



IMPACT STATEMENT: ASQ-3 PILOT

Problem

Conversations about developmental screening results and concerns can be time-consuming and anxiety-provoking for families and early care educators, but the benefits are clear. When families and early care educators have productive conversations about a child's development, they are better equipped to work collaboratively to support the best outcomes for the child. However, universal developmental screening across early childhood sectors often does not exist and both parents and early care educators struggle to understand the importance of using a developmental screening tool together.

"Approximately 1 in 7 children in the US faces a developmental disability or disabling behavioral problem before age 18. Yet fewer than 50% of these children are identified before they start school."

- Zero to Three, 2012

In October 2021, IdahoSTARS and the Idaho Infant Toddler Program (ITP) partnered on a pilot project to increase the use of the Ages & Stages Questionnaires, Third Edition (ASQ-3) among early care educators and parents. The ASQ-3 is a developmental screening tool completed by parents to recognize the developmental progress of children from birth to five years of age. Families of children who are identified as needing further evaluation are referred to the ITP (birth-3 years) or local school district (3-5 years).

Intervention

The ASQ-3 Pilot uses a train-coach model to support early care educators' understanding of the importance of developmental screening, how to use the ASQ-3, and the importance of family engagement. Participating early care educators complete the Idaho Child Care Program required training, ASQ-3 Developmental Screening Training, and receive targeted technical assistance (TTA) from an IdahoSTARS Quality Consultant on how to implement the ASQ-3 in their program. Upon completion of the trainings and TTA, early care educators are awarded \$500 to purchase materials like the ASQ-3 kit for their program.

Impact

To date, more than 42 child care programs have participated in the ASQ-3 Pilot and screened **430** children. As a result of the screenings, **18** children (5% of those screened) were referred for additional evaluation. Of those, 6 children enrolled in the ITP and are receiving additional supports and 9 children were referred to a school district. Only 3 children exited or had no response.

Although the ASQ-3 Pilot has increased the use of developmental screening tools across Idaho, there is still work to do. IdahoSTARS and the ITP plan to expand the pilot next year to new programs and add support for the Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ: SE-2) and developmental monitoring.



IMPACT STATEMENT: EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE & EDUCATION BADGE INITIATIVE

Problem

The IdahoSTARS Professional Development System recognizes academic achievement. Child care providers on a non-academic journey did not receive comparable recognition for their accomplishments. The system also failed to recognize the value of experience through longevity. With the use of supplemental funds, IdahoSTARS, in following their primary mission to be inclusive to all, created the Early Childhood Care and Education Badge Initiative.

The Badge Initiative ensures that all child care providers can increase their qualifications and receive recognition for their efforts.



Intervention

On October 1, 2021, the Badge Pilot was launched with supplemental funding. In conjunction with IdahoSTARS Statewide Regional Child Care Resource Centers, a multi-Domain Badge system was created to include Professional Development Training hours, Coaching Cycle's, Targeted Technical Assistance, and Longevity recognition.

Impact

Almost two years of the Badge Initiative has led to an increase in Professional Development skills and knowledge. With the creation of a scoring rubric and a list of required activities to complete, providers on a non-academic professional development track gained additional expertise needed to succeed and were recognized for their achievements.

- 664 Individuals Recognized
- 2,278 Badges Earned
- Total Incentives = \$920,000

...The knowledge that I have gained from the trainings for this initiative has really been helpful. - Beneficiary Voice Participant



IMPACT STATEMENT: BUSINESS PRACTICES COHORT

Problem

Most child care facility owners and directors are more passionate about working with children than running a business. With the rising costs of nearly all business expenses, tight profit margins, and the end of COVID-relief funds, child care providers must employ sound business practices, fiscal planning, and management to be sustainable.

In October 2021, IdahoSTARS developed a new professional development opportunity, the Business Practices Cohort, to address the widespread need for support to strengthen child care business practices and improve their sustainability.

Intervention

The Business Practices Cohort combines training and practical application of best practices through coaching. Led by regional IdahoSTARS Resource Specialists, participation in the cohort involves:

- Attending a series of four training modules over four months:
 - Budgets, Projections, and Planning
 - Financial Reports and Internal Controls
 - Marketing Your Program
 - Recruiting and Retaining Staff
- Completing a pre- and post-training Checklist of Practice (introduced during the Spring 2023 Cohort) to identify best practices in place and to set goals.
- Implementing a new business practice after each module.
- Applying for a grant of up to \$5,000 upon completion of the cohort to support the implementation of business practice goals.

"Useful topics for me were projecting revenue, not only creating but writing down long and short-term goals, backing up business records regularly, and using shared services."
- Cohort Participant

Impact

More than 300 child care owners and directors across Idaho have participated in a Business Practices Cohort. Analysis of the Spring 2023 Cohort Checklists of Practice showed a statistically significant increase in the implementation of best practices after participating in each of the four training modules. End of cohort survey data complimented these findings. Networking was also an important aspect of the cohort for providers. One participant commented, "Exchanging best practices was so helpful, all of us struggle in one way or another and being able to bring issues to the table with other providers and a rep from IdahoSTARS was so helpful."

The grant funds allowed cohort participants to purchase a wide variety of materials to support their business practice goals and, in some cases, set up a professional office for the first time. An owner explained, "By having the supplies needed to organize my office and plan for the year, I will be able to keep better records and hold myself accountable for the changes and plans I have set for myself and my school."



IMPACT STATEMENT: SAFE SLEEP GRANTS

Problem

Naptime is a common occurrence in early care and education settings. Infants have an ongoing need for sleep as a part of their rapid development, while toddlers, preschoolers and even some young school-age children benefit from a designated nap time during their day. Additionally, child care facilities providing 24-hour care have children sleeping through the night while in their care.

According to the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, safe sleep for infants means they are alone (in their own designated sleep space free of other individuals and materials), on their back, and in a crib. Following these simple steps reduces the likelihood of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID). Additionally, Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, states that individual, washable sleeping mats should be provided for all older children during sleeping times.

Idaho was late to implement safe sleep requirements for child care providers, not adding safe sleep language to licensing statute until 2020. In preparing to add safe sleep requirements for subsidy participating providers, many of these providers expressed an interest in improving sleep practices but indicated that affording safe sleep equipment (CPSC certified cribs, pack and plays, floor mats, etc.) was a barrier to improvement. After collecting health inspections with repeated sleep violations in all regions of the state, seeing inspections with older children uncomfortably sleeping on bare floors, and a sleep-related death, we knew that providing the equipment and support to fully implement safe sleep in Idaho's child care programs must be prioritized.

Intervention

With this grant, IdahoSTARS was able to provide coaching on safe sleep practices to 331 child care facilities in Idaho. After coaching, IdahoSTARS Child Care Health Consultants then supported providers to develop a quality improvement goal related to safe sleep practices and apply for a Safe Sleep Grant for materials to meet that goal. Materials available through the grant included:

- Safe Sleep PD
- Sleep sacks
- Consumer Product Safety Commission certified pack 'n plays, cribs
- Fitted crib sheets
- Sleeping mats and cots
- Evacuation cribs
- "Sleep Baby Safe and Snug" books for facilities to give to parents of infants

Impact

In the two years of the Safe Sleep Grant:

- IdahoSTARS has awarded materials totaling almost \$685,000 to 331 early care and education programs across Idaho.
- And estimated 13,850 children in child care in our state have been impacted by this intervention.
- IdahoSTARS Health Consultants report these coaching and materials improved safe sleep practices in child care settings and spared children from sleeping on the floor, on couches, and in broken cribs.



IMPACT STATEMENT:

HOME-BASED STEPS TO QUALITY COHORTS

Problem

Home-based child care providers have traditionally been a significant part of the child care industry across the state offering child care to many families. However, they have been less likely than center facilities to engage in voluntary quality initiatives such as Steps to Quality (STQ). They have occasionally described participation as feeling intimidating or time-consuming. Home-based providers have also shared concerns about feeling alone and without the same social support as their center peers.

One way to encourage home-based providers to become more active in quality improvements is through Home-Based Cohorts. This model was created in 2022 to encourage home-based providers to join Steps to Quality and begin the process of continuous quality improvement in a supportive setting with their home-based peers.

Intervention

The home-based cohorts combine networking, information sharing, and coaching. Cohorts meet with their peers and an IdahoSTARS coach to work through quality improvements as outlined in STQ.

- Participants attended six cohort meetings covering the welcome visit, professional development, quality improvement, handbooks, families, and environments.
- Participants had an introduction to the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) and how results could be used to set goals.
- Participants learned what happens during a STQ verification visit, and in-person or virtual verification options were discussed.

"We were able to use each other as sounding boards, sorting out the best ideas together...We discussed things that worked for us, things that didn't and why it did or didn't. It saved us a lot of trial and error." - Cohort Participant

Impact

Twenty-nine home-based providers enrolled for the Home-based Cohort opportunity. Twenty-two providers completed the cohort and for 21 programs, their participation in the cohort resulted in being verified at a Step 2 or higher.

- 76% of participants completed an ERS assessment, a nationally recognized assessment that measures quality in child care settings, during the cohort.
- 72% of participants verified at a step 2 or higher in STQ after completing the cohort.



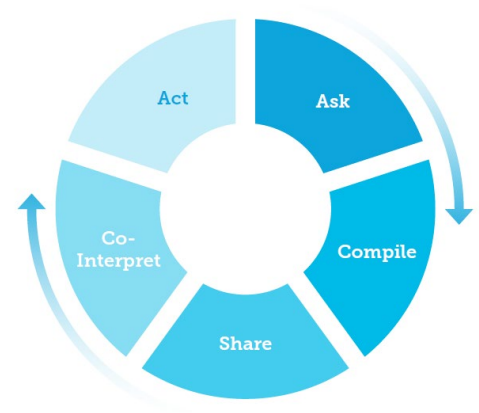
IMPACT STATEMENT: BENEFICIARY VOICE

Problem

The beneficiaries of our work are our most important allies and stakeholders. As people who use our services, their lived experiences – their voices – need to inform our processes, policies, and procedures. IdahoSTARS decisions are driven by our contract, scope of work and system administrators. While all of those are important considerations for decision making, the voice of our beneficiaries was notably missing. This meant that we encountered unintended consequences to our supports and placed unnecessary burdens on child care professionals. When people freely share their lived experience, we learn how systems are working, and how they are falling short.

Intervention

With the goal of improving our responsiveness to the lived experiences of child care professionals, IdahoSTARS organized listening sessions, starting in August 2022. Professionals received financial recognition to acknowledge the value of their time and contributions. Listening sessions included feedback in the following areas: general IdahoSTARS supports, the user experience of the RISE mobile app, Steps to Quality system/updates, training opportunities, supports for Spanish & Swahili speakers, Professional Development System (PDS) Education pathway updates, the Badge Initiative, child care subsidy exit interviews, the collection of wage data in RISE and workforce turnover. The beneficiary voice cycle also includes a commitment to share and co-interpret data with those impacted by our work. We provided this critical follow-up through email and co-interpretation sessions.



Impact

IdahoSTARS programs are currently being updated to better meet the needs of child care professionals. Beneficiary voice activities have contributed to increased trust based on IdahoSTARS responsiveness to identified needs. This includes the Steps to Quality system, PDS Education Pathway and Badge Initiative. We have gathered qualitative data that supports numerous other process changes. We are sharing power in new ways, embracing a whole new level of receptivity, a commitment to building trust, and accountability.

Roughly 20 listening sessions were held with around 200 participants.

As we continue to complete beneficiary voice cycles, we do so, grounded in the knowledge that as experts in their own lives, beneficiaries are the people most qualified to guide the co-creation of life-affirming systems and services.

Date Developed



IMPACT STATEMENT: NUTRITION AND ACTIVE PLAY COHORTS

Problem

Promoting healthy development, including good nutrition and active play, is crucial for the overall growth and development of children. Early childhood educators could benefit from basic training on nutrition and active play. Without training, educators often fall into patterns of addressing these topics based on their own personal opinions or ideas about healthy eating and being active. This is not always in line with best practices for young children.

In August 2022, IdahoSTARS developed a new professional development opportunity, the Nutrition and Active Play Cohort, to address the widespread need for healthier nutrition and active play practices in child care.

Intervention

The Nutrition and Active Play Cohort combines training and practical application of best practices through coaching. Led by regional IdahoSTARS Health Consultants, participation in the cohort involves:

- Attending a series of three training modules over three months:
 - Basics of Food, Nutrition, and Mealtimes
 - Basics of Active Physical Play
 - Childhood Food Insecurity
- Implementing a new quality practice after each module.
- Applying for a grant of up to \$5,000 upon completion of the cohort to support the implementation of nutrition and active play goals.

Impact

During Fiscal Year 2023, 106 child care providers from 98 facilities across Idaho participated in a Nutrition and Active Play Cohort, impacting an estimated 4,080 children. End of cohort survey data showed that the cohort design was effective in improving child care providers' practices around nutrition education and meal planning, family style dining, and opportunities for indoor and outdoor active play.

"We are having so much fun inside playing, staying active and using our imagination. You cannot even imagine our happy days. And we still have a garage full of fun things for outside once it warms up."
- Cohort Participant

All survey respondents found the homework to implement a new quality practice after each module to be helpful in meeting the goals they set for their program. The grant funds allowed cohort participants to purchase materials to support their goals that they may not have otherwise been able to. One provider explained, "We wouldn't have been able to start family style dining or a classroom garden without the support of the Cohort. It was a huge blessing so thank you!"