Idaho AEYC and Partners to Strengthen Statewide Early Childhood System

Boise, ID – With funding from a $3.3 million federal grant, the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children is set to spend the next year laying the foundation for a better-connected early childhood system that will prepare Idaho children for a successful start in school and life.

This is the first time Idaho has received a federal grant to explore our early childhood system. Idaho will use the funding from the Preschool Development Grant to examine and implement initiatives to more efficiently use existing resources, strengthen the delivery of existing early childhood programs, and work toward improving school readiness outcomes with a focus on early literacy.

“Every community throughout Idaho is unique, and the approach to investing in early learning must meet the needs of Idahoans,” said Idaho AEYC Executive Director Beth Oppenheimer. “By understanding the systems our families are navigating, we will be better prepared to improve statewide infrastructure of early learning programs that will best fit each individual community’s needs.”

Since taking office in January 2019, Governor Little has made early literacy his number one education priority. Governor Little worked with the Idaho Legislature to double early literacy intervention money for K-3 students not reading at grade level. There continues to be challenges with incoming Kindergarten students not scoring proficiently on the fall Idaho Reading Indicator assessment.

“Improving early childhood literacy is one of my top priorities as Governor,” Little said. “This funding will give educators and kids more tools to strengthen language and literacy prior to starting kindergarten. The earlier our kids start reading, the better chance they have to be proficient by third grade.”

Idaho will rely heavily on information gathered from a statewide needs assessment to develop a strategic plan for improving the design and capacity of the state’s early learning system. The assessment will help stakeholders and policymakers understand the needs of Idaho families, the current quality of early care and education settings, and the accessibility of services. The work will provide clarity for decisionmakers as sustained investments to improve equitable access to high-quality early learning opportunities are considered.

# # #

About Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (Idaho AEYC)
The nonprofit Idaho AEYC is dedicated to advancing Idaho's early learning profession and advocating for children and families. The organization was founded in 1986 and is headquartered in Boise, Idaho. Learn more at idahoeyc.org.