



# Our children, our legacy

then and now



*A 2019 update to the publication*

*"Our children, our legacy, present and future"*

*published in 2004 by the SD Alliance for Children*



South Dakota Association for the  
Education of Young Children

**SDAEYC Vision Statement**

All young children thrive and learn in a society dedicated to ensuring they reach their full potential.

Please contact [sdaeyc@gmail.com](mailto:sdaeyc@gmail.com) for more information or questions.  
(Please put “Our Children, Our Legacy” in the subject line.)

# Introduction

In 2004, the South Dakota Alliance for Children, a group formed to support child care, early education and school-age care, published *Our Children, Our Legacy Present and Future*. The vision of the Alliance was a “commitment to creating a seamless, unified, high-quality child care and early education system that is supported by policymakers, the public and is accessible and affordable to all families.”

The work continues even though the SD Alliance for Children is no longer in existence. A small but passionate group of individuals came together in the beginning of 2017 with the common goal to discuss how to advance the work that the Alliance began 15 years ago. The group consisted of individuals from Head Start/Early Head Start, South Dakota KIDS COUNT, SD-DSS-Child Care Services, university faculty, foundation representatives and early childhood professionals. A concern expressed by the group was the lack of knowledge about early childhood and its importance to a young child's life by the general public as well as policy makers in the state.

The Early Childhood Care and Education Network (ECCEN)

- ▶ Provided a chance to hear and share the unique challenges of early care and education in South Dakota communities.
- ▶ Provided an opportunity to keep a continuous conversation about early care and education thereby keeping it at the forefront. This helped ensure the message of early care and education will be in the minds of everyone, especially state leaders.
- ▶ Encouraged participation across the state to more effectively capture the different needs and issues of early care and education in South Dakota.
- ▶ Gave voice to early care and education in South Dakota.
- ▶ Tapped into the passion of individuals and organizations to determine where we are now and where we want to be in early care and education in South Dakota.

During two years of discussion the group identified two goals that were important to focus on:

1. Data collection – gathering and collecting more pertinent information.
2. State-wide awareness - get people informed, engaged and build understanding of the early childhood care and education field.

Other highlights:

- Submitted a Bush Foundation grant application for building a foundation for the growth of the SD Early Childhood Education Structure.
- An endowment was set-up to help fund positions for children on the waiting list for Head Start or those children who do not have access to Head Start.
- Established an Early Childhood Day at the Capitol.
- SDAEYC discussed early childhood care and education with the SD Congressional delegation.
- South Dakota Public Broadcasting hosted a live show on SD Focus regarding the Preschool Levels of Excellence coordinated by the School Administrators Association of SD.

The 2019 publication *Our Children, Our Legacy Then and Now* updates the 2004 Alliance publication, giving South Dakotans a picture of what has happened over the last 15 years, in regards to quality early childhood programming for the youngest children in our state.

Members of the ECCEN contributed program and policy information for this document. This publication should not be construed as everything that has happened in the last 15 years. We ask that the reader not take offense if a project they have been working on was inadvertently omitted. We want this document to spur discussion of other types of progress made and any existing gaps.

Members of ECCEN firmly believe what happens from birth to age five is critical in terms of laying a foundation for success in school and throughout life. Please join us in this important discussion.

# 2004 Goal 1

## ***Enhance the stability and quality of the child care and early education workforce in South Dakota.***

Imagine any community without child care, an Alliance member challenges, and you're likely to picture chaos. For the majority of working parents, the availability of quality child care is directly linked to their ability to go to work and focus on the job at hand.

And South Dakota has the highest percent of working mothers in the nation. The 2003 KIDS COUNT Factbook reports that 77.5 percent of this state's mothers of children under 6 are in the workforce; the national average is 63.5 percent.

Although parents are the most important people in the lives of the majority of South Dakota youngsters, child care providers are also playing an increasing role.

Among child care workers in this state, the annual rate of turnover is one-third. That's according to a 2004 childhood workforce study by KIDS COUNT and the University of South Dakota School of Education.

"In the business world, turnover may be just another fact of labor dynamics," says Ellen Goodman of the Boston Globe. "But to the 2-year-old customer, the word for turnover is 'loss.'" Quoting Marcy Whitebook, director of the Center for the Child Care Workforce, Goodman adds, "It doesn't matter to a hamburger who flips it. It does matter to a child."

Turnover in caregivers is upsetting to children, who crave stability and familiarity.

The reasons for high turnover? According to one child care director, "It's hard to find someone who wants to work with young children for a low salary; and it is hard to train people who aren't used to working in a fast-paced, quick thinking environment for low pay." And too often, there is too little recognition of this vital role.

In an effort to reverse this trend, the Office of Child Care Services has introduced its Pathways to Professional Development project that promotes quality child care and early education through a seven-level Career Lattice.

The project aims to help those working in child care to chart a course for their career growth and receive recognition for education and professional achievements.

By developing a knowledgeable and skilled workforce, the goal of the Pathways project is to increase the number of quality programs available to South Dakota children and youth.





**Enhance the stability and quality of the child care and early education workforce in South Dakota.**

The need for childcare in South Dakota due to the number of working parents has not changed much since 2004. The SD KIDS COUNT Factbook reports that 74 percent of children under the age of six in South Dakota had all available parents in the work force in 2017; this is higher than the nation at 66 percent.



In 2017 there were 698 registered and in-process family child care providers (down from 909 in 2004), 59 licensed group family child care centers (down from 93 in 2004) and 205 licensed and in-process child care centers (increase from 147 in 2004). The staff turnover rate during the 12-month period prior to survey completion for the 2017 Market Rate Survey for group family providers was 24% for part-time employees and 30% for full-time employees (2017 South Dakota Department of Social Services Market Rate Survey). There are an unknown number of family child care providers with up to 12 children that are not required to be registered.

There have been efforts to enhance the stability and quality of the child care and early education workforce in SD.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant, reauthorized in 2014, resulted in changes in the requirements for child care employee orientation, training requirements, criminal background checks, consumer and provider education website, family-friendly eligibility policies, increasing access for vulnerable children and families and activities to improve the quality of provider care.<sup>1</sup>

The Division of Child Care Services offers a free on-line and on-demand orientation training for providers.<sup>2</sup> Scholarships are available for providers to obtain [Child Development Associate Credential \(CDA\)](#) and complete CDA assessment. In addition, articulation agreements exist with five institutions to articulate the 120 hours of CDA training and the 30-hour Pathways to Professional Development Series for up to 10-12 college credits at the respective institution.

From 2005 - 2009 South Dakota Voices for Children, worked with several business and civic groups in various communities around the state. The business-civic groups focus “was the development to a community response to improve the quality of care and early learning for local children.”

1 <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/fact-sheet-occ>

2 <https://dss.sd.gov/childcare/stateplan/default.aspx>

# 2004 Goal 2

## ***Increase awareness of child development and the importance of quality child care and early education.***

What happens during the first few months and years of life lays the groundwork - solid or shaky - for everything that follows. Environment matters, according to *Neurons to Neighborhoods*, a 2000 study by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies.<sup>1</sup>

Success over the years of programs similar to Head Start and Early Head Start (birth to 3) demonstrates that investing in children early has very high rates of return, while social policies that intervene at later ages have low economic returns.<sup>2</sup>

Public understanding, however, lags behind scientific research.

That may change as a result of action in the 2004 South Dakota Legislature, which authorized appointment of a 20-member task force to examine the current child care and early learning system for children in South Dakota.

The task force will provide recommendations for improvement in a report to the 80th legislative assembly.

Elements of early childhood programs that enhance social and emotional development are as important as those directed to developing language and the ability to think and reason. As *“Neurons to Neighborhoods”* confirms, emotional development and academic learning are closely linked in the early years.



Clearly, learning begins at birth.

Can we afford to wait?

The Alliance's answer: We cannot.

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<sup>1</sup> From *Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



**Increase awareness of child development and the importance of quality child care and early education.**

In 2004 the SD legislature authorized the appointment of a 20 member task force to examine the current child care and early learning system for children in SD. The recommendations published January 2005 were presented in a report to the Eightieth Session of the South Dakota Legislature.

Of the 12 recommendations, three had notable action and are listed below. These recommendations are provided for an historical look but they are not necessarily priorities for 2019.

**Quality Improvement**

Recommendation 2005: Develop a star rating system for all types of child care which includes specific criteria for infant-toddler care, out-of-school time care and care for children with special needs.

Progress 2019: A voluntary rating scale is being developed by the Division of Child Care Services. It will focus on relationships and interactions, age appropriate environments, age appropriate activities and family engagement.



Recommendation 2005: Support the development and sustainability of quality out-of-school time programs and encourage school districts and communities to partner together.

Progress 2019: The Department of Education received federal funding to support 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers at 37 Afterschool programs statewide.

**Children with Special Needs**

Recommendation 2005: Conduct a study of the issues, gaps and solutions surrounding child care for children with special needs to include the following:

- a. Improved linkages between parents and special needs child care resources
- b. Identification of training, information, and resource needs for providers and parents.

Progress 2019: Child Care Services (CCS) and Birth-to-Three cross train staff to ensure continuity of care for children with special needs served in childcare programs. CCS will continue to partner with regional Early Childhood Enrichment (ECE) programs to provide awareness and knowledge of resources and services available for families of children with special needs. At the local level, parenting classes are available through the ECE training system for parents that emphasize responsive caregiving and include support for children with special needs. Information from the CDC's Learn the Signs, Act Early is shared with child care providers. Providers caring for a child with special needs can be reimbursed at a higher rate.



# 2004 Goal 3

## ***Enhance the quality of family child care services in South Dakota.***

**H**ere is the challenge: To reach all child-care providers in South Dakota, including the unknown number of those who are unregistered and home-based. According to the state Office of Child Care Services, there are more than 900 registered family child care providers statewide.

Unless a provider wishes to be eligible for public funding, registration is voluntary. There is no way of tracking the number of family child care providers who choose not to be registered.

Registered or not, those who run family day cares are an essential component of the state's economy. Research bears this out. The Iowa State University Extension office reports that family child care is the most widely used form of child care in the United States.

A good family child care home does much more than keep children busy, under control and out of trouble.

A quality family child care home is operated by a child care professional who understands and responds to children, takes care of their needs, comforts them and teaches them.

Caregivers in a good family child care home know how to show children love and acceptance, while strengthening the bond those youngsters have with their own families.

The most effective family child care homes offer:

- ▶ a home-like setting in the child's neighborhood,
- ▶ an extended family environment,
- ▶ the opportunity to keep brothers and sisters together during the day.
- ▶ flexible schedules
- ▶ small intimate groups
- ▶ consistent care year after year from one primary caregiver.

The Alliance supports the highest standard of care for youngsters in all child care settings by encouraging a variety of professional education opportunities such as credentialing and apprenticeship. Networking and advocacy opportunities, as well as information and resources, should be available through state and local partnerships.

Family child care providers benefit from access to training and professional development opportunities, such as the South Dakota Family Child Care Mentor program.

The mentoring project, administered by Office of Child Care Services, is designed to help new child care providers learn the ins and outs of the child care business from the people who understand it the most - other child care providers.

Through the program, experienced family child care providers are trained to serve as mentors to those who are new to the field. Often family child care providers experience isolation and burnout, which can be alleviated by mentors who offer information, encouragement, resources and support. The mentor assists the new provider in establishing a professional network and in learning about local community and state resources.

The end result: To increase retention of family child care providers and to make sure that those parents who choose family child care settings find the quality their children deserve.



# 2019 Goal 3

## ***Enhance the quality of family child care services in South Dakota.***

The challenge in the 2004 Alliance publication remains the same: to reach all child care providers in SD, including the unknown number of those who are unregistered and home based. While the Division of Child Care Services tracks registered family home care providers (698 in 2017<sup>1</sup>), there is no way of tracking the number of family child care providers who choose not to be registered. Family child care providers can care for up to 12 children in their home without being required to be registered in SD. This makes it challenging to support these unregistered providers for them to access information and resources, such as, health and safety information, developmental screening opportunities, school transitions, family enrichment opportunities, and even appropriate response to emergency situations. Cities that have adopted ordinances that identify, regulate or enforce family child care homes include Aberdeen, Belle Fourche, Sioux Falls and Vermillion.

The Family Child Care Professionals of South Dakota<sup>2</sup> sprang from the mentor program that was initiated by the South Dakota Family Child Care Providers Association, with support of the SD Department of Social Services, Division of Child Care Services in 2003. It was officially launched in 2004. In addition to offering connections with local family child care professionals, the association provides a professional development Child Care Professionals Conference annually.

The SD Association for the Education of Young Children and the SD Head Start Association have also provided a state Early Childhood Education Conference annually. It offers college credit and professional development to all early childhood providers in the state.

With the high number of working parents in SD, family child care providers continue to play an important role in supporting the economy. Many parents in communities across the state rely on family child care as the only child care option in their community.



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1 South Dakota Child Care Workforce and Market Rate Report May 2017

2 <https://fccpsd.org/>



**Establish adequate and stable funding for child care and early education in South Dakota.**

While the state Department of Labor reports that child care workers earn less per hour than auto mechanics, hair stylists, dental assistants, massage therapists, nursing aides and housekeepers, for parents who foot the bills, quality child care is far from inexpensive. The state Labor Department in 2003 reported the average annual fee for full-time infant care in a center was \$4,680 (rural) or \$6, 188 (urban). The costs drop a bit for a 4-year-old: \$4,472 (rural) or \$5,408 (urban).

Now, consider this: The College Board figures average annual tuition and fees at a state-supported South Dakota college or university at \$4,088 in 2003.

At a time when they've not begun to reach their full earning potential, young families are hit with an expense that can exceed the cost of college tuition. And they've not had time to build an education savings account.

The 2004 release of a study, *Early Learning Left Out*<sup>1</sup>, presents the most comprehensive picture to date of public investment in the education and development of children in three categories - the early learning years (0-5), school-age years (6-18) and college-age years (19-23). Results for South Dakota, which mirror those of other participating states, show the lowest public investment comes at the earliest, most formative years of life. According to the report, public per-child investment by South Dakota in 2001 looked like this:

And yet researchers at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis recently reported that “dollars invested in early childhood development yield extraordinary public returns.”<sup>2</sup> For each dollar of investment, they calculated, \$8 in “benefit” to society as a whole.

Age	Investment
0-5 years old.....	\$571
6-8 years old.....	\$4,328
19-23 years old.....	\$3,193

But while high-quality early childhood programs are cost-effective in averting future social problems, reducing government costs, increasing earnings and expanding the tax base, there is, in the words of one advocate, “no secret pot of money” to fund those efforts.

Still, where there's will, there may be a way. Next steps include a study of the economic impact of child care in the state and direct effects of the child care industry. The study will also calculate the effect of the child care industry as a support to other sectors of the economy.

These findings will guide further efforts to identify adequate and stable funding sources and strategies for maximizing investments

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 1 Voices for America's Children and the Child and Family Policy Center in partner ship with the South Dakota Coalition for Children, 2003.

2 Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return, Art Rolnick, Rob Gruenwald, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, 2003.



***Establish adequate and stable funding for child care and early education in South Dakota.***

Success over the years of programs demonstrates that investing in children early has very high rates of return, while social policies that intervene at later ages have low economic returns. The Early Learning Left Out report (updated in 2013 by the Build Initiative), presents the most comprehensive picture to date of public investment in the education and development of children in three age categories: 0-2, 3-5 and 6-18. “In South Dakota, for every public dollar invested in the development and education of a school-aged child, only seven cents was invested in an infant or toddler and 20 cents in a preschooler.”<sup>1</sup> Results for South Dakota in 2011, show the lowest public investment comes at the earliest, most formative years of life:

Age	Investment
0-2 years old.....	\$600.07
3-5 years old.....	\$1,801.48
6-18 years old.....	\$8,882.15

**2017** – Child Trends, “Children enrolled in Early Head Start were less likely to become involved later in life with the child welfare system.”

**2012** – Professor James Heckman’s research analyzed the results of the Abecedarian program, which yielded a 13 percent return on investment per child.

**2009** – Perry Preschool Study, “A high quality program for 3-5 years olds demonstrated an estimated return on investment (return to society) of between \$7 and \$10 for every \$1 invested.

**2004** – SD KIDS COUNT report, *The Economic Impact of the Child Care Industry in South Dakota* found child care also is an economic force that creates jobs and generates local income (\$124.5 million in direct economic activity).

**1999** – Abecedarian Study, “Children from low-income families in a full-time high quality education from infancy through age five were more likely to score higher in IQ, reading and math tests, be enrolled in or graduate from a four-year college or university and be gainfully employed.”

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 1 Early Learning left out report

# 2004 Goal 5

## ***Support healthy development in early childhood and out-of-school time settings.***

Researchers have identified milestones that indicate a youngster has acquired the social/emotional foundation needed to learn. Developing a sense of trust and security come first. Building on that, a child develops a sense of self and autonomy after which she or he learns to cooperate with others and to lead as well as follow. And when behavior becomes unusual or extreme?

There is help - created in part by a recommendation from a children's mental health task force authorized by the 2002 Legislature: "Children and adolescents in South Dakota shall be screened for social-emotional development to promote early identification and intervention needs."

To increase identification and services for children birth to 5, the Office of Child Care Services and the Division of Mental Health offer training and on-site technical assistance at pilot sites: Aberdeen, Huron/Madison, Rapid City and Sioux Falls. The service will help parents and providers recognize behaviors that are so extreme or long-lasting that a child may need help. Untreated, social-emotional difficulties can delay normal development and cause more severe problems later. As many as one in five children experience difficulties that affect their behavior, mood, or ability to learn. Yet few receive treatment, because symptoms are often misunderstood.



Youngsters' physical well-being is the focus of Healthy Child Care South Dakota. Child Care Services (CCS) has established linkages between parents, health professionals and child care givers. In cooperation with the Department of Health and Department of Social Services' Medical Services, CCS will work to improve the health and safety practices and physical environments in child care programs throughout South Dakota and continue to raise awareness of the state Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) among parents whose children attend child care.



**2019 Goal 5**

**Support healthy development in early childhood and out-of-school time settings.**

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey<sup>1</sup> is conducted every 2 years in grades 9 through 12. These risk behaviors are often established during childhood and early adolescence and the early childhood period is a critical time for intervention. A sampling of indicators from the 2016 report illustrate areas that can be impacted in the early childhood years include:



**91.9%** of students report never or rarely wearing a helmet when riding a bicycle



**33.8%** of students report eating breakfast on all of the past 7 days



**47.4%** of students were physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day on 5 or more of the past 7 days



**38.2%** of students who get at least 8 hours of sleep on an average school night

**Early Hearing Detection & Intervention** - Established in 2015, the SD EHDI Collaborative, a partnership between the University of South Dakota and the South Dakota Department of Health State EHDI program, along with other partners including the South Dakota School for the Deaf. The SD EHDI Collaborative works to improve early identification of hearing loss in children and promote early intervention services for children and their families across the state of South Dakota.

**fitCare** - The fitCare initiative Best Practice Program was developed through a partnership between the SD Department of Health, SD Department of Social Services, Sanford Children's and Sanford fit initiative. The program emphasizes a holistic approach to living a healthy lifestyle and considers being fit as the ability to interplay between nutrition, physical activity, emotional management and rest to achieve a healthy lifestyle.

**InfantSEE** - Provides no-cost comprehensive eye assessments for infants between six and 12 months of age through participating optometrists.

**KIDSIGHT South Dakota** - A free statewide vision screening program provided to children ages 12 months and up sponsored by the SD Lions Foundation.

**SD Oral Health Coalition** - Works to reduce the number of children who have experienced decay, untreated decay and increase the number of children with dental sealants.

**The Delta Dental Mobile Program** - Provides oral health services to underserved children. Two trucks have visited 82 communities and provide services to around 3,000 children annually. In addition, dental hygienists and community health workers based on SD Native American reservations reach an additional 4,000 each year.

**The South Dakota Early Childhood Mental Health Collaborative** - In 2018 was awarded a \$2.2 million five year grant to support experts and licensed therapists to identify and treat children from birth through age five in 14 counties in the state.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://doh.sd.gov/statistics/YRBS.aspx>



# 2004 Goal 6

## ***To increase the availability and quality of infant/toddler care and education in South Dakota.***

Even beyond the familiar (and time-consuming) feed-change-cuddle cycle, infants and toddlers present unique challenges - ask any parent. That's why delivering excellent care in a group setting requires staff knowledgeable about early childhood development. And babies require greater staff-to-child ratios - ideally 1/4<sup>1</sup> - than do older children.

Not only are health and safety concerns paramount, but very young children need experienced caregivers who are responsive and respectful. Caregivers must understand that basic need and be willing to provide relationship-based care. From birth to 5, brain development is at a peak and nurturing is essential.

Recognizing the challenges, the state Office of Child Care Services with funding from the Bush Foundation, developed an infant/toddler training program to help caregivers provide high-quality care. Other program partners include the South Dakota tribes, South Dakota State University and Early Childhood Enrichment Programs across the state.

South Dakota trainers use the Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers (PITC) developed by WestEd of California, a nonprofit research, development and service agency to promote excellence in education. Elements of the program, which is offered at sites throughout the state, focus on:



From July 1998 through June 2003, the Office of Child Care Services reported 1,177 training events. As of October 2003, some 3,550 individuals participated in infant/toddler training.

As an incentive, regulated child care providers who attend 20 hours of training in at least two of the components listed above are eligible for a \$200 mini-grant. They may use that money to purchase infant/toddler specific toys and equipment, or to pay for training.

And in the meantime, South Dakota will participate in the second round of technical assistance and guidance offered through the Zero to Three National Infant & Toddler Child Care initiative, a project of the Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services. Through the next 18 months, tools will be available to advance and improve quality and availability in the infant/toddler child care system.

The guidance and assistance provided by the Zero to Three project will help to ensure that recommendations from the Legislative task force mentioned in Goal 2 are considered. Those associated with the project will also share with the task force current issues relating to infant and toddler care in South Dakota.

<sup>1</sup> Accreditation Criteria and Procedures, National Association for the Education of Young Children.



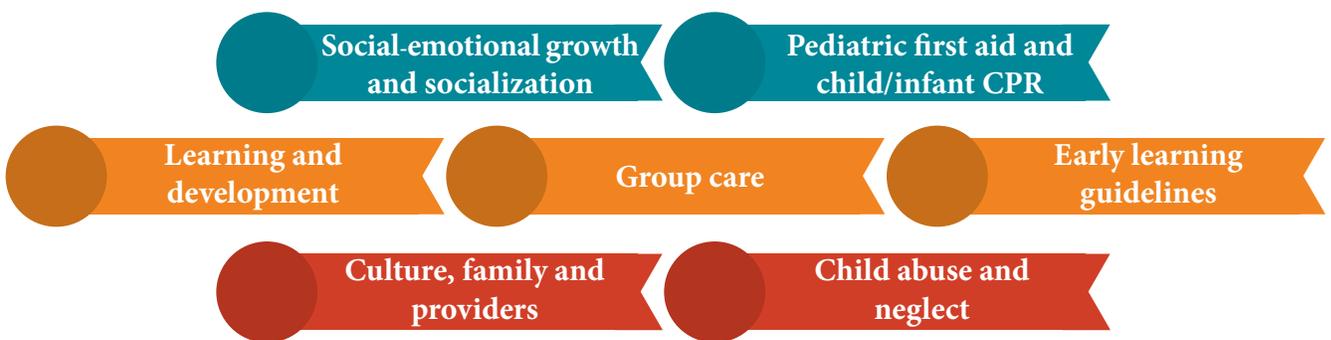
***To increase the availability and quality of infant/toddler care and education in South Dakota.***

Even beyond the familiar (and time-consuming) feed-change-cuddle cycle, infants and toddlers present unique challenges – ask any parent or infant childcare provider. That’s why delivering excellent care in a group setting requires staff knowledgeable about early childhood development, specifically for infancy and toddlers. In an ideal world, one teacher to three children or one teacher to five children would be optimal. Because SD does not require home childcare providers to be registered unless they serve 12 or more children, the data is unknown regarding how many infants and toddlers are actually cared for in a child care setting in SD. It is still important for families of Infants and Toddlers to have access to high quality care.

Not only are health and safety concerns paramount, but very young children need experienced caregivers who are responsive and respectful. Caregivers must understand that basic need and be willing to provide relationship-based care. From birth to age five, brain development is at a peak and nurturing is essential.

The South Dakota Early Childhood Enrichment System (ECE). There are five offices located across the state which offers infant and toddler training based from the Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers (PITC). The PITC series, developed by WestEd of California, is a nonprofit research, development and service agency to promote excellence in education. Most ECE trainers in the SD Early Childhood Enrichment system completed the Six Essential Program Practices Training for Trainers in July 2017 in Pierre. The ECE system offers ongoing training and technical assistance for caregivers of children, birth to age 13. Go to <http://dss.sd.gov/childcare/educationalopportunities/> for more information.

**Elements of the program for infants and toddlers focus on:**



In the past three years, 1,743 child care providers (including duplicate participants) attended 428 hours of training specific only to infants and toddlers offered by the five ECE programs. From July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2018, 142 series were held reaching 875 parents and caregivers impacting over 1,430 children.

# 2004 Goal 7

## ***Increase the quality of care and education for children ages 3-5 in South Dakota.***

**H**ere are causes for optimism: The Good Start, Grow Smart initiative, a component of No Child Left Behind, is a federal-state partnership that includes development of early learning guidelines.

This joint endeavor calls for states to develop quality criteria for early childhood education that includes voluntary guidelines on pre-reading, language and math skills that parallel state K-12 standards. The guidelines will detail what children need to know, understand and be able to do before entering school. Parents, too, can follow the same guidelines at home.



The Department of Education, along with other Alliance partners, has developed guidelines in language and literacy for 3- to 5-year-olds that link to K-12 standards, with the University of South Dakota School of Education guiding those efforts. A group of 39 - faculty from every public university with an early childhood program, teachers, Head Start, Even Start, parents, child care providers and administrators - will then tackle guidelines for math and social/emotional development.

These principles are developed with care and deliberation, then submitted for review, comment and revision to professionals in the field, school teachers, Title I preschools, various administrators, special ed programs and others. The work, in the words of an Alliance member, “is a deliberative process. We’re looking at what other states have done. We want to be sure our recommendations are based on scientific research.”

At the same time, the South Dakota Coalition for Children, in collaboration with a University of South Dakota student research team, is exploring certification models for preschools in others states. The purpose of this effort is to identify the best model for South Dakota.

The ultimate goal: To be sure South Dakota children enter school ready to learn.



***Increase the quality of care and education for children ages 3-5 in South Dakota.***

The Good Start, Grow Smart Initiative (2002 – President Bush’s State of the Union address) called for states to develop quality criteria for early childhood education that included voluntary guidelines on pre-reading, language and math skills that parallel state K-12 standards. The Department of Education (DOE) started working on the Early Learning Guidelines and supporting resources which were approved by the DOE in 2007 and distributed across the state to early childhood professionals and parents. In 2017, the SD Early Learning Guidelines for preschoolers were revised and guidelines for infants and toddlers were added. The Early Learning Guidelines are available on the SD DOE and DSS websites as well in printed format. In addition, a website “SD Step Ahead” ([sdstepahead.com](http://sdstepahead.com)) was launched in 2018 and provides easy access to the guidelines. These guidelines are based on research and provides a common knowledge base and examples of high-quality practices and resources for parents and professionals working with young children in our state.

Regarding preschool certification models, there have been a variety of efforts and legislation introduced over the past 15 years but currently there is no oversight or certification of preschool programs in the state.

Some local efforts have had an impact from 2007-2010, private funding supported “Starting Strong” voluntary preschool programs in Sioux Falls and Rapid City. Models exist today with support from private or other (United Way) funding. In 2017, the School Administrators of South Dakota developed the Preschool Levels of Excellence, which is a voluntary self-assessment tool to help preschool programs strive toward quality practices. Local preschool programs can work with their partner school district to receive recognition for their quality programs. Research is clear high quality early childhood experiences, including parents reading to their children regularly, influence later school success.

Data from the SD Department of Education shows there were 4,293 students enrolled in Pre-K programs in public and non-public schools the Fall 2018 school year.<sup>1</sup> That’s about three percent of the total school enrollment (PreK-12 grade) of 154,819. It is unclear how many preschools not connected to a school district are available in SD.

The ultimate goal stated by the Alliance in 2004 remains the same: To be sure SD children enter school ready to learn.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://doe.sd.gov/ofm/enrollment.aspx>



***Increase the quality and availability of out-of-school time (OST) programs for K-8th grade youth.***

**R**isky behavior among youth occurs most often between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., after school and before parents come home from work, according to any number of recent studies. In South Dakota, with 101,544 youngsters age 5 to 13<sup>1</sup>, that news commanded public attention. It also prompted development of out-of-school time (OST) programs.

Once operated in the state by relatively few entities like Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs and churches, program directors were relatively isolated. “These people didn’t know each other,” explained an Alliance member. “There was no networking component during the ‘90s.” Nor was the concept of OST programming fully understood across the state.

With the aid of state grants to schools and communities, the Office of Child Care Services stepped in to bridge the gap. It continues to encourage school districts across the state to offer OST programs. Those efforts paid off. According to an official, South Dakota went from 65 licensed OST sites in 1998 to nearly 150 in December 2003. The increase came in part as a result of collaborations with the state Department of Education, South Dakota State University Extension Services and SoDakSACA (South Dakota School Age Care Alliance), the state after-school organization.

The ultimate goal is to encourage development of OST programs as needed and to assist them in reaching these standards:

- Goal setting and strong management;
- Quality staffing;
- Low staff/student (maximum 1 /15, according to the Office of Child Care Services) ratios;
- Attention to safety, health and nutrition issues;
- Strong involvement of families;
- Effective partnerships with community-based organizations, juvenile justice agencies, law enforcement, and youth groups;
- Learning coordinated with the regular school day;
- Offering enrichment activities with learning opportunities that differ from those offered in the school day;
- Linkages between school-day teachers and OST personnel; and
- Evaluation of program progress and effectiveness.

In 2002, the Office of Child Care Services launched Move to Quality for OST programs, which encourages:

- Annual OST-specific training opportunities for OST directors,
- Development of new OST-specific curriculum statewide,
- Development of a state OST credential, which can be articulated into college credit,
- Accreditation of all OST programs statewide through the National Afterschool Association (NAA).

Recognizing OST as a vital link in the continuum of learning, Child Care Services has provided specific assistance and incentives to OST programs wanting to become accredited through a pilot project.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census, 2000

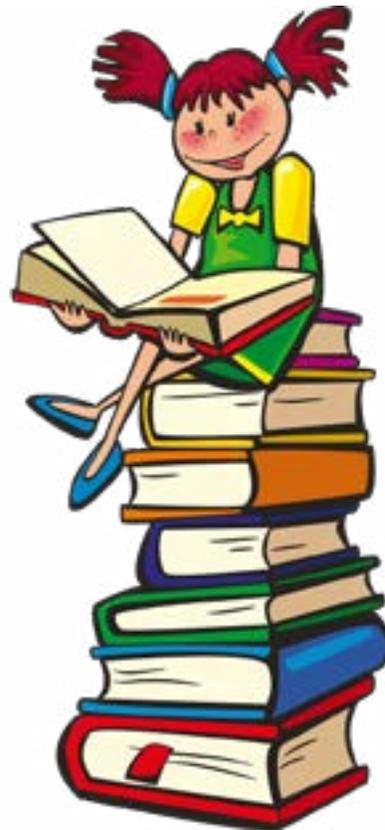
# 2019 Goal 8

***Increase the quality and availability of out-of-school time (OST) programs for K-8th grade youth.***

The South Dakota Division of Child Care Services partners with the South Dakota Afterschool Network with a goal of creating and sustaining quality afterschool programs.

The South Dakota School Age Alliance<sup>1</sup> (SoDakSACA) is an affiliate organization of the National After School Association. SoDakSACA has hosted the annual Out of School Time Director's Retreat since 2013 and sponsors a statewide conference in October for professionals working with school age children. SoDakSACA voted to endorse the National Afterschool Associate Core Knowledge and Competencies.

The South Dakota Afterschool Network<sup>2</sup> launched in 2016. The Network continues to build on afterschool and summer learning systems that improve outcomes for children and youth through school-based or school linked programs



1 <https://www.sodaksaca.org/>

2 <https://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net/south-dakota>

## Items to note that impact children in SD

- State Legislature actions regarding early childhood
  1. [2010 SB 191](#) – creating the SD Early Learning Council - passed out of committee, sent to 41st day, recalled to floor, defeated.
  2. [2017 SB 155](#) – establishing an Early Childhood Education Pilot Program – defeated in committee
  3. [2017 SB 156](#) – establishing an Early Learning Advisory Council – defeated in committee
  4. [Issue Memorandum 2017-05](#) – council published memorandum which provides a history of Early Childhood Education in the state.
  5. [2018 SB 132](#) – establishing an Early Learning Advisory Council – defeated in committee
  6. [2018 SCR 10](#) – recognizing the need for and urging the support for ECE in SD - tabled by committee, no further action
  7. [2019 HB 1175](#) - an act to establish the Early Learning Advisory Council - deferred to 41st day in state affairs committee
- Communities and school districts across the state have started the [Feeding South Dakota Backpack Program](#). The program provides at-risk children with nutritious, easy-to-prepare foods during weekends and holidays when school is not in session. More than 5,000 children statewide have participated in the program.
- In 2018, the SD Department of Education's state-wide school data entry system contains enrollment data for children enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start programs in the state.
- A private community foundation was started in 2017 to garner funding to support preschool education in the state.
- Between 2004 and 2017 the number and percent of children under age 18 in poverty increased from 27,000 (15%) to 34,000 (17%). By age group, the number and percent of children under age 5 in poverty in 2004 showed 12,000 (19%) and 13,000 (18%) in 2017. For the age group 6 to 17 in poverty, 2004 data showed 16,000 (13%) versus 21,000 (16%) in 2017.
- There has been a growth in funding to support Early Head Start services for expectant women and children ages 0-2.
- The SD Legislature Legislative Research Council published Issue Memorandum 2017-05, which provides a history of Early Childhood Education in the state.
- [The Center for American Progress](#) cites 43% (2018 data) of people in SD live in a child care desert (any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no child care providers or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed care slots).

## Early Childhood Resources

- **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)** - Are stressful or traumatic events that happen in childhood. The more adversity a child experiences in the first three years of life, the greater the odds of development delays. Early high stress experiences embed into the body with lifelong cognitive, emotional and physical health effects. ACEs trainers are available across the state to provide information and supportive resources.

- **Boys Town Common Sense Parenting Program** - Offered through the Department of Social Services' Division of Child Protection Services assists parents of toddlers, preschoolers, elementary and teenagers through easy-to-learn techniques addressing issues a parent may have with communication, discipline, decision-making, relationships and self-control when parenting.



- **Elevated Blood Lead Levels** - Became a Category II disease reportable within three days to the South Dakota DOH in 2017. While everyone is at risk for high blood lead levels, children under the age of six are of the highest concern. Exposure to lead can seriously harm a child's health, causing damage to the brain and central nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems and hearing and speech problems.

- **For Baby's Sake** - Is a website stemming from the Governor's Task Force on Infant Mortality SD has a website that offers training for parents, health care providers, childcare providers and resources for expectant women and their families in the state.

- **Huron Preschool Partnerships** - Provides tuition assistance to families who have qualified using the Headstart financial guidelines and needs assessment. Families who are on the Headstart waiting list are contacted to begin the process of placing their child in an existing preschool program in the community. Each family is asked to contribute what they can afford toward their child's preschool experience and the Preschool Partnership Program supplements the monthly tuition.

- **Responsive Parenting Classes** - Are offered through the Department of Social Services' Division of Child Care Services, for parents with children ages birth to three years old. Parents will learn about topics such as social-emotional growth, early brain development, temperament and guidance.

- **Sanford Harmony Program** - Is a social-emotional teaching program that cultivates strong classroom relationships between all students. The goal is to implement specialized teaching strategies into classroom activities in an effort to develop children into tolerant, compassionate, and caring adults.

- **SD Step Ahead** - This site houses the South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines.

- **The South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children (SDAEYC)** - Dedicated to creating a quality system for early childhood education through collaboration and partnerships, leadership and professional development. SDAEYC will advocate for the rights and needs of children, families and early childhood professionals. The group works to raise public awareness of the importance of young children and increase the respect and acknowledgment of early childhood professionals.

- **Bright Start Home Visiting Program** - Bright Start Home Visiting is a program of the Office of Child and Family Services in the Department of Health. Registered nurses meet with at-risk families during pregnancy and until their child turns two or three years old. Bright Start services are available in the following areas: Pennington County, Butte and Lawrence Counties, Pine Ridge Reservation, Lyman, Stanley & Hughes Counties, Beadle County, Roberts, Marshall & Day Counties and the Sioux Falls Metro Area.

- **The South Dakota Head Start Association (SDHSA)** - Collaborates and partners with various groups to provide services and information to aid SD children and families. SDHSA coordinates professional development for Head Start and collaborates with the South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children (SDAEYC) for an annual SD Early Childhood Education Conference for all childcare professionals and parents. SDHSA works with policy makers and leaders to advocate and promote quality programs for children and families in SD.
- **Starting Strong** (Rapid City) Is a market based, voluntary, parent-driven community scholarship program for three and four year old children from low income families. It provides scholarships for children so that they may obtain high-quality early education in order to enter school ready to learn. Parents of eligible children can choose a quality preschool from among approved programs that provide healthy meals and snacks, quality learning environments and highly qualified educators.
- **United Way - Black Hills Reads Initiative** - Helps children reach reading proficiency by third grade by improving school readiness, school attendance and summer reading loss.



South Dakota Association for the  
Education of Young Children

#### SDAEYC Vision Statement

All young children thrive and learn in a society dedicated to ensuring they reach their full potential.

Please contact [sdaeyc@gmail.com](mailto:sdaeyc@gmail.com) for more information or questions.  
(Please put "Our Children, Our Legacy" in the subject line.)