



**SANDPOINT EARLY LEARNING  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Community Needs Assessment**  
Preschool Development Grant  
August 2020

**United Way of North Idaho**



**LIVE UNITED**

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# SUMMARY

On behalf of Idaho AEYC, United Way of North Idaho has been awarded a local collaborative Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) to support and enhance early childhood systems. Through this grant, our local collaborative is analyzing and building upon current systems to maximize parental choice, share best practices and improve program quality with the goal of enhancing early learning systems locally as well as statewide to improve literacy as school readiness outcomes.

The Early Care and Education Needs Assessment covers a variety of topics. Parents identified the importance of early care and education for preschool aged children, the skills they believe are important for their children to have when entering Kindergarten, the important factors when selecting an early childhood program as well as the barriers they encounter when accessing care. Through the Needs Assessment the landscape of child care was also identified, including the programs available, the cost of care and the statistics related to the early care and education professionals serving children and families.

Parents identified critical factors such as trust in educators and staff, staff to child ratio, licensing requirements and indoor and outdoor environments to be key in their criteria when selecting a child care or preschool program. They also identified key skills for children to have to be successful when starting school to be the ability to communicate their needs, feel excited about school and learning and the ability to manage strong emotions.

In general, parents demonstrated support for early learning in our community and believe preschool is important or necessary for children. The biggest gap between the importance of early learning and the value of that learning is the parent's ability to access and afford the program where they desire to enroll their child.

# OUR STAKEHOLDERS

## Family

- Median family household income - \$62,241
- 2062 children under the age of 5
- 37.9% (1,141) Children are eligible for free and reduced lunch (185% or below of federal poverty guidelines)

## Child Care

- Annual cost of child care in Bonner County per child
  - Infant - \$7,800 (\$650/mo.)
  - 2-3-year-old - \$7200 (\$600/mo.)
  - 3-5-year-old - \$6,600 (\$550/mo.)

## Provider

- Average hourly wages earned:
  - Child Care Director: \$14.00-\$18.00
  - Home-Based Child Care Provider: \$5.00-\$10.00
  - Lead Teacher: \$10.00-\$14.00
  - Assistant Teacher: \$9.00-\$12.00
  - Home Visitors: Average \$20.31

***What are your long-term goals for your center?***

***“Continue offering high quality care and hands on early learning and strengthening family events. Would like to increase pay and benefits for staff who are worth a million dollars.” - Center Based Directors Survey Response***

# CHILD CARE INVENTORY



## Child Care and Preschool Inventory

Below is the reported enrollment and capacity of child care and preschool-only slots by age group

Location	Enr 0-12	Cap 0-12	Enr 13-24	Cap 13-24	Enr 2-3	Cap 2-3	Enr 3-5	Cap 3-5	Enr sch	Cap Sch
Hope	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	12	0	0
Kootenai	0	1	2	2	4	4	6	8	12	12
Ponderay	4	12	3	20	6	20	20	35	2	20
Sandpoint	13	22	11	26	34	48	201	231	28	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>86</b>

## Types of Services

- Sixteen 16 child care programs (12 large centers, 2 small centers, 3 group providers, 1 family, 1 relative)
- Two 2 preschool-only programs
- Seven 7 other early care services include, Head Start, developmental preschool and home visiting Services

# EARLY CARE PROVIDERS

## Provider Inventory

The variety of providers identified that provide direct services to children were: directors of child care centers, home based child care providers (owners), lead teachers, assistant teachers, child care aides, speech and language pathologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, home visitor and registered nurse.



## Experience

Forty-four (44.1%) of directors and 38.2% of lead teachers have more than 10 years of experience in their role.

## Early Care Providers

There is a total of 79 individuals who provide direct services to children. A lead teacher works an average of 40 hours a week with children.

*“Children do not interrupt my work; they are my work.”*

## Turnover

Twenty-Three and a half percent (23.5%) of those surveyed experienced a minimum of 2 employees a year that have left their program. Fifty (50%) of the time the employees that have left an early care and education setting have reported leaving due to wages

## Education Levels

- 7 Child Development Credential, or 12 credits related to ECE
- 2 Associates degree related to ECE
- 4 Bachelor’s degree related to ECE
- 4 Master’s degree related to ECE

## BARRIERS TO CARE

- Four and a half percent (4.5%) of families have trouble accessing care due to a disability or medical need of their child. 47.1% of providers surveyed reported they have had to unenroll or turn away a client due to the inability to meet the need of a child with a disability or a medical need.
- Thirty-three percent (33.3%) of families reported one of the biggest challenges they face when placing their child in care is price. Four and a half percent (4.5%) reported additional fees charged as a barrier due to creating an additional hardship
- The top 3 additional fees reported by providers surveyed were: registration fee (82.4%), late payment (64.7%) and late pick-up (67.6%)

## NEXT STEPS

Based off the local Needs Assessment that the Sandpoint Early Learning Advisory Committee has completed; they will be developing a local Early learning Strategic Action Plan. This Strategic Action Plan will have clearly identified goals with strategies to assist the committee in implementing the plan within the community. This will be available on United Way of North Idaho's website as of December 2020.

*What strengths do you see in your community's early childhood services?*

*"The creation of a local community in early childhood becomes the supportive, positive, uplifting foundation of a child's life. It helps them to learn about themselves. It helps them learn how to tackle challenges, build knowledge, and thrive. I think our community efforts are absolutely noticeable when it comes to childcare programs." - Parent Survey Respondent*

# EARLY LEARNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Sandpoint Early Learning Advisory Committee exists to support statewide efforts by focusing on local early child systems. The ELAC will work to analyze and build upon current systems to maximize parental choice, share best practices, and improve the quality with the goal of enhancing early learning systems in our community to improve literacy.

The membership consists of participants from the following disciplines: a representative from the least fiscal agency/organization, lead project manager, at least one early childhood educator working in a licensed/regulated child care, early learning, or preschool program, at least one representative from the local k-12 school district; and at least two community participants from a mix of public, private and nonprofit, government, health care and civic organizations, such as:

- Child Care/preschool programs
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Schools (public/private)
- Libraries
- Community foundations
- Local businesses
- Tribal organizations
- Community action centers (e.g., Volunteers of America, Big Brothers Big Sisters)
- Health care organizations
- Mental health providers
- Early intervention organizations
- Local government
- Parents and other invested individuals

ELAC will meet a minimum of four times, virtual or in person. Attendance, actions, and decisions of the committee are recorded and stored on Microsoft teams. Decisions are made by majority vote and ties are determined by a coin flip.



# NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA SOURCE

## Sources

- Department of Health and Welfare - Child Care, July 2020
- Department of Health and Welfare - Children and Family Services, June 2020
- Department of Health and Welfare - Infant Toddler Program, June 2020
- Lake Pend Oreille School District, August 2020
- Early Care Providers and Families (Survey and interviews), June - September 2020
- Inland Northwest Insights [www.inlandnorthwestinsights.org](http://www.inlandnorthwestinsights.org), July - August 2020
- IdahoSTARS, August 2020