**Supporting Early Learning in Idaho**

**Activity One**
Statewide Needs Assessment

**Activity Two**
Statewide Strategic Plan

**Activity Three**
Maximize Parent Knowledge and Choice

**Activity Four**
Share Best Practices Among State Early Childhood Educators

**Activity Five**
Improve Overall Quality of Early Learning Programs and Services

**Activities 1 and 2: Statewide Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan**

Idaho AEYC has held kick-off meetings with nearly all of the partners working on the statewide Needs Assessment. In addition, we are currently working with the Washington State University Social and Economic Sciences Research Center to develop questions for the family survey which will be distributed to approximately 6,500 families throughout Idaho in June 2020. The family survey will focus on obtaining information related to where children are cared for when parents are working outside the home (based on pre-pandemic situations), the perceived importance of early learning programs, perceived school readiness indicators, and gaps in community services for families with children younger than six years of age.

**Activity 3: Maximize Parent Knowledge and Choice**

Idaho Public Television has become a statewide source of inspiration during the COVID-19 pandemic by broadcasting shows and programs that support families. In partnership with ID PTV, a literacy-based early childhood campaign is underway that focuses on television spots relaying messages to encourage families to engage young children in learning experiences wherever they are including at home, in the grocery store, exploring outdoors, and more.

**READY! for Kindergarten** sessions have been engaging families in learning opportunities through various forms of technology. In addition, Ready! for Kindergarten team members have created a partnership with Preschool the Idaho Way to promote literacy through bedtime story sessions broadcast through social media. The summer reading project, spearheaded by the READY! for Kindergarten team, is in the design phase and will be distributed to families through libraries, social media, direct mailing, and other ways this summer.

**Activity 4: Share Best Practices Among State Early Childhood Educators**

As we get ready to work with several communities that will form local collaboratives to develop needs assessment and strategic planning documents, we are excited to see how we can promote systems to enrich the lives of young children and their families. A major component of this work is to enhance early literacy and school readiness skills, and to support children in their transitions to school.

In preparation for the Regional Early Learning Academies to be held in October 2020, we have partnered with Lakeshore Learning to purchase literacy kits that will be distributed to participants who will be attending the early learning professional development sessions throughout the state. These kits will enhance the materials available for children in many programs and provide early childhood educators with additional resources to promote early literacy experiences.

**Activity 5: Improve Overall Quality of Early Learning Programs & Services**

We are continuing to explore options to allow Idaho STARS team members to participate in CLASS Pre-K training sessions as part of improving overall quality of early learning and preschool programs. CLASS Pre-K focuses on creating positive social-emotional environments for young children while promoting adult-child interactions to support children’s growth and development.