

The Loop

QUALITY CARE SOUTH DAKOTA NEWSLETTER



April 2025 | Issue 20

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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@sdsu.edu.

News to Support Your Program

Congratulations - March Level Designations

☐ Shoutout to Our Quality Champions! ☐

We are proud to recognize and celebrate the outstanding providers who have recently reached new milestones in Quality Care South Dakota (QCSD). These providers have shown incredible dedication to continuous improvement and high-quality care for children and families.

☐ Level 1 – Childcare Centers

These programs have taken an important first step in their quality journey:

- **Faulkton Area OST Program**
- **FAOSP Little Sprouts Daycare**
- **Bright Start Childcare**
- **Good News Children's Center**

☐ Level 4 – Family Child Care

Achieving one of the highest levels in the QCSD system:

- **Emily Osterloh - Perfect Storm Daycare**

☐ A big congratulations to these providers for achieving their new QCSD levels! Your hard work, commitment, and passion for early childhood education are truly making a difference. We celebrate your success and are honored to walk alongside you in your quality journey.

☐ Interested in joining QCSD?

Learn more and get started at <https://sdece.org/quality-care-south-dakota/> or email us at sdsu.sdqris@sdsu.edu!



Provider Appreciation Day - May 9, 2025

Provider Appreciation Day is a National Day of Recognition held annually on the Friday before Mother's Day. It honors the dedication of early childhood education professionals—including child care providers, teachers, and other educators—who play a vital role in the lives of young children and their families.

At Quality Care South Dakota, we are proud to celebrate the over 6,000 early childhood and school-age care educators across South Dakota. These providers are the heart of an essential workforce, offering care, learning, and lifelong success for children in their homes.

Join us in thanking these incredible professionals—today and every day—for their tireless commitment and lasting impact.

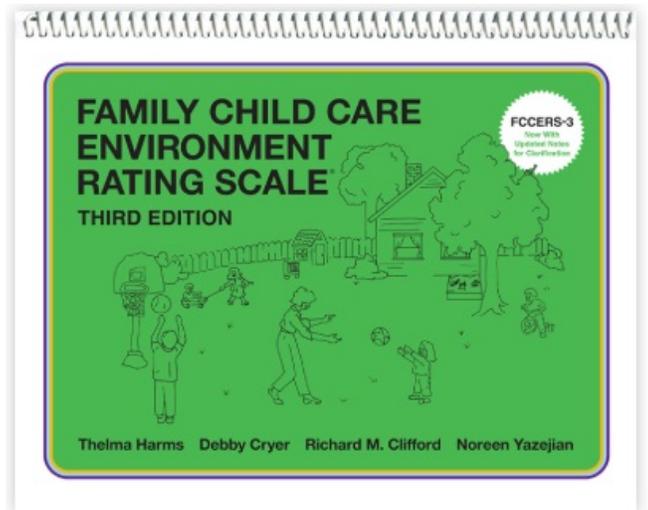
Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale

The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS) is a specialized tool designed to assess the quality of family child care settings, where care is provided in a home-based environment, often by a single caregiver or small team. This scale evaluates various aspects of the caregiving environment, focusing on how well the space and interactions support the development of young children in a more intimate, home-like setting. The FCCERS is used to assess care for children from infancy through school-age and is designed to guide family child care providers in creating enriching, supportive environments.

During the QRIS pilot, family child care programs showed the highest area of growth in the Language and Books subscale which includes areas of talking with children, encouraging vocabulary development, responding to children's communication, encouraging children to communicate, provider use of books with children, and encouraging children's use of books.

This growth shows that using the FCCERS tool gave providers a clear path to strengthen how they support language and literacy. With a better sense of what to focus on, providers were able to be more intentional in how they talked with children and used books in meaningful ways.

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



SD ECE Resources



Theme-Based Lesson Plans

Did you know South Dakota ECE Resources includes a [collection of printable lesson plans](#)? These ready-made plans include detailed step-by-step instructions, key vocabulary words, recommended books, suggested questions to guide young learners, background information for teachers, and pre-written family letters in both English and Spanish to extend learning at home.

The lesson plans cover a variety of topics perfect for both spring and summer. A few of the lessons that align well with warmer weather are *Curious Crawlers*, *Outdoor Classroom*, and *Spring*. Don't miss other spring and summer-friendly topics, such as *Bird Feeders* and *Growing*





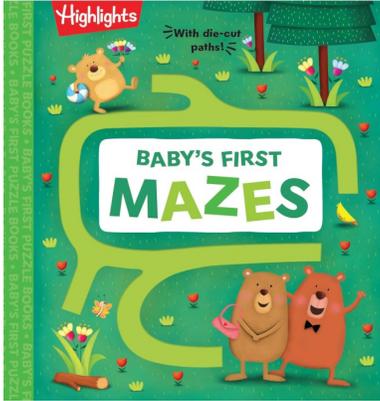
Spring and Summer monthly topics, such as *Let's Recycle* and *Growing Green Grass (Recycling)*, and *Let's Go Fly a Kite* and *Sun Prints (Our Sky)*, all designed to inspire outdoor exploration and learning.

If you are an educator working in a registered or licensed program, please [register here](#) for membership at no cost to you.

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 the days grow warmer, it's still just as important to take time to cuddle up and read with the children in your care. Sharing stories together boosts language development, enhances focus, and sparks imagination—making it a meaningful part of any day, no matter the season.



Highlights Baby's First Puzzle Books encourage essential skill development in babies and toddlers through togetherness

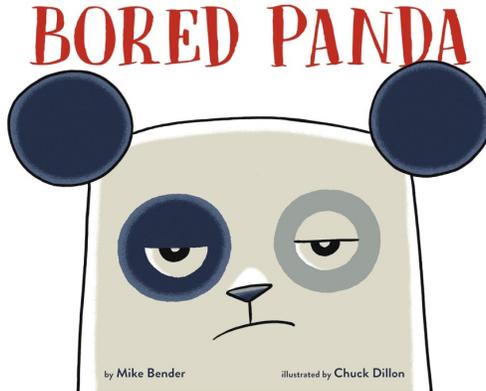
and play. This engaging first puzzle experience combines vibrant art and developmentally appropriate puzzles to spark early learning and promote important bonding with parents and caregivers.

Every puzzle of this 14-page maze activity book is designed by childhood experts. Nourish baby's growing mind with:

- Interactive puzzles that boost fine motor and cognitive skills
- Vibrant illustrations that inspire smiles
- A tactile learning experience that encourages curiosity and boosts confidence

Reading age: Infant- 3 years

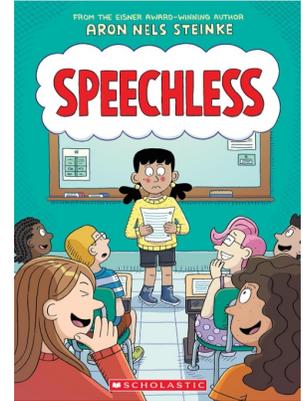
**Please note, all book descriptions and suggested reading ages are provided by Amazon. While suggested reading levels can provide guidance, they should be seen as flexible recommendations rather than strict rules. By using suggested reading levels as guidelines, you can choose books that not only match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



For Panda, there is NOTHING worse than being bored. It's just so...boring.

But what's a tech-loving panda to do when there's no electricity? Skeptical that the great outdoors will cure his boredom, Panda nonetheless sets out on a day full of surprises. They might even turn out to be *fun* surprises!

Reading age: 4-8 years



Middle school was supposed to be a fresh start for Mira, who struggles to speak in class even though she can speak at home

without a problem. Her former best friend, Chloe, has become her worst enemy, and Mira's only solace is making videos for her secret stop-motion animation channel. But when Chloe's mom has to travel for a family emergency, Mira is horrified to learn that her family has volunteered to let Chloe stay with them. When it feels like everything is going wrong, will Mira ever find her voice?

Reading age: 8-12 years

Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming Statewide Conference Dates

[South Dakota Early Childhood and School Age Leadership 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

[South Dakota Early Childhood Education Conference](#)

Rapid City, SD; April 9-10, 2026

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

Keystone, SD; TBD April 2026

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.



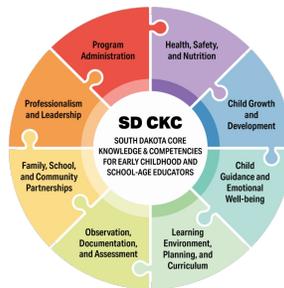
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Loop



We're so excited to have welcomed so many new members to Pathways since our relaunch!

If you're an educator in a registered or licensed early childhood or school-age care, we'd 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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