



Idaho Association for the  
Education of Young Children

2023

Idaho School  
Readiness Project,  
Year 1.



## Dear Stakeholders and Partners,

We are thrilled to present the Idaho School Readiness Year One Report, a testament to the collaborative efforts of Idaho State University, the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC), and our dedicated partners. Our project is committed to supporting early childhood services for children from birth through age five, focusing on strategic initiatives such as family engagement, quality improvement, workforce support, and direct services for young children.

Through comprehensive statewide needs assessments and strategic planning, we aim to establish an early childhood education system that caters to the needs of all children and families, particularly those who are most vulnerable. By gathering input from stakeholders across Idaho and updating our strategic plan accordingly, we are laying the groundwork for a more inclusive and effective early childhood education system.

The progress outlined in this report reflects our collective dedication to maximizing family engagement, supporting the B-5 workforce, enhancing program quality, and expanding access to high-quality early learning services. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our partners and stakeholders for their invaluable contributions to the Idaho School Readiness Project, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to promoting excellence in early childhood education across the state.

Sincerely,



**Amy Koplin**

*Co-Principal Investigator / Grant Manager*  
Idaho School Readiness Project  
Idaho State University

## The Idaho School Readiness Project (ISRP)

**The Idaho School Readiness Project (ISRP) is a collaborative effort** dedicated to enhancing early childhood services for children from birth through age five. Spearheaded by the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children in partnership with Idaho State University, this initiative brings together partner organizations to deliver comprehensive support tailored to the needs of Idaho's youngest learners.

At the heart of this project are **several key activities** aimed at fostering holistic development and preparing children for academic and social success. These activities include conducting a statewide needs assessment, engaging families, strategic planning, enhancing quality standards, providing support and compensation to the workforce, and delivering direct services to young children.

One of the core objectives is to **promote synergy among existing programs and establish a diverse delivery system.** This system encompasses child care and family child care providers, Head Start programs, early intervention services, preschool settings, and home visiting programs. By embracing a variety of approaches, we strive to ensure that every child has access to high-quality early childhood education and care, setting them on a path toward lifelong learning and achievement.



## Goals of the Idaho School Readiness Project:

### **#1** Update Comprehensive Statewide Birth through Age Five Needs Assessment

The Idaho School Readiness Project gathered input from early childhood stakeholders—including parents, child care providers, and school and community partners—across Idaho to update the 2020 Needs Assessment. This process included nine individual studies which gathered input from research, data, town hall meetings, focus groups, and surveys, compiled to highlight the needs of Idaho’s early childhood system. The Needs Assessment findings will be used to update Idaho’s Comprehensive Statewide Strategic Plan, scheduled for release in December 2024.

### **#2** Update Comprehensive Statewide Strategic Plan

Based on the Needs Assessment, Idaho will develop a strategic plan to enhance collaboration and coordination among existing Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs in our state's mixed-delivery system. The plan will prioritize creating and sustaining an ECE system that caters to all children and families, especially those deemed most vulnerable. It will outline goals and action items to tackle the areas for improvement highlighted in the needs assessment, embracing a comprehensive systems-plan approach. Expect the release of this Strategic Plan in December 2024.

### Strengthening Families Protective Family Framework™ and the Building Blocks of HOPE® (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences)

Positive experiences play a crucial role in mitigating toxic stress and fostering resilience in children and youth, setting the stage for healthier adulthood. The HOPE initiative aims to highlight strategies for communities and care systems to enhance positive experiences for all children and provide support for families to nurture and acknowledge their strengths. This approach underscores the role positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) plays in a child's future or well-being. Additionally, the Strengthening Families Framework™ has five protective factors that serve as a way to bolster family resilience and well-being. These factors include:

- 1 **Parental Resilience**  
I deserve self care!
- 2 **Social Connections**  
I have healthy connections with others!
- 3 **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development**  
I can make informed decisions about my child!
- 4 **Social and Emotional Competence of Children**  
I can help my child learn how to handle their feelings and get along with others!
- 5 **Concrete Support**  
I can find help for my family when we need it!

### Education & Implementation Activities

74 presentations and 13 trainings to community groups, child care providers

27 child care providers in cohorts

4 ELACs received training

11 champions trained as implementation coaches

15 child care start-up owners trained so businesses are strong from the start

Over 8,000+ You've Got This! Booklets distributed through libraries, schools, CCRCs, child care programs and pediatrician offices.



“From these classes, I learned that I'm not just a child care provider--what I do is important to the families.”

**STRONG COHORT PARTICIPANT**



# READY!

## for Kindergarten<sup>®</sup>

READY! for Kindergarten provides workshops and take-home materials and tools to inspire and empower parents and caregivers to help babies and young children develop strong brain connections that determine how they will think, learn, and grow.

A new READY! for Kindergarten registration platform makes it easy for parents to register for workshops, and for site coordinators to manage attendance and communication.

“Your book recommendations are always fantastic! And you offer great ways and ideas on how to fully engage all the senses in the story/song/others. These sessions always serve as great reminders and education for us as parents. Thank you all for this fantastic resource!”

### READY! PARTICIPANT

<b>273</b> workshops	<b>4,449</b> READY! kits - parents
<b>67</b> locations	<b>208</b> child care providers
<b>2,619</b> registrants - parents	<b>269</b> child care provider kits

This year, we also increased the number of participants in the workshops for parents with children age 0-4, increased the number of Spanish workshops, and increased the total number of series by age level offered in 2023.

Idaho AEYC's READY! for Kindergarten program will be celebrating its 10th Anniversary in 2024!

## Kids of Idaho Activity Kits

In partnership with Lakeshore Learning, Idaho AEYC has created a children's activity book series titled "Kids of Idaho." This book series can be paired with complementing activity kits that support the development of young children.

**640 KITS**  
DISTRIBUTED

Kids of Idaho Love to  
Learn Kits - English

**173 KITS**  
DISTRIBUTED

Kids of Idaho Love to  
Learn Kits - Spanish

**658 KITS**  
DISTRIBUTED

Kids of Idaho Love the  
Outdoors Kits - English

**118 KITS**  
DISTRIBUTED

Kids of Idaho Love the  
Outdoors Kits - Spanish

Total ISRP 3.3 Kids of Idaho Activity  
Kits Distributed Oct - Dec 2023:

**1,589 KITS**

## Active Learning/ Kindergarten Readiness Kits:

1,956 customized Active Learning/School Readiness Kits were distributed statewide to child care programs, Head Start Programs, ELC regional sites, and community partners supporting pre-k children. These kits were distributed to rising kindergarten children in Idaho's most vulnerable communities.

## Community Engagement

- Family resource fairs
- Community events, including Family Storytelling Nights (968 people participating in 20 family storytelling nights).



# Maximize Family Engagement in the B-5 System

## Child Care Recruitment/Start-up Spanish-speaking Child Care Providers

15 Spanish speakers completed a child care start-up training. Two are newly licensed, one program is expanding, and the remainder are working toward state licensure.

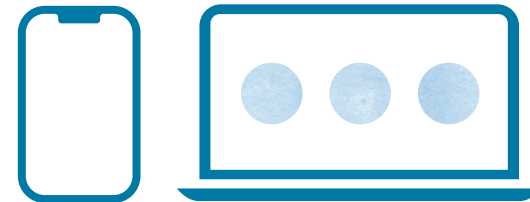
## EARLY IDENTIFICATION: DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

More children are receiving early intervention services due to increased use of developmental screening. Communities are coming together to introduce developmental screening to parents and caregivers.



## WONDERSCHOOL

Wonderschool is a child care management software that assists child care programs with licensing, setting up a classroom, setting pricing, building a website, matching parents to their program, operating a school day to day, and everything in between.



## INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH

The Idaho Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health supports a system of care that helps families ensure the social and emotional well-being of their infants and young children. We support AIM Early's strategic plan for workforce development, curriculum, endorsement, and sustainability.



# ∴ Higher Education Matters ∴

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The most effective early educators—those with at least a four-year college degree and specialized training in early childhood—have more responsive interactions with children, provide richer language and cognitive experiences, and support a holistic approach to learning.. But obtaining a degree may be out of reach for many early educators. The Idaho School Readiness Project supports the workforce through scholarships to Idaho's colleges and universities.



## Total Number of Scholarships: 131

- Full Time: 42
- Part Time: 66
- Single Course: 18
- Reimbursement: 5
- Completed: 130 (99%)



## Recipients – workforce data

Total: 94

- Number of recipients indicating they work in a large child care facility (26+ children): 78
- Number of recipients indicating they work in a small child care facility (up to 25 children): 5
- Number of recipients indicating they work in a Group child care facility (up to 12 children): 3
- Number of recipients indicating they work: 4
- Number of recipients indicating they work in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Teacher Roles: 4



## Fall Statistics

- Total: 61
- Full Time: 20
- Part Time: 25
- Single Course: 11
- Reimbursements: 5
- Total Completed: 61 (100%)













## Winter Statistics

- 5 Part Time



## Spring Statistics

- Total: 65
- Full Time: 22
- Part Time: 36
- Single Course: 7

Institution	Fall Full Time	Fall Part Time	Fall Single Course	Fall Reimbursement	Fall Complete	Fall Total	Spring Full Time	Spring Part Time	Spring Single Course	Spring Total	Winter	Total
 BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY	6	8	9	3	26	26	8	15	5	28	NA	54
 BYU IDAHO	6	0	1	0	7	7	NA	NA	NA	0	5 Part Time	12
 CSI COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN IDAHO	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	2	NA	4
 CWI COLLEGE OF WESTERN IDAHO	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	3	NA	4
 Idaho State University	1	5	0	1	7	7	5	6	0	11	NA	18
 LEWIS & CLARK STATE COLLEGE	0	4	0	0	4	4	1	5	0	6	NA	10
 North Idaho College	1	2	0	0	3	3	2	5	0	7	NA	10
 TREASURE VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	NA	1
 University of Idaho	4	4	1	0	9	9	4	2	2	8	NA	17
 E.O. EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	NA	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	20	25	11	5	60	60	22	36	7	65	5	131

# Academic Scholars and Early Learning Collaboratives (ELCs)

Participation in the scholarship program was robust within the boundaries of the ELCs, with

**72** unique individuals receiving at least one scholarship.

## Total ELC Scholarships Provided: 101

- Total Full Time Scholarships: 33
- Total Part Time Scholarships: 52
- Total Single Course Scholarships: 11
- Total Reimbursement Scholarships: 5

 **Total Fall**

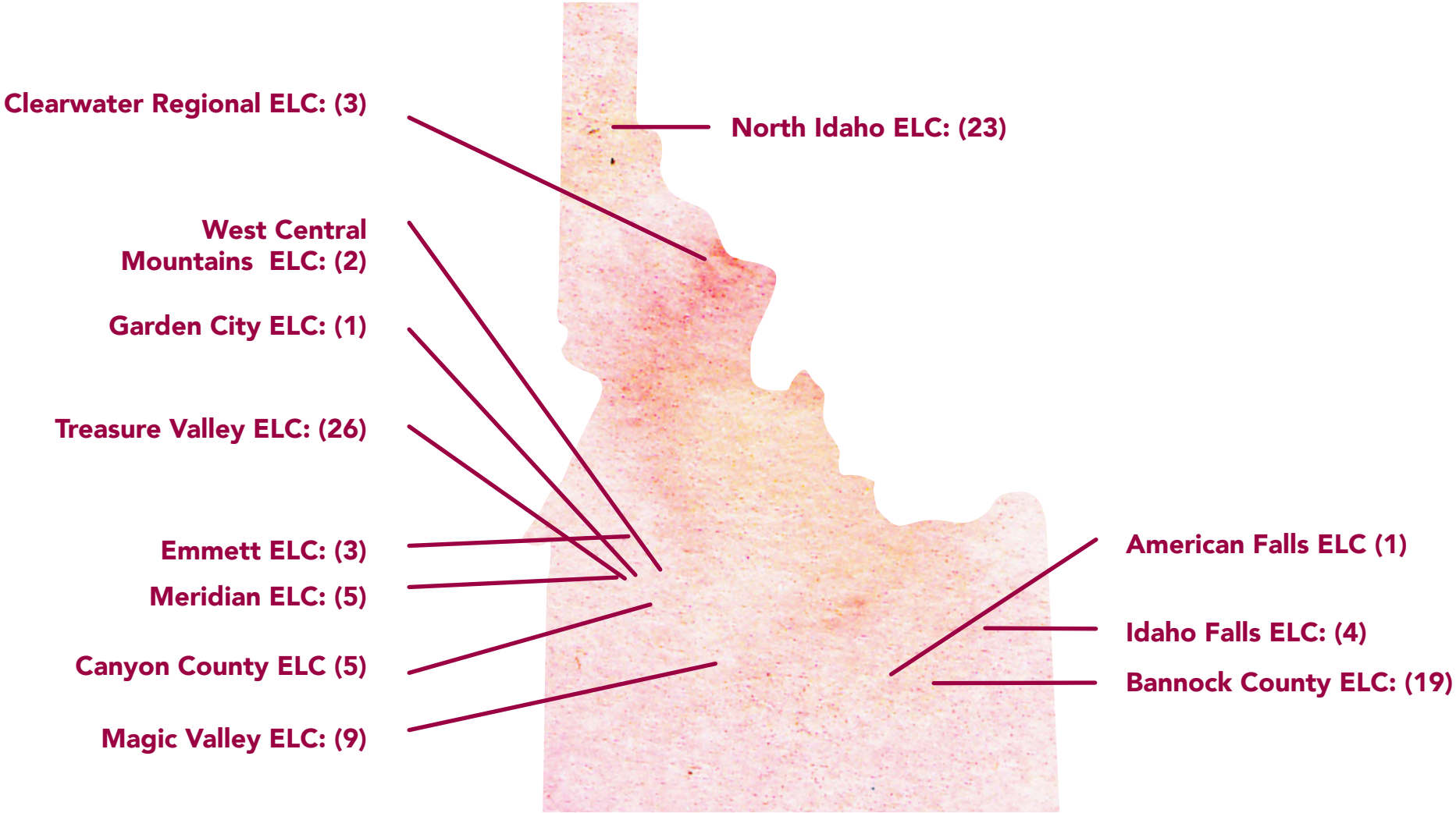
- Total Fall 2023 Full Time: 13
- Total Fall 2023 Part Time: 20
- Total Fall 2023 Single Course: 7
- Total Fall 2023 Reimbursement: 5

  **Total Spring/Winter**

- Total Full Time Scholarships: 20
- Total Part Time Scholarships: 32
- Total Single Course Scholarships: 4

**The average GPA of scholarship and grant recipients was 3.7 in 2023.**

# Early Learning Collaboratives (ELCs) and Number of Academic Scholarships



# Support Program Quality Improvement

The ISRP (Idaho School Readiness Project) facilitates the enhancement of program quality through professional development initiatives. These opportunities span from individualized training sessions for child care providers and parents to specialized groups aimed at supporting individuals pursuing Child Development Associate (CDA) certification and academic coursework. Additionally, ISRP assists partners in devising comprehensive strategies at the system level to ensure success across the board.



## Support CDA expansion

95 individuals participated in CDA cohorts

Regions 1, 2 & 5: 25

Regions 3 & 4: 56

Regions 6 & 7: 14



## Professional Development Cohorts (357 participants)

Lee Pesky Every Child Ready to Learn: 65

IdahoSTARS Nutrition and Active Play: 32

READY! for Kindergarten: 218

Rural Development Initiative Cohort: 15

Strengthening Families & the Building Blocks of HOPE: 27

An orange rounded rectangle containing the white numbers 1, 2, and 3 in a large, bold, sans-serif font, representing early math.

## Investment in Early Math

In alignment with our mission to bolster student achievement, the ISRP facilitates professional development opportunities for early educators in the field of early childhood mathematics. In collaboration with the Erikson Institute, a diverse coalition of early childhood experts is actively crafting an advanced early math framework. This framework serves as a comprehensive guide, steering the delivery of top-tier professional development sessions and facilitating meaningful dialogues with parents on this critical subject.

# Badges

38 badges awarded to 29 individuals across 8 domains:



6 AWARDED



8 AWARDED



9 AWARDED



6 AWARDED



4 AWARDED



1 AWARDED



4 AWARDED

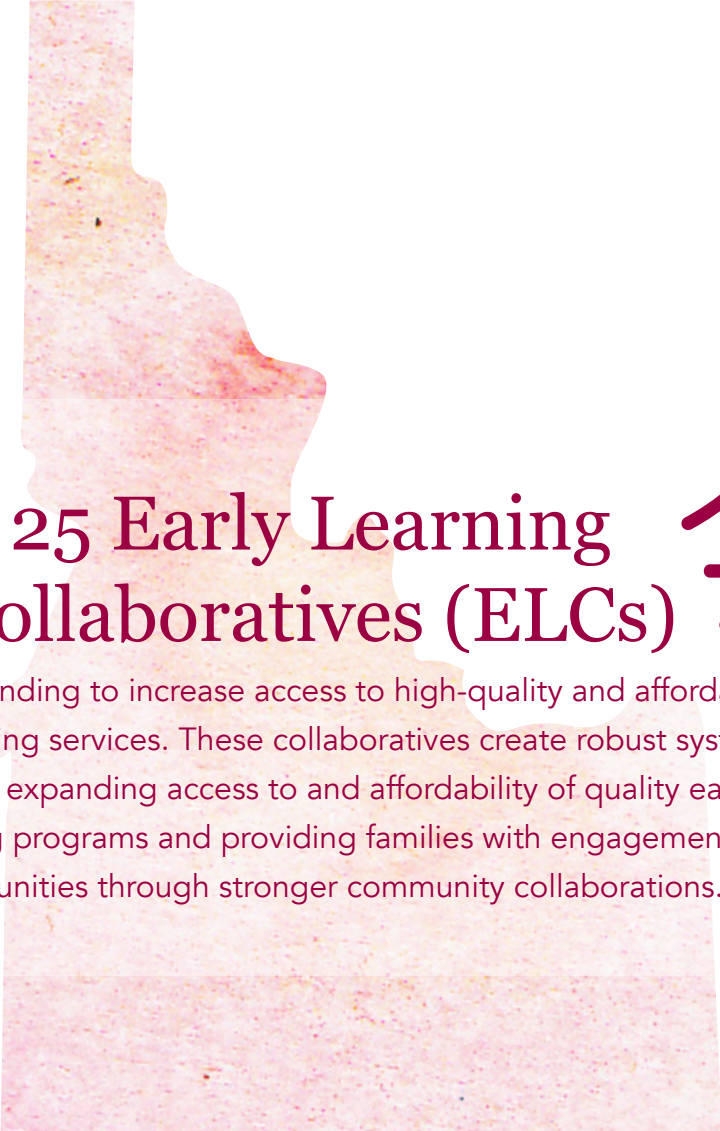
## Shared Services

A child care leadership and management approach that helps small child care businesses achieve sustainability through stronger fiscal management practices, strategic use of business automation software, and taking advantage of the economies of scale that can be offered through a network that shares resources like staff, expertise, and technology.



“ When participating in shared services, providers have the opportunity to build their financial knowledge and work alongside other programs to strengthen their own programs in learning not only from their coaches but also from one another. ”

**YUCARE CAMACHO DELGADO**  
**CHILD CARE SPECIALIST**  
**IDAHO AEYC**



## 25 Early Learning Collaboratives (ELCs)

received funding to increase access to high-quality and affordable early learning services. These collaboratives create robust system supports, expanding access to and affordability of quality early learning programs and providing families with engagement opportunities through stronger community collaborations.

**7** family child care homes and child care centers received equipment and materials to support child care start-up and expansion.

Programs reported an increase in capacity totally at **658** new child care slots.

### Locations & number of new slots

- Blackfoot (319)
- Caldwell (70)
- Driggs (22)
- Nampa (28)
- Oldtown (60)
- Rexburg (9)
- Sandpoint (150)

Recipients in Blackfoot, Caldwell, Nampa, Rexburg & Sandpoint also received a Workforce Development Council Grant.



# Top highlights from each ELC!

## AMERICAN FALLS

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- Each preschool has achieved or is working toward Step 3 in the IdahoSTARS Steps to Quality (STQ) program.
- All programs use one curriculum, and each program's curriculum is observed monthly.

## BANNOCK COUNTY

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- Held 3rd Annual Child Care and Preschool Provider Reception with American Falls ELC.
- Over 100 early learning professionals gathered for an appreciation of their professionalism, to distribute materials for their programs, and to set the stage for ongoing coordination to improve local systems.
- IdahoSTARS CCRC is helping facilitate joint in-person regional training with American Falls and Bannock County early learning programs.

## BASIN

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- Tuition-free universal preschool for all four-year-olds in the Basin School District.
- Idaho STARS Steps to Quality Rating of Step 5.

## CANYON COUNTY

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- Caldwell School District hires new Project Manager, Kari Palmer.
- The Caldwell School District assumed the role as lead agency and has deepened connections between local school districts, libraries, private child care programs, and other child and family serving organizations.

## CASTLEFORD EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE



- The Castleford ELC Preschool Teacher and Project Manager received the “2023 Teachers of the Year” awards for their work with the ELC.
- Castleford has landed a Workforce Development Council Childcare Expansion grant to build and deliver high-quality childcare in a partnership with the school district adding 23 additional seats to serve their community.

## EMMETT EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- Created extensive supports for parents with newborns and toddlers.
- Created a professional learning community by attending professional development opportunities increasing their knowledge of early childhood education.

## CLEARWATER REGIONAL EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- Delivered Kids of Idaho Love to Learn kits to the Nez Perce Tribal Early Learning Center in time for National Head Start Month in October 2023.
- ELC is established in partnership with Clearwater Economic Development Association



## FREMONT

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- Fremont County School District hired new Project Manager, Rebekah Crawford.
- Fremont ELC has increased their impacts leaps and bounds by presenting early learning information to local businesses through their city council and their Chamber or Commerce as well as conducting a steady stream for family engagement events across the area.

## GARDEN CITY

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- Provided high quality programming to underserved children in Garden City as an STQ Step 4 program.
- 100% of graduating preschool students are ready and prepared for kindergarten after only nine months in the program!

## HOMEDALE

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- In August 2023, Homedale Elementary earned honors for highest kindergarten IRI growth in the state at 42%. This is after the Trojan Tots Preschool and full-day kindergarten were introduced to the Homedale School District in August of 2022.
- In November 2023, Homedale kindergarten students earned the highest IRI proficiency in school history at 60%. This can be attributed to students having a foundation in education after participating in one full year of preschool and full-day kindergarten.



## KENDRICK-JULIAETTA KJ7

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- 100% tuition-free preschool and provider support for all early care and education providers
- Full implementation of all age levels for READY! for Kindergarten workshops in the fall of 2023.

## KUNA

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- All Kuna Elementary Schools are offering READY! for Kindergarten workshops. They are the only school district in the state to offer these district-wide.
- Expansion of the full day program by adding a three-year-old classroom

## MAGIC VALLEY

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- Development of the E Street Community Center/Magic Valley ELC.
- Broke ground on a large garden and loose parts play space.

## MARSING

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- Marsing Early Learning Collaborative hosted STEM night with Marsing families in November 2023. Over 270 community members, with 28 early learners, participated.
- Installed a StoryWalk contributed by Idaho AEYC with an effort to create fun literacy activities for young children.

## MURTAUGH

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- Murtaugh ELC celebrated its second year of full time preschool for all four-year-olds district-wide.
- Murtaugh ELC adopted a Pre-K math curriculum that aligns with the K-6 program.

## NORTH IDAHO

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- North Idaho ELC hosted 12 READY! for Kindergarten events and 18 READ Up events.
- Disbursed over \$500,000 in scholarships to families and \$50,000 in stipends to child care providers



## NOTUS-PARMA

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- Since the 2020-21 school year, the Notus-Parma TREASURES Playschool has increased from one session with 14 participants to four sessions while also adding a 3-year-old developmental preschool with students residing in Notus, Parma, and Wilder.
- Provided scholarships for children to attend local private child care program Roni's Care House, thereby increasing access to early learning and school readiness opportunities.

## TETON VALLEY

### EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- The Teton Valley ELC received a \$1.2 million dollar grant to move and refurbish a building to be the future of of an early care and learning center in downtown Driggs. This adds an additional 70+ child care seats to their community.
- Teton Valley ELC conducts family engagement events on a regular basis and also has a successful meeting of private childcare professionals every quarter to distribute materials and help face shared challenges

## WEST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- McCall-Donnelly School District opens up Early Childcare Center in early September, creating 40-50 new childcare spots.
- Facilitated partnership between Donnelly Elementary School and READY! for Kindergarten to start workshops in 2024.
- Facilitated introduction between Early Learning Centers and IdahoSTARS, resulting in two new centers beginning Steps to Quality.

## WOOD RIVER EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

- Wood River ELC hosted a family engagement celebration in December 2023 with more than 100 people in attendance. Lunch was provided and other activities included a raffle and several creative arts experiences. Active and Engaged Families Kits were also distributed to all families in attendance.
- Wood River ELC hosted their third provider gathering where early education professionals can connect and discuss strategies to support the children and families in their communities. Their third provider gathering had a great turnout with 20 providers from 12 different programs in their community.





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This publication was made possible by federal grant #90TP0091-01-00. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families..