Kootenai County Early Learning Strategic Action Plan Calendar Years 2021-2023

VISION:

Equitable access to high quality, nurturing care in early learning opportunities for all children birth to five years of age.

MISSION:

The Coeur d' Alene Early Learning Advisory Committee (CDA ELAC) exists to support statewide efforts to elevate and unify local early childhood systems. The ELAC will work to analyze and build upon current early learning systems to maximize equitable access to a variety of quality programming and share developmentally appropriate practices and resources with the goal of improving school readiness and overall well-being of children and families.

VALUES:

- Parents are their child's first teachers
- Continuity is vital for the care of a child as will as for an early care professional
- Collaborative partnerships between public and private entities, nonprofit and for-profit agencies are essential to allow for more effective outcomes for children, families, early care professionals and the business community.
- Recognize the value of our early childhood professionals
- Honor diversity of children, families and the professionals working with young children

CORE BELIEFS:

Access - We will work to bridge the divide that isolates and prevents members of our community from accessing quality and affordable child care. We consider access to mean geographical, financial, diverse abilities, cultural, ethics and high quality. We recognize that persistent and systemic disparities diminish access.

Inclusive - We consider inclusive to be multiple types of care; home based, center based, family, friends and neighbor care. Also opportunity for full participation, supported by policies and practices for individuals of diverse socioeconomic status, racial and ethnic backgrounds, education levels, LGBTQIA and diverse abilities.

Equitable - We recognize systematic disparities and we all individuals do not start from the same place or have the same knowledge. We will work to remove barriers and biases to create fairness so children, families and early care professionals can thrive.

GOALS: (SMARTIE-Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timed, Inclusive, Equitable)

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Priority 1: Invest in Early Care and Education Infrastructure

GOAL: Invest in early care and education infrastructure to build professionals skills, knowledge and capacity demonstrated by 30% professional learning attainment by December 2023.

*Needs for Investing in early care and education infrastructure:

- 83% of the early care and education professionals have high school education or below.
-52.9% reported have to unenroll a child care turn away a child due to the inability to meet the need of a child with a disability or medical need
-62% reported being interested in being able to invest in their staff by offering more professional development opportunities for their staff

Strategies:

1. Implement a pyramid style training that builds on knowledge, skills and competencies with professional learning attainment demonstrated through self report through pre, mid and post survey collection.

2. Remove barriers and support implementation of practices for early care and education professionals by providing IdahoSTARS credit, tangible materials, curriculum and scholarships.

3. Strengthen ECE partnerships with local school districts, Head Start, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Mountain State Early Head Start, North Idaho College and University of Idaho by agencies delivering of the training series, participating in community of practice opportunities and facilitating training groups to early childhood community

4. Build on current resources and expand opportunities for elevated levels of professional development and high education opportunities through development of an Early Learning & Training Center.

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Goal 1: Invest in early care and education infrastructure to build professionals skills, knowledge and capacity demonstrated by 30% professional learning attainment by December 2023.

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Action/Task	Lead	Timeline	Status Notes

Goal 1: Invest in early care and education infrastructure to build professionals skills, knowledge and capacity demonstrated by 30% professional learning attainment by December 2023.

Strategy 2: Remove barriers and support implementation of practices for early care and education professionals by providing IdahoSTARS credit, tangible materials, curriculum and scholarships.

Action/Task	Lead	Timeline	Status Notes

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Strategy 4: Build on current resources and expand opportunities for elevated levels of professional development and high education opportunities through development of an Early Learning & Training Center.

Action/Task	Lead	Timeline	Status Notes

Priority 2: Maximize consumer education and knowledge of high quality early childhood education (ECE)

GOAL: Maximize parental choice and knowledge through a consumer education campaign in Kootenai County promoting key factors in Idaho's identified developmental domains as well as the 5 main categories for types of care by December 2023.

- Parents identified key areas of development from the National Association from the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as skills that are important for children for school readiness
-Parents identified they were attending mixed delivery options for types of care
-Parents access information for resources, where to find care, etc in a variety of platforms. 47.7% were somewhat sure or were not sure where to find information.

Strategies:

1. Provide tools, information and resources to empower parents and caregivers to succeed as their child's first and most influential teacher

2. Educate consumers on all types of care; family child care, center based programs, family, friends and neighbor as high quality learning opportunities along with preschool only, Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

3. Highlight skills and tangible value to having skilled early care and education professionals and connection to high quality learning opportunities

4. Create a business alliance; business partners that are trained on the importance of ECE, participate in the campaign and provide a level of child care resources to their employees.

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Goal 2: Maximize parental choice and knowledge through a consumer education campaign in Kootenai County promoting key factors in Idaho's identified developmental domains as well as the 5 main categories for types of care by December 2023.

Strategy 1: Provide tools, information and resources to empower parents and caregivers to succeed as their child's first and most influential teacher

Action/Task	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Status Notes
Provide professional development opportunities that are open for parents and caregivers on development and school readiness		Head Start, CDA Tribe, Early Head Start, School District, Ready!	Y1, Y2, Y3	

Goal 2: Maximize parental choice and knowledge through a consumer education campaign in Kootenai County promoting key factors in Idaho's identified developmental domains as well as the 5 main categories for types of care by December 2023.

Strategy 2: Educate consumers on all types of care; family child care, center based programs, family, friends and neighbor as high quality learning opportunities along with preschool only, Head Start and Early Head Start programs. (Provide consumer education to meet children and families unique needs and connect families to programs and services.

Action/Task	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Status Notes

Goal 2: Maximize parental choice and knowledge through a consumer education campaign in Kootenai County promoting key factors in Idaho's identified developmental domains as well as the 5 main categories for types of care by December 2023.

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Priority 3: Increase equitable access to quality early care and education
Goal: Children birth through age 5 will have increased equitable access to developmentally appropriate, high-quality early learning slots by 15% by December 2023.

*Needs for increased access to quality providers

-3% of providers reach a basic level of quality in the states Quality Rating and Improvement System
- Early childhood programs report they are committed to raising the level of quality and increasing the availability for care in our community
-Parents reported quality indicators as important top factors when selecting ECE programs for their child
-Less than 39% of children enter school at benchmark by Idaho's Kindergarten readiness standards.

Strategies:
1.Increase the number of family, group, and center based programs enrolled in the QRIS by 3% for 2021, 5% for 2022, 7% for 2023..

2. Increase the number of family, group, and center based programs verified and the basic level of quality by 7% by 2023.

3. Create partnerships with the identified quality programs to prioritize ALICE scholarships to assist parents with access

4. Improve coordination between local school districts and ECE to support a more seamless transition to kindergarten

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5. Build on current resources and expand opportunities for parental choice and access to high quality care through development of an Early Learning & Training Center

Goal 3: Children birth through age 5 will have increased access to developmentally appropriate, high-quality early learning slots by 15% by December 2023.				
Strategy 1: Increase the number of family, group and center based programs enrolled in the QRIS by 3% for 2021, 5% for 2022 and 7% for 2023.				
Action/Task	**Lead**	**Key Partners**	**Timeline**	**Status Notes**
Create survey to providers to identify barrier to enrolling into STQ (State's QRIS System)	Sam		End of Nov 2020	

Goal 3: Children birth through age 5 will have increased access to developmentally appropriate, high-quality early learning slots by 15% by December 2023.				
Strategy 2: Increase the number of family, group, and center based programs verified and the basic level of quality by 7% by 2023				
Action/Task	**Lead**	**Key Partners**	**Timeline**	**Status Notes**

Goal 3: Children birth through age 5 will have increased access to developmentally appropriate, high-quality early learning slots by 15% by December 2023.

Strategy 3: Create partnerships with the identified quality programs to prioritize ALICE scholarships to assist parents with access

Action/Task	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Status Notes

Goal 3: Children birth through age 5 will have increased access to developmentally appropriate, high-quality early learning slots by 15% by December 2023.

Strategy 4: Improve coordination between local school districts and ECE to support a more seamless transition to kindergarten

Action/Task	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Status Notes

Goal 3: Children birth through age 5 will have increased access to developmentally appropriate, high-quality early learning slots by 15% by December 2023.

Strategy 5: Build on current resources and expand opportunities for parental choice and access to high quality care through development of an Early Learning & Training Center

Action/Task	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Status Notes

Priority 4: Strengthen relationships and inform decisions

GOAL: Build a resource center to share data, resources and information related to Early Childhood Education for consumers and stakeholders by December 2023

Strategies:

1. Provide results for community needs assessment as a filterable dashboard for stakeholders to access

2. Make available the already created Business Supported Child Care Handbook available online for stakeholders to access as an available resource

3. After completed Feasibility Study for Early Learning and Training Center is complete make results available for stakeholders to access to support growth and opportunity to support ECE infrastructure

4. Create a location for centralized resources and a directory to caregivers to improve access to services for families

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Goal 4: Build a resource center to share data, resources and information related to Early Childhood Education for consumers and stakeholders by December 2023

Strategy 1: Provide results for community needs assessment as a filterable dashboard for stakeholders to access

Action/Task	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Status Notes
Provide access to tools that support children's development (e.g. talk with my baby, milestone trackers, learn the signs - act early, etc) and information that have foundational knowledge through state and community partner websites with parent access	Sam	IdahoAEYC, Head Start, Early Head Start, CDA Tribe, School Districts	Y1	

Goal 4: Build a resource center to share data, resources and information related to Early Childhood Education for consumers and stakeholders by December 2023

Strategy 2: Make available the already created Business Supported Child Care Handbook available online for stakeholders to access as an available resource

Action/Task	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Status Notes

Goal 4: Build a resource center to share data, resources and information related to Early Childhood Education for consumers and stakeholders by December 2023

Strategy 3: After completed Feasibility Study for Early Learning and Training Center is complete make results available for stakeholders to access to support growth and opportunity to support ECE infrastructure

Action/Task	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Status Notes

Goal 4: Build a resource center to share data, resources and information related to Early Childhood Education for consumers and stakeholders by December 2023

Strategy 4: Create a location for centralized resources and a directory to caregivers to improve access to services for families

Action/Task	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Status Notes