

[News](#) > [Opinion](#)

Annie Henna: Not all parents can provide their own children's early education

READER'S VIEW EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

BY ANNIE HENNA - Idaho Statesman

Edition Date: 12/18/08

[Comments \(2\)](#) | [Recommend \(0\)](#)

In a Reader's View, Darrel Deide advocated against early childhood education, arguing that parents should be responsible for meeting this need. While Deide indicated there are some public policymakers who share his opinion, more than two thirds of Idahoans reported they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports access to pre-kindergarten programs for Idaho's young children. But why would Idahoans support early education programs outside of the home? The answer is simple: They cannot afford to stay at home with their children.

Catholic Charities of Idaho agrees that parents staying home with their children is ideal. In fact, virtually all Idaho parents I've spoken to would prefer to provide care for their own children rather than outsourcing it. But the reality is this: Nearly 48 percent of Idaho's children, from birth to age 5, live in low-income families. Of these children, 44 percent have parents who work full- or part-time. And while the vast majority of parents in low-income families are working, they are not earning enough to escape low-income status, let alone stop working altogether and stay home with their children.

Additionally, more than 50 percent of Idaho families with children have a single parent. This means that, for more than half of Idaho families, if a parent were to stay home with the children, no adult in the home would be bringing in an income.

Deide wrongheadedly argued that publicly funded early education programs would act as an "enabler." But when you look at the numbers, only 4 percent of Idaho's low-income families are idle, or not working. Clearly, the bulk of low-income families in Idaho are trying to make ends meet, rather than sitting at home, jobless.

I am not arguing that Idaho parents should not stay at home with their children; I am certain many would love to. Realistically, Idaho simply cannot ask its families - who are already struggling despite maintaining employment - to quit working, cutting off their means to pay for everyday necessities.

[Printer Friendly](#) [Email to a Friend](#)

[Enlarge Font](#) [Decrease Font](#)

[BOOKMARK](#)

[See All Photo Galleries](#)

MISS AN
Click he
State F
ne

Find a Job
Keywords:
e.g., registered nurse

Advertising provid

The S

Don't

How Quick

If policymakers want parents to stay home and take the lead in their children's education, then they must provide them the means to support their families.

Creating publicly funded early childhood education programs will allow all Idaho parents to have access to quality education and child care. Public early childhood education means low-income families will not have to forfeit opportunities to earn incomes needed to help their families survive.

Catholic Charities of Idaho holds the strong belief that, as a society, we must assist parents who, despite their best efforts, are still unable to cover the costs of providing their kids with early childhood education or staying home with their children. Something must be done to help these families acquire access to quality early education.

If the Legislature fails to act this coming legislative session, nearly half of our state's families will continue to struggle with access to early childhood education, despite an abundance of studies that overwhelmingly support its existence. Therefore, Catholic Charities of Idaho will be advocating strongly for the passage of legislation that creates early childhood education in Idaho. Please join us in our efforts.

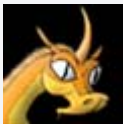
Annie Henna is a legislative advocate intern for Catholic Charities of Idaho.

POWERED BY  Pluck

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Login](#) | [Register](#)

Submit



Comments:  2 Showing: **Oldest first**



[brt929](#) wrote on December, 18 6:56 AM:

If policymakers want parents to stay home and take the lead in their children's education, then they must provide them the means to support their families. If policymakers want parents to stay home and take the lead in their children's education, then they must provide them the means to support their families.

In other words, the state government of Idaho has worked against individual Idahoan citizens' ability to find decent wages- such as with their Right to Work legislation. If Idaho's government would remember that they are there for individual citizens; not to maximize corporate profits, they actually might find themselves collecting more in taxes.

 [Recommend \(0\)](#)  [Report abuse](#)



[blackelkspeaks](#) wrote on December, 18 7:46 AM:

As a "legislative advocate intern" for Catholic Charities, Henna's position on early childhood education reveals her need for a great deal more exposure to the Catholic Magisterium, rather than the hackneyed talking points of the Democrat Party. If pre-school education is important, and it is, then this Catholic believes the best way to