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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

Congratulations - June Level Designations

- Shout-out to Our Quality Champions!

We are proud to acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding providers and programs that have recently reached new milestones in Quality Care South Dakota (QCSD). These individuals and teams have demonstrated remarkable dedication to continuous quality improvement for children and families.

Level 1 - Registered Family Child Care

- Kristina Pieschke
- Erica Thorson

Level 1 - Licensed Child Care Center

- Wagner Early Childhood

Congratulations to each of you on achieving your new QCSD levels! Your hard work, commitment, and passion for early childhood/school-age care are making a lasting difference. We're honored to support you on your quality journey and proud to have you as part of the QCSD community.

- Interested in joining QCSD?

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

Quality Care South Dakota (QCSD) observer Cheyanne Kamps, along with QCSD coaches Deb Owens, Cassie Stoltenburg, and Clover Herdman, recently completed a 4-day specialized training through the Environment Rating Scales Institute (ERSI).



This training is the only official course developed and approved by the authors of the Environment Rating Scales (ERS), a trusted tool for evaluating the quality of early childhood environments. Led by the ERS authors, the training includes four days of hands-on, guided assessment practice. By completing this course, the QCSD team has strengthened its ability to support and promote high-quality early childhood education using proven, research-based tools.

Participants are trained to effectively utilize the ERS tools through hands-on observations in childcare settings. Each session includes a comprehensive debriefing led by experienced group leaders, with the authors available to provide expert insights and answer questions.

Certification as a reliable ERS observer is based on scores achieved during three observations conducted by certified ERSI trainers. To qualify, participants must meet the following reliability thresholds: 80% for technical assistance level, 85% for assessor level, and 90% for anchor level.

Observer Cheyanne Kamps shared the following about her experience: "Attending the ECERS and ITERS trainings provided by the Chapel Hill trainers was an incredibly valuable experience. It deepened my understanding of quality early childhood environments and will greatly enhance my ability to conduct accurate and meaningful observations. This opportunity has provided me with the confidence for the tools and will allow me to better support programs in strengthening the care and learning they provide."

Great work to QCSD Team, in being lifelong learners with your professional goals and learning new information to support providers and programs.



Looking for Professional Development Training Opportunities?

Home How Do I... Behavioral Health Child Care Child Protection Child Support Eco

2025 Training Calendar

Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5
January	January	January	January	January
February	February	February	February	February
March	March	March	March	March
April	April	April	April	April
May	May	May	May	May
June	June	June	June	June
July	July	July	July	July
August	August	August	August	August
September	September	September	September	September
October	October	October	October	October

The South Dakota Department of Social Services offers an easy way for child care providers to find upcoming training sessions offered by the South Dakota Early Childhood Enrichment system across the state. The Training Calendar is a helpful online tool that lists current and upcoming professional development opportunities designed to support your work with children and youth and are aligned with the South Dakota Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood and School Age Care Educators*.

Whether you're working to meet licensing requirements, strengthen your skills, or stay current on early childhood topics, the training calendar provides an up-to-date list of available sessions to support your professional growth.

Visit the Training Calendar [here](#). In addition to the established training sessions, the SD ECE System can discuss your program's unique needs for upcoming professional development.

*South Dakota Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood and School Age Care Educators categories:

- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Child Growth and Development
- Child Guidance and Emotional Well-being
- Learning Environment, Planning, and Curriculum
- Observation, Documentation, and Assessment
- Family, School, and Community Partnerships
- Professionalism and Leadership
- Program Administration

Stay Safe in the Summer Heat

Summer is a great time to enjoy outdoor play, but hot weather can bring serious health risks like dehydration, heat exhaustion, and sunburn. As temperatures rise, it's important to know when it's safe for children and youth



to be outside—and when it's best to stay indoors.

When Is It Too Hot to Go Outside?

Use the **heat index** (a combination of temperature and humidity) to decide if outdoor play is safe. Here are some general guidelines:



- 80°F or below: Considered comfortable and safe for outdoor play.
- 90°F: Beginning to feel uncomfortable. Use caution. Limit time outdoors, play in the shade, and offer water often.
- 100°F: Uncomfortable and may be hazardous. Avoid long periods outside. Plan very short outdoor play or stay indoors.
- 110°F: Considered dangerous. Stay indoors. It's too dangerous for outdoor activities.

Tips for Safe Summer Play

- Offer water frequently, even if children aren't thirsty.
- Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher and reapply every 2 hours.
- Try to plan outdoor time early in the morning or later in the afternoon, when it's cooler.

We've got weather magnets for you!

These handy magnets feature simple outdoor temperature guidelines—perfect for quick reference. Just hang one near your door or check-in area for easy reminders throughout the day.

Get your **FREE MAGNET** by emailing: SDSU.SDQRIS@sdstate.edu

Let's keep children safe, healthy, and happy during these hot summer months!

SD ECE Resources



Ready, Set, Move!

Looking to add fresh physical activities to your lesson plans? Need creative movement ideas for those rainy indoor days?

The [Activity Resources](#) section on SD ECE Resources has you covered! You'll find helpful tips, fun songs, engaging poems, exciting activities, family newsletters, and more—perfect for bringing movement into daily routines. Just download, print, and get moving!

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



Books of the Month

Each month, this section spotlights children's books that align with seasonal themes or offer meaningful value for child care providers. This curated selection is designed to introduce new and noteworthy titles that caregivers may not have come across before—providing fresh inspiration for story time.

As July unfolds with sunshine and summertime fun, it's the perfect time to connect and discover the joy of a new book together. Reading with children nurtures language skills, strengthens attention spans, and sparks imagination—making it a fun and enriching part of each day, all summer long.



A tactile touch-and-feel book all about bugs. You must never touch the bugs . . . except in this book!

This insect-themed touch-and-feel book is perfect for young children. Children will love counting down from five and watching the bugs disappear at the turn of a page. Innovative silicone touches feature on every bug creating a tactile reading experience. This awesome book offers plenty for young children to enjoy, helping to promote an early love of reading.

Reading age: 1- 3 years

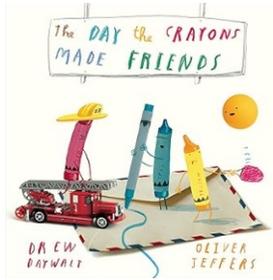


Duncan's crayons just can't seem to stay put!

After convincing one group of crayons to go back to work after they wanted to quit and rescuing another group who got lost in the most inconvenient places, Duncan's crayons have disappeared once more.

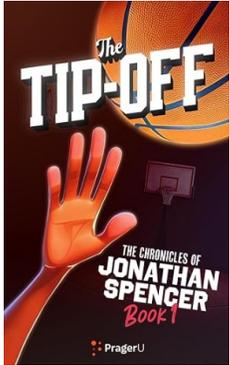
But this time, they've gone out into his room to make friends. From Red Crayon, who fulfills his dream of driving a firetruck; to Blue Crayon, who meets a fashion doll desperately in need of a head; to fan favorite Esteban, who is off to tame a teddy bear (or as he would call it, a wild beast), each crayon has an exciting story to share about the new objects they've met and the new adventures they've had.

Reading age: 4-8 years



Starting middle school is rarely easy, but a summer full of big changes has Jonathan feeling overwhelmed. There are new responsibilities at home involving his three crazy younger siblings, and Mom and Dad have new jobs and no time. Plus, the notorious school prankster Slammo prowls the halls in search of victims for his growing online empire. But when Jonathan discovers a hidden talent, things begin to change. Learning to play basketball might be just what he needs to survive on and off the court.

Reading age: 10-14 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.

→ 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 executive summary on the [QRIS pilot](#) and the video below to learn how QCSD supports licensed child care centers and school-age programs, and registered family day care homes.



Stay in the loop with the latest news from Quality Care South Dakota!
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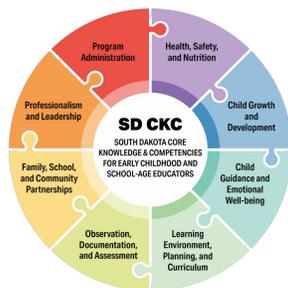


PATHWAYS
SOUTH DAKOTA

Congratulations to the 500+ professionals participating on the Pathways to Professional Development Career Ladder. If you're an educator in a registered or licensed early childhood or school-age care program, we'd love to welcome you and get a welcome kit to you soon!

Apply to be a member of Pathways

□ Visit our new Pathways Facebook page and join us in celebrating the early childhood and school-age care educators who make up our Pathways community! □



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.

Directors are using the SD CKCs to support important conversations about professional development and growing leaders in your child care and school-age program. 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
- Tessa Stoltenberg, Education Program Support Assistant

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

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