

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Idaho AEYC Welcomes Nicole Criner as New Executive Director

Boise, Idaho - The Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (Idaho AEYC) is proud to announce Nicole Criner as its new Executive Director.

An Idaho native and proud Boise State University alumna, Criner brings an exceptional blend of nonprofit leadership, higher education advancement, and corporate communications experience to Idaho AEYC. She holds a bachelor's degree in communications, a Certificate in Leadership and Human Relations, and a master's degree in leadership.

Criner's cross-sector experience spans higher education, nonprofit advocacy, and corporate affairs. At Boise State University, she managed donor strategy and development initiatives for the Bronco Athletic Association. She later served as Director of External Relations and Development at Idaho AEYC, leading media relations and revenue generation. Most recently, she led communications, government and public affairs at Albertsons Companies, shaping messaging and supporting brand reputation across eight states. Her return to Idaho AEYC brings seasoned insight and renewed focus to the organization's mission.

Criner brings a clear understanding of Idaho's early learning landscape and the communication needed to build trust across sectors. Her experience informs her approach to strengthening family choice, supporting educators, and advancing community-driven solutions. As Executive Director, she will guide Idaho AEYC's efforts to ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive, whether at home, in child care, or in preschool.

Beyond her professional achievements, Criner is also a successful entrepreneur and dedicated community advocate. She owns and operates two Happy Teriyaki restaurants in the Treasure Valley and currently serves on the executive board of the West Valley Humane Society. She is also a former board member of Idaho AEYC, deepening her long-standing commitment to early childhood education and family well-being.

"Nicole's deep Idaho roots, proven leadership, and extensive experience across corporate, nonprofit, and higher education sectors make her an outstanding choice

to lead Idaho AEYC," said Kevin Bailey, Chair of the Idaho AEYC Board of Directors. "Her vision and commitment to Idaho's youngest learners will strengthen our mission and expand our statewide impact."

"I'm honored to return to Idaho AEYC and serve the families and educators who are building Idaho's future," said Criner. "We are ready to do the work; supporting families and communities, and making sure parents can choose an early learning path that fits their values, whether at home or in a classroom. These choices are foundational to family planning, workforce participation, and a strong Idaho economy where all families can thrive."

About Idaho AEYC:

The Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (Idaho AEYC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring all Idaho children thrive by supporting early childhood educators, families, and communities. As the state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Idaho AEYC works to advance high-quality early learning through professional development, advocacy, and community partnerships. With a focus on parental choice, local solutions, and increased access to early learning opportunities, Idaho AEYC empowers families and strengthens Idaho's early childhood systems—because when children thrive, communities prosper.

For more information, visit www.idahoaeYC.org or contact:

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