

# Child Care in Idaho

A Summary Report of the 2015 Child Care Workforce Study Conducted by the University of Idaho Center on Disabilities and Human Development and IdahoSTARS



CENTER ON DISABILITIES AND  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT


*live learn work play*

**University of Idaho**  
College of Education



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“Young children thrive when they have secure, positive relationships with adults who are knowledgeable about how to support their development and learning and are responsive to their individual progress.”

*Transforming the Workforce for Children  
Birth through Age 8 (2015)*



## INTRODUCTION



Child care providers bear a great responsibility for young children in child care settings. Supportive care and secure relationships with adults build strong foundations for later learning and development. Quality child care keeps children safe, healthy, and actively engaged, and prepares them for later learning at school.

This report, based on a study of Idaho’s early childhood workforce, highlights child care

provider characteristics, their professional development and education, and the activities and services they offer children and families.

This study was initiated by IdahoSTARS. Child care providers may voluntarily participate in IdahoSTARS which offers scholarships, training, and support for developing quality child care settings.





## IDAHO CHILDREN IN CHILD CARE

Idaho's **112,536 children** who are birth to five years old make up almost **7% of the Idaho population** (US Census, 2015).

It is estimated that **76,000 of these children** will need child care (Child Care Aware, 2016).

## ABOUT IdahoSTARS

Idaho's Child Care State Training and Registry System (STARS) leads, inspires, and elevates the quality of early care and education.

- Information and referral resources for parents
- Professional development for child care providers
- Training
- Health consultations for programs
- Steps to Quality, a quality rating and improvement system
- On-site consultation and assessments
- Scholarships
- On-site coaching

For more information, visit [www.idahostars.org](http://www.idahostars.org)



## SCOPE OF STUDY

IdahoSTARS contracted with the University of Idaho Social Science Research Unit to conduct a survey of Idaho's early childhood workforce. Respondents include 617 child care providers, with 270 of those being administrators of a program. 74 respondents reported that they are no longer in the field and did not advance in the survey questionnaire.

**Objectives of the study are:**

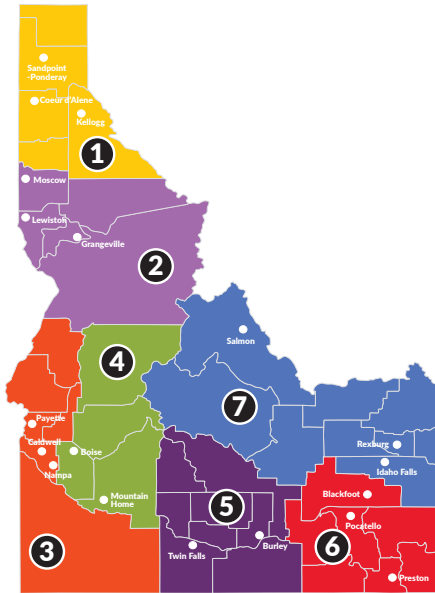
- Identify demographics of Idaho's early childhood care and education workforce, including economics, preparation (education, training, and certification), experience, longevity, and career path.
- Identify economic, career, and skill development outcomes for child care providers following the inception of IdahoSTARS.
- Identify selected business practices and pedagogical practices of early childhood professionals, and child care directors/administrators.
- Identify perceived future workforce and professional development needs of early childhood professionals and child care directors/administrators.



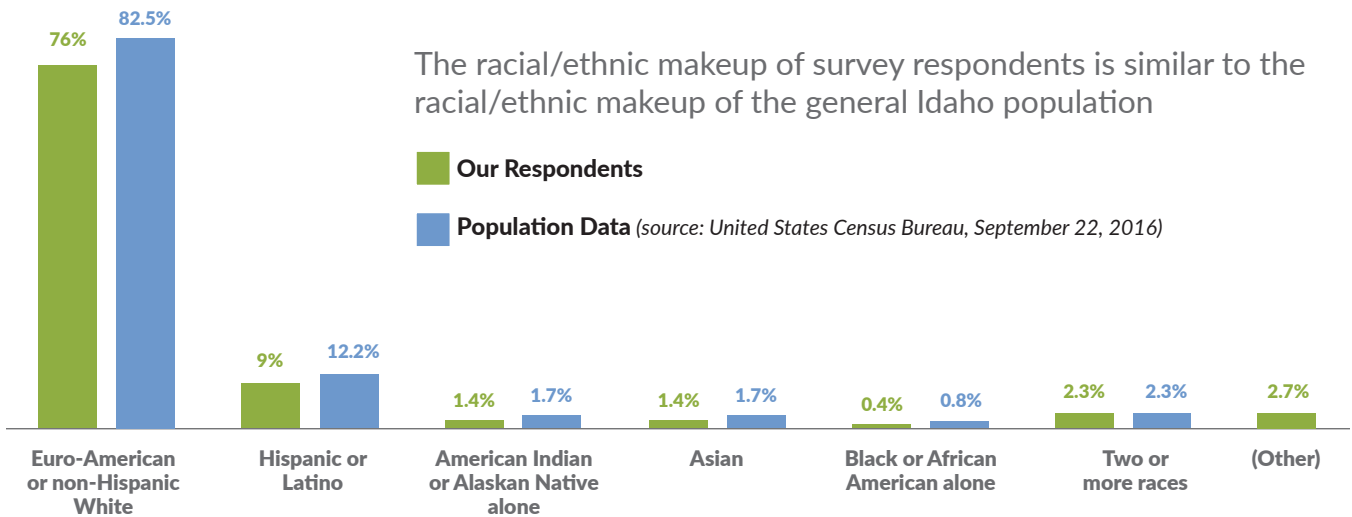


# RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Survey respondents by Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Regions



Region	n	Percent of Respondents
Refused/missing	28	5.4%
Region 1	50	9.7%
Region 2	26	5.1%
Region 3	73	14.2%
Region 4	186	36.2%
Region 5	30	5.8%
Region 6	65	12.6%
Region 7	56	10.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



Respondent Position in Child Care Program	n	Percent of Respondents
Lead Teacher	129	25.3%
Assistant Teacher	57	11.2%
Child Care Director	162	31.8%
Child Care Director and Teacher	69	13.5%
Child Care Family Home Provider	59	11.6%
Other	32	6.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



## RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Respondent Age	n	Percent of Respondents
18-24 years of age	58	8.0%
25-34 years of age	216	22.7%
35-44 years of age	244	25.9%
45-54 years of age	256	25.9%
55-64 years of age	156	15.0%
65-74 years of age	24	2.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**96%** of respondents are female

**77%** are married and/or in a committed relationship

**95%** speak English in their daily lives

**90%** of respondents work full-time in child care (25 hours or more)

**45%** report working in their program more than 40 hours per week

**63%** of respondents work directly with 12 or more children

**36%** work directly with 20 children or more

## EDUCATION

- More than half (**51%**) of respondents have education beyond high school
- **26%** of respondents are currently working toward a college degree
- A comparison of education levels of providers from 2015, 2009, and 1998 surveys shows an increase in bachelor's and graduate degrees

Education Level	2015	2009	1998
Some high school	2.0%	4.0%	8.0%
High school graduate or GED (General Education Degree)	34.3%	42.0%	33.0%
Child Development Associate (CDA without college credit)	5.7%	*	*
Child Development Associate (CDA with college credit)	6.3%	*	*
Vocational/technical program (AAS degree)	6.9%	15.0%	11.0%
Associate degree (AA, AS)	16.3%	18.0%	32.0%
Bachelor's degrees (BA, BS, BT)	21.3%	17.0%	6.0%
Graduate	7.1%	5.0%	2.0%

\*Not collected in 2009 or 1998



## LONGEVITY

- **67%** of respondents have seven or more years working in the early childhood field
- **12%** are new to the field with fewer than two years working in the field

Longevity in Early Childhood Field	n	Percent of Respondents
Less than one year	14	2.8%
1-2 years	48	9.5%
3-6 years	103	20.4%
7-10 years	57	11.3%
More than 10 years	283	56.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



# RESPONDENT COMPENSATION

## BENEFITS

Most respondents earn **few paid benefits**

**45.3%** of respondents receive **no paid benefits**

Benefits	Percent Who Receive Benefits
I do not receive any benefits	45.3%
Paid vacation days	36.7%
Paid personal sick leave	26.4%
Paid health insurance	14.2%
Paid retirement benefits	12.3%
Paid family leave	9.2%

## SALARIES

More than half (**55%**) of respondents earn **less than \$20,000 per year**

**39%** of Idaho’s child care providers surveyed earn **less than 15,000 per year**

“I wish there were more benefits when working in early childhood. I also wish that it paid more. I feel we get paid a pathetic amount. It is so disappointing.”  
*(Respondent Comment)*



## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Idaho median household income **\$47,334**

Idaho persons in poverty **15.1%**

*(US Census Bureau Quick Facts 2015-2016, 2016)*



Total Household Income of Respondents						
Less than \$19,999	Between \$20,000 and \$29,999	Between \$30,000 and \$39,999	Between \$40,000 and \$49,999	Between \$50,000 and \$59,999	Between \$60,000 and \$69,999	More than \$70,000 and \$74,999
24.4%	15.3%	12.1%	9.8%	10.5%	7.0%	20.9%

## POVERTY

Based on reported individual income, **61.7%** of respondents earn salaries that place them below the poverty threshold.

**56%** of part-time child care respondents (n = 50) live in households in poverty

**25%** of full-time child care respondents (n = 454) live in households in poverty

## TURNOVER

**High turnover in child care programs negatively impacts children, especially infants and toddlers (Rhodes and Huston, 2012).**

**60%** of respondents plan to stay in their current workplace for three years or more

**40%** plan to leave their position in the next three years

“I would like a way for dedicated early childhood workers to find quality, decent paying jobs. I would like the opportunity to work in an environment where I can work as a collaborative team, in a career, not a dead end job. We need companies where the vision of early childhood is at the forefront and measures are taken to rejuvenate team members—adding fuel and staving off burnout.”

*(Respondent Comment)*



Plans to Stay-In Current Workplace	n	Percent of Respondents
Less than 1 year	59	12.4%
1 to 3 years	130	27.3%
More than 3 years	287	60.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### What might influence respondents to leave the child care workforce?

Low salary **81%**

Emotional fatigue **74%**

Inadequate benefits **69%**

Inflexible work schedule **68%**

Limited advancement opportunity **57%**

“I don’t do the job for the money, it is more about service and making a difference in the lives of young children, but I still need to be able to provide for my own family.”

*(Respondent Comment)*



### What might influence respondents to stay in the child care workforce?

Opportunity to make a difference in children’s lives **96%**

Opportunity to influence families **93%**

Opportunity to work with supportive co-workers **92%**

Pride in serving society **90%**

Support from a professional development system such as IdahoSTARS or Head Start Association **78%**

Opportunity for scholarships to earn college degrees **57%**



## RESPONDENT PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Types of Facility	n	Percent of Respondents
Child Care Home Facility (1-6 children enrolled)	48	9.5%
Child Care Group Facility (7-12 children enrolled)	87	17.2%
Child Care Center Facility (more than 12 children enrolled)	372	73.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Number of Children Served	n	Percent of Respondents
1-6	75	14.9%
7-11	119	23.7%
12-20	127	25.3%
21-30	55	11.0%
More than 30	126	25.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Operating Hours of Programs	n	Percent of Respondents
Half day	19	3.7%
6 AM to 6 PM	376	74.0%
8 AM to 5 PM	74	14.6%
6 AM to 12 AM	27	5.3%
24 hours per day	12	2.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>100%</b>

Service Days of Programs	n	Percent of Respondents
Five days a week (Monday through Friday)	452	88.1%
Six days a week (Monday through Saturday)	31	6.0%
Seven days a week	18	3.5%
Four or fewer days a week (Monday through Friday)	12	2.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Age of Children Served	n	Percent of Respondents
Birth to three years	136	26.7%
Three years to six years	171	33.5%
Six years and older	13	2.6%
I work with children across these ages	190	37.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>100%</b>

**63.5%**  
of administrator  
respondents report  
their child care  
programs are  
**for-profit programs**



# SERVICES AND PRACTICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN RESPONDENTS' PROGRAMS

Families partner with child care providers for their young children's daily care and education. Child care providers offer a variety of services and practices to support children and their parents.

## CURRICULUM PRACTICES OFFERED BY RESPONDENTS (N=510)

- 97% offer vigorous physical play
- 96% offer play based activities
- 93% offer social skills activities
- 89% offer daily living activities
- 87% offer academic/school skills activities
- 85% observe and document children's skills and use goals and objectives for lesson plans
- 58% use Idaho Early Learning Guidelines to plan
- 49% use formal tools to screen children's skills and development
- 67% refer children for formal assessment if they think a child is not developing typically
- 55% work with specialists when a child has a special need
- 37% offer early intervention services for a child's special learning or developmental needs
- 22% use the Idaho Reading Indicator to assess children's skills

## SERVICES OFFERED TO FAMILIES BY RESPONDENTS (N=510)

- 75% provide breakfast and lunch.
- 20% provide dinner
- 25% work in a program where children bring lunch boxes
- 43% participate in the Idaho Child and Adult Care Food Program, a nutrition program for low-income children
- 62% offer family social events
- 41% offer family education events
- 47% provide activities for families to complete at home with their children
- 70% offer breastfeeding support for families
- 11% offer a food shelf in their programs for families in need
- 15.4% offer a clothing closet for families in need
- 62.2% have a program emergency preparedness plan

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## IDAHO CHILD CARE PROGRAM

The Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP) provides child care assistance to eligible low-income, working families. The program pays part of child care costs for eligible households, and parents pay a portion which is called co-pay.

### For more information, visit:

<http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/children/childcareassistance/tabid/292/default.aspx>

Child care program owners and directors in the Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP) commit to serve families with incomes below the poverty line.

In 2015, **7,932 families** and **13,828 children** were served by the Idaho Child Care Program (Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Idaho Child Care Program, 2016).

In an average 2015 month, **1,030 Idaho child care programs** participated in the Idaho Child Care Program (Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Idaho Child Care Program, 2016)

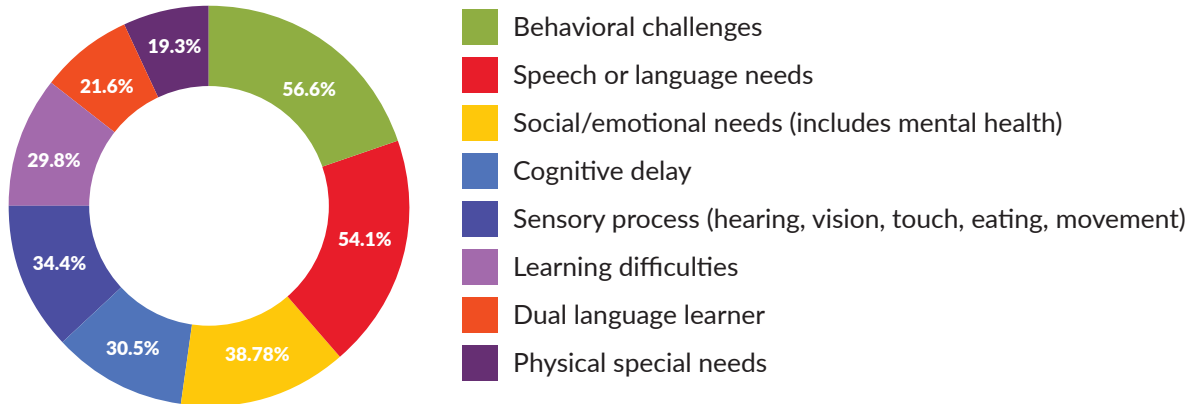
**79.2%** of respondents work in programs that participate in the Idaho Child Care Program



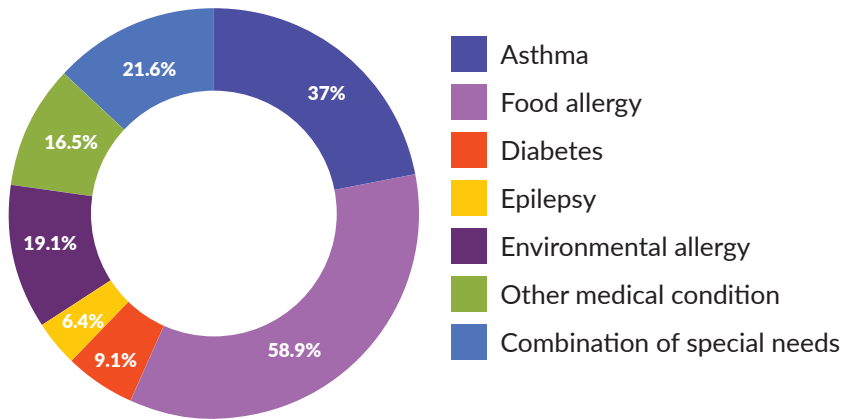
## CHILDREN WITH DIVERSE ABILITIES

**73.2%** of respondents report enrolling one or more children with diverse abilities

### Respondent report of children’s developmental needs in their programs in the last two years



### Respondent report of children’s special medical needs in their programs in the last two years



**10.1%** of administrators (n=210) report not enrolling a child due to staff lacking skills to address that child’s diverse abilities



# CHILDREN WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Challenging behaviors are intense behaviors that do not go away over time or after adults use typical tried-and-true guidance methods. Such behaviors lessen a child’s positive relationships with children and adults. Skilled adults who support children with challenging behaviors can reduce those effects.

Challenging Behaviors	Respondent Report of Frequently Observed Challenging Behaviors
Aggression toward other people	49.2%
Defiance	44.9%
Lack of self-control	34.4%
Inability to stick with a task	26.1%
Destructive aggression with materials and equipment	23.7%
Inability to wait	19.5%
Anger	19.1%
Eating challenges	14.4%
Sleeping challenges	10.5%
Unconsolable crying	7.0%
Sadness	6.6%

**61.4%** of all administrator respondents (n=215) report seeing a child with behavior challenges that staff struggle to address, at least once a year

**50.7%** of administrators (n=221) report asking a family to leave their program due to a child’s behavioral challenges that staff were unable to address

“I find behaviors of children the last ten years to be extremely challenging. I have observed teachers’ frustrations of trying to manage these behaviors. I feel there is an increased need for education classes to provide teachers with increased skills to help manage these children to prevent burnout in the early childhood field. One of the most challenging jobs, rewarding in many other ways, but, how do we change this so teachers are more supported?”

*(Respondent Comment)*



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND IdahoSTARS

Idaho's working families depend on child care providers to take good care of their children. They want choices for a child care program that is safe and supports their children's learning.

IdahoSTARS assists child care providers obtain training to offer healthy, stimulating care for children.

The IdahoSTARS Professional Development System (PDS) offers resources to strengthen providers' professional growth and knowledge, including:

- Professional development to increase providers' ability to understand and assess children's development, create safe environments for children, teach and guide children, offer quality care for children who have diverse abilities, and work in partnership with families
- Scholarships for higher education
- Stipends for approved trainings
- Support for meeting quality standards through Steps to Quality, a quality rating and improvement system
- On-site coaching

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM REGISTRY

Child care providers can enroll in the IdahoSTARS Professional Development Registry. Eligible registrants receive training and stipends for professional development.

**76.6%** of 2015 survey respondents participate in IdahoSTARS, in comparison to the 2009 survey where **50%** of respondents reported participation

**51%** of respondents have been in the Professional Development System Registry five years or more

## IdahoSTARS STEPS TO QUALITY

IdahoSTARS offers participation in Steps to Quality, a voluntary quality rating and improvement system that supports quality practices for children in child care settings.

**55.4%** of respondents report participation in Steps to Quality



"I believe that education is important, enabling providers to establish and maintain quality environments for children. Thank you for opportunities that you have provided for us to increase our knowledge and skills."  
*(Respondent Comment)*





## IdahoSTARS APPROVED TRAINING

**329** respondents took IdahoSTARS approved training in the last two years

**225** respondents used IdahoSTARS stipends to take at least one approved training

**174** respondents took thirty or more hours of training in the last two years

## IdahoSTARS SCHOLARSHIPS FOR COLLEGE COURSES

**20%** (100 respondents) used an IdahoSTARS scholarship to take college courses

**20%** report attracting more children and families after taking courses

**23%** report that they got a raise at work as a result of taking courses

**85%** report positive changes in quality practices after taking college courses using IdahoSTARS scholarships

**Respondents who took IdahoSTARS approved trainings report positive changes in quality practices after taking the trainings**

Practices	Percent Respondents Reporting Positive Changes
Working with families	84.1%
Being responsive to children's development	94.5%
Teaching and caring for children with special needs	76.1%
Observing and assessing children's needs	78.9%
Offering learning activities for children	86.3%
Guiding children with challenging behaviors	87.2%
Keeping children safe	80.2%



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish a consistent tracking mechanism to monitor child care salary and benefit information.

Examine economic outcomes for child care providers who receive additional education.

Examine existing advancement opportunities, and create strategies for advancement for those in child care positions.

Project expected education needs and training needs of child care providers in IdahoSTARS, and the associated needs for IdahoSTARS scholarship support.

Provide on-going examination of the practical impact of IdahoSTARS activities on evidence-based quality practices in child care programs.

Examine resources and professional development needs of child care providers for supporting children with diverse needs.

Recognize, acknowledge, and celebrate the widely held belief of child care providers that they make a difference in the lives of children and families and that they take pride in the work they do for society.



“It’s the most beautiful work. I enjoy seeing the smiles of children, seeing their development, seeing their creativity, and becoming part of their lives. It makes me feel special.”

*(Respondent Comment)*







# Endnotes



## Acknowledgments

This summary report was prepared by staff at the University of Idaho Center on Disabilities and Human Development (CDHD), including Julie Fodor, director of the CDHD; Janice Guier, assistant director for IdahoSTARS; and Janice Fletcher, University of Idaho Emerita Professor, Child, Family, and Consumer Studies.

This report, which focuses on the child care sector of the early childhood workforce, serves as a condensed summary of the Idaho Early Childhood Workforce Study Final Report (September, 2016) prepared by the Center on Disabilities and Human Development and the University of Idaho Social Science Research Unit (SSRU). Contact Janice Fletcher at [jfletcher@uidaho.edu](mailto:jfletcher@uidaho.edu) for more information.

## Methodology

The University of Idaho Center on Disabilities and Human Development contracted with the University of Idaho Social Science Research Unit to conduct a survey of Idaho's early childhood workforce. An online survey methodology was used to conduct the study.

Lists of child care providers were obtained from the Idaho State Training and Registry System (IdahoSTARS) and from the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Idaho Child Care Program. The final cleaned frame contained 4148 individuals. 594 respondents who are still in the field completed the survey, and 74 respondents reported they are no longer in the field.

Twenty eight individuals partially completed the survey, five refused the survey, 153 broke off before completing a required amount of the survey, two were ineligible, and 298 had a non-working email. 2993 individuals had no activity on the survey. None of the individuals listed above were included in analyses.

The final adjusted rate was 16.1%. Data for the survey were analyzed using the SAS statistical software package. Frequencies, standard errors, and 95% confidence limits were computed using the Surveyfreq procedure in SAS. For some analyses, cross tabulations (chi square analysis) were used to determine if significant differences exist among sectors in the early childhood workforce.

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