



IDAHO
STARS

2021 Annual Report

A year of change. A year of adaptation. A year of learning.



Thrive!

Adapting during uncertain times and learning through data.

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The data within this report represents the training and professionals categorized in the RISE database as child care providers, currently employed in legally operating Idaho child care facilities within the state of Idaho.

To Our Community

IdahoSTARS Director, Melissa Crist, shares her vision for the future of the project and the lessons and growth that occurred during a challenging year for child care in Idaho and across the nation.



What a memorable year we have had. IdahoSTARS has adapted, grown, and ultimately thrived through the many challenges and changes of the past year.

IdahoSTARS is an organization that values working in person with early care and education providers. COVID-19 made that not only challenging, but sometimes impossible. So we adapted and learned how to work remotely with providers, whether it was in trainings, coaching, or assisting in State Licensing and ICCP. We implemented new ways of doing things that not only kept our work on track, but often improved it. While we are grateful to see providers face-to-face again in their programs, our offices, and at trainings, we will keep some of the lessons we learned through working remotely with them.

Equity has continued to be a focus of our project this past year. In every goal, we have looked to see if we are doing the best we can to serve each and every early care and education provider. We look at race, ethnicity, language, technological capabilities, and inclusivity of individuals with disabilities. Ultimately, we know this work helps all of us to improve the quality of child care in Idaho.

We thank you for the opportunity to show you the work our team has done over the last 12 months. It is exciting and rewarding to help shape the future of Idaho and improve the lives of children, families, and our ever essential early care and education workforce.

With gratitude,

Melissa Crist

Who We Are

IdahoSTARS is the leading expert and resource for quality child care in Idaho. We empower parents and early childhood professionals to make safe, healthy, nurturing and educational child care a top priority.

IdahoSTARS' mission is to ensure that Idaho's children, birth through age 5, have access to the highest quality inclusive early care and education.

We accomplish this by:

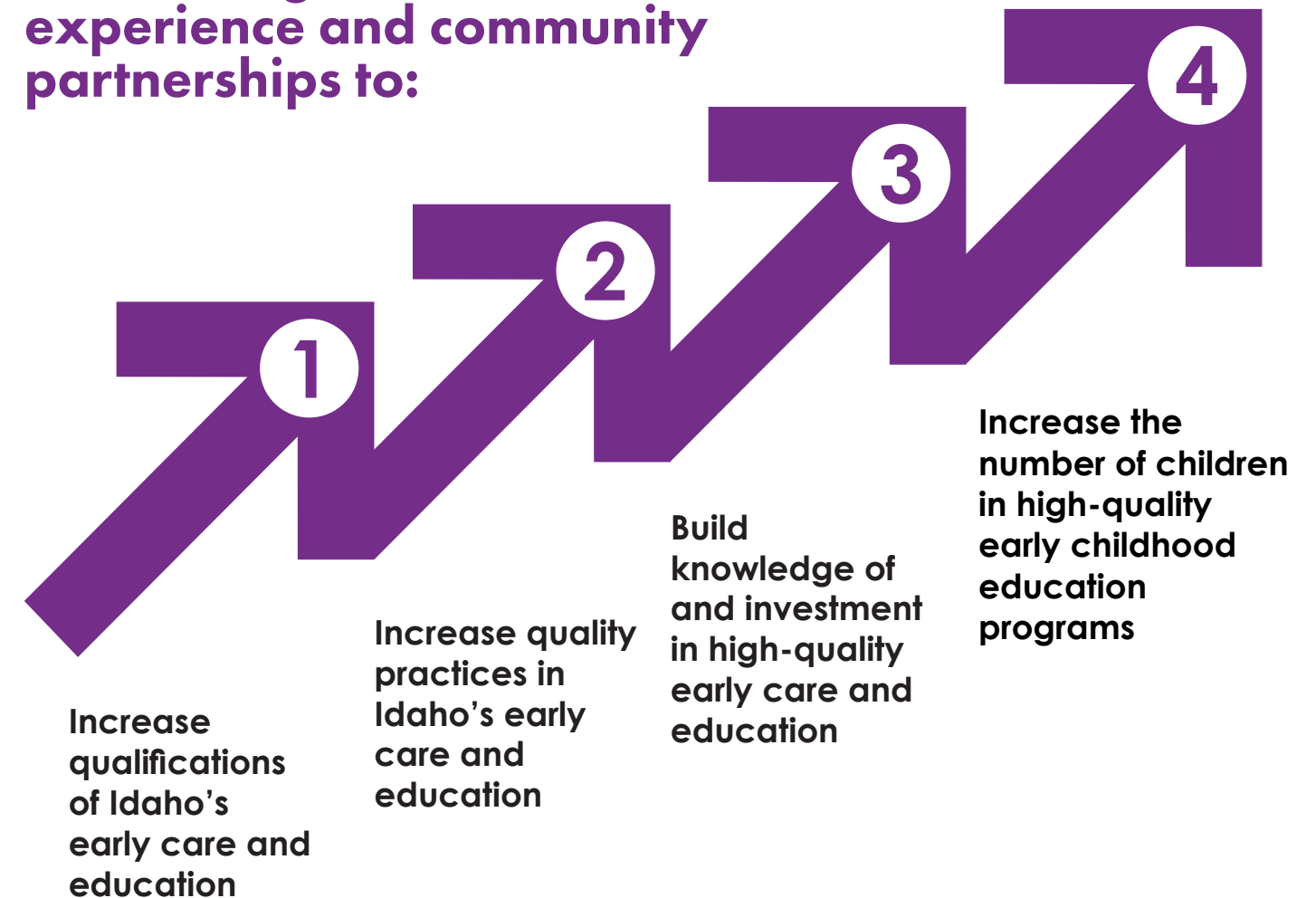
- Supporting early care and education providers with professional development opportunities to improve their practice and develop their businesses.
- Equipping families with tools and resources that empower them to find a nurturing and safe environment for their child.



The University of Idaho Center on Disabilities and Human Development (CDHD) and the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (Idaho AEYC) proudly partner on the IdahoSTARS project. IdahoSTARS is funded by the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to improve the quality of child care available to families.



We leverage our resources, experience and community partnerships to:



Goal 1

Increase Qualifications of Early Childhood Education and Care Professionals

TRAINING

IdahoSTARS focused on live webinar-hosted trainings this year due to limitations on face-to-face training. 647 child care professionals adapted to this new webinar platform.



In addition, IdahoSTARS adapted the way we offer professional development to customers who prefer to learn in a language other than English. All registrants may now request an interpreter for any IdahoSTARS approved training and are accommodated at no cost. To further improve equitable access to training, a green triangle icon was added to the RISE training calendar to identify trainings offered with Language Supports (access to an interpreter).

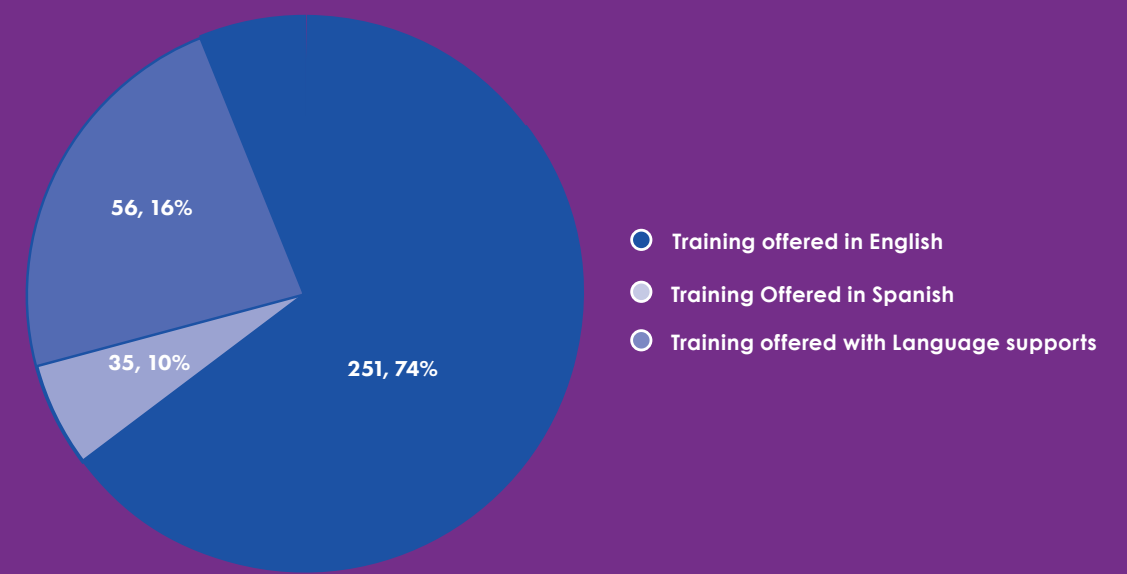


The ICCP Annual Health and Safety online training, *Safe, Appropriate, and Engaging Outdoor Environments*, was completed by 2,518 child care professionals in English and 56 in Spanish. This training was also offered live via webinar with interpreters available. We had 32 attendees with 20 requesting interpreters.



10,379 Online trainings were completed this year!

Training offered by Language

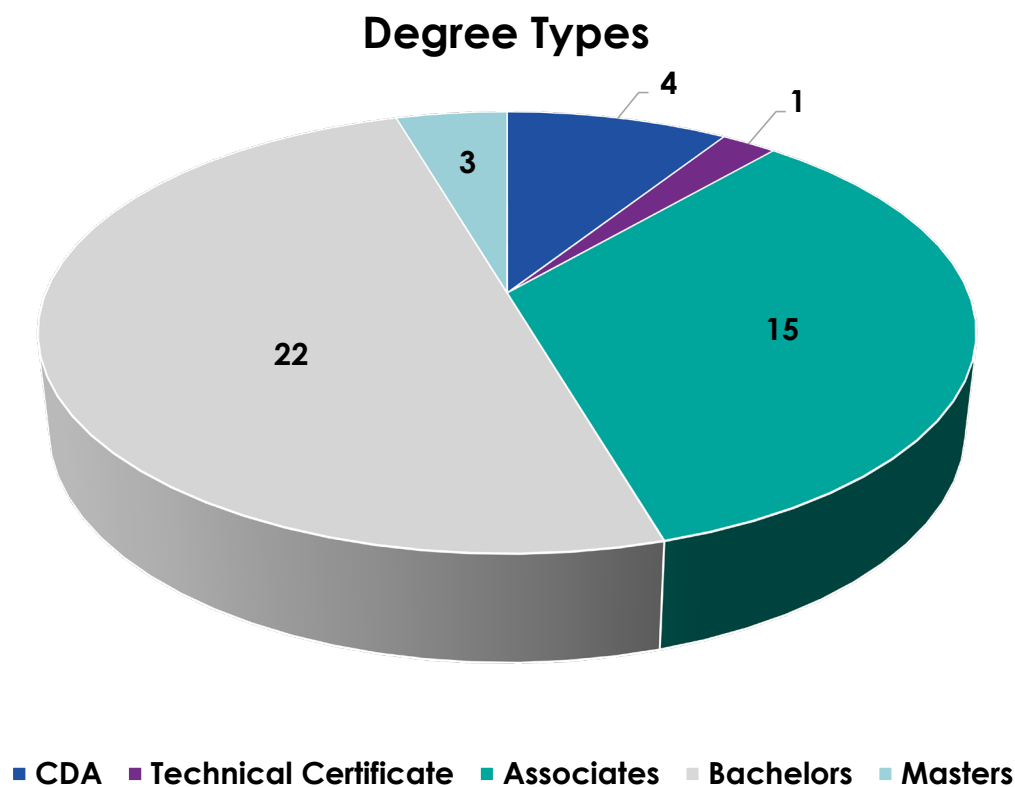


ACADEMICS

IdahoSTARS changed the way we award academic degree scholarships to better serve our scholars, utilize our budget dollars, and encourage equity. We now offer a flat rate scholarship of \$2,000 for a 2-year school and \$5,000 dollars for a 4-year school. Our updated application rubric looks at demographics like race/ethnicity and language, taking measures to mirror the workforce. Our rubric also gives preference to those working in child care deserts.

45
Academic
Scholars

This year we had academic scholars in all 7 regions, distributed among 5 types of degrees, with nearly half going toward bachelor's degrees.



SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT STORIES

My long-term goals include being able to continue to be a lead pre-k co-teacher at my center. I have grown and learned so much while pursuing my professional education, and I have been able to take what I have learned and not only brought it into fruition into my classroom, but to my center. After graduating from CWI this spring, I hope to be able to continue my education to be able to pursue a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from a 4-year university. Without this scholarship, it would have been very difficult for me to find and acquire funding to be able to go back to school. School was something that I had always struggled with as a young child. I didn't believe I could be successful or gain anything from a traditional school system. Without this scholarship, my financial state would not have allowed me to follow this path, therefore, limiting my ability to learn and grow as much as I have. This scholarship has supported me in being able to find the strength and confidence to pursue my education and follow my passion in Early Childhood Education. Without it, I would not be the early educator I am today.

- Ashley Carlson - CWI Academic Scholar, St. Alphonsus Early Learning Center

This year I learned a lot about child observation and curriculum for young children. While I work with children every day, I was able to learn names of things I do at work and learn better methods for teaching the children I work with. Specifically, I learned how to foster young children's various developmental domains in my curriculum and how to use various observation methods to evaluate the growth of my students.

- Ashley Mathena - University of Idaho Academic Scholar





WORKFORCE

This year we delved into workforce data to better understand the needs of Child Care Professionals in Idaho and help IdahoSTARS serve them better. IdahoSTARS has created a separate statewide workforce report. Here are some of the highlights.

93% Women



Women represent the majority of Early Childhood Educators in Idaho. Of the 6,109 Early Childhood Educators in Idaho, 93% are women, while women only make up 48% of Idaho's workforce.

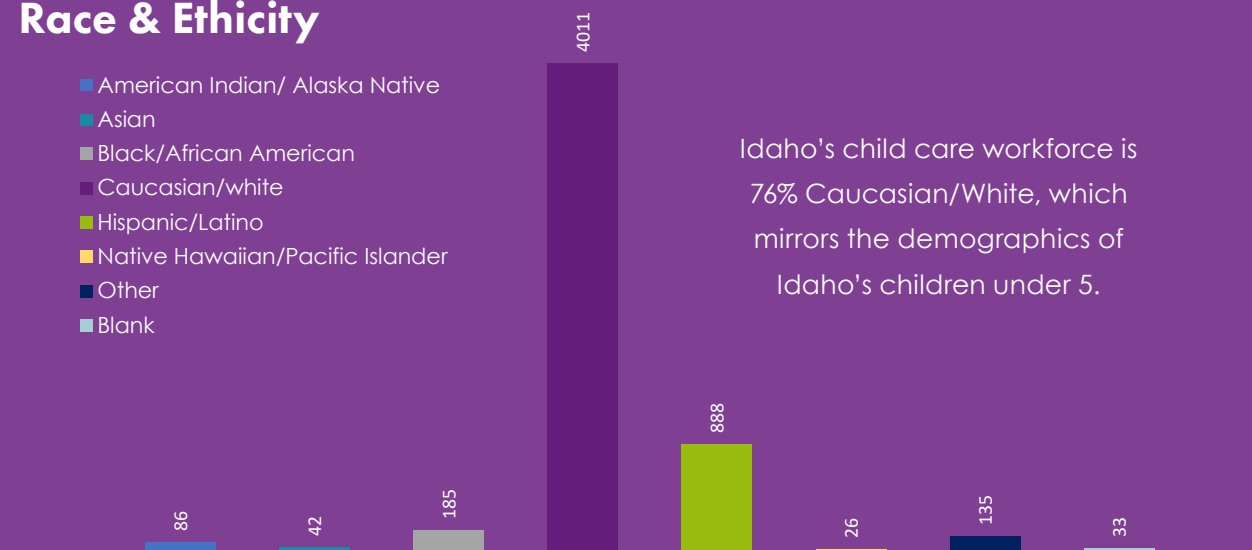
Median Wage = \$10.38

Wages for Early Childhood Educators in Idaho are some of the lowest of any occupation. The median wage for all occupations is \$17.80

Race & Ethnicity

- American Indian/ Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Caucasian/white
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Other
- Blank

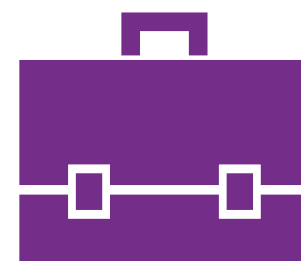
Idaho's child care workforce is 76% Caucasian/White, which mirrors the demographics of Idaho's children under 5.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

The Professional Development System (PDS) had 1,226 new users join this year and granted 1,084 PDS Anniversary Recognition for a total of \$214,000.

This year we focused on increasing the number of users in RISE with a verified education level. Our "Education Giveaway" ran for 4 months, and encouraged early childhood educators to log into RISE and update their education information. Our goal was to receive 150 new education submissions and our results exceeded our expectations. We approved 220 submissions!



\$214,000 was granted to **1,084** early childhood professionals in Idaho who participated in professional development.



1596
COVID-related contacts with providers and families

Goal 2

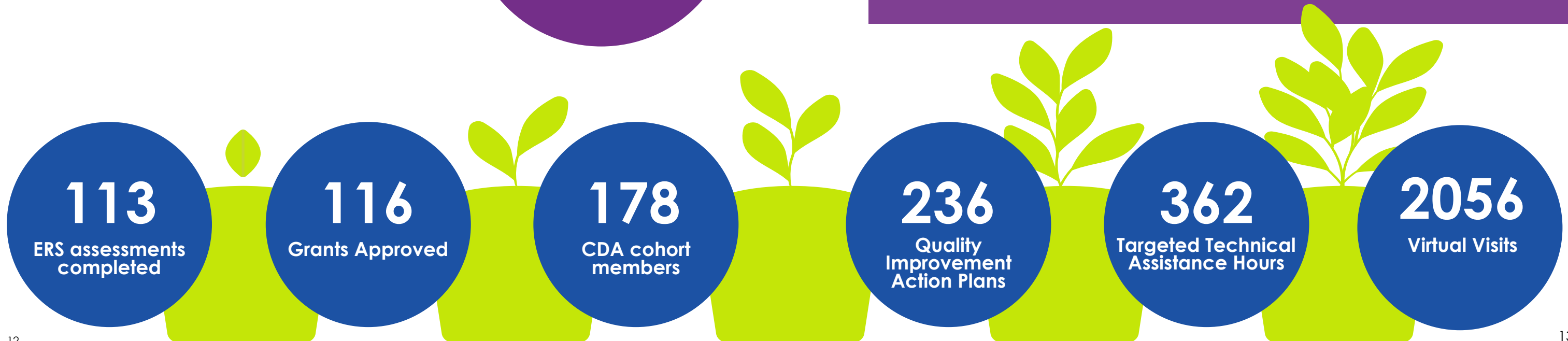
Increase Quality Practices in Early Childhood Education

COVID-19 brought on new challenges to child care programs and IdahoSTARS as we helped facilities reach new successes in our Quality Improvement System. Despite constraints, there was an increase in participation in quality improvement, reminding us it's about the journey as much as the destination.

STEPS TO QUALITY

At each step, we help programs grow quality in the following areas:

- Business Practices
- Health, Safety and Wellness
- Child Development
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Environments
- Inclusion and Diversity
- Partnering with Families and Communities



STQ PARTICIPANT STORIES

Liz's Loving Child Center, Region 3

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, Liz's Loving Child Center actively engaged in quality improvements by participating in regular coaching sessions with their regional IdahoSTARS Multidisciplinary Team, completing seven coaching cycles. They also worked closely with their IdahoSTARS consultants to create two Quality Improvement Action Plans (QIAPs) focused on developmental monitoring and health and safety. All this work allowed them to receive a quality improvement grant for a changing table and cots that helped them to reach their health and safety goals. In August of 2020, Liz's was prepared for their ERS assessment. They scored well in both overall and interaction subscale, which are indicators of quality. After continued coaching and training, in January 2021, Liz's verified at Step 3! It has been wonderful working with Liz's Loving Child Center, seeing them eager to learn, and helping them meet the needs of the children and families in their care.

Papa Bear Daycare II, Region 7

Papa Bear Daycare II became an IdahoSTARS MDT site right before the pandemic hit. However, COVID-19 was no match for Papa Bear, as they continued participation with IdahoSTARS creating and implementing multiple QIAPs. Staff at Papa Bear completed "Circle of Security" training, received Active Supervision TTA, and participated in a Child Development Associate (CDA) cohort. In 2020, they achieved Step 3 verification within the Idaho Quality Rating and Improvement System (STQ).

Throughout the pandemic, Papa Bear staff continued to participate in virtual coaching, and received a grant for cots, changing pads, and an evacuation crib. Since participating with IdahoSTARS, they transitioned from a mixed-age, one-room facility to a larger building with interactive learning centers in the classrooms. When they relocated into their new facility, Papa Bear asked IdahoSTARS for input, showing eagerness to learn. It has been exciting and rewarding for IdahoSTARS and the Idaho Falls community to watch them grow.

Goal 3

Build Knowledge & Invest in High-Quality Early Childhood Education

As the important role of child care in society was making headlines, IdahoSTARS continued to showcase Idaho's resilient early childhood education community. We featured relevant training opportunities, emerging research in child development, support for best practices, available grants, and up-to-date analysis of the child care industry. COVID-19 meant there was always something new to talk about, such as health and safety updates, closures, temporary policy changes, and new funding opportunities.



Outreach Team

This year our Outreach team used social media, newsletters, mailings, email and even text messages to keep child care providers, families, and community partners informed about the constantly shifting landscape of child care.

FAMILY PORTAL

The Family Portal on our website launched to help families searching for child care make better informed decisions through advance search criteria and by exploring new resources in child development, quality child care, and family support. We also share a quarterly family newsletter to keep families connected with the latest research and local resources.

NEW RISE HELP SECTION

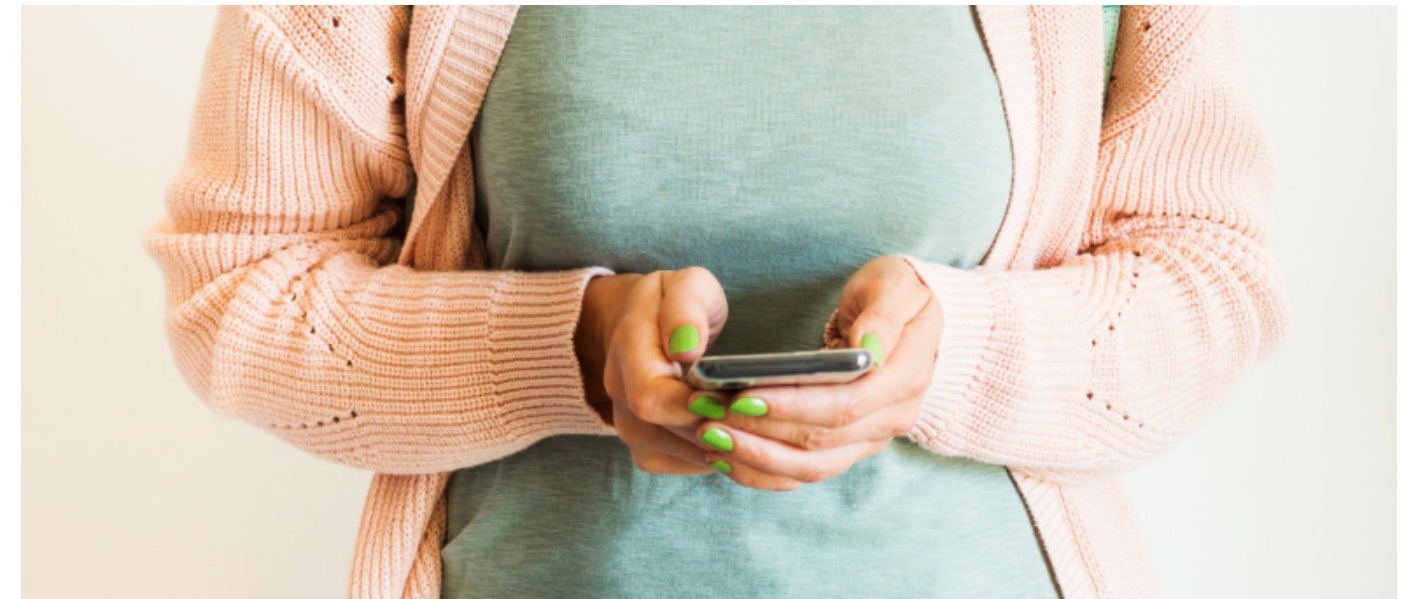


RISE evolved this year with an enhanced Help Section. Now written and video tutorials help child care providers navigate processes and programs. Resources are just a click or download away.

EYE ON EQUITY



With an eye on equity, we expanded our outreach in Spanish. RISE is now available in Spanish, including the Help Section. IdahoSTARSeñor Facebook page launched to give Spanish-speaking providers content in their preferred training language and to highlight information especially tailored to Spanish speakers. We also distribute a quarterly Spanish newsletter to share information tailored to the Spanish-speaking community.

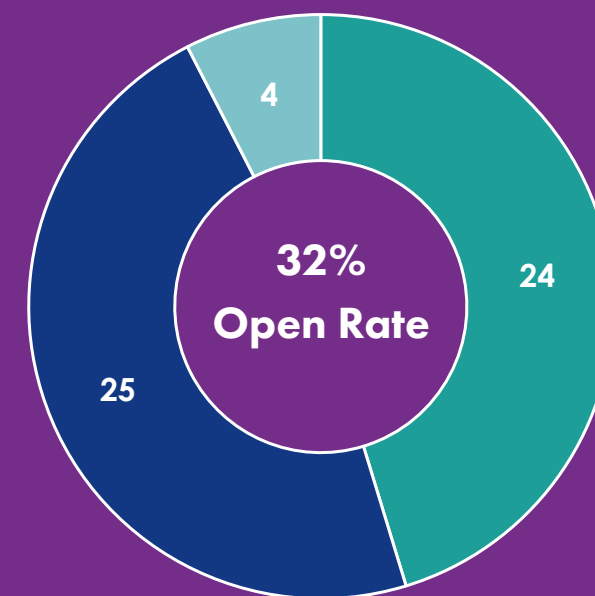


Social Media



- 1800+ Followers
- 2867+ People reached
- 487 Posts
- New Spanish Facebook page

Digital Communications



■ Newsletters ■ Subject Specific Emails ■ Surveys

Goal 4

Increase the Number of Children in High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs

In July 2020, IdahoSTARS launched an evolved approach to customer service with our new Customer Support Team.

This team's primary goal is to provide personalized customer care so more child care programs are successful in completing the state licensing and/or ICCP certification and renewal processes. What does this look like in practice?

- We reached out directly to customers, communicating which requirements are outstanding and offering guidance.
- We updated renewal notices to be more informative and easier to understand.
- We exceeded our goal of 75% successful renewal rate in 10 months over the last year, with an average renewal rate of 80%.

872
ICCP FACILITIES

MONTH	% OF ON-TIME ICCP CERTIFICATION RENEWALS
July 2020	68%
August 2020	86%
September 2020	93%
October 2020	76%
November 2020	78%
December 2020	86%
January 2021	71%
February 2021	81%
March 2021	78%
April 2021	83%
May 2021	77%
June 2021	85%

FAMILY PROVIDER SUPPORT

IdahoSTARS works closely with child care professionals. Our Resource Specialists (RS) conduct referrals for families searching for child care and consult with families to learn what they are looking for in a child care program. During the phone consultation, the regional RS shares information about quality care, licensing requirements and available resources for families. A family can receive an Enhanced Referral if their family has specialized needs such as a family member serving in the armed forces, a family needing language supports, a child that has been asked to leave another program, families experiencing homelessness, families with unmet needs, or just by request. We use RISE to match programs that align with each family's wants and needs, understanding how important it is to find child care that meets a family's expectations.



EQUITABLE CUSTOMER SERVICE:



We use phone interpreters when a customer indicates a preferred training language other than English and reach out to them 90 days in advance of renewal to offer individualized support.



Decertification notices use more symbols that can be more easily understood by everyone.



Multiple documents are provided in Spanish and the ICCP Provider Agreement is also available in Swahili.

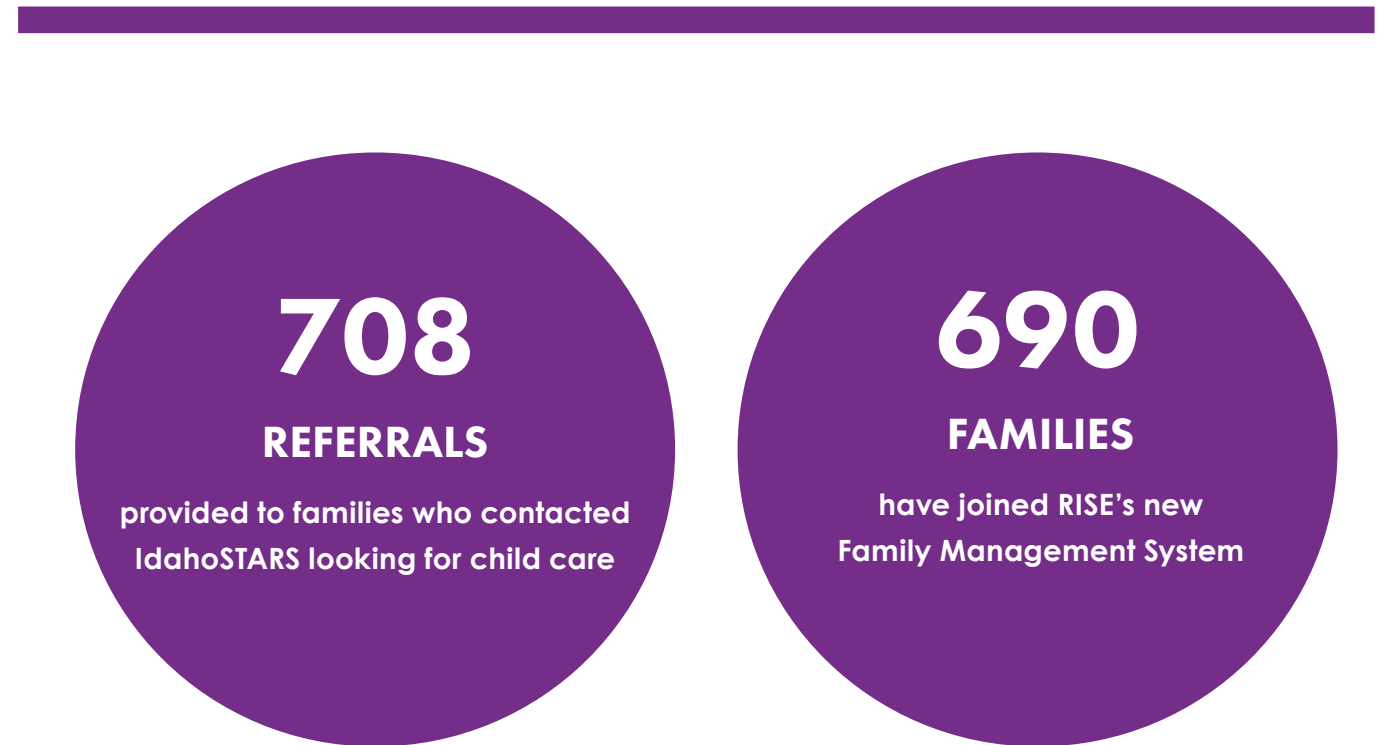


PARENT STORY

I was heartbroken when I realized my oldest daughter could not stay safely in my arms forever. I had to go back to work, and she had to go to daycare. The first day I took her, I didn't leave. I watched her. I interacted with the teachers and staff. I listened, observed and anticipated her hating it. She didn't and I didn't either. After touring over 20 facilities, I had finally found a daycare that respected my emotions and parenting style, loved my baby, and is still helping me raise my girls. It is their second home.

The search for a daycare is daunting and full of emotion. Feeling comfortable that a facility is doing everything they can to keep your child safe, healthy and educated is harder. I often tell people that I co-parent with our daycare, and that isn't an exaggeration. We communicate and problem solve situations for the best outcome for my kids. Our daycare is working hard to meet and exceed local and state milestones that are important to me as a parent, and those milestones prove that they put the needs of the children they care for first. They are an invaluable resource and have made me a better parent. Our family is fortunate to have found a certified, caring daycare that has taken the time to educate and love all of us.

- Amanda Collins, Idaho parent





IDAHO STARS

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