

CARE Academy Parent Handbook 2023-2024 School Year

Children's After-School Recreation & Education

Providing care, academic support, and enrichment to Yellowstone County children.



Billings Schools: Arrowhead, Big Sky, Boulder, Burlington, Central Heights (a.m. only), Highland, and Meadowlark.

Laurel Schools: West and Graff

Satellite Schools (limited busing available for K-3 students to site schools):

Billings: Broadwater to Highland; McKinley to Highland; Miles Avenue to Highland; Rose Park to Highland; Washington to Highland; Central Heights to Meadowlark.
Laurel: South to West.

Hours:

Before School CARE	6:45 am to start of school
After School CARE	from class dismissal to 6:00 pm (a late fee will be charged after 6:00 pm)

Registration: \$25 registration fee. This will be added to your first payment of the 2023-2024 school year.

After School Program Only	Before School Only	Combined Before & After School
\$270 per month	\$95 per month	\$315 per month

Whole Day Program
\$40 per day

10% discount for each additional sibling.

If the yearly tuition is paid in full at registration, a 10% discount will be applied.

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GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS:

CARE Academy is available for elementary school age children (grades K-5) who are currently enrolled in Billings and Laurel Public Schools.

The daily program at CARE Academy is dedicated to providing a setting and schedule which is more “home-like” than “school-like.” The children in the program already spend many hours in school each day. After school, children need some time to relax or rest, and to stretch their bodies as well as their minds. The setting provides a fun place to be. Children must look forward to going there each day. The space and materials are stimulating for school age children.

Program Goal:

To provide a safe and caring environment for all children in CARE Academy with a variety of educational and recreational activities.

Key Elements:

1. Homework help/academic assistance and educational games.
2. Physical activity including a variety of sports and age-appropriate games.
3. Enrichment activities ranging from arts & crafts to music.
4. Finally, just “free time” for children to pursue their favorite interests.

Enrollment:

Parents may enroll students on a monthly basis, space available, first-come/first served. Early registration is advised. Registration may be found on the United Way of Yellowstone County website: www.uwyellowstone.org/care-academy. Re-registering parents will be sent a link to register via Procure.

Registration Information

Re-enrolling Families	New Families
Using the email you originally signed up with, you will re-enroll for fall with the link provided on April 24, 2023.	Because you provided your email address, you will be emailed a link to register on May 8, 2023.
Update information if changes occurred since the 2023-2024 school year.	Provide a copy of custody arrangements, foster parent paperwork, or a restraining order to careacademy@uwyellowstone.org
If needed, request Procure link to update payment information from careacademy@uwyellowstone.org .	A link will be sent via email to enter payment information.
Read and acknowledge policies and procedures in 2023-2024 CARE Academy Parent Handbook at www.unitedwayyellowstone.org .	Read and acknowledge policies and procedures in 2023-2024 CARE Academy Parent Handbook at www.unitedwayyellowstone.org .
You will receive a confirmation email within 3 business days of registration.	You will receive a confirmation email within 3 business days of registration.

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Parent Custody Paperwork:

If you have custody paperwork, please indicate this in the Confidential Information portion of the registration and include a copy of the legal document. Registration will not be considered complete without this.

Medication:

If your child needs to take medication during CARE hours, you will need to indicate this during registration through Procure. We will then email you the DPHHS-QAD/CCL-121 Medication Authorization Form. If this form is not filled out completely we will not be able to administer the medication while your child is in our program.

Payments and Payment Options:

Monthly tuition payments will be made by pre-authorized auto pay only via debit/credit card or ACH payment from a checking or savings account. Payments made by credit card will be charged a 3% service fee per transaction. Payments for the school year program are monthly and will not be prorated or credited for days your child(ren) do not attend. Invoices will be emailed on or around the 1st day of each month with the auto pay transaction charged on the 10th of the month. You will be contacted if the auto payment is rejected. Updated payment information must be provided within three days, or your child will be suspended from the program. You will also be charged the rejection fee of \$4.00. If you need to update your payment information let us know and we will send you a link through Procure that will allow you to update your payment information directly into the system.

Tuition Assistance

It is the mission of United Way of Yellowstone County and CARE Academy to make the program affordable for all. Based on available resources and tuition assistance eligibility, United Way of Yellowstone County will provide financial assistance to families who attend Billings Public Schools and Laurel Public Schools. United Way of Yellowstone County provides tuition assistance based on need through an application process. Limited funds for tuition assistance for the CARE Academy program are made possible through the generosity of those who contribute to annual community campaign. This application can be found at <https://www.unitedwayyellowstone.org/sites/unitedwayyellowstone/files/Tuition%20Assistance%20Application-Fall%202022-2023.pdf>. If you have received tuition assistance during the summer, a new tuition assistance application is needed for the 2023-2024 school year.

Cancellation:

Cancellation of enrollment in CARE Academy must be received two weeks in advance of cancellation date. Withdrawal notices received less than 14 business days in advance will be charged for the entire month of CARE.

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Closing Time:

Please observe our closing time of 6:00 pm. Any child(ren) left at a site outside of operating hours will result in additional billing. The late pick-up fee is \$10 for every 10 minute increment. More than three infractions may result in termination of services.

Release of Children:

Children will only be released to person(s) who have been specified by the enrolled parent(s) through registration or written permission. All individuals with permission to sign out a child must be 16 years of age or older, unless special arrangements are made. Identification may be required prior to the release of a child. Any exceptions to this must be communicated in writing to the CARE staff at the site.

Drop-off/Pick-Up Procedure:

Parent/Guardian MUST exit their vehicle (no exceptions), walk their child to and from the entrance, and wait for a CARE staff member to let them inside. Please call or text when pulling up to the school. This procedure is for safety reasons and so you can communicate with CARE staff if needed. If this procedure is not followed, we will first give a verbal warning, a written warning on the second occurrence, and suspension and/or termination of services will be determined after a third occurrence.

Early Out and Whole Day Programs:

CARE Academy will provide child care programs on most weekdays when the Billings and Laurel Public Schools are not in session, other than recognized holidays. On these days, CARE Academy will be offered at centrally located centers. Space is limited at each center. The days below are subject to change but we will notify in advance of any changes. **The fee for the Whole Day Program is NOT covered by monthly tuition, and will be billed as a separate invoice each month there are whole days.** The Whole Day cost will be billed the following month. (Ex. December Whole Days will be paid in January).

Parents wishing to utilize CARE Academy's Whole Day Programs will be required to sign-up to reserve service for their child(ren) at least two weeks in advance of the whole day(s). The CARE Academy office will email out the registration link for the Whole Day Programs. After reserving your child's space, you will receive a confirmation email within three business days. If you have not received an email please contact CAREAcademy@uwyellowstone.org to check on the status of your registration. Failure to cancel via email to the CARE Academy office at least a week prior to the whole day(s) will result in you being billed for the day(s) your child(ren) did not attend.

Operating hours for the Whole Day Program are 6:45 am to 6:00 pm. Please send your child with a lunch. Morning and afternoon snack are provided. If field trips are planned, we will email you a link to provide your permission and details of the outing.

Billings CARE Academy Whole Day dates for 2023-2024:

October- Thursday 19th, Friday 20th

November- Wednesday 22nd

December- Tuesday 26th through Friday 29th

February- Monday 19th

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March- Monday 25th through Thursday 28th
May- Friday 3rd

Laurel Schools CARE Academy Whole Days dates for 2023-2024:

October- Thursday 19th, Friday 20th
November- Wednesday 22nd
December- Tuesday 26th through Friday 29th
March- Friday 29th
April- Monday 1st
May- Friday 3rd

No Program Days and Holidays:

CARE Academy **Does Not** provide programming on the following days and recognized holidays:

September 5, 2023
November 23-24, 2023
December 22, 2023
January 1, 2024
January 15, 2024
April 8, 2024
May 27, 2024

**Billings CARE Academy will be closed on the afternoon of the last day of school, Friday, May 31, 2024.
Laurel CARE Academy will be closed on the afternoon of the last day of school, Thursday, May 30, 2024.**

School Closures Due to Weather and/or Delayed Starts:

If school is closed because of severe weather or any other unscheduled or emergency situation, CARE Academy will also be closed. Morning CARE will be closed if the school start time has been delayed because of severe weather or any other unscheduled emergency situation. Parents will be notified by the school districts of any school closures or delayed starts.

Food & Snacks

Morning Program:

Unless the school has a breakfast program in place, children will not be fed in the morning. If breakfast is served at the school site, parents will work directly with Food Services to take advantage of this program.

Afternoon Program:

Nutritious snacks will be served in the afternoon. Parents may want to provide a treat in honor of a child's birthday. In this case, they should contact the CARE Academy staff to determine the number of children to be served, learn of any dietary restrictions, and plan the date.

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Whole Day Programs:

Snacks will be served mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Parents should send children after eating breakfast with a bag lunch. No food will be provided for breakfast or lunch at the site.

Bus Transportation:**Billings 2023-2024 satellite schools have limited busing for K-3 students to site schools.**

Broadwater to Highland; Miles Avenue to Highland; Rose Park to Highland; McKinley to Highland; Washington to Highland; Central Heights to Meadowlark.

Busing from satellite schools to main CARE Academy sites will not be available August 22 through August 25, 2023. Busing will start Monday, August 28, 2023.

Laurel 2023-2024 satellite schools have busing available for K-5 students to site school.

Busing for the school year 2023-2024 will be from South to West Elementary starting on August 25, 2023. Busing will be available for Parent-Teacher Conferences.

Parent-Teacher Conference Days:

No busing is available from satellite schools to CARE Academy Site Schools on Parent-Teacher Conference Days. November 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, 2023. Parents will have to arrange for transportation to and from the program site during those days.

Field Trips:

CARE Academy provides many opportunities for children to explore their community and sites of interest. In order for our program to provide quality care and enrichment, it is critical that, on dates when field trips occur, all children participate. Therefore, no on-site care is provided for those not wishing to participate in any given off-campus activity.

When field trips are scheduled, parents are required to complete a permission form. This will be sent as a link via email which will list the field trip activity, date, time, and location. The school district's transportation buses will provide transportation for the field trip if it is outside of walking distance.

Absences and Illness:

No credit will be given for absences. If a child(ren) do not arrive as intended, the CARE staff will contact the parent(s). If the parent(s) cannot be reached, the CARE staff will contact the child(ren)'s emergency contact person(s). If a child becomes ill, or arrives ill at the CARE Academy site, the parent will be contacted and expected to promptly pick up the ill child within 30 minutes of notification. The child will be isolated from the other children until the parent or authorized person arrives.

CARE Academy provides before and after school care for children who are attending school on any given school day. If a child is too ill to attend class, he or she is then too ill to attend the before and after school program.

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Infectious Disease Mitigation Policy:

United Way of Yellowstone County (UWYC) is committed to protecting the workforce and those served by reducing the risk of spreading infectious disease by implementing various mitigation measures as deemed appropriate to factors including but not limited to disease prevalence, disease incidence, disease virulence, risk to vulnerable populations, and burden on the healthcare system. **This commitment is not limited to the COVID-19 pandemic, but rather stands for all infectious diseases that threaten the health and well-being of the community and the UWYC workforce.**

Infectious diseases, according to Center for Disease Control and Prevention, is defined as disorders caused by organisms — such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites. Some infectious diseases can be passed from person to person. Some are transmitted by insects or other animals. And you may get others by consuming contaminated food or water or being exposed to organisms in the environment. Infectious diseases that may require mitigation decisions include, but are not limited to: COVID-19, Norovirus, Influenza, Meningitis, Hand, Food & Mouth Disease, Pertussis, E. coli, Salmonella, and Measles.

Guidelines:

Disease-related factors to be considered in making mitigation decisions include:

- Transmissibility and virulence of the infectious agent(s) in question
- Incidence rate in Yellowstone County and surrounding areas
- Test positivity rate for the infectious agent, especially for symptomatic persons.
- Rate of change (ie: rate of increase or decrease) of disease incidence, prevalence, and hospital burden.
- Impact of the infectious disease on UWYC to serve its mission and deliver services, such as staff availability, absenteeism due to staff illness, capacity to redeploy staff, etc.

Activity-related factors to be considered in making mitigation decisions include:

- Location of the activity (i.e.: indoors or outdoors)
- Density of the activity (i.e.: room size, duration of activity, number of persons attending, “come and go” vs. same people for the entire time, movement during the activity vs. staying in one spot for the entire time, ability to maintain physical distancing)
- Attendees (internal staff or external participants)
- The inclusion or exclusion of meals, caterers, etc.
- The “estimated vaccination status” of attendees. Recognizing that MT law does not allow vaccinated and unvaccinated persons to be treated differently nor does it allow organizations to compel people to reveal their vaccination status, decisions for mitigation should consider reasonable estimates of the prevalence of vaccination among participants based on self-disclosed status, nature of the group.

Infectious disease mitigation measures have been roughly divided into three categories that can be selected or deselected depending on conditions:

- Category 1: In place regardless of outbreaks
 - Hand hygiene (i.e.: hand washing, availability and use of hand sanitizer, education and reminders via signs and other messages, etc.)
 - Disinfecting procedures (i.e.: wipe surfaces with Clorox wipes, spray disinfectant on tables/chairs after use)
 - Respiratory etiquette (i.e.: cover your cough, cough or sneeze into tissues, etc.)
 - Stay home when ill
 - “Informal” self-screening (i.e.: encourage staff to self-monitor / self-assess for symptoms and use sick time to stay home when symptomatic)
 - Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is encouraged but not required.

- Category 2: In place when risk / community transmission / impact on UWYC is at a moderate level
 - Includes category 1 mitigations
 - “Formal” self-screening for disease-specific symptoms
 - Physical distancing in meetings and other encounters (generally requiring 6 feet of distance between individuals, including seating arrangement)
 - Use of appropriate PPE
 - Remote work, when physical distancing cannot be maintained, and remote work is a reasonable and workable option
 - Use of remote or hybrid meeting technologies when physical distancing cannot be maintained, and remote technologies represent a reasonable and workable option
 - In Youth Programs, cohort groups are established to track and mitigate risk

- Category 3: In place when risk / community transmission / impact on UWYC is at a high level
 - Includes categories 1 and 2 mitigations
 - Universal masking* at all sites and in all areas

*Masks should completely cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of face without gaps.

Staff members and UWYC program participants can freely layer on additional protective interventions for themselves at any time as the person deems best given their personal circumstances and risk factors.

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Procedures:

In determining measures to be used and when such measures will be added, modified, or removed – decisions will be based on an overall, integrated assessment of factors relevant and timely to local circumstances, including the resources listed below.

The addition, modification, or removal of organization-wide mitigation measures will be determined by the UWYC Chief Executive Officer with input from other advisors as deemed necessary. In the absence of the CEO, the Director of Operations, in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Directors, is fully authorized to add, modify, or remove mitigation measures in response to changing conditions.

Resources:

- COVID-19 (2022). RiverStone Health. <https://riverstonehealth.org>
- COVID-19 Risk Tracker. COVID Act Now. [https://Montana \(MT\) - COVID Vaccine & Risk Tracker - Covid Act Now](https://Montana (MT) - COVID Vaccine & Risk Tracker - Covid Act Now)
- COVID-19 Guidance for Operating Early Care and Education/Child Care Programs, Updated January 28, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/child-care-guidance.html>
- COVID-19 Community Levels (February 25, 2022). <https://COVID-19 Community Levels | CDC>
- Diseases and Conditions. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. [https://Diseases & Conditions A-Z Index - A \(cdc.gov\)](https://Diseases & Conditions A-Z Index - A (cdc.gov))
- Emerging Infectious Diseases journal (February 2022). Center for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://Emerging Infectious Diseases journal - CDC>

Discipline and Termination:

CARE Academy staff have been trained in evidence-based practices following the same model as the school districts to utilize the PAX Good Behavior Game. The PAX Good Behavior Game is, in essence, a set of trauma-informed, evidence-based behavioral principles, or tools, taught to teachers and those who work with children, to use through the course of the day. When used properly, these tools help to develop resiliency in children.

Children are entitled to a safe, pleasant and harmonious atmosphere. We work with the children in our care to help mitigate behavioral issues; however, there are times when unacceptable behavior may be cause for dismissal from the program.

If a child is chronically disruptive to the functioning of the program, his/her enrollment may be suspended and/or terminated upon the recommendation of the staff after reasonable effort to integrate the child into the program, and after consulting the Program Director, the parent(s), and the Site Coordinator.

Behavior Plan Procedure:

CARE Academy staff works hard to help children adjust to the CARE program setting. We appreciate all of our children in CARE, and our staff is trained to discipline them with kind, but firm re-direction when necessary. This may include the PAX Good Behavior Game, one-on-one talks, time-out, or a written behavior plan. We may also, at times, ask parents to assist us and/or partner with school officials to synchronize a behavior plan.

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Seriously disruptive behavior is a different manner. Any misbehavior serious enough that it affects the ability of the staff to conduct the program, or that could endanger the safety of the child or other children, will be dealt with as follows:

The child will be given one “behavior point.” If this occurs, we will tell the parent about it when they come to pick their child up. This will give the parent the chance to work with their child at home to reinforce the need to follow CARE rules, and help to avoid further problems.

After this, if there is another incident, the child will receive a 2nd behavior point. If this occurs, we will call the parent and ask that the child be picked up immediately, and they will be suspended from the program for the remainder of the day.

If a child receives a 3rd behavior point from another incident, this will result in the child being immediately suspended from the program. Reinstatement will depend on the seriousness of the ongoing behavior problem, and the likelihood of a continuation of the behavior.

*Please note that this agreement does not limit us from removing a child at any time if, in our judgement, the child’s behavior is too disruptive, or if they become a danger to themselves or others, regardless of “points” received or not received.

Children’s Rights:

1. To have a safe environment.
2. To use all equipment and space on an equal basis.
3. To have their ideas and feelings respected.
4. To have discipline that is fair, equal, and respectful.
5. To have staff members who care about them, enjoy being with them, and help them grow.

Children’s Responsibilities:

1. To learn the rules and accept the consequences for their actions.
2. To control their feelings so their actions do not harm people or school property while in the program.
3. To follow directions and remain with the group and supervisor at all times.
4. To return materials and equipment to the place they found them for other children to use before taking out a new activity.

Parent’s Rights:

1. To know their child(ren) are in a safe environment.
2. To share concerns with the staff about anything they do not feel is in the best interest of their child(ren).
3. To know about their child’s behavior. If there is a concern, to spend time taking with the staff about a solution.
4. To know if their child(ren) do not report to the program as intended.
5. Open and timely communication with the Site Coordinator about calendar, activities, and curriculum.

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Parent's Responsibilities:

1. Any changes to your child(ren)'s schedule, drops or other charges, must be communicated to CARE Academy via email at CAREacademy@uwyellowstone.org or by calling the CARE Academy phone at 406.272.8512.
2. To notify your child(ren)'s CARE Academy Site Coordinator by phone or written notice if a child(ren) will not attend.
3. To notify your child(ren)'s CARE Academy Site Coordinator when another authorized person is picking up your child(ren).
4. To pay fees on time.
5. To keep the child(ren)'s records up-to-date with changes in contact information, child pick-up authorization, or emergency contacts.
6. For your child(ren)'s safety, you must sign your child(ren) in each morning and out each evening.
7. To pick up your child(ren) on time. Parents whose child(ren) remain past 6:00 pm must pay overtime fees at \$10.00 per each 10-minute increment. Children's services may be denied for one day or terminated if three overtime charges occur.
8. To tell the Site Coordinator if the child(ren) needs special attention which may not be indicated on their registration forms (for example: a special crisis time in the child(ren)'s life, a death in the family, medication a child is taking, etc.).

Emergency Procedures:

In case of a serious medical emergency:

Step 1: The Site Coordinator will call the parent(s). If neither parent can be reached, the next step will be taken.

Step 2: If the parent has listed an alternate emergency number, that number will be tried (i.e. grandparent, neighbor, or close friend). If those individuals cannot be reached, then step 3 will be followed.

Step 3: Our staff have been certified in CPR training and if warranted, will administer CPR until the paramedics arrive. The child will be taken by ambulance to the emergency room at a local hospital at the parent's expense.

Step 4: CARE Academy's responsibility ends when the child has been transported to the emergency room at the hospital. It is suggested that parent(s) have a notarized permission form on file with the hospital to treat their child(ren).

In case of poisoning, staff will immediately contact Poison Control (1.800.222.1222) and follow their instructions.

CARE Academy Contact Information

Arrowhead CARE Academy

2510 38th St. W., Billings, MT 59102

Kayla Kautz- Site Coordinator

406.850.9029

kautzk@billingschools.org

Big Sky CARE Academy

3231 Granger Ave. E., Billings, MT 59102

Abby Remington- Site Coordinator

406.850.4457

remingtona@billingschools.org

Boulder CARE Academy

2202 32nd St. W., Billings, MT 59102

Haiven Hayes - Site Coordinator

406.850.4456

hayesh@billingschools.org

Burlington CARE Academy

2135 Lewis Ave., Billings, MT 59102

TBA

TBA

TBA

Central Heights (A.M. Only)

120 Lexington Dr., Billings, MT 59102

Katie Wirtzberger- Site Coordinator

406.720.0320

wirtzbergerk@billingschools.org

Highland CARE Academy

729 Parkhill Dr., Billings, MT 59102

Candace Perea- Site Coordinator

406.850.4454

chavezc@billingschools.org

Laurel Graff CARE Academy

417 E. 6th St., Laurel, MT 59044

Annie Lindell- Site Coordinator

406.633.0212

laurelgraffcare@uwyellowstone.org

Laurel West CARE Academy

502 8th Ave., Laurel, MT 59044

Annie Lindell- Site Coordinator

406.698.1437

laurelwestcare@uwyellowstone.org

Meadowlark CARE Academy

221 29th St. W., Billings, MT 59102

Joey Perkins- Site Coordinator

406.850.4455

perkinsj@billingschools.org

If you have questions for the Program Director, please contact:

Michelle Lamberson

406.672.4214

ostdirector@uwyellowstone.org

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If you have questions regarding enrollment, tuition fees, payment, or the waiting list, please contact the United Way CARE Academy office:

406.272.8512 (phone)

406.252.3830 (fax)

CAREacademy@uwyellowstone.org

If you have questions or concerns to share with United Way of Yellowstone County management, please contact:

Kim Lewis

406.272.8501

klewis@uwyellowstone.org

Note to our CARE Academy parents:

Thank you for choosing United Way of Yellowstone County's CARE Academy. United Way of Yellowstone County relies on the generosity of donors for many services that impact Yellowstone County, including CARE Academy. If you would like to contribute to United Way of Yellowstone County's mission, please go to www.unitedwayyellowstone.org.

Bright By Text

Provides free tips, ideas and resources to help all parents and caregivers of children 0-8 to give every child a bright beginning. Text '406Parents' to 274448 to subscribe.

Best Beginnings of Yellowstone County

This is a community-led coalition backed by United Way of Yellowstone County. The coalition members include local organizations aimed to ensure every child in Yellowstone County have the skills and resources necessary to prepare them for kindergarten.

Success Mentoring

This program for elementary and middle school students in Yellowstone County helps children struggling with consistent school attendance develop goals, routines, and positive attitudes towards school which strongly correlates to their likelihood of graduating on-time with their peers.

As part of **United Way of Yellowstone County's Attendance Initiative**, materials are available free of charge to educators in Yellowstone County to ensure all students are in class, on time, every day. All resources have been created by United Way of Yellowstone County with support from Attendance Matters.

Montana 211

This is a mobile friendly website and phone number, 2-1-1, available to connect those in need of help with local non-profit and government services. www.montana211.org.

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Looking for ways to be more involved with the CARE program? Come Join CARE Academy Parent Advisory Council.

Staff Liaison: Michelle Lamberson

Meeting frequency: Quarterly

Meeting Duration: 1 ½ hours

Time Commitment: It is expected that committee members read materials and consider points of discussion prior to the meeting. There is expected post-meeting work. Committee members will spend 1-3 hours per quarter.

Purpose: The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is comprised of parent and school representatives from each CARE Academy location who meet quarterly. The PAC serves as an advisory, not a decision-making body, that makes recommendations and provides advice to CARE Academy Director relating to programs, activities, and resources in order to 1) help the program attain its goal of providing each child with the best Out-of-School Time experience possible and 2) have policies and programs that support families' strengths and needs.

- Increase community support for CARE Academy.
- Enhance the quality of the program through recommendations and feedback.
- Assist in identification of community resources.
- Act as an advocate for CARE Academy.