

First Annual *Stick Your Neck Out for Children* Award Presented to First Lady



[March 25, 2005] – **Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children**, along with hundreds of local organizations around the country, celebrated Week of the Young Child, April 3-9, 2005. Week of the Young Child honors the more than 35 million children from birth through age eight in America, and the families, teachers and other adults who help children make the most of the opportunities of their early years.

"Research and experience clearly show that children's earliest years are crucial learning years," said Karen Mason, Executive Director of Idaho AEYC. "*Week of the Young Child* is a chance to celebrate the learning opportunities of young children, and to recognize the responsibilities we share for helping them make the most of the early years."

These local celebrations of the Week of the Young Child are designed to build broader support for early childhood programs that nurture young children's early learning and growth. **This year, Idaho AEYC is pleased to announce the First Annual "Sticking Your Neck Out for Children" award. On April 5th from 11:30 – noon on the Capitol steps, First Lady Patricia Kempthorne read Idaho's Week of the Young Child Proclamation. She was also honored for her work on behalf of Idaho's Young Children.**

Idaho AEYC advocates a comprehensive effort to improve the quality of early childhood education, including:

- ❖ Providing professional development opportunities and adequate compensation for teachers and staff;
- ❖ Improving the health and safety of programs;
- ❖ Using developmentally appropriate practices to encourage literacy and learning from birth; and
- ❖ Supporting the family's crucial role in early education.

Idaho AEYC has **650** early childhood professionals working together to improve professional practice and working conditions in early childhood education, and to build public support for high-quality early childhood education programs. **Idaho AEYC** is an affiliate of NAEYC, the largest organization of early childhood educators and others dedicated to improving the quality of early education programs for children birth through age eight.