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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Idaho Early Learning Day Highlights Child Care as Essential Infrastructure at State Capitol**

**IDAHO - Tuesday, February 3, 2026** - Idaho early childhood leaders, programs, and advocates will gather at the Idaho State Capitol for Idaho Early Learning Day, hosted by the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (Idaho AEYC) and the Idaho Community Foundation. The event highlights the critical role high-quality early learning opportunities and child care play in strengthening Idaho's families, communities, and long-term economic stability.

### **Event Details:**

- Date: February 3, 2026
- Time: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Location: Idaho State Capitol, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Rotunda
- Open to the public
- Breakfast served from 8:00 - 10:30 AM

Early Learning Day provides a platform for early learning programs and organizations to engage directly with policymakers, share local success stories, and demonstrate the value of investing in early learning as part of Idaho's essential infrastructure.

"High-quality early learning is just as vital to Idaho's future as roads and bridges," said Nicole Criner, Executive Director of Idaho AEYC. "Idaho's young learners are our future leaders, early education is the infrastructure needed to build their success at home, in school, and in our communities. As we invest in building a network of early learning programs and resources, we support not only Idaho children's education, but also nurture the very roots that keep Idaho strong for generations to come."

Criner emphasized that Idaho families are central to Idaho AEYC's mission. "Parents are their children's first and most important teachers," she said. "We are committed to providing families with the resources they need to keep their families strong. Families are the building blocks of our communities."

Idaho AEYC's work includes establishing 24 Early Learning Collaboratives across the state. These collaboratives are opening child care seats, distributing early learning resources, providing parent engagement workshops, and increasing access to services in communities where early education options are limited.

"Many nonprofits across Idaho are stepping up to create local solutions to early learning challenges," said Kevin Bailey, Idaho Community Foundation's Vice President of Impact and Idaho Nonprofit Center. "These partnerships are making meaningful progress for children and families, even in the face of limited resources. Supporting organizations like Idaho AEYC is an investment in Idaho's long-term vitality and our future workforce."

Idaho AEYC invites the public, policymakers, and early learning supporters to participate in Early Learning Day and help shape the future of early childhood education in Idaho.

### **Participating organizations include:**

- American Falls Early Learning Collaborative
- Bannock County Early Learning Collaborative
- Basin Early Learning Collaborative and Preschool

- Canyon County Early Learning Collaborative
- Emmett Early Learning Collaborative
- Friends of Children and Families
- Garden City Early Learning Collaborative
- Herrett Center for the Arts and Sciences
- Homedale Early Learning Collaborative
- Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children
- Idaho Children's Trust Fund
- Idaho Commission for Libraries
- Idaho Community Foundation
- Idaho Head Start Association
- Idaho Out of School Network
- Idaho Public Television
- Kuna Early Learning
- Lakeshore Learning Materials
- Lee Pesky Learning Center
- Madison Early Learning Collaborative
- New Horizon Academy - Idaho
- North Idaho Early Learning Collaborative
- READY! for Kindergarten - an Idaho AEYC program
- United Way Southeastern Idaho
- West Central Mountains Early Learning Collaborative

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### **About the Idaho Community Foundation + Idaho Nonprofit Center**

For nearly 40 years, The Idaho Community Foundation has helped generous Idahoans invest in the people, places, and causes they care about. Through our statewide programs, including The Nonprofit Center, an Idaho Community Foundation program, we strengthen communities by growing philanthropy, elevating nonprofit impact, and connecting Idahoans to opportunities to give back. Learn more at [idahocf.org](http://idahocf.org) or contact us at [info@idahocf.org](mailto:info@idahocf.org).

### **About the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children**

Through a statewide network of Early Learning Collaboratives, Idaho AEYC unites parents, communities, and educators to serve the needs of children and families in every corner of Idaho. We work to improve access to high-quality child care, raise awareness about the importance of early learning, and provide parents with tools to build a strong foundation for lifelong learning. Learn more at [idahoaeyc.org](http://idahoaeyc.org) or contact us at [outreach@idahoaeyc.org](mailto:outreach@idahoaeyc.org).