

September 2025 | Issue 25

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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](http://www.sdece.org/quality-care-south-dakota).

News to Support Your Program



**Congratulations - August 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 - Licensed Child Care Center**

- Our Little Village Learning Center

**Level 1 - School Age Program**

- Kadoka Learning Center

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.

Learn more QCSD at <https://sdece.org/quality-care-south-dakota/>

**Good Leaders are Good Delegators**

In the world of early childhood and school-age care, strong leadership

**"If you want to do a few small things**

doesn't mean doing everything yourself. Instead, it means creating the conditions where others can lead, contribute, and thrive.

At first glance, this advice may seem like simple common sense—exactly what effective leaders are expected to do. However, many of us operate in a constant state of overextension, which leads to an instinct to “hold on” to work rather than share it. While this may feel like self-preservation, it ultimately lessens our impact by limiting the influence we can have on others.

In the article “[To Be a Great Leader, You Have to Learn How to Delegate Well.](#)” by Jesse Sostrin, he reminds us that one of the

toughest transitions for leaders is moving from doing to leading. Great leaders spend less time carrying out the work themselves and more time ensuring their teams have the tools, encouragement, and clarity they need. Sostrin outlines four delegation strategies that work well for leaders in any role.

1. **Start with your reasons.** When people lack understanding about why something matters and how they fit into it, they are less likely to care. But if you give them context about what's at stake, then you increase personal relevance and the odds of follow-through.
2. **Inspire their commitment.** People get excited about what's possible, but they commit only when they understand their role in making it happen. Once clarity is established, confirm their interpretation (face-to-face, or at least voice-to-voice, to avoid email misinterpretations).
3. **Engage at the right level.** It's essential to stay involved, but the degree matters. You should maintain engagement levels sufficient for you to deliver the agreed-upon mix of support and accountability. To pick your spot, simply ask people what the right level is based on their style. This not only clarifies the frequency of touchpoints they will find useful but also gives them autonomy in how the delegated work will move forward.
4. **Practice saying “yes,” “no,” and “yes, if.”** Delegation begins with the art of being selective. Take time to evaluate each request that comes your way and match it to the contributions where your skills create the greatest value. When a task aligns with your strengths, say “yes” and commit fully and give it your focus. But when it doesn't, consider saying “yes, if...” and then identify team members who can take ownership. In this role, you still guide, encourage, and inspire, but your impact comes as the catalyst rather than the one doing all the heavy lifting. At times, this discerning approach may also mean saying “no”, while clearly explaining how your attention will create greater value elsewhere.

For early childhood and school-age care leaders, delegating not only lightens your load but also builds a culture of trust and empowerment. When staff feel valued and supported, they are more invested in the mission of providing quality care and education for children. Effective delegation, then, isn't about letting go of responsibility, it's about lifting others up so the whole program can succeed.

right, do them yourself.  
**If you want to do great things and make a big impact, learn to delegate.”**

—John C. Maxwell, noted leadership expert and bestselling author of *The Five Levels of Leadership*, *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*, and *Leadership: The 11 Essential Changes Every Leader Must Embrace*

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## South Dakota Pathways to Professional Development Career Ladder: Literacy Challenge

An impactful opportunity has launched for members of the South Dakota Pathways to Professional Development Career Ladder. All Pathways members have been invited to take part in our very first Pathways Literacy Challenge! This unique opportunity is designed to celebrate the joy of reading while supporting the children and families served every day.

Reading aloud is one of the most powerful ways to support children's learning and growth. Did you know that hearing 100 books can introduce nearly 30,000 new words to young children? Each shared story builds vocabulary, strengthens comprehension, and nurtures a lifelong love of reading.

Educators who participate in the literacy challenge will:

- Read 100 books aloud during October and November for children birth to age 5.
- Read aloud for 8 hours during October and November for school age children.

Educators who complete the challenge and submit a reading log will receive a kit of new, age-appropriate books for their programs. They'll also receive a certificate recognizing and celebrating the meaningful gift of reading they've shared with the children in their care.

If you are a Pathways member check your email, then visit [traininghouse.sdstate.edu](http://traininghouse.sdstate.edu) and search for the Pathways course. Once inside, click the Pathways Literacy Challenge tile to sign up and print your reading log.

Don't wait—October 2 is the last day to register! ☐





# SD ECE Resources



## Manage HR with Confidence

Many of us entered the field of child care and school age care because we love caring for and educating children, not because we have a background in business or HR. But running a successful program often means juggling those responsibilities, too.

That's where South Dakota ECE Resources can help. Under the Successful Program Management section, the [Becoming an HR Expert](#) section offers a Tools, Templates, and Resources collection designed to guide you through HR tasks with confidence.

You'll find everything from job descriptions and interview guides, to employee handbooks, an orientation toolkit, and practical guidance on other HR topics. Best of all, the documents are ready to go; simply download and customize them for your program.

With these supports, you can spend less time stressing over HR and more time focusing on what you do best: helping children thrive.

*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.*



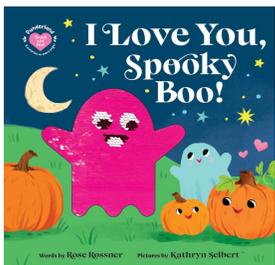
# Books of the Month



Each month, this section spotlights children's books that align with seasonal themes or offer meaningful value for child care providers.

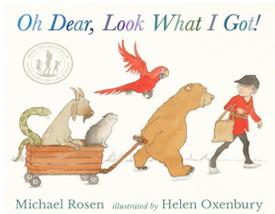
This curated selection is designed to introduce new and noteworthy titles that caregivers may not have come across before—providing fresh inspiration for story time.

As September ushers in crisp mornings and the start of a new season, it's the perfect time to connect and discover the joy of a new book together. Reading with children strengthens language skills, sharpens focus, and sparks imagination, making story time a meaningful and enriching part of every day as we settle into fall.



Looking for a fun, educational activity for the season? This board book combines cute illustrations, pun-filled rhymes, and tactile surprises that children will love. Each page encourages sensory exploration and makes storytime unforgettable.

Reading age: Birth- 3 years



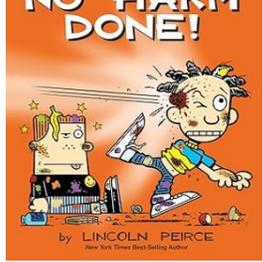
The incomparable creative team behind *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* reunite for a read-aloud comedy of misunderstandings that has all the hallmarks of a classic.

As an unlucky boy goes from shop to shop, asking for simple, reasonable things—a hat, a coat, a cake, a chair—he keeps running into problems. Instead, he ends up collecting a growing group of animals who happily follow him on his errands. It isn't until he asks for a cup that he is given a wriggly little creature—one that might just solve his problem... or maybe not.

Reading age: 3-7 years



It's back-to-school time for sixth-grader Nate Wright, and this just might be the best year ever! Rumors are flying that the villainous Mrs. Godfrey is now teaching EIGHTH grade. Chad is on the verge of destroying Gina in the race for class president. And could Nate finally realize his dream of changing the school mascot to . . . a sea cucumber? Hey, why not? He's a can-do kind of guy.



When the *Weekly Bugle* needs a story, Nate's happy to make headlines—by (allegedly) starting an epic food fight in the cafetorium! In this latest collection of gut-busting *Big Nate* comics, Nate's always stirring things up, but at the end of every day, P.S. 38 is still standing. In other words: NO HARM DONE!

Reading age: 8-12 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

#### [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

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

Oacoma, SD; July 24-25, 2026



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Subscribe to our newsletter and never miss a beat.

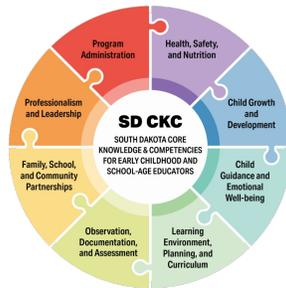
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Loop



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](#)

Child and Family Resource Network, SDSU | Pugsley Center 201 Box 2218, SDSU | Brookings, SD 57007 US

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