



Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children

## Preschool Development Grant (PDG B-5) Highlights

Governor Brad Little authorized the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (Idaho AEYC) to apply for the federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) on Nov. 5, 2019 and designated Idaho AEYC as the lead agency to administer the grant. On Dec. 18, 2019, Idaho AEYC was awarded \$3,343,592.00. The one-year grant (Dec. 31, 2019 – Dec. 30, 2020) will focus on research, planning, collaboration and coordination on early childhood systems across the state. Idaho was one of six states and territories awarded funding for this planning grant.

In addition, Governor Little re-established the Idaho Early Childhood Advisory Council and designated Idaho AEYC to coordinate the council's efforts. Idaho AEYC will collaborate with various federal, state and local agencies and partners to support the Governor's goals to improve early literacy and school readiness, prepare low-income and disadvantaged children to enter kindergarten with foundational skills needed to be successful and to improve transitions into elementary schools. The PDG B-5 is an opportunity to bring resources into Idaho that will empower parents and early childhood educators and offer a mixed delivery system that includes private, public and community based approaches.

Per federal requirements, five specific activities must be addressed. Below you will find those activities with strategies we have put forth to accomplish the goals.

### Activity One: Statewide Needs Assessment Plan

- Define the scope and develop a work plan.
- Collect, compile and present data.
- Complete a systems and facilities validation study, inventory and analysis.
- Finalize a written Needs Assessment.

### Activity Two: Statewide Strategic Plan

- Define the scope of the strategic plan.
- Review needs assessment data and stakeholder input to create goal and strategy statements.
- Conduct a literature and best practice review.
- Incorporate stakeholder feedback and submit a final plan for approval.

### Activity Three: Maximizing Parental Choice and Knowledge

- Conduct an outreach and recruitment campaign for early childhood program participation in the IdahoSTARS *Steps to Quality*.
- Recruit and incentivize child care professionals to start a new high-quality child care business.
- Conduct an outreach campaign and training for parents and early childhood educators on the CDC's *Learn the Signs, Act Early* developmental monitoring, screening and referrals for early intervention services.

- Utilize the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire* for developmental screenings within Idaho's star-rated *Steps to Quality* programs.
- Conduct a feasibility study to explore telehealth models that will improve access to speech pathology and other services for children in rural areas.
- Conduct an outreach and education campaign through Idaho Public Television's *Parent Engagement Initiative* to engage families and improve school readiness.
- Expand the Idaho Commission for Libraries' outreach campaign and *Read to Me* project through Kindergarten Readiness Grants.
- Empower parents to facilitate smoother transitions through a partnership of parents, children and kindergarten teachers in four high-need school districts via a pilot of the *Countdown to Kindergarten* program.
- Extend the English and Spanish version of the *Ready! for Kindergarten* program throughout the state to empower parents with resources and training to prepare their child for kindergarten.
- Provide *Block Fest* opportunities focusing on STEM activities for families in partnership with school districts and libraries.

#### **Activity Four: Sharing Best Practices**

- Expand the early childhood local collaborative structure (*Preschool the Idaho Way*) to establish a local governance structure; conduct a local B-5 needs assessment; conduct a local early childhood strategic plan; and engage in transition practices between early childhood programs and elementary schools.
- Share best practices in early childhood through seven regional Early Learning Academies focusing on strengthening early childhood educator's knowledge of language and early literacy practices. Included in the academies will be professional development in trauma informed care, creating inclusive settings and conducting early screenings for developmental delays, and how to interpret Idaho Reading Indicator scores.
- Support early childhood classrooms with materials designed to enhance early language and literacy development.
- Provide early childhood educator social service training and materials at the Head Start Collaboration Office *Early Years Conference*.
- Produce four one-hour course modules developed by Idaho Public Television and Lee Pesky Learning Center highlighting best practices in early literacy.

#### **Activity Five: Improving Overall Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education**

- Build capacity for quality early childhood classroom assessments and improvement through the *CLASS* assessment tool.

#### **Program Performance Evaluation Plan**

- Develop a plan to monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objective of the project.