Dear Friends,

As we take a moment to reflect on the past year and commemorate Idaho AEYC’s remarkable 25-year journey as Champions for Children, I am overwhelmed with gratitude and hope for the days and years ahead. Over the past 25 years, Idaho AEYC has advanced high-quality early childhood education throughout our state. We’ve navigated complex systems and political landscapes, all while nurturing a collective vision of an Idaho where all children thrive, every family can access affordable, high-quality early childhood education and our early childhood educators have opportunities for growth through professional development. This vision drives us forward in our pursuit of a brighter, more equitable future for the youngest members of our communities.

In the face of unprecedented challenges, Idaho AEYC has remained committed to being a champion for high-quality early childhood education. We have worked relentlessly to ensure that every child in Idaho has access to the nurturing and stimulating environments they deserve. Our dedicated team, along with our partners and supporters, has continued to champion the cause of early childhood education, advocating for policy changes, supporting early childhood educators and expanding access to quality programs. As we look to the future, we hope you will remain with us on our journey in our commitment to the vision of an Idaho where all children thrive, knowing that our efforts today will shape a brighter tomorrow for future generations. Thank you for your support and for joining us in this critical endeavor.

With warm regards,

Beth Oppenheimer
Idaho AEYC Executive Director

A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

As the President of the Idaho AEYC Governing Board, I’m delighted to extend my gratitude to all of you who have been instrumental in making this year another remarkable chapter in our 25-year journey. Your unwavering support and dedication to our mission of advancing early childhood education in Idaho have profoundly impacted the lives of countless children, families and early education professionals.

In this annual report, you’ll discover the inspiring stories of our accomplishments and the challenges we’ve faced, all of which have strengthened our resolve to champion high-quality early childhood education. Your continued partnership fuels our commitment to creating a brighter future for the children of Idaho.

Thank you for your commitment and belief in our mission. Together, we are making a difference.

With warm regards,

Tonya Sears
Idaho AEYC Board President
25 Years
OF IDAHO AEYC

Leading Idaho's effort to ...

Advance Early Learning Programs and Resources.
Support Early Care and Education Professionals.
Champion for Idaho’s Children and Families.

IDAHO AEYC OVER THE YEARS

1998
Our Founding
Idaho AEYC is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit

1999
Grant Awarded
TEACH multi-year grant from J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation

2000
Grant Awarded
TEACH multi-year grant from Idaho Dept. of Health and Welfare

2001
Grant Awarded
Healthy Child Care Idaho multi-year grant by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau

2002
Grant Awarded
Quality Child Care Initiative multi-year grant by the Department of Labor

2003
IdahoSTARS Launched
Partnership with the University of Idaho and the Department of Health and Welfare begins

2006
Strengthening Families Launched
First Strengthening Families project grant awarded by Idaho Children’s Trust Fund

2009
Business Industry & Early Childhood Summit
In partnership with the PEW Foundation & Idaho Business for Education

2013
1st Early Learning Legislative Day
Hosted in partnership with the Head Start Association and Idaho Voices for Children

2014
READY! for Kindergarten Launched
In partnership with the Idaho Community Foundation & United Way of SW Idaho

2015
1st Early Childhood Conference
Successfully hosted the first statewide Idaho AEYC Early Childhood Conference

2016
Grant Awarded
3-year grant from W.K. Kellogg Foundation for state-funded preschool research & outreach

2017
Statewide Restructure
Idaho AEYC becomes a statewide affiliate to better serve members across Idaho

2018
Preschool The Idaho Way Launched
This later becomes our Early Learning Collaboratives Project

2019
Award Received
Idaho Nonprofit Center’s Outstanding Nonprofit for Idaho Philanthropy Day

2020
Grant Awarded
Led Idaho’s very first, one-year initial Preschool Development Grant

2022
Idaho School Readiness Project Launched
A partnership with ISU to support families with young children and improve school readiness

2023
Award Received
Boise Metro Chamber Nonprofit Excellence Award
Supporting **Families** with young children to engage in quality early learning.

**FAMILY RESOURCES**

In the past year, Idaho AEYC introduced its Family Resource Page, a significant step in bolstering early childhood education and family support. This platform empowers parents, caregivers and families with a wide range of educational tools and expert guidance. It reflects Idaho AEYC’s dedication to fostering meaningful partnerships between parents and educators while nurturing a supportive environment for Idaho’s children.

**Kids of Idaho Kits:**

In partnership with Lakeshore Learning, Idaho AEYC created a children’s activity book series titled “Kids of Idaho.” This series can be paired with aligned activity kits that support children’s development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kits of Idaho Love to Learn Kits</th>
<th>43k +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kids of Idaho Love the Outdoors Kits</td>
<td>22k +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Kids of Idaho: The World Around Me** Coming Soon!

**Early Learning Products:**

Active Learning Products are designed to be used by families at home to support children who are starting school. They contain activity ideas and directions and the kits contain early learning materials such as, playdough, crayons, scissors, books and more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Learning Kits</th>
<th>6k +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active &amp; Engaged Families Booklets</td>
<td>5k +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Active & Engaged Families Kits | Coming Soon! |

**CELEBRATION OF THE YOUNG CHILD**

Idaho AEYC hosted our annual celebration on August 19th. Families were able to spend their afternoon at the park while learning about organizations and services available in Idaho that support young children. This year’s celebration witnessed a record-breaking attendance, hosting an impressive gathering of families and educators. With a remarkable turnout, we were thrilled to welcome over 45 vendors—the highest number in our history.
Children learn best through engagement with people they love and trust. READY! for Kindergarten provides workshops for parents and educators that show them different ways to foster pre-literacy, math, and social skills through songs, activities and reading.

READY! FOR KINDERGARTEN IMPACT

Through both virtual and in-person workshops, Idaho AEYC offered Ready! for Kindergarten workshops resulting in the following impacts:

- **85** Workshops
- **2,200+** Participants
- **6,500+** Learning Kits

“READY! for Kindergarten empowers parents in the role of their child’s first and most influential teacher by giving them the tools they need to support their child’s kindergarten readiness through play! Workshops facilitate relationships between families and educators, bridging the gap between home and school. Parents who attend a workshop series leave with knowledge, tools, and new friendships!”

- **Adrian Amo**
  - Ready! for Kindergarten Director
  - On staff since 2021

READY! TESTIMONY

“The READY! for Kindergarten curriculum completely transformed my life. It's incredible to think that it not only improved my parenting skills, but also allowed me to fully prepare my son for kindergarten, where he's now excelling. I can’t express how grateful I am for this program. What’s even more amazing is that it sparked a fire within me. I've decided to go back to school after completing my early childhood development and social work program. My dream is to become the support for other children that I didn’t have when I was growing up.”

- READY! for Kindergarten Participant hosted at Boise Rescue Mission, Boise, ID

Offered in-person in 45 cities and towns across Idaho.
Improving quality early care and education by supporting Professionals in the field.

IDAHOSTARS PROJECT

Through the IdahoSTARS project (implemented in partnership with the University of Idaho) Early Care and Education Professionals participate in these learning opportunities and grow in their understanding and use of quality practices in child care.

IDAHOSTARS LEADERSHIP CO-DIRECTORS

Erin McCandless joined Malia Woessner as an AEYC Leadership Co-Director for the IdahoSTARS Project. Erin and Malia lead a forward-thinking team to collaborate across partner organizations to meet the strategic plan of the IdahoSTARS Project with a focus on increasing qualifications in Idaho’s early care and education workforce, and increasing quality practices in Idaho’s early childhood programs.

Erin McCandless
IdahoSTARS Leadership Director
on staff since 2019

Malia Woessner
IdahoSTARS Leadership Director
on staff since 2018

HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS

This year, Higher Education Grants supported 339 Idaho residents pursuing degrees and certificates in Early Childhood Education at accredited institutions of higher education.

WORKFORCE SCHOLARSHIPS

Recipients receiving academic scholarships are pursuing a degree or coursework in Early Childhood Education at an accredited college/university in Idaho.

45 Scholarship Recipients
339 Grant Recipients

STEPS TO QUALITY UPDATE

Steps to Quality (STQ) is Idaho’s Quality Rating and Improvement System for child care programs. It is a voluntary program for centers and home-based programs in which they work with IdahoSTARS consultants to assess, improve and communicate quality practices.

In 2022-2023, STQ piloted a program helping home-based child care providers engage in quality improvement. IdahoSTARS now has more than doubled the number of children receiving care in home-based settings engaged in quality improvement.
In June, over 350 attendees from across the State participated in over 19 workshops over two days at the Idaho AEYC Annual Professional Development Institute (PDI), a record-breaking attendance for Idaho AEYC. Keynote Speaker Patrick Mitchell, Idaho’s own “Down to Earth Dad,” shared the importance of storytelling, whether it be at home, or in the classroom. There were many amazing moments to highlight from the conference, one being the conference’s key sponsor, the Micron Foundation, who provided a $25 gift card to all 350 conference attendees to share their gratitude for early education professionals. Additionally, this conference addresses the impact that early education professionals have on our community, providing space for reflection, growth and connection.

IDAHO AEYC MEMBERSHIP

With over 300 professional members across the state of Idaho, our dedicated network shapes policies that benefit educators, caregivers, and, most importantly, the children we all serve. Membership provides access to vital resources, including our annual PDI Conference and NAEYC Conference, enhancing professional development and networking opportunities. By joining Idaho AEYC, members contribute to the advancement of early childhood education standards and ensure a brighter future for Idaho’s young learners.
Creating an Idaho where every Community has access to quality early learning opportunities.

EARLY LEARNING DAY

In February, Idaho AEYC orchestrated the yearly Early Learning Day at the Capitol, aiming to showcase ongoing efforts in bolstering early childhood education across communities statewide. Our presentation effectively illustrated the substantial advantages of investing in children during their early developmental stages. This event provided an invaluable opportunity for policymakers to witness firsthand the impact of early learning resources and understand how they can actively support their local communities. Idaho AEYC remains a reliable resource for policymakers, offering crucial insights into our early childhood system and advocating for the well-being of the children and families throughout Idaho.

READY IDAHO COALITION

The Ready Idaho Coalition was founded and is led by Idaho AEYC to collectively develop policy, advocacy and programmatic strategies to secure investments that improve access to quality early learning opportunities for Idaho’s children.

Jonny Carkin
Advocacy and Coalition Director
on staff since 2020

“The work of improving the early childhood landscape in Idaho would not be possible without the dedicated coalition partners and advocates who step up and speak out for our children, families and the early childhood workforce. The collective impact our advocates have made through outreach, education and direct engagement in the policymaking process continues to impress me.”

ADVOCACY UPDATE

This year our 40-member coalition collaborated to:

- Advance awareness among decision-makers about the importance of early education.
- Support early childhood providers by advocating for continued COVID-related program supports like wage subsidies and facilities grants.
- Support passage of the Child Care Workforce Development Grant program.
- Advocate for legislation that provided landmark investment in literacy that enabled many school districts to offer no-cost, full-day kindergarten.
Early Learning Collaboratives (ELCs)

These collaboratives bring together local stakeholders – such as city and school leaders, parents, teachers and businesses – to build and offer affordable, quality early learning opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable in their community.

“...The ELCs are a testament to what can be achieved when dedicated individuals come together with a shared vision. They foster growth and development in our youngest citizens and knit communities closer together. Our 25 ELCs provide a platform for local parents, educators and policymakers to unite and create a tailored approach to support early learning that suits their community’s unique needs.”

Martin Balben
Early Learning Collaboratives Project Director
on staff since 2017

Early Learning Collaborative Update

Collaboratives have actively engaged in strategic planning, advocacy and high-quality service through the Idaho School Readiness Project. They have also made significant investments in their communities, from promoting early childhood health and learning to optimizing the quality and accessibility of child care services. Additionally, with the support of specialized grants, new and existing programs have enhanced their offerings, underscoring a statewide commitment to fostering an Idaho where every child thrives.

Success in Sandpoint ELC

Our partners at Panhandle Alliance in Sandpoint received their fall Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) scores from forty students whose families attended READY! for Kindergarten workshops. The results were that 93% of Panhandle Alliance’s READY! for Kindergarten graduates scored at or near grade level. This collaborative had 68% score at grade level (already!) and 25% in near grade level, indicating that they would likely achieve grade level standards by the end of the school year.
Growing Our Impact

FINANCIAL REPORT

Revenue
- $7,683 Professional Membership
- $90,225 Donations
- $59,995 Events
- $699,575 Misc. & In-Kind
- $17,552,780 Grants

Expenses
- $699,576 Donated Services
- $2,217,614 Personnel
- $286,793 Events & Outreach
- $2,629,991 Professional Services
- $120,134 Travel & Meetings
- $4,172,957 Program Materials
- $7,820,270 Distributed Grants & Awards

“Our work has made measurable, positive impacts on children and families, but there is still so much to be done to ensure every child in Idaho has the opportunity to thrive.”

Join our Circle of Friends

Visionary Circle: $5k+ given annually
Advocate Circle: $1k-$4,999 given annually
Community Circle: $500-$999 given annually
Family Circle: $100-$499 given annually
Young Child Circle: Give up to $99 annually

Rachel Flachbart Sladek
Development Director
on staff since 2022
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS
Tonya Sears, President
Kevin Bailey, President-Elect
Anna Wolfenbarger, Treasurer
Chase Ropelato, Past-President

North Idaho College Head Start
Idaho Nonprofit Center
Severn, Winkle, LLP
Idaho Power Company

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Megan Robison, North Central
Phyllis Vernon, Southwest Idaho
Melissa Buck, Treasure Valley
Maura Goldstein, Treasure Valley
Janet Salvoni, Magic Valley
Kelsey W. Skinner, Magic Valley
Sheryl Gittings, Eastern Idaho

North Idaho College Head Start
University of Idaho Children’s Center
WICAP Head Start
Vista Montessori Schools, Inc.
Roots Forest School
Sun Valley Community School
College of Southern Idaho
Maggie’s Place, LLC

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Kayla Burnim
Nichole Billetz
Cristina Daccarett
Katie Downs
Trina Dykas-Dillman
Erin Erkins
DaLynn Hammer
Rebecca Lemmons
Krystal McFarlane
Ellen Neff
Alicia Robertson
Cammra Wakagawa

Prairie Learning Center
Boise State Children’s Center
St. Luke’s Health System
Middleton School District
Huntington Learning Center, Boise
Erkins Commercial Real Estate
Idaho National Laboratory
Saint Alphonsus
TLC for Tots
Retired, College of Southern Idaho
Lewis-Clark State College
New Horizon Academy

STAFF

ADMINISTRATION with Idaho AEYC since...
Beth Oppenheimer, Executive Director 2010
Jane Zink, Deputy Director 2003
Rachel Sladek Flachbart, Development Director 2022
Nicole Criner, Marketing & Communications Director 2023
Laurie Demko, Executive Assistant 2014
Patty Keyes, Administrative Assistant 2011

READY! FOR KINDERGARTEN TEAM
Adrian Amo, READY! for Kindergarten Director 2021
Stacy Poirier, READY! for Kindergarten Specialist 2023

EARLY LEARNING COMMUNITY TEAM
Jonny Carkin, Advocacy and Coalition Director 2020
Richard Mussler-Wright, Membership Coordinator 2022
Martin Babbin, ELC Project Director 2017
Heather Lee, ELC Assistant Director 2021
Florina Ruvio, Community Engagement Coordinator 2022
Amanda Mills, Strengthening Families Specialist 2023
Yucare Camacho Delgado, Child Care Specialist 2023

FINANCE TEAM with Idaho AEYC since...
Katrice Walters, Finance Director 2002
Megan O’Neill, Accounts Payable Manager 2010
Christy Galaviz, Assistant Finance Director 2022
Nicole Walters, Accounts Payable Specialist 2022

IDAHOSTARS TEAM
Lisa Just, Customer Communication Director 2018
Malia Woessner, Leadership Director 2018
Erin McCandless, Leadership Director 2019
Chelsea Krema, Equity Director 2022
Blanca Rios, Equity Specialist 2017

Krisi Wagnon, Academic Scholarship Coordinator 2022
Lucy Pekovich, Academic Scholarship Specialist 2023
Victoria Heaton, Academic Scholarship Specialist 2013

Tracy Gagnon, Project Assessment Specialist 2009
Eleni Graham, Professional Development Specialist 2017
Sheralynn Bauder, Communications Specialist 2020

John Hess, Customer Support Coordinator 2023
Cheryl Bowers, Customer Support Specialist 2017
Maria Perez, Customer Support Specialist 2021
Debora Amsi, Customer Support Specialist 2021
Imagine an Idaho...

THAT SUPPORTS EARLY EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN.

CONNECT WITH US

Visit our website to sign up for our newsletters, become a member, or join our Circle of Friends.

idahoaeyc.org