Autism in Rural Areas: Lessons we have learned in Montana



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

Ontana Autism Center mtautism.org

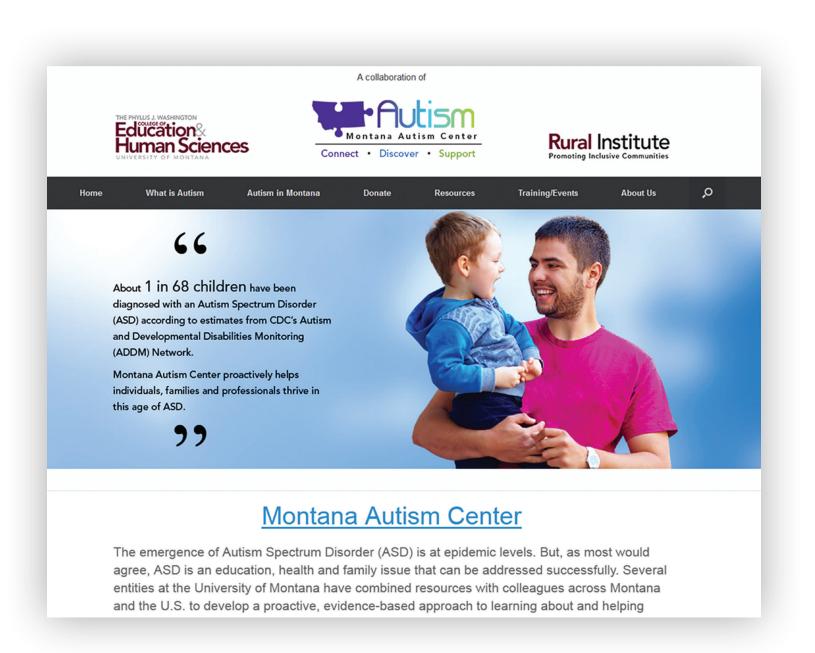






- Social media and Facebook are a great way to share information and build community. Texting has not been as beneficial.
- Churchs, bowling alleys and bars are good points of contact in rural and remote areas.
- Indian Health Service provides an effective connection to tribal communities.
- Local newsletters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





MT Autism Center

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

Fast Facts:

Text4Baby Connections (text4baby.org)

: Training & Research

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

 In 8 years, preschool age referrals are up 100%. For school age, referrals are up 150%, mostly in western MT.

• One urban Part C provider currently serves 125 families, 38% screen positive for ASD.

• "Youth Engagement through Intervention" for school age children grew from 8 to 17 children in one year. "MOSSAIC" grew from 4 to 7 young adults.

• The largest youth/adult provider in central Montana has 100 open Direct Service Providers positions.

• ACL American Indian Outreach coordinator to improve Native American connections.

• Overview for State ASD team members.

