

BUILDING QUALITY THROUGH  
LEARNING & DOING

2024

# ANNUAL REPORT



IDAHO  
STARS

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## CREATING A TEAM CULTURE

The annual IdahoSTARS summit serves as a valuable opportunity for IdahoSTARS staff to come together and reinforce shared values. This focus on teamwork is essential for the success and cohesion of a large project like IdahoSTARS. In 2022, our summit focused on cultural alignment. Since then, we created a cultural DNA code to enhance connectivity and teamwork with all our staff from two different organizations across Idaho. Our code lays out how we show up to each other, work together, and ultimately how we define teamwork.



### We shoot for the stars. We are exceptional.

- Work for high-quality outcomes.
- Take initiative & ask for feedback.

### We illuminate others. We care.

- Encourage, support, & celebrate others.
- Listen with a curious mind.
- Allow failure/mistakes & learn from it.

### We are star-studded. We embrace others.

- Strive to be authentic and inclusive.
- Seek to understand varied perspectives.
- Create a safe work environment.

### We are stellar. We are accountable.

- Come from positivity.
- Take Responsibility.
- Acknowledge mistakes.
- Collaborate in conflict.

### We shape the galaxy. We are a team.

- Work as one.
- Support one another & mutual success.
- Communicate & collaborate.
- Commit to the success of decisions.

# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



In 2022, IdahoSTARS began actively seeking feedback on our work from child care professionals. This concept, Beneficiary Voice, is a part of our regular practices now. We know it is crucial for ensuring that the services we provide meet the needs of the child care community. We have done this through listening sessions with small groups of providers, surveys and a new feedback form on the IdahoSTARS website. Through these activities we have heard from nearly 1,800 child care professionals.

Not only do we listen to our beneficiaries' voices, but we also act on it. This supports our continuous quality improvement of IdahoSTARS' programs, systems and procedures. This "Learning and Doing" is a concept that IdahoSTARS is also using in the delivery of a range of professional development offerings that encourage professionals to take what they learn and put it into practice. It is only right that we do the same.

With "Learning and Doing" at the forefront of our work, our continuous quality improvement efforts were evident this past year and will be evident in our future work. We have expanded Pyramid Model training offerings because we heard how valuable these courses are. We have also engaged even more child care programs in implementing Pyramid Model practices through the Idaho Pyramid Model

Collaborative, adding an option for a "readiness" year to meet providers where they are at. This ensures their long-term success with addressing challenging behaviors and increasing positive behavior supports in early childhood classrooms. We recognized the importance of the business aspect of child care and continued delivering Business Practices Cohorts. Watch for more specialized business offerings coming soon as we continue to explore innovative ways to deliver business knowledge to child care owners and directors.

In the upcoming year, you will also see our Professional Development System (PDS) and our Quality Rating and Improvement System (Steps to Quality) evolve with new names that better describe these systems of support. You will also see a widely available RISE mobile app, making training and other tasks you complete in RISE convenient and accessible right from your phone or tablet.

As child care evolves, we will continue to evolve alongside it. We are committed to the children, families, educators and caregivers we serve as outlined in the work we have done and included in this Annual Report.

Quality Child Care Matters.

**MELISSA CRIST**  
IdahoSTARS Project Director

## YOUR VOICES MATTER:

Throughout this report, you will find blue boxes with quotes, highlighting the feedback you've given us regarding various programs and pieces of the IdahoSTARS Project. We value your voices and continue to use your input to better our work.

# SUPPORTING PROFESSIONALS

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (PDS)

The IdahoSTARS Professional Development System (PDS) is committed to supporting the professional development and career advancement of early care and education professionals in Idaho. Through scholarships for continuing education, credential attainment or specialized training, current early childhood educators have the opportunity to enhance their skills and knowledge. This not only improves the quality of care and education for children in our state, but also enhances job satisfaction and professional fulfillment, which are key factors in the recruitment and retention of our workforce. Currently, 4,958 early care and education professionals (58% of our eligible workforce) are enrolled and participating in the PDS.



### Training Scholarships

Early care and education professionals enrolled and participating in the PDS have the opportunity to utilize up to \$200 annually to access IdahoSTARS approved trainings and conferences.

**578** INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED TRAINING SCHOLARSHIPS

**\$56K** PROVIDED IN TRAINING SCHOLARSHIPS

### PDS Anniversary Recognition

Completion of at least 20 hours of professional development on an annual cycle results in a financial incentive for individuals who are enrolled and participating in the PDS.

 **\$250K** AWARDED IN PDS ANNIVERSARY RECOGNITIONS

 **1,133** PDS ANNIVERSARY RECOGNITION RECIPIENTS

### Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential Scholarships

The CDA® is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education and allows ECCE professionals to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities in the field. IdahoSTARS provides scholarships to support the attainment of both new and renewal CDA® credentials.

 **\$25K** AWARDED IN CDA® SCHOLARSHIPS

 **84** CDA® SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

## UPCOMING PDS CHANGES

By actively engaging with participants' feedback, IdahoSTARS has recognized the need for a more inclusive and responsive system that caters to the diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities of early care and education professionals in Idaho. Moving forward, we are poised to introduce a new PDS system with a new name aimed at recognizing and investing in the development of Idaho's early care and education workforce.



# ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS & REIMBURSEMENTS

Academic scholarships offered through IdahoSTARS reduce the financial barrier of higher education making it more feasible for early care and education professionals to advance their formal education and career. Through four scholarship opportunities, we strive to support professionals at all stages of their career.

## Workforce Scholarships

The Workforce Scholarship is available to early care and education professionals working in child care at least part-time while pursuing a degree or certificate in Early Childhood Education at least part-time at an accredited Idaho college or university.

RECIPIENTS

AWARDED

**15**

**\$55,891**

## Single Course Scholarships

Single Course Scholarships support early care and education professionals who are taking a single class in Early Childhood Education, or a non-ECE course designed to improve specific practices within a child care business or support specialized learning such as ASL or other language coursework.

**31**

**\$55,325**

## Future Educator Scholarships

The Future Educator Scholarship encourages and promotes the choice of pursuing a rewarding career in the field of Early Childhood Education. This one-year scholarship award is available to graduating Idaho high school seniors who enroll in an Early Childhood Education degree or certificate pathway at an accredited college or university. Upon completion of their freshman year, Future Educator Scholars have the opportunity to transition to the Workforce Scholarship if they become employed in child care at least part-time.

**3**

**\$9,000**

## Emerging Leaders Scholarships

The Emerging Leaders Scholarship programs are available to graduate students at both Boise State University and the University of Idaho. The BSU Emerging Leaders program offers a unique pathway through the MEd in Early and Special Education program with a focus on early childhood education, leadership, and applied action research. At the University of Idaho, Emerging Leaders pursue an individualized pathway through the Master of Science in Family and Consumer Science with an emphasis in child development, focusing on leadership in the field of ECE with the option of a thesis and non-thesis track.

**9**

**\$66,000**

**“This scholarship will allow me to embrace working in early childhood while still learning new skills. To me, I never knew what path I was going to take until I found this scholarship. This award has been a gift for me and my family, once I was accepted, I was immediately thrilled for my future in learning.”**

– 2024 WORKFORCE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

# FEATURED SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

## Future Educators

An impactful way the IdahoSTARS project invests in the early care and education system in Idaho is through initiatives focusing on high school Career Technical Education (CTE). Through partnerships with the Idaho Division of Career Technical Education (IDCTE) and student clubs like Idaho FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America) we collaborate to build a pipeline of engaged students entering the early care and education workforce. These strategic investments in the future workforce support the development of skilled professionals who play a critical role in nurturing young children and prepare them for future success.



### Signing Day 2024

Erin McCandless, IdahoSTARS Leadership Director presents five Future Educator scholarship awards at the annual "I said Yes! to FCS" signing day event where CTE students "sign on" to pursuing higher education in a Family and Consumer Sciences pathway.

### More than Muscle

Meridian High School students Lauren Dobson and Brooklyn Black present their action research project "More than Muscle" to judges at the state FCCLA conference. Lauren and Brooklyn earned a gold medal for their child development project in the "Focus on Children" competitive event and advanced to the national competition.



## Emerging Leaders

The first cohort of graduates from the Early Childhood Emerging Leaders Programs at Boise State University and University of Idaho presented their culminating applied research projects at the Idaho AEYC Early Learning Conference in June, 2024. Inspired by "problems of practice" from their own work, the Emerging Leader Scholars designed and implemented action research projects to explore their wonderings and enhance learning experiences for young children, families and educators across Idaho.

From left to right Hannah Sharpe, M.Ed., Boise State University, Taira Guerrero, M.Ed., Boise State University, Ashley Langland, M.S., University of Idaho. Not pictured, Lindsey Orne, M.Ed., Boise State University graduated with the Boise State University cohort.

**"I've listened more, sat in the discomfort of my own wonderings, and pushed myself to engage in important dialogue about topics and current events in our field. I have been able to translate these experiences into my current practice and better serve the children and families in our program."**

**Taira Guerrero**  
Emerging Leader Scholar/Graduate  
Boise State University

# ADVANCEMENT IN THE WORKFORCE

IdahoSTARS empowers early care and education professionals to progress in their careers through robust professional development opportunities. We are proud to recognize professionals on our Education Pathway who have expanded their expertise through academic and credentialing programs. In 2023-2024, 97 professionals were recognized for increasing their education level on our PDS Education Pathway.



## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS



**12**

PROFESSIONALS ACHIEVED 12 CREDITS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



**3**

PROFESSIONALS ACHIEVED 30 CREDITS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



**6**

PROFESSIONALS COMPLETED A TECHNICAL CERTIFICATE



**13**

PROFESSIONALS COMPLETED AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE



**18**

PROFESSIONALS COMPLETED A BACHELOR'S DEGREE



**8**

PROFESSIONALS COMPLETED A MASTER'S DEGREE

## CREDENTIAL ACHIEVEMENTS



**27**

CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES (CDA) CREDENTIALS ACHIEVED



**10**

MONTESSORI CREDENTIALS ACHIEVED



# TRAINING & COACHING

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The IdahoSTARS Training Office plays a crucial role in professional development. It creates online and in-person training, manages external trainers and their offerings, collaborates with the Regional Professional Development (PD) Specialists, assesses training from external companies and conferences, maintaining a focus on inclusive practices in child care and supporting children and families with disabilities.

### Online trainings

Online training is the way many professionals prefer their training. These trainings can be accessed at anytime through the RISE database, so can be easily adapted to the needs of the professional and their schedule. IdahoSTARS' most popular training this year was the ICCP Annual Training, *Do No Harm*, which covered effective behavior management and positive discipline.



### Live In-Person and Webinar Trainings

Many early childhood professionals also prefer webinars as an additional method of live training. These training opportunities still allow for instructor and peer interactions while not needing to leave the convenience of their home or place of work. Professionals can take training in their preferred language through interpretation services offered by IdahoSTARS.



### New Trainings

Training courses are refreshed every three years to ensure current and relevant information. This year, the training office has developed or updated the following:



- 4** ICCP Initial Trainings
- 3** Trainings in the Domain Category "Partnerships with Families & Communities"
- 1** ICCP Annual Training - Responsive Feeding in Child Care



Among the new webinars IdahoSTARS offered were the ZERO TO THREE Critical Competencies for Infant-Toddler Educators™ modules.



## Professional Development (PD) Specialists

The addition of Regional PD Specialists has enabled the training office to better meet the needs of child care programs and professionals who prefer webinars or live training.

**220** TTAS DELIVERED BY PD SPECIALISTS

**70** TRAININGS OFFERED BY PD SPECIALISTS

**642** PROFESSIONALS SUPPORTED

## Targeted Technical Assistance

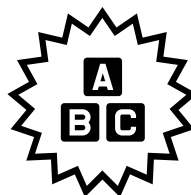
Targeted Technical Assistance (TTA) is a three-step professional development process: (1) knowledge acquisition, (2) skill practice, and (3) evaluation. Early care and education professionals work with IdahoSTARS consultants in a specific area on subjects relevant to their work.

**434** PROVIDERS COMPLETED A TTA THIS FISCAL YEAR

**62** TTA TOPICS OFFERED

## Badges

Badges are a form of recognition for completing professional development, which involves learning (gaining knowledge of early learning content) and doing (putting this knowledge into action). This year, we offered eight badges. Professionals can earn multiple badges and receive a financial incentive for two of those earned.



**119** BADGES AWARDED

**96** PROVIDERS WHO RECEIVED A BADGE

## WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOU:

The training office hosted five (5) live listening sessions to receive training topic requests, inviting everyone who had taken at least one training in the past year. A follow-up online written survey was offered to those who did not attend the live sessions. These sessions and online surveys identified gaps and areas of interest for the training office to respond with professional development opportunities. Themes emerged as areas of need or interest, including adapting activities and individualizing curriculum.

“

I greatly appreciate the efforts made through IdahoSTARS in the areas of materials for parents, training for teachers, money that is available to encourage workers, area-wide meetings. Since I joined almost 20 years ago, the goals that strive for quality with child care have been tremendous! Thank you!

”



# COACHING

The IdahoSTARS Child Care Referral Centers (CCRC) consist of regional offices that include Lead Consultants, Quality Consultants, Child Care Health and Safety Consultants, Professional Development (PD) Specialists, Child Care Bilingual Specialists and Resource Specialists. These regional office teams offer personalized coaching to early care and education professionals and group coaching to child care programs. They assist programs and professionals in setting goals, reviewing monitoring their progress and providing feedback while encouraging them to reflect on their work.

Coaching can be associated with a specific program, such as Steps to Quality, or be part of a cohort, such as Nutrition and Active Play, Business Practices and the Pyramid Collaborative Cohorts. Child care programs can also receive support with Health and Safety Practices through referrals for health inspections.

	PARTICIPANTS	SESSIONS
<b>Nutrition &amp; Active Play Cohorts</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Business Practices Cohorts</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Steps to Quality Coaching</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>4,975</b>
<b>Pyramid Model Cohorts</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>1,136</b>

**1,260** COACHING PARTICIPANTS

**5,360** HOURS OF COACHING COMPLETED

**6,869** COACHING SESSIONS COMPLETED



## Coaching Participant

“Coaching has been instrumental in my facility. It has helped me change my practice into one where I am confident in our facilities abilities. It has also helped my staff and I be able to obtain our CDAs and soon to be degrees in Early Childhood Education.

KRISTIN

”

# SUPPORTING PROGRAMS

## STEPS TO QUALITY (STQ)

Steps to Quality is Idaho's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Participation in STQ is voluntary for home-based and center-based programs, ensuring those involved are committed to improving their quality practices. Programs receive guidance and support from coaches in IdahoSTARS regional offices.

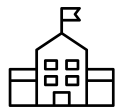
Steps to Quality has been heavily engaged in beneficiary voice work with STQ participants and IdahoSTARS staff. In addition to listening sessions, surveys and weekly staff meetings, Steps to Quality held four Statewide Meetings attended by 77 programs to engage directly with early care and education professionals to inform their decision-making process on establishing a new QRIS system including name, cycles, indicators, and the transition.

**173** TOTAL PROGRAMS  
VERIFIED AT A STEP



**25**

HOME-BASED PROGRAMS  
VERIFIED AT A STEP



**148**

CENTER-BASED PROGRAMS  
VERIFIED AT A STEP

**16%** OF STQ PROGRAMS PARTICIPATE IN THE  
IDAHO PYRAMID MODEL COLLABORATIVE

### Transitioning to a new system: Quality Achievers

Through listening to child care professionals, studying national trends and receiving input from other states' strategies, IdahoSTARS will be transitioning to our new QRIS system, Quality Achievers, in 2025. Participants will see new structures that focus on recognizing a program's definition of quality in a more tailored and relevant way. Programs will be encouraged to work in areas that naturally make sense for their staff, children and families.



### WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOU:

“

This looks great! I am excited to see the program grow! You all work so hard to keep Idaho early learning education moving forward and you are appreciated.

”



**IDAHO STARS**  
Quality Achievers

# PYRAMID MODEL INITIATIVE

IdahoSTARS has joined a nationwide effort to promote inclusive policies and practices in early care and education through the Pyramid Model Framework. This initiative aims to promote young children's social, emotional, and behavioral development. Currently, 28 child care programs across Idaho are implementing the Pyramid Model at various stages of implementation, impacting a total of 27 classrooms statewide. Of the 28 programs, 10 of them are in the exploratory phase of the initiative and do not have implementing teachers at this time. The exploration year helps lay the foundation for successful implementation ensuring that parents, children, and staff are prepared for the changes that Pyramid Model will bring to their educational settings. The ultimate goal is to ensure that all children, including those with disabilities and at-risk, receive the support they need to succeed in their early development and learning.



**28** PROGRAMS PARTICIPATING



**27** CLASSROOMS IMPACTED SO FAR

## Expanded Pyramid Model Trainings:

Adding over 50 Pyramid Model-related trainings to the IdahoSTARS training catalog has expanded the audience for this successful informative series, allows providers outside of the Pyramid Cohorts to gain more knowledge focused on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 5.

## WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOU:

“

Our children and staff seem to have closer relationships with each other. We are experiencing families sharing they feel more connected with the teaching staff.

”

PYRAMID MODEL TRAINING PARTICIPANT

# ICCP & STATE LICENSING SUPPORT

IdahoSTARS supports child care programs participating in the Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP), which assists low-income families with child care tuition through the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. Additionally, IdahoSTARS supports providers licensed throughout the state. Two IdahoSTARS teams, the Customer Support Team, and Resource Specialists, offer this support statewide.

## Customer Support Team (CST)

The CST works with new and renewing child care programs to ensure that all requirements and documentation are met to participate in those programs. Child care programs submit documentation in RISE for review by the CST. The CST members begin contacting programs 90 days before their renewal and assist them until their licensing or certification is complete. Their assistance means more financially stable programs for child care providers and families.



**825** ICCP CERTIFIED PROGRAMS



**674** STATE-LICENSED PROGRAMS



## Language Supports

Idaho has many child care professionals from diverse language backgrounds. To aid in their support, the IdahoSTARS Customer Support Team and Regional offices have bilingual staff members to support child care professionals and families. IdahoSTARS also provides interpreter services for professionals preferring languages other than English.

**This year 127 early care and education professionals utilized interpretation services with a total 410 requests.**

## COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

The IdahoSTARS Outreach Team ensures that the early care and education community, families, partners, stakeholders and the public stay informed about IdahoSTARS offerings, supports and news relevant to child care, early learning and families

### IdahoSTARS Publications

The Outreach Team produces multiple print and digital publications every year in both English and Spanish. To download and view IdahoSTARS publications, go to IdahoSTARS.org and click the About Us page and scroll down.



FIND OUR WORKFORCE REPORTS AND ANNUAL REPORTS HERE!



**11,000+**

NEWSLETTER RECIPIENTS

**51%**

NEWSLETTER OPEN RATE

## Resource Specialists

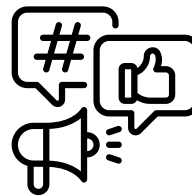
Child care programs are introduced to ICCP through an orientation called an ICCP Initial Orientation (IIO) with a Resource Specialist. During this orientation, they are introduced to quality practices, health and safety standards, ongoing requirements, business practices, developmental screenings and inclusion, attendance and record-keeping procedures, payment policies, and our software system, RISE.

**170**

ICCP ORIENTATIONS COMPLETED



### Social Media



**2,500**

FOLLOWERS ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM

**15,494**

REACH

# SUPPORTING FAMILIES

IdahoSTARS supports families because we know the early years are the most important for children. We help families by educating them about quality child care and early learning opportunities and aiding them in their search for child care. Regional offices also help families better understand child development and developmental screening.

## CHILD CARE REFERRALS

IdahoSTARS Resource Specialists refer families to child care resources in their area that meet their family's needs, whether for dual language learners or children with diverse abilities. Enhanced referrals are for children with specialized needs in early care and education programs. After we have referred a family to child care, IdahoSTARS follows up by sending a book to families.



## CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Seeing children grow and thrive is a rewarding experience. IdahoSTARS assists early care and education families in understanding the milestones of development.

### Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ 3® and ASQ SE 2®)

The Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3®/ASQSE2®) are developmental screening tools designed to assess children's progress from birth to five. This parent-engaged approach evaluates key areas of development, including communication, gross and fine motor skills, problem-solving and social-emotional skills. IdahoSTARS, in collaboration with the Infant and Toddler Program, has initiated a program to enhance understanding and use of these developmental screeners within Idaho's child care settings.

Led by IdahoSTARS Quality Care Consultants, the program includes:

- Comprehensive training on the use of the ASQ.
- Practical application of developmental screening.
- Ongoing support and coaching.
- Assistance to address specific needs and challenges.



**WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOU:**

“ This was helpful to me, to see how I can incorporate the screening data into my lesson planning. ”

CHILD CARE PROFESSIONAL

**1,402** ASQ® SCREENERS COMPLETED

**165%** INCREASE FROM LAST FISCAL YEAR



## NEW IDAHOSTARS SUPPORTED PARENT EVENTS

In response to feedback from child care programs, the IdahoSTARS team created a comprehensive presentation to pilot a parent event focused on the importance of family-driven developmental screening. This presentation educated parents about the critical role of early developmental assessments and provided a hands-on opportunity for parents to engage directly in the screening process during the event. This initiative aimed to enhance parents' understanding and involvement, ensuring they recognize the value of early detection and intervention for their children's developmental progress.

IdahoSTARS held its first parent event, supporting one early care and education program. The event screened 29 children and referred five children to either the Infant and Toddler Program or the school district for further evaluation.

## OUTREACH FOR PARENTS AND THE PUBLIC

IdahoSTARS creates bookmarks, brochures, and flyers for families and early care and education professionals. Our printed materials provide information on searching for child care, the importance of quality in child care, child development, the Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP) and various IdahoSTARS programs. We understand that many people now prefer digital communication. The IdahoSTARS website offers this option, and most of our publications now include QR codes for easy access.



### YOUR VOICES:

“

This is a good way to see if a child is meeting their milestones and if they need extra help or not!

”

PARENT USER OF THE ASQ

“

I like the resources for things to do with my child at home.

”

PARENT



IdahoSTARS is a joint project between the University of Idaho - Idaho Center on Disabilities and Human Development and the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children. The project is funded by the Child Care Development Block Grant through the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare.



## Contact

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