

Position on Child Care Adopted 1988

Position

The Missoula League of Women Voters believes that our community's children deserve environments that nurture their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Therefore:

The Missoula League of Women Voters believes that the Missoula Community and the Missoula community governments have a responsibility to help maintain and improve the quality of child care for this community's children; i.e., health and safety of children receiving care; training of caregivers; adequate monitoring of child care facilities for safety, health, sanitation; economic incentives for facilities and the education of caregivers.

A major determinant of high-quality child care is the caregiver's knowledge of child development which is then applied in developmentally-appropriate activities. Other aspects crucial to the quality of child care are: a stable, long-lasting relationship between child and caregiver (i.e., low turnover of trained caregivers); a partnership relationship between parent and caregiver assuring consistency between the child's home life and the child care experience; the child/staff ratio; and the adequacy of the facility.

The quality of care a child receives affects all learning later in life, as well as his social, emotional, and physical health. Therefore:

The Missoula League of Women Voters believes that the quality of child care affects later cost-benefits to our community. Ensuring high quality care, now, will be more cost-effective than correcting future problems caused by the lack of such care.

A child's development, the stability of his or her family, and the economic life of the community all benefit from high quality child care. While high quality child care depends on a partnership relationship between parent and caregiver, employers and government must share some responsibility in the wake of this social revolution that has redefined work and family roles resulting in a vast societal change which has radically altered the everyday experiences of our community's youngest citizens. High-quality child care will help children become well-adjusted, successful, and functioning and contributing members of society.