

## **Enhancement Grant Opportunities for 2010**

Enhancement Grants are to assist child care facilities to continually improve the quality of services they offer the children and families in their programs. “The Enhancement Grants” for 2010 will offer awards focusing on two program practices: Outdoor Learning Environments, Accreditation, and Feeding & Nutrition for Young Children. Interested participants can apply for only one of the available grants.

**Outdoor Learning Environments** are more than ‘just a playground’. It is unfortunate that children can't design their outdoor play environments. Research on children's preferences shows that if children had the design skills to do so, their creations would be completely different from the areas called playgrounds that most adults design for them. Outdoor spaces designed by children would not only be fully naturalized with plants, trees, flowers, water, dirt, sand, mud, animals and insects, but also would be rich with a wide variety of play opportunities of every imaginable type. If children could design their outdoor play spaces, they would be rich developmentally appropriate learning environments where children would want to stay all day. That is the goal of this Enhancement Grant – create a truly Outdoor Learning Environment for children.

**The Accreditation Grant** will help with meeting accreditation standards for programs in the process of NAFCC or NAEYC accreditation process. Accredited early childhood programs have been assessed by nationally recognized credentialing organizations and have proven their level of quality in many ways.

**Feeding & Nutrition** is more than ‘just snacks and a lunch’. Early experiences with food and eating have implications for the development of eating disorders and future health issues. Feeding young children in group settings needs to be purposefully considered. The goal of this grant will be for child care providers to gain information and to intentionally address the challenges of feeding young children in their specific setting for positive outcomes.

Eligibility – Center directors and/or family home child care owners are eligible to apply.

Directors/owners must be enrolled in the PDS Registry prior to March 1, 2010 (Reminder: IdahoSTARS Registry applications take approximately 4 weeks to process).

How to apply – applications are available at [www.idahostars.org](http://www.idahostars.org) or at the Child Care Resources and Referral (CCR&R) office in your region. **Applications will be accepted beginning Feb. 1, 2010 and ending on March 19, 2010 at 5:00 P.M. MST.** All applicants will be notified by March 31, 2010 of the status of their application. If your facility is selected, IdahoSTARS staff will contact you to schedule a short phone orientation about the upcoming grant. For further information and details, contact your local CCR&R by dialing 2-1-1, the Idaho CareLine or 1-800-926-2588.