

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Idaho Preschool Grant – Information Item

The ICfL staff have been active participants in a multi-year effort to secure federal funds to improve birth through age five educational efforts. Background about the program and the ICfL's role follows.

The Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. The PDG B-5 program is a \$250 million competitive federal grant designed to improve states' early childhood systems by building upon existing federal, state, and local early care and learning investments. PDG B-5 was established in 2015 through the bipartisan [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#), which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Idaho's Year 1 Planning Grant (2020): \$3,300,000

The PDG B-5 grant was submitted and managed by the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (Idaho AEYC), which partnered with many early childhood educational and service organizations/agencies: IdahoSTARS, Health and Welfare, Head Start, the State Department of Education Special Education Department, the Lee Pesky Learning Center, the University of Idaho Center on Disabilities and Human Development, Idaho Public Television, Idaho Children's Trust Fund, McClure Center for Public Policy, Boise State University Research Lab, the Idaho Commission for Libraries, and United Way.

In 2020 Idaho made full use of its initial PDG B-5 funding, engaging in projects that: 1) helped the state better understand the needs of parents, families, and other early childhood care and education (ECE) stakeholders; 2) created strategic planning goals for state and local ECE systems; 3) improved access to and the quality of ECE programs; 4) expanded efforts to improve the ECE workforce; 5) strengthened local mixed delivery collaboratives; and 6) established a framework by which to evaluate ECE system changes and engage in continuous quality improvement (CQI). Through the ICfL's role in this partnership:

- Over 75 Idaho library staff participated in at least one professional development webinar hosted by the Idaho AEYC. These "Early Learning Academies" were offered at no cost to educators, childcare providers, and library staff, and addressed three topics: Developmental Milestones, Trauma-Informed Spaces, and Early Literacy. Those who completed the webinars received high-quality resources to use in their classrooms/libraries, funded through the grant.
- Up to 300 families were able to participate in a Ready! for Kindergarten workshop, facilitated by library staff at approximately a dozen libraries. This part of the project is still underway, hence the estimated numbers. Families participating in a Ready! workshop receive about \$500 in materials, funded through the grant. Library staff were trained by Idaho AEYC staff, and Idaho AEYC is the official lead for this project.

- Idaho libraries were featured in a statewide “Kindergarten Readiness” virtual event hosted by Idaho Public Television. Designed to reach parents of incoming kindergarteners who were not able to visit their schools for traditional kindergarten registration events in the spring because of the pandemic, this two-day event streamed eight “get ready for kindergarten” presentations on various topics. ICfL was invited to present about libraries and focused on the ways local libraries help children and families be ready for kindergarten and beyond. The videos received 4,200 views.
- The ICfL was appointed to a seat on the Governor’s Early Childhood Advisory Council; establishing an advisory group was a requirement of the planning grant. Youth Services Consultant Staci Shaw is currently serving in this capacity. The council meets virtually twice per month.

Idaho’s Years 2, 3, and 4 Renewal Grant: \$6,000,000

Building on the successes and findings of the planning grant, the Idaho AEYC and partner organizations applied to renew the grant for another three years. The grant was approved and plans for 2021 – 2023 are underway. The renewal grant will be administered by the Idaho State Board of Education and will be managed by the Idaho AEYC. The original partners listed in the Planning Grant are involved in the renewal grants and several new partners have been added including: the Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Center for Disease Control’s (CDC) “Learn the Signs. Act Early” initiative and Act Early Idaho, Idaho Parents Unlimited, Lakeshore Learning, Idaho Children’s Trust Fund, and STEM Action Center.

Most of the ICfL’s involvement will be in Activity 3 of the grant: Maximizing Parent and Family Knowledge, Choice, and Engagement in their Child’s Early Learning and Development. Additional activities include working with public libraries statewide to disseminate information or promote other projects/activities. Highlights of the ICfL’s planned activities include:

- ***Ready! for Kindergarten in Idaho libraries:*** Through a partnership with Idaho AEYC’s Ready! for Kindergarten program, the Ready! program will be expanded in 2021 to serve up to 480 families (approximately 16 libraries). Approximately \$135,000 will be allocated to the Idaho AEYC, and the Ready! coordinator will purchase materials and distribute them to participating libraries. The ICfL will prioritize small and rural libraries for this project.
- ***Reading Challenge:*** As part of the PDG B5 Initial Grant, a statewide reading challenge is being developed through a partnership between Idaho AEYC and the ICfL. In 2021 the challenge will be available to families with children birth through age five and will include approximately ten titles per age group (infants/toddlers, preschool/pre-k, and kindergarten) to read with children. To support underserved/vulnerable populations, the challenge will encourage families to find these titles at their local library. The ICfL will work with Idaho AEYC to purchase as many titles as possible and distribute sets of books to each Idaho library outlet (approximately 150 including main libraries, branches,

and bookmobiles). Grant funds will be leveraged by utilizing the ICfL's purchasing agreements and discounts with vendors and publishers.

- Book costs: Approximately \$10 per title; 30 title set = \$300; 150 sets = \$45,000 - \$55,000
 - Grant funds will be allocated to the ICfL; staff will purchase, process and ship book sets to libraries.
- The ICfL will promote *Kids of Idaho Love to Learn* activity books with the Idaho library community to support school readiness and literacy skills. Interested libraries can help distribute activity books, as needed, in collaboration with the PDG B5 grant to promote successful transitions from early learning to school settings.
 - **Developmental Surveillance Training:** As part of the Step Up Idaho initiative, the ICfL will work with Act Early Idaho to provide Ages and Stages training for interested library staff, as well as training in the CDC's "Learn the Signs-Act Early" Developmental Milestones. Library staff will become comfortable with developmental surveillance and screening tools that help identify possible physical, social, and/or emotional concerns, and assist parents/caregivers in accessing subsequent support for those needs. An information meeting for the library community is planned for February 2021.

The ICfL and Idaho libraries will also play an important role **in Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices and Professional Development for the Early Childhood Workforce** in the following ways:

- **PDG B5 Local Collaboratives:** The ICfL supports the inclusion of a library representative on the PDG B5 Local Collaborative Early Learning Advisory Committees throughout the state and will assist potential Advisory Groups and child care programs (both center-based and in-home child care) in connecting with their local libraries.
- **Professional Development:** The ICfL will encourage Idaho library staff to participate in the Idaho STARS and Idaho AEYC Early Learning Institutes and other professional development opportunities and help Idaho library staff earn a Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate if they are interested in that option.

The activities and projects outlined in the grant provide many opportunities for communities to work together, for public and private entities to share common goals, and for policymakers to see the effects of high-quality early learning experiences on school preparedness. The impact this grant will have on a statewide level will be quite substantial.

Staci Shaw is available to answer questions about this grant, activities, and funds. She is also happy to discuss the other ways the ICfL is working with state and local partners to help libraries strengthen programs, resources, and services that help children prepare for kindergarten and beyond.