



**ParentingMontana.org
Health Professional Resources**





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Recommended Citation: Center for Health and Safety Culture. (2023). *ParentingMontana.org Health Professionals Resources*. Bozeman, MT: Montana State University.

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Introduction

Health professionals can play an important role in helping parents access and utilize ParentingMontana.org tools and resources. By engaging parents and those in a parenting role in the website and resources and encouraging use of ParentingMontana.org tools, you can improve outcomes for Montana's youth.

ParentingMontana.org was designed specifically for parents and those in a parenting role to

- address everyday challenges like creating routines, growing confidence, or managing anger;
- while at the same time growing their child's self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and the ability to make responsible decisions.

ParentingMontana.org is a simple, free way health professionals can

- engage parents to support their children in their home, and
- provide tools and resources to parents to address issues like tantrums, peer pressure, stress and anxiety, and others that impact a child's health.

The tools and resources can be viewed online (using a computer, tablet, or phone), downloaded and printed, or even listened to (there are audio versions). Health professionals can download, print, or email links of developmentally appropriate tools and resources to share with parents.

ParentingMontana.org is designed for parents and those in a parenting role of children from birth to age 19. Topics include anger, back talk, bullying, confidence, conflict, discipline, friends, homework, listening, lying, tantrums, reading, sharing, stress, disrespect, responsibility, and more.

The website contains a variety of tools and resources valuable for parents and health professionals including

- tools, tool summaries, and audio versions of tools (to guide parents through five steps to address specific topics);
- brief tool summaries and rack cards that can be printed and used as quick references;
- "I Want to Know More" background information written for parents that provide additional information on specific topics;
- research summaries written for professionals;
- podcasts discussing key ideas in more depth; and
- supportive media including articles, podcasts, videos, and print materials.

ParentingMontana.org Purpose

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services partnered with the Center for Health and Safety Culture (Montana State University) to create ParentingMontana.org – an intentional effort to promote the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of Montana’s children by actively growing their skills of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and the ability to make responsible decisions.

Those who care for youth are the greatest stakeholders in their development and often the greatest influencers on their skill development. ParentingMontana.org provides tools and resources to enhance parenting skills in growing the skills of children. The tools are appropriate for children from birth through the teen years.

Research¹ shows that growing skills around self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and the ability to make responsible decisions

- reduces risky behaviors (such as underage drinking and the misuse of other drugs);
- prevents mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders including depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders;
- reduces negative outcomes such as dropping out of school, poor education attainment, unemployment, suicide, and others;
- improves academic performance; and
- leads to better employment outcomes (like being employed full time) later in life.

Positive outcomes from growing these skills occur across the lifespan and in diverse cultural settings. Parents and those in a parenting role can develop these skills of their children at any age while addressing common parenting challenges like reading, stress, discipline, and making sure homework is completed.

As parents and those in a parenting role use the ParentingMontana.org tools with their children, both the children and the parents develop their skills around self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and the ability to make responsible decisions – thus bolstering the parents’ abilities while strengthening protection for the child.

Why ParentingMontana.org?

Mental, emotional, and behavioral health are critical for individuals to have the opportunity to flourish, that is to lead meaningful, productive, and engaged lives.² An individual's mental, emotional, and behavioral health develops across the lifespan. Much of this development occurs in the first two decades of life.

Individuals with poor mental, emotional, and behavioral health are more likely to engage in risky behaviors (such as excessive drinking or substance misuse), experience mental health disorders (depression, anxiety, etc.) and substance use disorders, and experience negative outcomes such as physical illness, disability, low education attainment, incarceration, homelessness, and suicide.²

Individuals with good mental, emotional, and behavioral health are more likely to have positive wellbeing. Positive wellbeing includes experiencing positive emotion, being engaged in activities, finding meaning in life, having positive relationships, and experiencing achievement.³

Mental, emotional, and behavioral health are impacted by a complex interaction of genetic, biological, social, and environmental factors. Efforts at the societal, community, organizational, and individual levels can intentionally promote healthy development and prevent risky behaviors, disorders, and negative outcomes. Such efforts can actively grow the social and emotional skills of children at all ages to promote healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development.²

The logic behind ParentingMontana.org is shown in Figure 1.

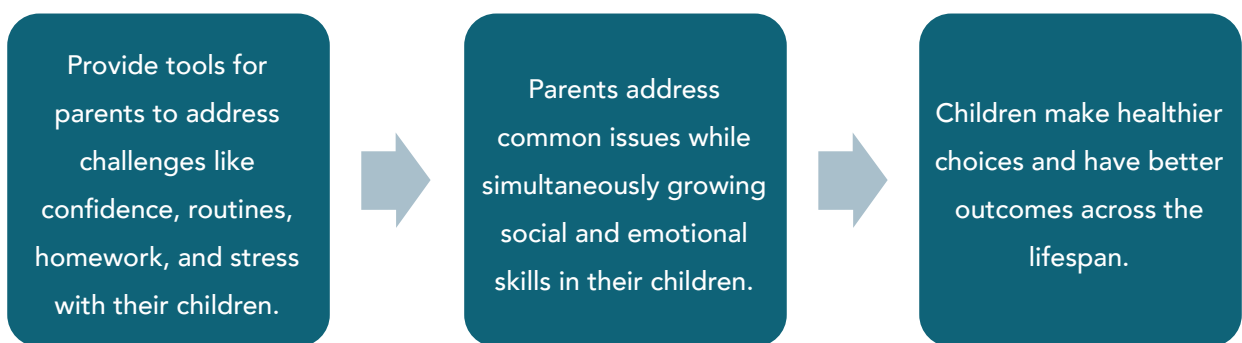


Figure 1. Logic Behind ParentingMontana.org

The Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health of Montana’s Children

Mental, emotional, and behavioral health have been assessed periodically on the National Survey of Children’s Health.⁴ This survey measures several indicators of mental, emotional, and behavioral “flourishing” including behaviors like bouncing back quickly when things don’t go well, showing interest and curiosity in learning new things, working to finish tasks, and generally showing positive emotion.

In 2016-17, 68% of Montana’s young children (ages 6 months to 5 years) were reported to have high levels of flourishing (6% had low levels, and 26% had moderate levels). However, only 34% of Montana’s children and youth ages 6 to 17 years had high levels of flourishing (39% had low levels, and 27% had moderate levels).⁵

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System measures several indicators of mental, emotional, and behavioral health among high school students.⁶ The 2021 results reveal several areas for concern about Montana’s high school students:

- 31% consumed alcohol in the past month
- 16% engaged in high-risk drinking
- 20% consumed cannabis in the past month
- 41% felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more so they stopped doing some usual activities in the past year
- 22% seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year

Poor mental, emotional, and behavioral health can lead to negative outcomes including death. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, motor vehicle crashes (many involving the misuse of alcohol), overdoses, and suicide account for six out of every 10 deaths of children and young adults between the ages of 5 and 25 in the United States.⁷ While the rates of fatal motor vehicle crashes are declining, most crashes are caused by human behavior, which is often influenced by mental, emotional, and behavioral health. Unfortunately, rates of suicide are increasing – especially among young people.

ParentingMontana.org – A Three-Generation Approach

Research supports growing skills around self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and the ability to make responsible decisions of parents improves the mental, emotional, and behavioral development of children. This connection between parent and child makes this strategy a two-generation approach.

Furthermore, research is now showing that a child with strong skills develops into an adult with similar skills and that these skills as an adult will foster the healthy development of the next generation. In this way, growing skills around self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and the ability to make responsible decisions is a three-generation approach with the potential for much broader impact.

Selected Research Behind ParentingMontana.org

Extensive research was used to inform ParentingMontana.org. The research summaries are standalone PDF files that you can view, download, and share. These brief documents summarize the research to bolster efforts to promote ParentingMontana.org.

- [Social and Emotional Development](#)
- [Social and Emotional Development Among Tribal Nations in Montana](#)
- [Social and Emotional Development as a Strategic Approach to Reduce Risk Factors and Bolster Protective Factors Associated With Underage Drinking](#)
- [Reducing Underage Drinking by Strengthening Social and Emotional Skills](#)
- [Adverse Childhood Experiences, Substance Misuse, and Social and Emotional Development](#)
- [Risk Factors and Supportive Strategies for Youth in Foster Care](#)
- [Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Circumstances, Impact, and Actions for Success](#)
- [Prescription Medications](#)
- [Cannabis](#)
- [Methamphetamine](#)

An Overview of the Website

Getting Started

On the homepage, many parents find that getting started is easiest when they begin by reviewing:

- The Parenting Process for Your Child's Success, a step-by-step process for dealing with simple and challenging parenting topics to build critical life skills and improve their relationship with their child.
- Intentional Communication, where they can learn how to communicate in a purposeful way with their child to support and enhance their relationship.
- Intentional Ways to Grow a Healthy Parenting Relationship, where they discover ways to promote a healthy parenting relationship with their child.

Tools for the Age of Your Child

ParentingMontana.org provides easy to use parenting tools and resources to support a child's success from birth through the teen years. The website includes practical topics to support Montana parents and those in a parenting role. On the ParentingMontana.org website, parents can search by age and issue to find tools addressing a variety of topics. A few topics include:

- Anger
- Back Talk
- Bullying
- Chores
- Confidence
- Conflict
- Defiance and Power Struggles
- Discipline
- Disrespect
- Eating
- Empathy
- Establishing Rules About Alcohol
- Establishing Rules About Marijuana
- Friends
- Happiness
- Homework
- Kindness
- Listening
- Lying
- Mixed Messages About Alcohol
- Mixed Messages About Marijuana
- Peer Pressure
- Reading
- Repairing Harm
- Resilience
- Responsibility
- Routines
- Sharing
- Stress and Anxiety
- Talking About Differences
- Tantrums

Audio Files

Audio files are included for each tool. Parents can listen to an audio file from the tool page or find the tools for the age of their child altogether, like a podcast, which can be found on popular podcast players.

Parenting Process for Your Child's Success

The tools are based on an easy-to-use 5 step process that creates an environment for learning that allows parents and those in a parenting role and their children to practice and grow critical life skills. Parents can download a summary of the 5 steps to keep close or even put on the refrigerator. The tools give specific actions to take, and ideas of the words to say to engage their children, to build their relationship, and strengthen their communication. At the end of each tool, there is an option to download the tool, save it, or email it.

I Want to Know More

In addition to the parenting tools, ParentingMontana.org includes additional resources (called "I Want to Know More") written for parents on such topics as:

- Parenting Process for Your Child's Success
- Communication
- Relationships
- Development
- Risky Behavior
- Foster Care
- Child Care
- Child Trauma

Media

Media include articles, podcasts, videos, and print materials.

Articles: Parenting articles written by experts in the field

- Guiding Children With Tools for Success: Parenting With Social and Emotional Learning. Learn how to parent in an intentional way that develops social and emotional skills within children.
- Empathizing With a Bigger World in Your Own Backyard: How Parents Can Support a Child's Growing Social Awareness. Learn a number of ways you can help your children and teens become more socially aware.
- Decisions, Decisions...Preparing Our Children to Make Responsible Choices. Learn how preparing your child for independence requires numerous small chances to make decisions so that they are ready for the big choices to come.
- Cultivating Trusting Relationships. Learn how an adult can become "ask-able" -- the kind of adult in which children and teens are comfortable approaching and confiding.

- Children’s Growing Identity: Cultivating Self-Awareness to Inspire Confidence. Ideas on how to cultivate self-awareness in children by teaching them to recognize their emotions and how they influence their behavior.
- A Parent’s Greatest Gift: Self-Management. Ideas for how parents and those in a parenting role can best promote the invaluable skill of self-management at various ages.

ParentingMontana.org Podcast: Inspirational and educational podcasts highlighting information from ParentingMontana.org including:

- Introducing The ParentingMontana.org Podcast. Join the ParentingMontana.org podcast in conversations about the challenges and the joys of being in a parenting role in Montana and learn how we can raise our kids to be confident, respectful, and make healthy choices.
- Guidance and Discipline for Skill Building. In this episode, we have a conversation about how providing guidance with discipline can grow skills and improve our relationships with our children. We are joined by Jennifer Miller, author of the book, *Confident Parents, Confident Kids: Raising Emotional Intelligence In Ourselves and Our Kids — From Toddlers to Teenagers*.
- Intentional Ways to Grow a Healthy Parenting Relationship. In this conversation, we talk about our relationships with our children. Joined by Dr. Shannon Wanless, an Applied Developmental Psychologist and the Director for the Office of Child Development at the University of Pittsburgh School of Education, we learn intentional ways we can grow a healthy relationship that can be a foundation for our children’s success.
- Parenting Process for Success. In this episode, we have a conversation about a step-by-step process parents or someone in a parenting role can follow for dealing with simple and challenging parenting topics. The process can help to build critical life skills and improve your relationship with your child.
- Social and Emotional Development. In this conversation, we talk about social and emotional development. We are joined by Maurice Elias, Ph.D., one of the pioneers of social and emotional development, director of the Rutgers University Social-Emotional Development Lab, and author of *Emotionally Intelligent Parenting*. We discuss the importance of social and emotional development for a child’s success.
- Communication. In this episode, we talk about intentional communication. Intentional communication is a way of communicating that deliberately fosters social and emotional skill development. It supports and enhances the relationship between parents and their child.
- Having Conversations About Alcohol and Drug Use. In this episode, we talk about some of the conversations we should be having with our children about alcohol and drugs and get specific ideas about what those conversations could sound like.

- Being at Your Best as a Parent. Taking Care of Your Health and Wellbeing. In this episode, we have a conversation about ways parents and those in a parenting role can be at their best for their children. We discuss intentional ways to develop our own skills and care for our own well-being – both physical and mental. We welcome back Jennifer Miller, author of the book, *Confident Parents, Confident Kids: Raising Emotional Intelligence In Ourselves and Our Kids — From Toddlers to Teenagers*.
- Improve Your Relationship With Your Parenting Partner - Part 1. As parents, we want to be at our best for our children. In part 1 of this episode, we discuss how taking care of our own health and wellbeing can include learning ways to improve our relationships with our parenting partners.
- Improve Your Relationship With Your Parenting Partner - Part 2. In part 2 of this episode, we continue the conversation on ways to improve our relationships with our parenting partners.

How-to-Videos: How-to videos demonstrating information from ParentingMontana.org

Rack Cards: Printable at-a-glance resources highlighting key information from ParentingMontana.org

Resources

There is a resources section that connects parents to additional Montana resources.

Other Resources Available

In addition, ParentingMontana.org has more detailed information and resources that can be accessed through a child care resource and referral agency or a Montana prevention specialist in your region. These two entities are local experts available to help you engage parents and those in a parenting role in your community to use the ParentingMontana.org website and tools. They have guidance and resources to work with schools, child care providers, social service agencies, health professionals, law enforcement, and others to connect parents and those in a parenting role to the ParentingMontana.org website. They also have access to additional media resources and online training to support their efforts to promote the website and tools.

How to Engage Parents

Reaching and engaging parents and those in a parenting role are essential in connecting them with the tools and resources available through ParentingMontana.org. The tools and resources found on ParentingMontana.org can be used to engage with parents in a variety of ways.

Tools For the Age of Your Child

- Download pdf files and print tools to share with parents
- Email links to tools directly to parents
- Email or print out tool summaries to share with parents

I Want to Know More

- Download and print (or email directly) to share with parents and those in a parenting role

Mixed-Length Videos (90, 30, 15, and 6 seconds) for Use in Office

- Use before or after other presentations or videos as short videos to direct parents to ParentingMontana.org
- Share as hyperlinks with other professionals
- Share directly with parents and those in a parenting role

How-To Videos

These longer videos tell a story, provide more details, and demonstrate key topics. These can be shared directly with parents.

- **Guidance and Discipline for Skill Building (How-To Video).** Learn how as a parent or someone in a parenting role, you can choose to be purposeful and deliberate in the ways you provide guidance and discipline.
- **Intentional Ways to Grow a Healthy Parenting Relationship (How-To Video).** Learn how to be purposeful and deliberate in the ways you parent to create a foundation for your child's success.
- **Parenting Process for Success (How-To Video).** Learn about a process for interacting with your children that helps you address simple and challenging issues while, at the same time, developing their skills so they can manage their emotions and make better decisions.

Display Posters & Rack Cards

- At-a-glance resources highlighting key information from ParentingMontana.org to distribute or display in office
- Distribute directly to parents

Conclusion

ParentingMontana.org provides tools and resources to help parents and those in a parenting role raise healthy kids. Developing the social and emotional skills of youth (and their parents) will lead to positive academic and behavioral outcomes and will reduce risky behavior.

Health professionals can play an important role in helping parents access and utilize ParentingMontana.org tools and resources. By engaging parents and those in a parenting role in the website and resources and encouraging use of ParentingMontana.org tools, you can improve outcomes for Montana's youth.

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