able to get a good job with good pay!

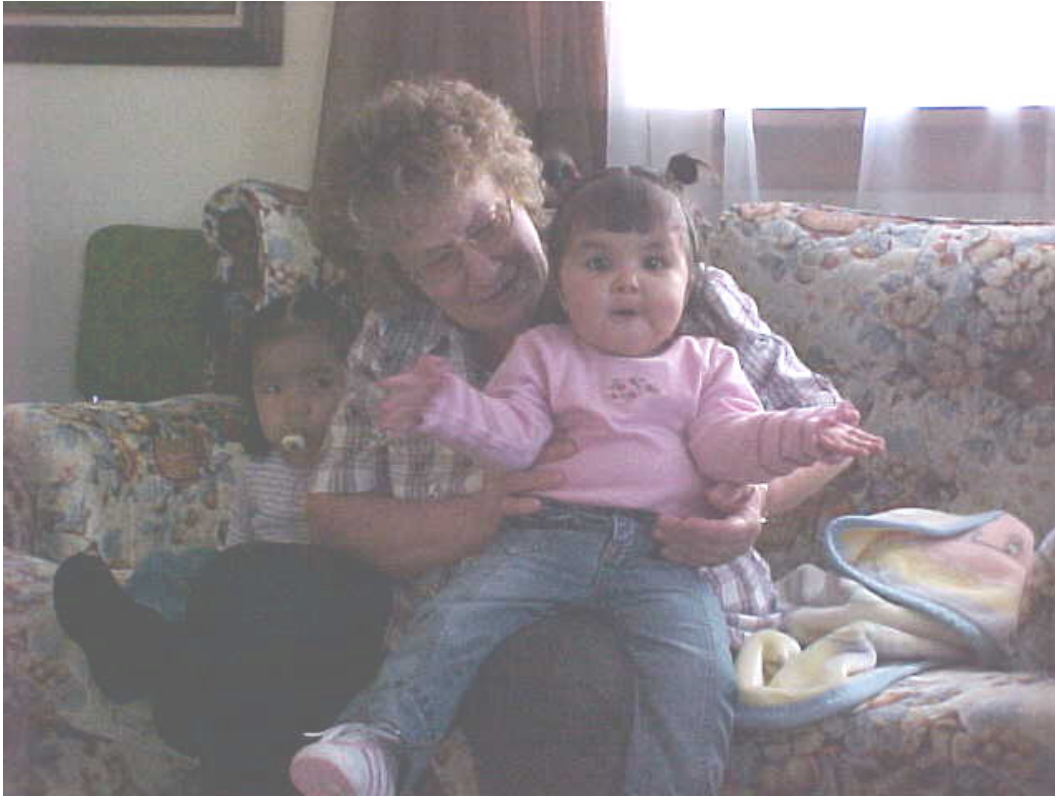
## Family Profile – Hill County



**Meet Lisa Stuckey and 2 1/2 year old son Jayden. Lisa works as a waitress and is enrolled as a full time student at Montana State University. The Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship Program pays approximately \$417.00 per month toward Jayden’s care in a state registered child care facility.**

Lisa states, “I am grateful that this scholarship program exists and is available for my family. I am a single mom and even though I am working, I do not make enough to pay child care and continue my education to make our lives better. I hope to someday be able to give back. Thank you!”

## Child Care Provider Profile Blaine County



### **Meet Margie Miller, Operator of Little Rascals Family Child Care Program in Harlem, Ashton (15 months), and Mia (10 Months).**

Margie has been in operation since September of 2004 and cares for up to six children at one time. She has utilized services through her local Child Care Resource and Referral Program in Havre at District 4 HRDC - Child Care Link. These services include: New provider Orientation; the Starting Out Successfully (SOS) Program where an Early Childhood Specialist from Child Care Link comes to her home to do a six unit, beginner training program, to get her business started off on the right track; resource Library materials; newsletters; training & workshops to help her learn more about providing good child care; and referrals to her program for families who are in need of child care.

Margie states, "My child care services are important so parents can go to work or college to earn money or advance their education for a better job. Their children learn to play, share, and eat healthy foods"

## Family Profile – Hill County



**Meet Dana and Tyrel Kjersem (age 3). Dana currently receives TANF Child Care Assistance in the average amount of \$387.00 per month to help pay for the costs associated with Tyrel’s child care at Jackie’s Daycare in Havre so she can attend college at Montana State University Northern.**

Dana states, “I am a single parent currently going to college to get my Bachelor’s degree in Physical Education and working part time. If it wasn’t for child care assistance I wouldn’t be able to afford day care to be able to go to school. Right now, I am closing my TANF Account and applying for Best Beginnings Non-TANF Child Care Assistance. I believe I will be able to fully support myself and my children upon graduation. Child Care Link has helped me by providing me a chance to go to college while giving me the help I need to afford child care for my child.”

*For more information regarding the services District 4 HRDC - Child Care Link provides, contact 1-800-640-6743 or 265-6743 or [www.hrdc4.havre.mt.us](http://www.hrdc4.havre.mt.us).*

*Child Care Link is this areas’ provider of child care resource and referral services and has been serving Hill, Liberty, and Blaine Counties and Ft. Belknap and Rocky Boy Reservations since 1992. District 4 HRDC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.*