

The Loop

QUALITY CARE SOUTH DAKOTA NEWSLETTER



March 2025 | Issue 19

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Quality Care South Dakota is designed to support child care and school-age programs in meeting benchmarks of quality and identifying their strengths as well as areas for growth. The Quality Care Team is housed at the Child & Family Resource Network at South Dakota State University and works in collaboration with the South Dakota Early Childhood Enrichment System with support and direction from the South Dakota Department of Social Services.

Interested In Learning More?

Registered family day care homes and licensed child care centers and school-age programs can voluntarily participate in this opportunity. Please check out www.sdece.org/quality-care-south-dakota. For more information or to apply, please email sdsu.sdqris@sdstate.edu.

News to Support Your Program

Quality Care South Dakota Website Launch

The South Dakota Department of Social Services and South Dakota State University Quality Collaborative have launched Quality Care South Dakota (QCSD), a new Quality Recognition and Information System (QRIS). QCSD supports early childhood and school-age care programs in their continuous quality improvement efforts, benefiting children, families, and communities. Our mission is to support state-registered and licensed childcare providers by offering a framework for quality standards, resources, coaching guidance, and professional development to improve care environments for children. The newly launched website, Quality Care South Dakota, is a great resource for interested programs and parents.

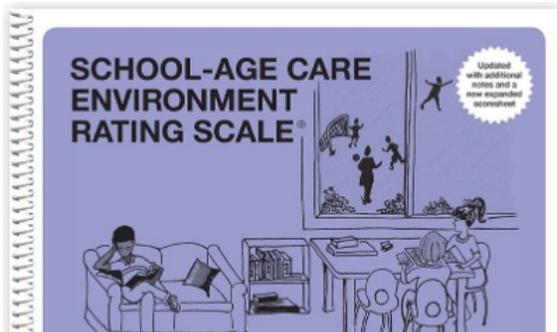
Quality Care South Dakota logo and navigation links: SDECE Home, QCSD Home, Quality Care South Dakota Team, For Families, For Providers, Participating Programs



The South Dakota Department of Social Services partnered with the South Dakota State University Quality Collaborative to develop and implement Quality Care South Dakota (QCSD), South Dakota's Quality Recognition and Information System (QRIS). The purpose of QCSD is to support early childhood and school-age care programs in their continuous quality improvement efforts. High-quality early childhood and school-age care programs are essential not only to South Dakota children, but also to their families and to the communities in which they live. QCSD provides a consistent measure of quality, helping parents make informed decisions when choosing child care. Quality Care South Dakota is housed at the Child & Family Resource Network on the campus of South Dakota State University.

OUR MISSION

Quality Care South Dakota (QCSD) is dedicated to enhancing the quality of early childhood and school-age care by providing a comprehensive framework to evaluate and recognize childcare services. Our mission is to support state-registered and licensed childcare providers by offering clear standards.



School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale

The School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) is an assessment tool designed to evaluate the quality of care in programs that serve school-age children, typically aged 5 to 12 years. These programs are often offered before or after school, during holidays, or summer breaks. The SACERS focuses on how well the environment supports the developmental, educational, and emotional needs of school-age children in a safe, stimulating, and structured environment.

During the QRIS pilot, school-age programs showed the greatest improvement in Health Practices. This demonstrates that utilizing the SACERS provides school-age programs with clear guidance on creating effective procedures and policies to ensure children's safety and well-being.

To learn more about the SACERS tool, please visit the [SACERS fact sheet](#).

South Dakota Early Childhood Enrichment 2024 Annual Report

Whether you're a provider, a parent, or a stakeholder, the South Dakota Early Childhood Enrichment 2024 Annual Report offers a deeper understanding of the SD ECE system's impact on supporting early childhood and school-age care educators across the state.

This report highlights key accomplishments from 2024 and outlines exciting plans for 2025, showcasing the continued growth and improvements in the care and education of South Dakota's children.

Download a copy of the 2024 Annual Report [here](#).



Financial Well-being



SDSU Extension will host a weekly series of six free webinars focused on increasing financial knowledge and improving financial well-being on Tuesdays from March 11 to April 15, 2025, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. CDT. The series covers the topics of hazard-proofing your finances, Medicare, managing household tasks, frauds and scams, saving money, and student loan repayment

While these webinars are not specifically aimed at early childhood and school-age care professionals, they may be of interest to you, the families you support, or someone you know.

These sessions are free, but registration is required. All sessions are offered via Zoom weekly on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm (CST) from March 11th – April 15th. Register at <https://extension.sdstate.edu/event/financial-fireside-chats>

SD ECE Resources



Enhance Communication with Printable Posters

Would your program benefit from using posters to communicate messages quickly and effectively to both staff and families?

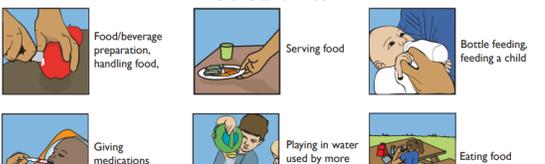
If so, we encourage you to explore the [Posters](#) page on *South Dakota ECE Resources*. Here, you will find a variety of downloadable and printable posters that cover a range of essential topics. These posters are designed to convey key messages in a clear and concise manner, making it easier to share important information with both your staff and the families you serve. Take advantage of these resources to enhance communication and support a positive learning environment.

If you are a provider working in a registered or licensed program and do not have an account, please [register here](#) for membership at no cost to you.

When To Wash Your Hands



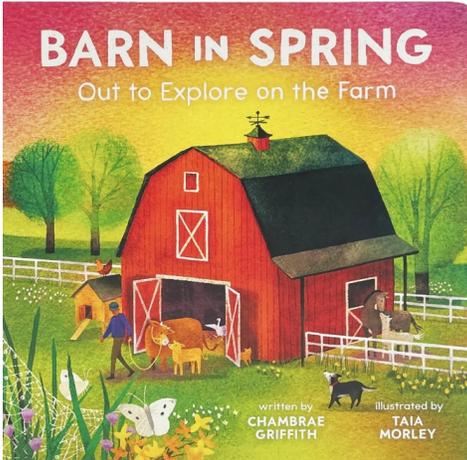
Before and After



Books of the Month

Each month, this section highlights children's books that are linked to monthly themes and/or valuable reads for child care providers. This curated selection aims to be a helpful resource of introducing titles to care givers they may not have seen before.

As we welcome the changing of seasons, there's no better time to dive into a fresh stack of spring books. These stories invite children to explore new worlds, spark curiosity, and embrace the season of change. Beyond just entertainment, reading strengthens cognitive abilities, enriches vocabulary, improves focus, and fosters creativity, making it the perfect way to celebrate the changing of seasons.



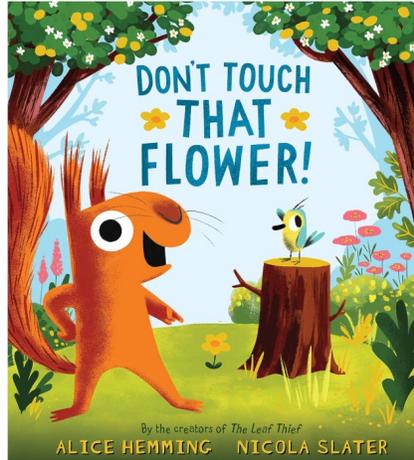
"Barn feels the sun. Warmth floods her gables. As winter retreats, she opens her stables..."

It's springtime on the farm, and the animals (and their new babies!) are ready to get out of the barn and explore. The cows are happy to graze in the green pasture, the hen is busy at work building a nest, and the happy-go-lucky pigs have found a mucky mud puddle to wallow in!

Celebrate spring with this beautiful book that any farm-loving toddler is sure to love! Lyrically written in rhyming verse with gorgeously rich illustrations.

Reading age: Infant-2 years

**Please note, all book descriptions and suggested reading ages are provided by Amazon. While suggested reading levels can provide guidance, they should be seen as flexible recommendations rather than strict rules. By using suggested reading levels as guidelines, you can choose books that not only match children's developmental stages but also ignite their curiosity and enthusiasm for reading. This personalized approach fosters a more meaningful and enjoyable learning experience.



Don't Touch That Flower! is the spring-themed companion to the beloved *New York Times* bestseller *The Leaf Thief!*

"Hello brand new day.

Hello sunshine!
Hello lovely leaves.
Nice to see you back."

Spring is here and today a flower has sprung to life. But when Squirrel becomes too protective of it, Bird shows Squirrel the right way to let flowers blossom and grow.

Reading age: 2-5 years



In this companion to *Fletcher and the Falling Leaves* and *Fletcher and the Snowflake Christmas*, Fletcher the fox returns for another seasonal adventure.

Fletcher enjoys the sunny weather and the warmth of spring. But when he stumbles across snowy flakes gently floating to the ground, he spreads the news of winter's return to all his friends. But spring is full of wonderful surprises for Fletcher and his friends.

The Fletcher books are enjoyable picture books for sharing at home or in the classroom and are perfect for units on the seasons.

Reading age: 2-7 years

Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming Statewide Conference Dates

[South Dakota Early Childhood Education Conference](#)

Ramkota Hotel & Watertown Event Center, Watertown, SD; April 10-11, 2025

Be on the lookout for the Quality Care South Dakota table – there's an exclusive perk waiting just for Pathways members!

[SD School-Age Care Alliance Out of School Time Leadership Retreat](#)

Keystone, SD; April 10-12, 2025

[South Dakota Early Childhood and School Age Leadership Summit](#)

South Dakota Early Childhood and School-Age Educators' Summit

Oacoma, SD; July 18-19, 2025

Family Child Care Professionals of SD (FCCPSD)

Huron; September 26-27, 2025

SD School-Age Care Alliance (SoDakSACA) Conference

Spearfish, SD; October 23-25, 2025

Quality Child Care in South Dakota

Whether you're interested in applying or just seeking more information, please view our video to learn how QCSD supports licensed child care centers and school-age programs, and registered family day care homes.



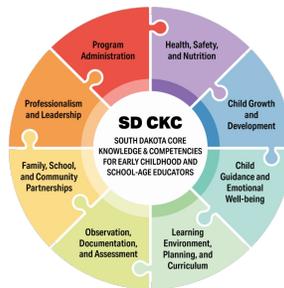
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Loop



We're thrilled to have welcomed so many new members to Pathways since its relaunch!

If you are an early childhood or school-age care educator, we would love to celebrate YOU next!

Apply to be a member of Pathways



The South Dakota Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs) guide self-reflection and professional growth by describing what early childhood and school-age care educators need to **know**, **understand**, and **be able to do** at all levels of professional practice in eight areas of knowledge.

Click the button below to learn more, to view the document, and to order free copies of the SD CKCs for yourself or your team.

View SD Core Knowledge & Competencies

Quality Care South Dakota Team

- Rachel Busmann, Outreach Coordinator and QCSD Lead
- Amelia Gullickson, Early Childhood Quality Assistant
- Nichole Lanning, Early Childhood Quality Assistant
- Maria Picek, Lead Coach and Observer
- Cheyanne Kamps, Early Childhood and School Age Program Observer
- Deb Owens, Early Childhood and School Age Quality Coach
- Cassie Stoltenburg, Early Childhood and School Age Quality Coach
- Clover Herdman, Early Childhood and School Age Quality Coach

South Dakota State University
Quality Care South Dakota
South Dakota Quality Recognition and Information System | [Website](#)

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