

United  
Way



United Way  
of Southeastern Idaho



# POCATELLO/CHUBBUCK EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

EARLY LEARNING NEEDS ASSESSMENT / PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT / SEPTEMBER 2020

# POCATELLO/CHUBBUCK NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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## II. Introduction



Research indicates that children 0-5 years of age undergo a tremendous amount of brain development preparing them for the process of formalized learning. This means that the environments which children are in *prior* to entering kindergarten are extremely important. To develop brain connections, language development, memory, problem solving skills, etc., young children must be given every opportunity to access quality early learning programs. In Idaho there are no state funded early learning facilities, requiring

families to rely on privately owned businesses which tend to be limited in number and high in cost, limiting access to large swaths of the population. Residents living in rural areas, low income families, and households where English is not the primary language, face additional barriers to accessing quality early learning programs. Once Idaho students enter the public education system, they are often already behind in meeting academic milestones which impact performance throughout the rest of their educational career.

In 2015 United Way of Southeastern Idaho (UWSEI) gathered a group of dynamic, committed, and invested community partners that had previously communicated their interest in improving educational outcomes along the Cradle to Career Continuum. In the following two years UWSEI took up the mantle of researching best practice and the logistics of building such an initiative. In November 2017, the cross-sector group of partners gathered under the newly minted name of imPACT East Idaho. The group joined the national organization StriveTogether for technical assistance and UWSEI became the formal backbone organization of the new collaborative. Three specific committees were developed under the banner of imPACT East Idaho including; a Leadership Table, an Early Learning Collaborative (focusing on educational impact areas for children age 0 to Grade 5), and an Education 2 Careers Collaborative (focusing on educational impact areas grades 6 through post-secondary education and/or launch into a first job).

In its initial meetings the Early Learning Collaborative determined its first efforts would be focused in the Pocatello/Chubbuck area as this is where most of the members live and work. The goal is to scale into other counties of the region when interest, resources, and capacity allow. Additionally, the group spent a significant amount of time examining the many impact areas across the early learning age group and decided to focus on kindergarten readiness as its initial area of focus. Currently the collaborative is in the process of planning a second phase of a marketing strategy, re-examining data due to state level changes, and now looking at how to incorporate strategies connected to the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) with their on-going work.

### III. Vision Statement:

Every child in Eastern Idaho will enter school ready to learn.

### IV. Mission Statement:

The mission of the imPACT East Idaho Early Learning Collaborative is to engage a diverse group of committed community members to develop an early learning environment where all children and their families have access and opportunity to build academic, social, and emotional skills necessary for them to be successful. Removing barriers and building supportive environments for all young children and their families is at the core of the collaborative's efforts.

## AREA DEMOGRAPHICS AND INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

Total Population: **80,303**

Total Households: **28,949**

Total Population Under 5 years Old: **5,916**

Estimated Number of 4-year-old children: **1,183**

Percent of Households Speaking Language other than English: **8.3%**

Median Household Income: **\$49,020**

Percent Non-White or Two Races: **12.1%**

Percent Hispanic/Latinx: **9.1%**

Number of Families Below 200% Federal Poverty Level: **6,602**

Percent of Families Below 200% Federal Poverty Level: **32.1%**

Percent of Families with 2 or More Workers: **52.3%**

Percent of Households Receiving Food Stamps: **14.8%**

Households Below the ALICE Threshold (United Way Report: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed): **46.1%**

Percent of students in Pocatello/Chubbuck SD #25 Qualifying for Free/Reduced Lunch: **42.9%**

*Source: US Census 2018 American Community Survey*

*Note: For purposes of this assessment the Zip Codes 83201, 83202, 83204, and 83209 were used which are nearly identical with the Pocatello/Chubbuck SD #25 boundaries.*

## V. Collaborative Key Questions

The collaborative has continually reviewed data as part of its key function. Initial data points included reading scores as collected by the State Board of Education. That data is not included in this needs assessment as it is currently three plus years old. This historical data can be shared upon request. Additionally, the data used for developing a baseline understanding of early learning scores became obsolete when the state changed its assessment tool two years ago. The collaborative was in the process of developing a new baseline using the new tool (IStation) but due to the past school year (2019-2020) ending in the midst of COVID-19, there are essential data points missing. Getting this piece of data collection back on track will be one of the efforts of the collaborative moving forward.

Ongoing discussions about data as it relates to the work of this collaborative have included conversations around the importance of finding the balance of gathering comprehensive and quality data for analysis and context to be used to make good decision; but also knowing that perfect data does not exist. The lack of perfect or complete data cannot be a reason to not act or make decisions. Based

on this conversation, the group determined the following key questions areas were most important to guide their work as a planning team.

**Key Question Area #1: Existing conditions in Pocatello/Chubbuck early learning environments**

1. **Types of care providers: private, public, daycare vs preschool, ICCP status, large vs small group, etc.**
2. **Capacity, enrollment, services provided by facility, program costs, amenities, facility specialties (bilingual, developmental delays), etc.**
3. **Defining what quality early learning in Pocatello/Chubbuck looks like, which providers meet quality standards, and involvement with IdahoSTARS Steps to Quality**

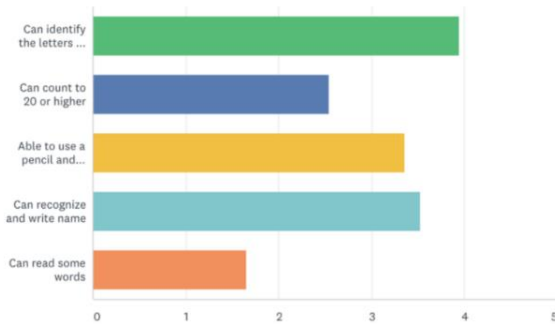
Quantitative & Qualitative Evidence



The following charts illustrates general public/parent perceptions of necessary components of an early learning program which could also be deciphered as components of a quality early learning program. (Fall 2019 Early Learning Survey)

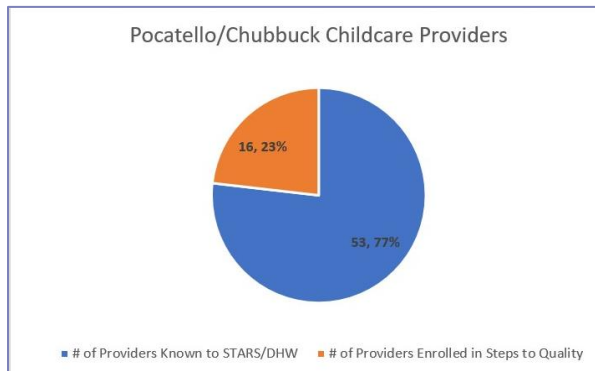
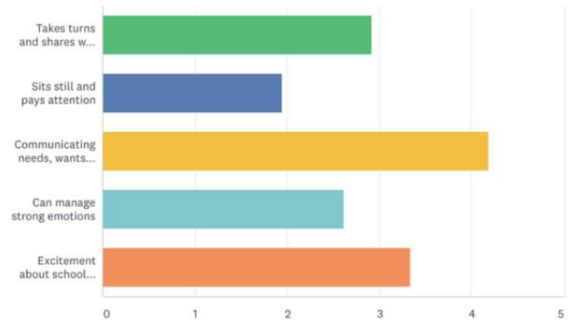
Rank the items below in order of importance for your child to be ready for kindergarten? (1 is the most important)

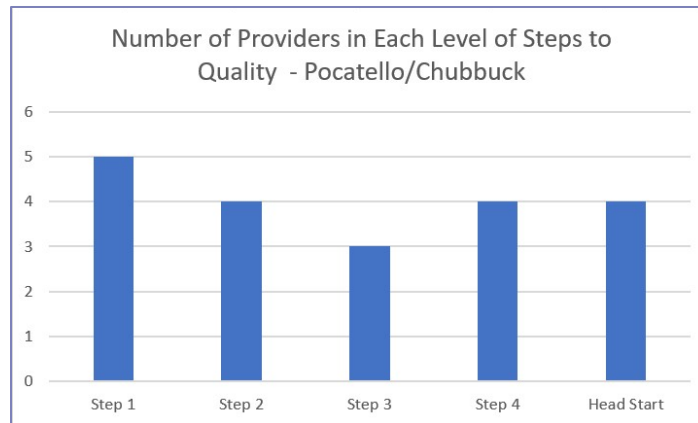
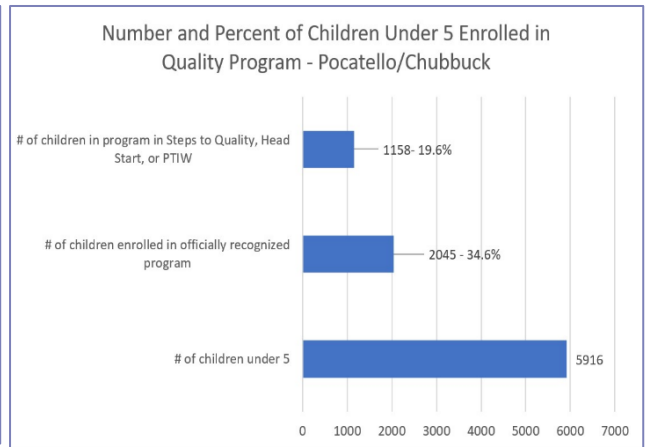
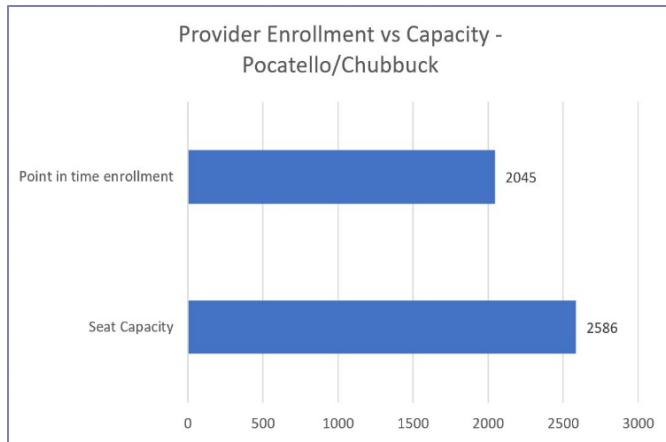
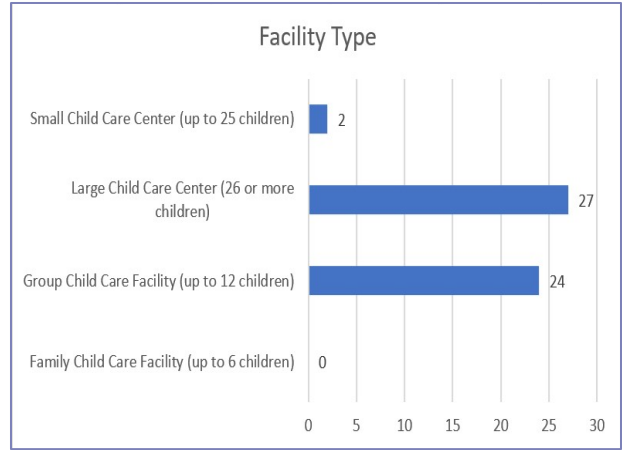
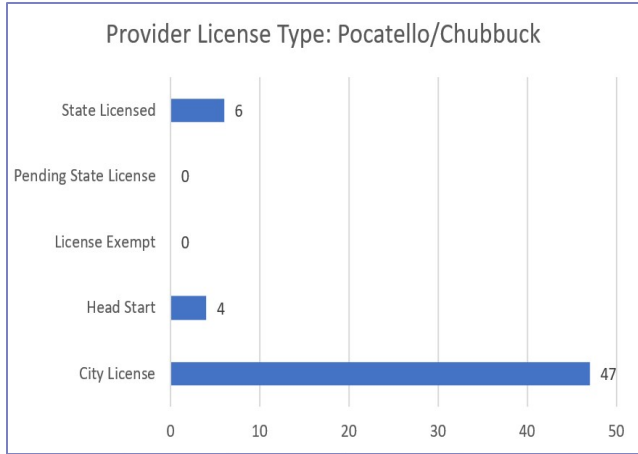
Answered: 201 Skipped: 231



Rank the items below in order of importance for your child to be ready for kindergarten? (1 is the most important)

Answered: 201 Skipped: 231





**Key Question Area #2: Understanding Pocatello/Chubbuck community perception of the value of early learning and where they go for related information.**

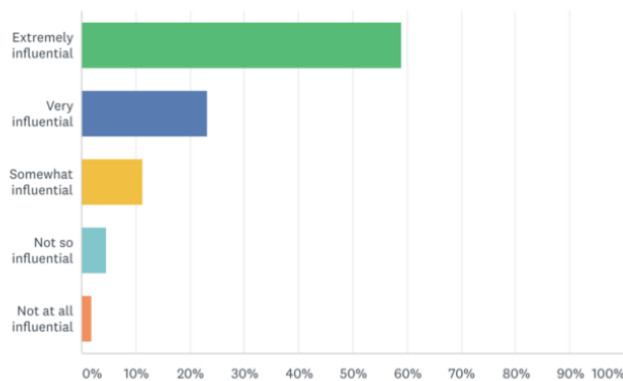
- 1. Do parents and families value early learning as important to children’s success later in life?**
- 2. Where do families go for trusted information about the education and development of their children?**
- 3. Do families feel the community of Pocatello/Chubbuck (service providers included) values early learning? What does this look like and what else could be done?**

Quantitative & Qualitative Evidence

imPACT East Idaho’s Early Learning Collaborative findings are consistent with parent perceptions of the value and influence of early learning programs on successes later in life, as seen in the following chart. (Fall 2019 Early Learning Survey)

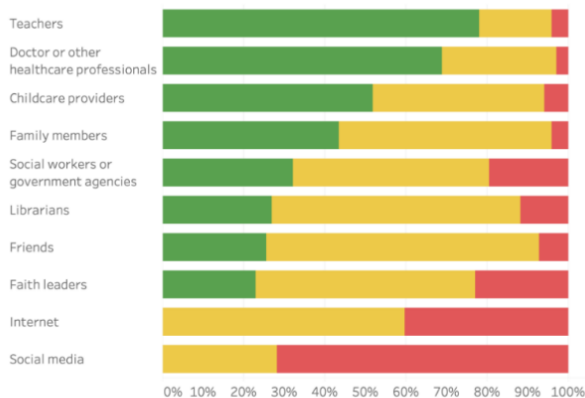
How influential is early learning (before kindergarten) on a person's opportunities later in life?

Answered: 432 Skipped: 0



Parents and families are inundated with information about how to best set their children up for success. The collaborative felt it was important to determine the most trusted sources of information as a starting place for reaching out to families about the work of the group. This chart shows where various people/groups fall along the spectrum of trustworthiness. (Early Learning Survey Fall 2019)

Trust these sources of information?



Trust about your child's readiness for kindergarten?  
 Trust greatly    Somewhat trust    Don't trust

Parents with children aged 5 or younger

The Bannock Youth Foundation (BYF) conducted a parent focus group, and several questions addressed family’s perceptions of the value the general community places on early learning. Families reported seeing positive messages of value at libraries, summer lunches in the park, Infant Toddler Program, and Parents as Teachers. Overall, families felt that this type of messaging should be seen in much broader locations including from the school district, in individual schools, Facebook, websites, mail, well-child checks, doctor’s offices, Farmer’s Market, etc. One parent is quoted as saying “I wouldn’t know anything if I weren’t in a playgroup”

The same parent group was also asked “What do you think your community could do to show more of a commitment to early childhood?” Responses overwhelmingly included: having more free community events, agencies should get out to community events more often, an early childhood fair, more playgroups like BYF, lower cost preschool programs (or creative exchanges like parent volunteers as payment), more scholarships for preschool, free preschool, more information from hospitals when babies are first born, and more. (BYF Parent Focus Group Narrative, March 2020)

**Key Question Area #3: Clarification of prohibitive barriers for families in Pocatello/Chubbuck, which keep children out of quality early learning environments.**

1. Are there any populations with specific needs which create barriers to children attending quality early learning programs?
2. Are families satisfied with the types of early learning environments that are available?
3. What could be done so families with young children feel more supported in providing their children early learning opportunities?

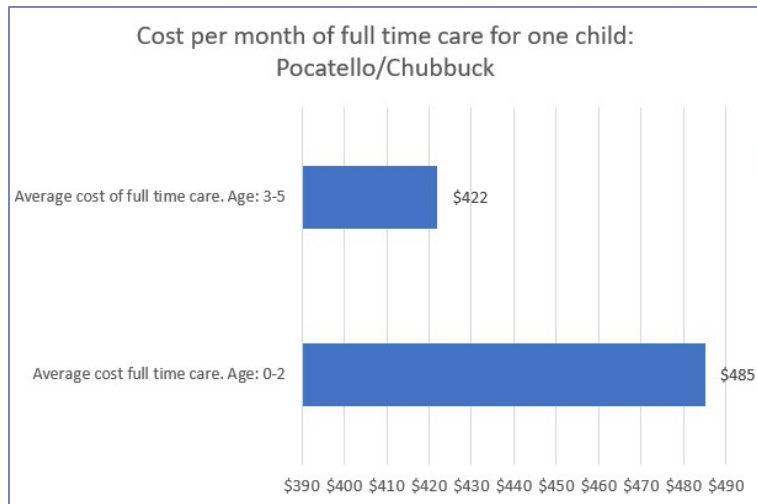
Quantitative & Qualitative Evidence

According to the most recent ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) Report, 46% of households in Pocatello/Chubbuck are struggling to pay for basic necessities on a monthly basis. According to the report, a household with two parents and two children in daycare/preschool needs an annual income of \$60,072 to make ends meet. Census data for the median household income in Bannock County is \$49,739. This makes it clear that for a significant portion of the community, it is not possible for them to afford to send their children to daycare and/or preschool. (ALICE Report, Summer 2020)

ALICE Household Survival Budget, Bannock County, Idaho, 2018				
	Single Adult	Two Adults	Two Adults Two School-Age Children	Two Adults, Two in Child Care
Housing	\$459	\$541	\$719	\$719
Child Care	\$0	\$0	\$321	\$899
Food	\$268	\$555	\$927	\$810
Transportation	\$325	\$497	\$794	\$794
Health Care	\$171	\$424	\$727	\$727
Technology	\$55	\$75	\$75	\$75
Miscellaneous	\$149	\$243	\$394	\$455
Taxes	\$211	\$337	\$374	\$527
Monthly Total	\$1,638	\$2,672	\$4,331	\$5,006
Annual Total	\$19,656	\$32,064	\$51,972	\$60,072
Hourly Wage	\$9.83	\$16.03	\$25.99	\$30.04



## Cost of Full Time Care per Month (IdahoSTARS Data)



The Bannock Youth Foundation (BYF) conducted a parent focus group, several questions addressed satisfaction with options for early learning environments and challenges with those environments. Responses indicate that families see quality options but that they often are too costly and have long waitlists. Programs that have greater availability and that are more affordable do not have IdahoSTARS certification/training, seem “sketchy” and overwhelmingly do not feel comfortable leaving their children in the care of these facilities.

The same parent group was also asked “What do you think your community could do to ensure that all families have access to high-quality services?” Responses included: more baby-changing stations in men’s bathrooms, there is a gap in services for lower-middle class families, families need to know that not every service is income based, universal preschool, more targeted messaging, Preschool Book Fair, scholarships for speech and occupational therapy, and doctors need to have information about the Infant Toddler Program. (BYF Parent Focus Group Narrative, March 2020)

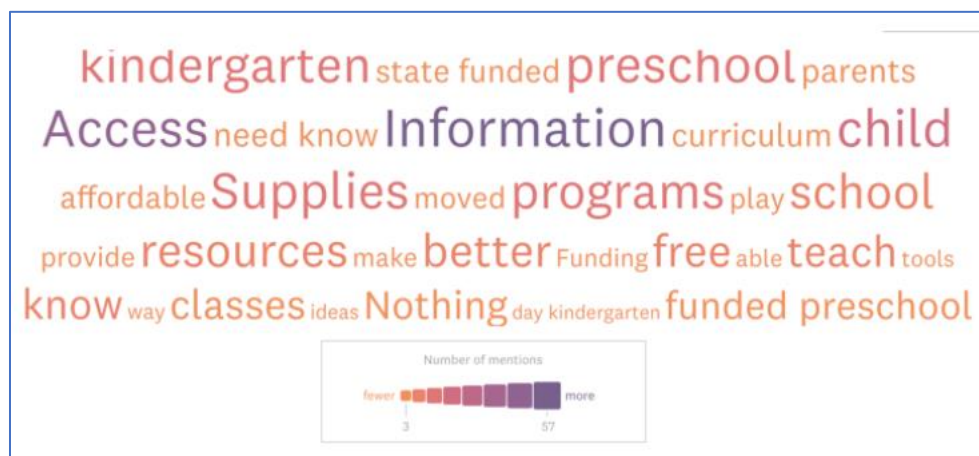
Responses to both questions show that access is huge barrier to Pocatello/Chubbuck area families trying to increase their child’s participating in early learning environments. All families should feel that wherever they take their child should be within their means, is a safe place, and will provide a quality experience that will aid in their development.

## VI. Summary of Findings

As a result of our community needs assessment we determined the following areas will provide the greatest opportunity to create an immediate positive impact in the community. These findings will be used in the next phase of the grant process including the creation of SMART goals, developing associated strategies and crafting a detailed strategic action plan to be used as a working document by the collaborative for the next three years. The following areas will be more fully developed in the impACT East Idaho Early Learning Collaborative Strategic Action Plan, available November 1, 2020.

1. The interest and demand from parents/families for *quality* preschool early learning experiences suggests that the collaborative should continue to focus on increasing the level of quality in Pocatello/Chubbuck facilities. This may include the need to also address secondary issues including access (availability of seats), affordability, transportation, etc.

2. Parents/families believe early learning is important for their children, but struggle with knowing where to find resources that are easily accessible, affordable, and easy to use. This implies there is a need for the collaborative to put resources in the hands of (or at the fingertips of) families so they can support their children in home environments.
3. Families identified gaps where services available to the community could promote the importance of early learning and prioritize families with young children. This is another area for the collaborative to further examine when strategizing their action plan.
4. An additional need that has been highlighted by the collaborative is the need for consistent feedback and presence of parents and people of color in the planning work. This is also in line with recommendations from StriveTogether. The collaborative will also include strategy work around this gap in the coming months, although the feedback was not gleaned from this specific needs assessment. (imPACT East Idaho Early Learning Collaborative Narratives, November 2017-current)



In the Fall 2019 Early Learning Survey the final question was an open form field asking parents what they most need or want, to help get their child ready for kindergarten. This word cloud shows which items were named most often.

## VII. Data Sources

### **ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) Report (June 2020)**

The ALICE Report is a new way of measuring the households in communities that live above the Federal Poverty Level, but do not earn enough to meet their basic needs. These individuals and families live everyday with the uncertainty of if they will make ends meet on a month to month basis causing them to make difficult decisions about what necessities to pay for and which to forgo. ALICE households live on the brink of financial despair and do not have the means to pay for “extras” or even unexpected emergencies that crop up in life. The newest report can be found: <https://www.unitedforalice.org/>

### **Bannock Youth Foundation (BYF) Parent Focus Group Narrative (March 2020)**

As part of our work with StriveTogether, imPACT East Idaho Early Learning Collaborative was asked to be part of an effort called Early Learning Nation, an effort that was also supported by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). This opportunity included the ability to utilize a survey to be used with parent focus groups. A member of the Early Learning Collaborative, Heather Kemp, runs developmental playgroups through the Bannock Youth Foundation. Heather brought the survey to a group of parents

from one of her playgroups and the synthesized results are included in the narrative. Additional parent groups will be given the opportunity to provide feedback to the same survey in the coming months. Raw commentary is available upon request.

### **imPACT East Idaho (Pocatello/Chubbuck) Early Learning Collaborative Narratives (November 2017-current)**

This collaborative was initially assembled to review all outcomes in the first half of the cradle to career continuum. The goal of the group was to implement agreed upon strategies, within targeted outcome areas. Once the collaborative is able to create sustained changes, the work will shift into a continuous improvement model with an eye towards scaling the most successful strategies. These efforts are in line with those articulated in the Preschool Development Grant, which is the reason the PDG deliverables will be worked through this existing collaborative. The group is made up of local: school district staff, Headstart staff, library staff, health care center, non-profit developmental playgroup provider, quality childcare referral agency, Housing Authority, Department of Health and Welfare Programs- Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and Parents as Teachers (PAT), and United Way of Southeastern Idaho.

Compiled responses include personal feedback from collaborative members and anecdotal evidence from parents, employees, and community members whom collaborative members interact with on a regular basis within their area of expertise. The collaborative has met in person about 10 times a year since its inception in 2017.

### **Department of Health & Welfare Public Records Request (September 2020)**

Data about local daycare/preschool providers was requested from the Department of Health and Welfare. Information requested included contact information, facility type, facility amenities, capacity, enrollment, ICCP status, complaints and inspection history, participation with IdahoSTARS, etc. This data is protected by Idaho's Public Records Law and may not be published or redistributed. For the purpose of this needs assessment the data was synthesized and compiled into charts. Any questions about contents of the raw data can be made to United Way of Southeastern Idaho.

### **Early Learning Survey Data (Fall 2019)**

In September of 2019, a survey was developed and deployed by Make Idaho Better on behalf of United Way of Southeastern Idaho and imPACT East Idaho's Early Learning Collaborative. The purpose of the survey was to quantify the public's understanding of early learning environments, gauge the value placed on early learning opportunities, to understand barriers and opportunities for expanding access to resources for families. 432 total responses were submitted from Idaho residents (Southeastern Idaho Counties count breakdown is: 107 Bannock, 2 Bear Lake, 5 Bingham, 2 Caribou, 1 Franklin, 0 Oneida, and 31 Power). When data was disaggregated by region in the state, Southeastern Idaho responses fell within the majority responses, as such, in this needs assessment the generalized responses are deemed representative of the individual counties being assessed. Link to survey findings can be found here: <https://medium.com/make-idaho-better/early-learning-pre-k-survey-a8525825b9ea>

### **IdahoSTARS Report (September 2020)**

Upon review of the Department of Health and Welfare's Public Request it was noted that numerous categories initially requested were missing or not available. Subsequent contact was made with the Region 6 office for IdahoSTARS. They provided supplemental information about daycare/preschool facilities including capacity and enrollment information, contacts, participation with Steps of Quality Program, average cost of programs, amenities offered by facility, etc. Raw data available upon request.

**United States Census Bureau Data**

Data about community demographics was taken from the United States Census Bureau website at:  
<https://www.census.gov/>

**VIII. Appendix Data Found on Following Pages**





## APPENDIX A:

# Pocatello/Chubbuck Early Learning Collaborative Quantitative Data for Needs Assessment

### AREA DEMOGRAPHICS AND INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

Total Population: **80,303**

Total Households: **28,949**

Total Population Under 5 years Old: **5,916**

Estimated Number of 4 year old children: **1,183**

Percent of Households Speaking Language other than English: **8.3%**

Median Household Income: **\$49,020**

Percent Non-White or Two Races: **12.1%**

Percent Hispanic/Latinx: **9.1%**

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Percent of Families Below 200% Federal Poverty Level: **32.1%**

Percent of Families with 2 or More Workers: **52.3%**

Percent of Households Receiving Food Stamps: **14.8%**

Households Below the ALICE Threshold (United Way Report: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed): **46.1%**

Percent of students in Pocatello/Chubbuck SD #25 Qualifying for Free/Reduced Lunch: **42.9%**

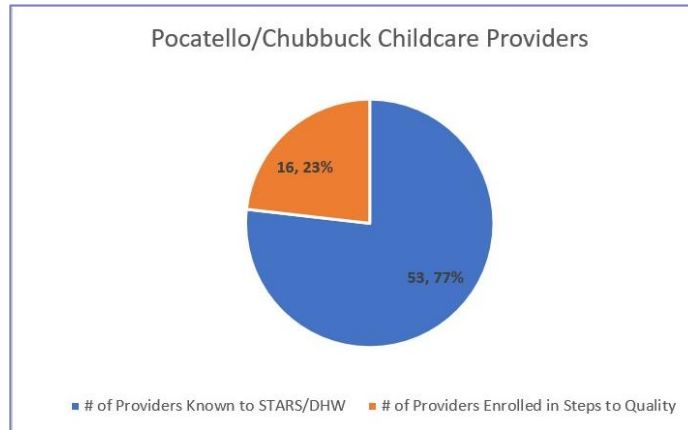
*Source: US Census 2018 American Community Survey*

*Note: For purposes of this assessment the Zip Codes 83201, 83202, 83204, and 83209 were used which are nearly identical with the Pocatello/Chubbuck SD #25 boundaries.*

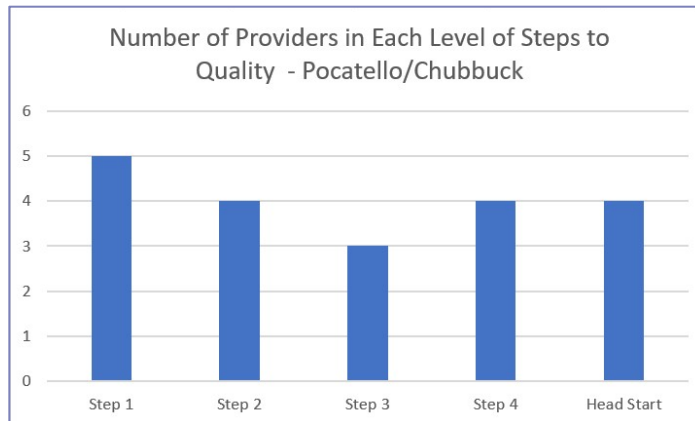
### Child Care Provider Characteristics

Number of Providers Known to Idaho DHW/IdahoSTARS: **53**

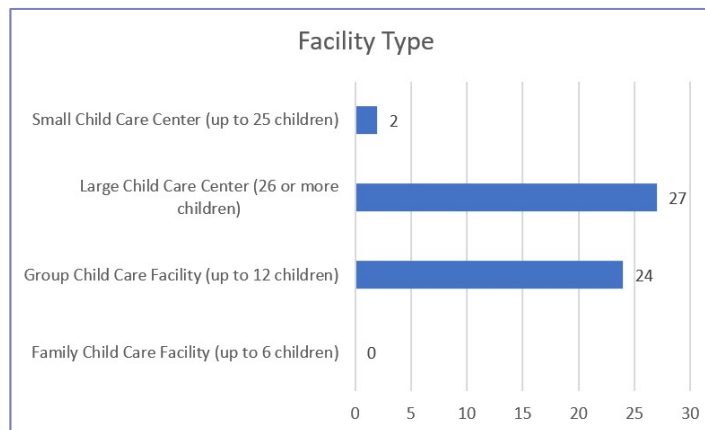
Number of Providers Enrolled in Steps to Quality: **16**



Steps to Quality Progress:



Facility Type:

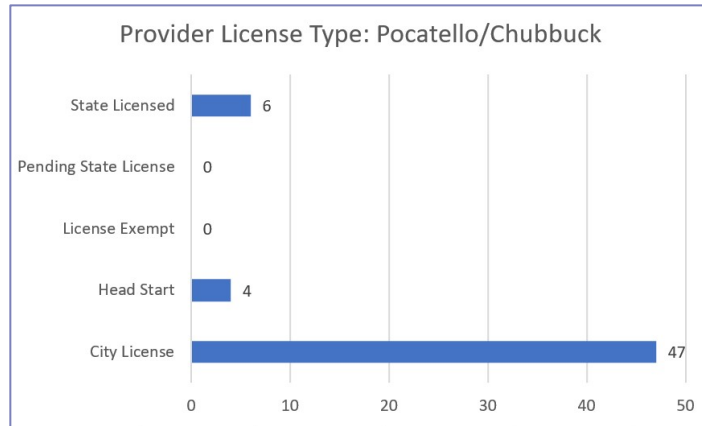


Source: Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and Idaho STARS Region 6 Office

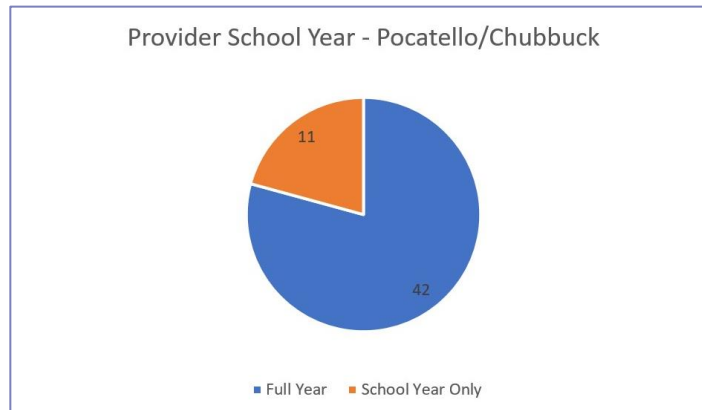
Note: For purposes of this assessment the Zip Codes 83201, 83202, 83204, and 83206 were used which are nearly identical with the

### Child Care Provider Characteristics, Continued:

#### Provider License Type:



#### Provider Services Provided During:

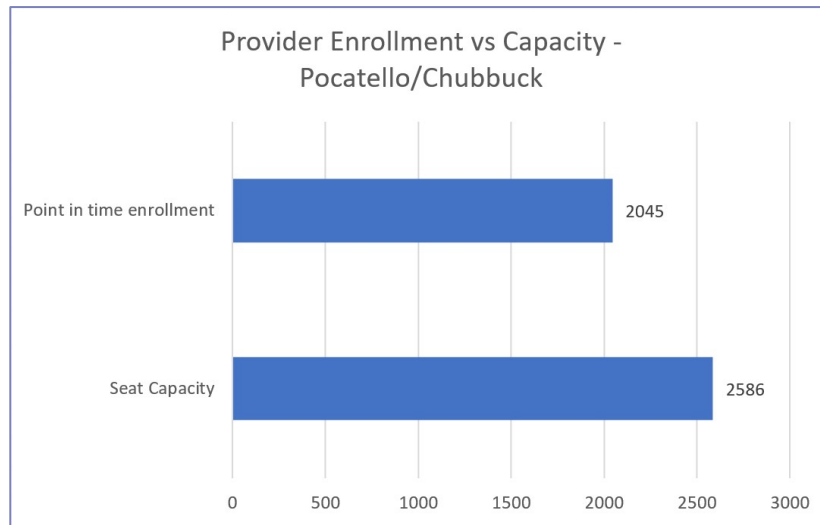


Source: Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and Idaho STARS Region 6 Office

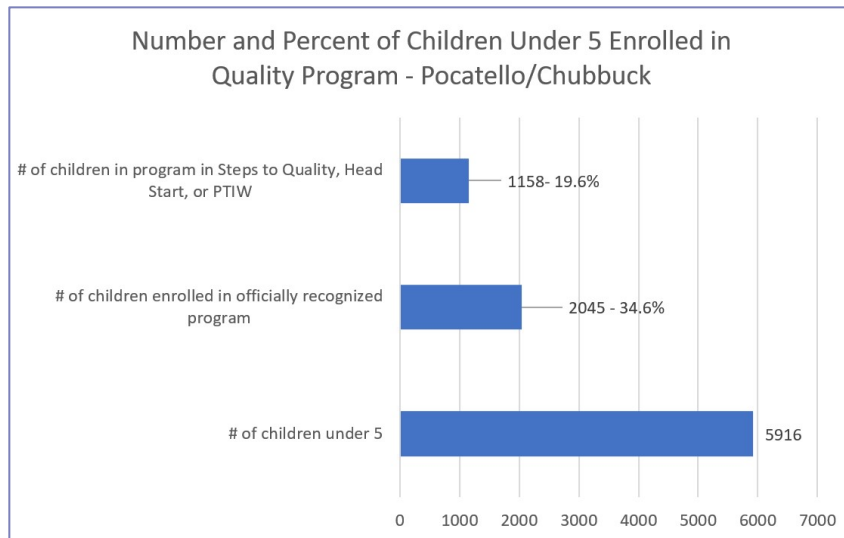
Note: For purposes of this assessment the Zip Codes 83201, 83202, 83204, and 83209 were used which are nearly identical with the Pocatello/Chubbuck SD #25 boundaries.

## Child Care Provider Inventory and Enrollment

### Provider Capacity vs. Enrollment:



### Percent of Children 0-4 enrolled in Quality Program:



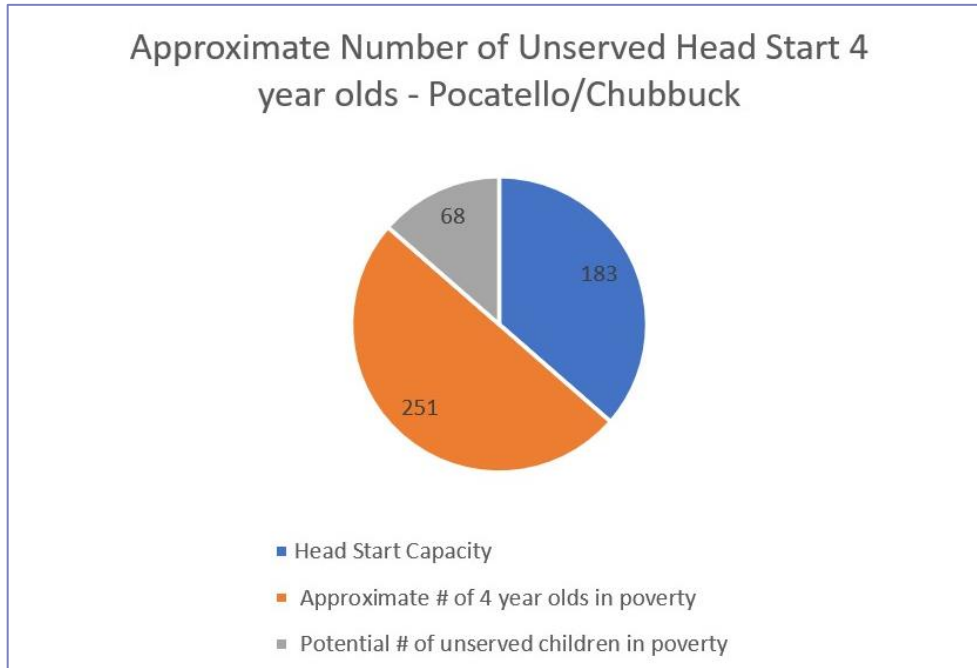
Source: Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and Idaho STARS Region 6 Office

Note: For purposes of this assessment the Zip Codes 83201, 83202, 83204, and 83209 were used which are nearly identical with the Pocatello/Chubbuck SD #25 boundaries.



### Child Care Provider Inventory and Enrollment, Continued:

#### Head Start:

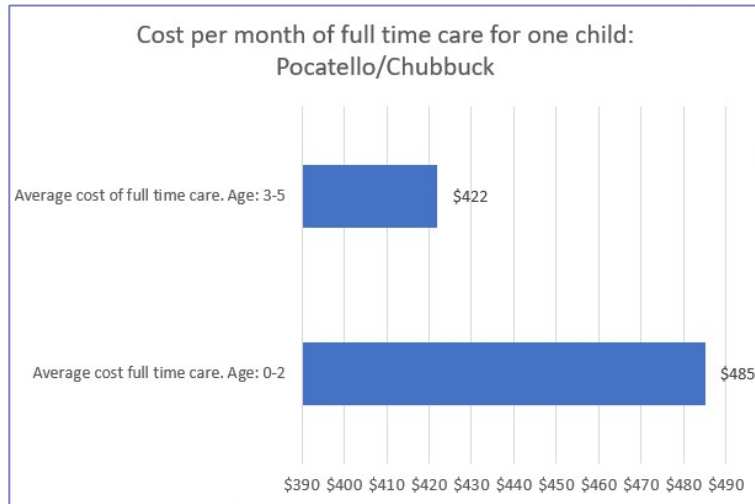


Source: Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and Idaho STARS Region 6 Office

Note: For purposes of this assessment the Zip Codes 83201, 83202, 83204, and 83209 were used which are nearly identical with the Pocatello/Chubbuck SD #25 boundaries.

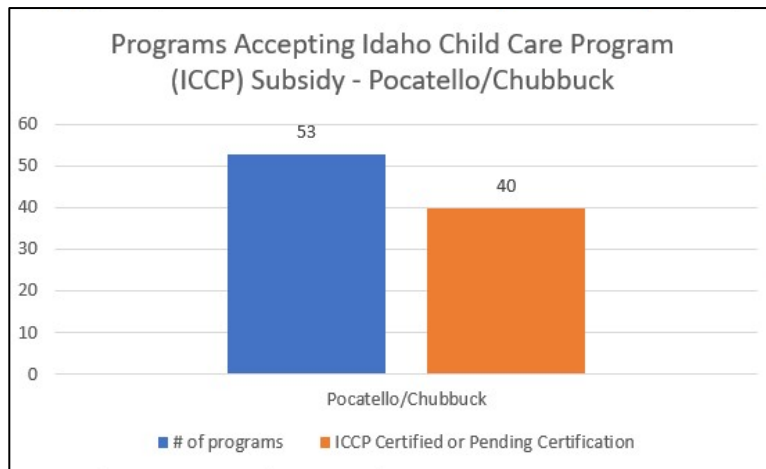
### Provider Cost

#### Cost of Full Time Care per Month (IdahoSTARS Data)



Average Cost of Full Time Care for Bannock County per Month (United Way Idaho ALICE Report): **\$449.50**

#### Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP) Subsidy:

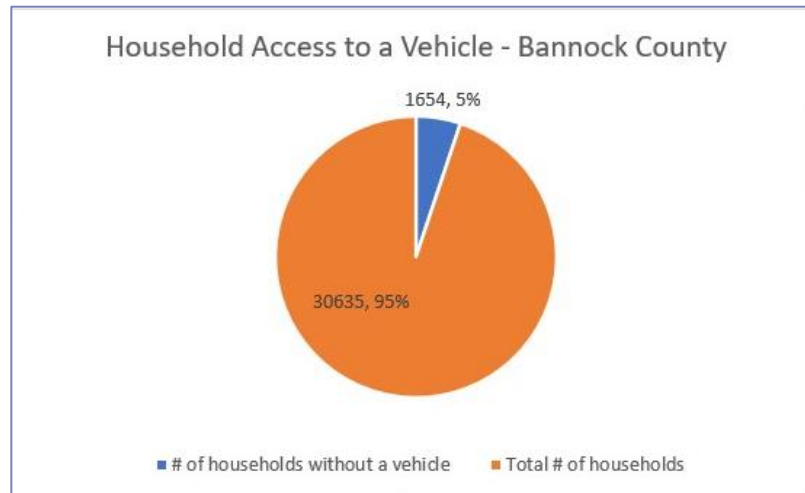


Source: Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and Idaho STARS Region 6 Office and United Ways of Idaho ALICE Report.

Note: For purposes of this assessment the Zip Codes 83201, 83202, 83204, and 83209 were used which are nearly identical with the Pocatello/Chubbuck SD #25 boundaries.

## Transportation

### Access to a Vehicle



Childcare programs providing some form of transportation: **50.9%**

Source: Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and Idaho STARS Region 6 Office and US Census American Community Survey 2018

Note: For purposes of this assessment the Zip Codes 83201, 83202, 83204, and 83209 were used which are nearly identical with the Pocatello/Chubbuck SD #25 boundaries.

## COVID-19 Impacts on Childcare

United Way of SE Idaho COVID-19 Impacts on Families Survey (359 respondents):

- In SE Idaho, 45.2% of households using child care and making less than \$50,000 annually reported having their work hours negatively impacted, reduced, or eliminated during the pandemic due to childcare issues compared to only 32.9% of all SE Idaho respondents.

Source: Source: United Way of SE Idaho Impacts of COVID-19 on Families Survey <https://www.unitedwaysei.org/covid-19>