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Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors:

We would like to formally announce the selection of the chairwoman of the Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council (MECAC), Kim Latrielle. We would also like to thank the Chamber of Commerce board for being a contributing organization to the system of support for early childhood education and the businesses and workforce that sustain this industry. The early childhood education system/childcare is critical to businesses in Montana that employ working parents. We look forward to Kim's leadership and knowledge in blending the economics of the child care workforce with other industry and business needs. The Early Childhood and Family Support Division (ECFSD) will staff the council and work to meet the goals of the council. Both Jamie Palagi and Patty Butler will guide this important council and support Kim in her role. Please see below, the MECAC announcement to be released this week.

The Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council, appointed by DPHHS, represents interested constituency groups, governmental agencies, the public at large, child care providers, state and local representatives, and Tribes. The Council provides advice concerning state early care and education and the professionals that support families and young children. The Council's purpose is not only to improve collaboration and coordination across the spectrum of governmental and non-profit organizations providing early childhood services, but to serve as a connector cross sector, bridging community and state needs for early childhood issues. The following objectives are included: families with young children are supported in their community; social, emotional, and mental health needs of young children and families are supported; children have access to high quality early childhood programs; child care is an integral infrastructure support for strong economies and business throughout the state. The Council meets a minimum of two times per year.

Kim Latrielle, President/CEO of the Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce, has agreed to serve as chairman of the Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council. Kim has been working side by side with business in Missoula for over 40 years. She has a passionate understanding of the business workforce structure and an understanding of the critical need for the child care industry to thrive and support working parents. Kim has led a collaboration with area child care providers and advocates to address the continued need for additional childcare, including school age care. In 2020 Kim led the Missoula Chamber in a survey that identified childcare as a critical workforce issue. In 1999 Kim represented Montana in Washington DC as an advocate and critical thinker on early childhood issues and business models that might support community.

The next full Council meeting will be held in the fall of 2021; however, committees and work groups are engaged in continued work at this time.

Sincerely,

Jamie Palagi, Early Childhood and Family Support Administrator
Patty Butler, Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief