

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines* are developed according to the following guiding principles:

- **Children are active learners who learn through play.**

Play is fundamental to a child's learning. Children learn through experiences and relationships with the people and objects in their world. Experience through play, shared knowledge, curiosity, and sense of wonder are foundations for children's learning.

- **Each child learns in unique ways.**

Children have unique characteristics that influence learning. The rate of development and learning varies for individuals and is not the same for every child of the same age. Learning may be uneven or occur in spurts. An individual's learning is impacted by genetics, culture, environment and experiences, interests, motivation, and approaches to learning.

- **Children receive learning opportunities that support their unique needs in inclusive environments.**

All children, who are both typically and atypically developing are supported with opportunities to grow and learn in inclusive settings in child care, school, and community activities.

- **Learning is most meaningful when it is integrated across all areas of development.**

Children construct knowledge and integrate new ideas and concepts into their existing understanding. Their achievements in language and learning are influenced by the social and emotional aspects of their development. Communication influences mathematical and scientific understanding. There are no clear lines between the domains of development or areas of learning.

- **Learning is continuous and sequential.**

Children's understanding grows from simple to complex and from concrete to abstract. New knowledge is built on previous experience and understanding. Young children learn best in safe, content-rich environments with supportive adults. Successful programs, teachers, and caregivers base decisions and plans on accepted child development principles, research, and best practices to support and enhance children's growth.

- **Development and learning are rooted in culture and supported by the family.**

A child's language, knowledge, traditions, and family expectations are the primary influences on development. Learning is enriched by stable, nurturing relationships within the family and community.

- **Parents want their children to be happy and part of their community.**

Early learning is the groundwork for learning from age five through the high school years and adult, life-long education. Early learning opportunities are best when children are healthy, well nourished, and safe. Engaged, healthy, and happy children are ready to explore through listening, watching, smelling, touching, and tasting.

- **Children are supported by the greater community.**

Children are regarded and respected as unique, competent individuals who have individual temperaments, learning styles, home environments, cultures, and ways of

understanding. Families' and children's health and well-being is a community priority. The community supports children's growth with high quality early learning and development opportunities.