

The Loop

QUALITY CARE SOUTH DAKOTA NEWSLETTER



May 2026 | Issue 33

• In This Month's Newsletter •

News to Support Your Program

- Congratulations - April Level Designation
- Have You Shared Your Feedback?
- QCSD 2025 Annual Impact Report
- Pathways Pathfinders: Joan Robinson

SD ECE Resources

- Summer Weather Preparedness

Books of the Month

- Are You Snuggly?
- It's My Bird-Day!
- The Stowaway

Mark Your Calendar

- Upcoming Statewide Conference Dates



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 child care homes, licensed child care centers, and school-age programs can voluntarily participate in this opportunity. Please check out [Quality Care South Dakota](#) for more information.

News to Support Your Program

Congratulations - April Level Designation

🎉 Shout-out to Our Quality Champion! 🎉

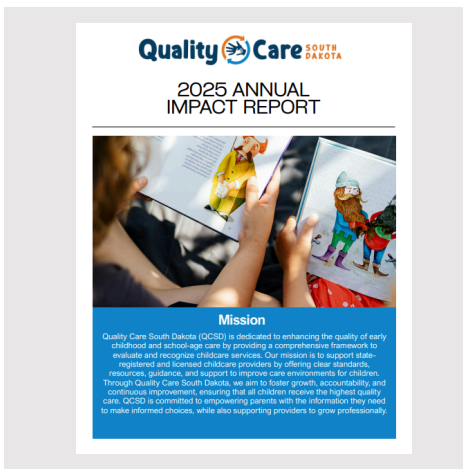
We are proud to recognize and celebrate the following outstanding program that has recently achieved a new milestone in Quality Care South Dakota (QCSD). This team exemplify dedication to continuous quality improvement for children and families.



Level 1 - Licensed Child Care Center

- Precious Angels Learning Center

Congratulations on achieving your new QCSD level! This accomplishment reflects your dedication, perseverance, and passion for early childhood and school-age care. Your work is creating meaningful, lasting impacts in your community and that is truly worth celebrating. We are honored to support you along your quality journey and grateful to have you as part of the QCSD community.



Quality Care South Dakota 2025 Annual Impact Report

The 2025 Annual Impact Report is now available! We invite you to explore information, accomplishments, and data highlighting the impact of our collective efforts focused on continuous quality improvements for early childhood and school-age programs. The report reflects the dedication of educators, programs, and partners working together to support South Dakota children, families, and communities.

View the full report on our QCSD website: [2025 Annual Impact Report](#)

Have You Shared Your Feedback?

BEAM-SD (Behavioral Health, Education, Access, and Management for South Dakota) is inviting educators across the state to share their insights through a brief Educational Professional Needs Assessment.

BEAM-SD supports healthcare, education, and behavioral health professionals in addressing the behavioral health needs of children and adolescents (ages 0–21) through no-cost programming, including professional-to-professional consultation, education and training, resources, and care coordination.

Your feedback matters and helps strengthen supports for children, families, and professionals across South Dakota. The survey will close on May 22, 2026.

Take the survey [here](#).

BEAM-SD EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

BEAM-SD supports healthcare, education, and behavioral health professionals across South Dakota in treating and managing behavioral health needs for children and adolescents (0-21) through the following no-cost programming: Professional-to-Professional Consultation, Education and Training, Resources and Care Coordination.

BEAM-SD is seeking input from educational professionals across South Dakota to shape its FREE education and training, FERPA-compliant consultation line, and website-based resources to meet educator needs.

Responses to this survey are anonymous and cannot be linked back to you.

Participants who complete this survey may choose to enter a drawing for a chance to win **one of two \$50 Amazon gift cards!** Two winners will be selected at random. **This survey will close on May 22nd 2026.**



Center for Disabilities



Pathways Pathfinders: Joan Robinson

Each month in Pathways Pathfinders, we highlight a Pathways member who is making a difference in the lives of children and families through their commitment to professional growth. This month, we are proud to feature Joan Robinson of Kids World Learning Center, whose passion for supporting young children and dedication to professional development are helping shape their growth and development. We asked Joan to reflect on her work, her Pathways journey, and what inspires her as an educator. Here's what she had to say:

"I work for Kids World Learning Center, a staple in the Brookings community for over 30 years. It was originally founded by Bob Fishback to provide the employees of First Bank & Trust with on site childcare. The center serves children from infancy through preschool. We focus on the balance of structured school readiness and creative play, ensuring every child feels a part of a supportive community.

As a lead teacher in the preschool program, my primary focus is on delivering a curriculum that balances school readiness and creative play. I have created a nurturing environment that allows the 3 and 4-year-olds to hit their developmental milestones and provide lessons that transition from toddlerhood to the cognitive skills they will need for kindergarten. I also prioritize social and emotional growth in the classroom. I implement dedicated social and emotional lessons to help the children navigate peer relationships and self-regulation. My goal is to make sure they are socially confident and emotionally prepared for the next step of their education.

I've dedicated the last 20 years of my career to early childhood education. It fascinates me how rapidly a child's brain develops in the first 5 years of life. I started because I wanted to be a part of that foundational period where you can shape a child's love of learning. Two decades later, my inspiration has evolved; now, I'm driven by the long-term relationships I've built with families and the pride of

seeing my former students grow into successful young adults. I've realized that by providing a stable, nurturing environment, I'm not just teaching a class, I'm supporting a community.

What I love the most is being a part of the daily transformation. Children develop so rapidly—socially, emotionally, and cognitively. I love being the person who guides them through their “firsts”, when they resolve conflict on their own or when they master the concept we've been practicing. I love seeing their confidence grow and knowing I had a part in it. I also love the relationships I've built with families. It brings me such joy when a parent tells me their child repeated a lesson I taught, or better yet, years later still says, “Hi” or gives me a hug when I see them in the community.

I am currently on Level 6 in Pathways. I earned this level by completing my Child Development Associate credential (CDA). I maintain this level by my current CPR certification, my continued work in a licensed child-care setting, and continuing to take professional development trainings. Being a part of Pathways has positively influenced my goals as an educator by strengthening my confidence in myself. It has encouraged me to engage with others and create meaningful learning experiences. I have been inspired to take on more leadership opportunities and to model confidence and growth for the children in my center. Pathways has reinforced my goal of becoming a more reflective, confident, and impactful educator.

I would encourage an educator considering Pathways to take the leap and commit to the process. It's an opportunity to grow in confidence and leadership. Pathways encourages you to reflect on your strengths, step out of your comfort zone, and develop skills that directly impact your effectiveness in the classroom.

It's an honor to be recognized in *The Loop*. It's a meaningful acknowledgement of my time, effort, and growth as an educator in the Pathways program. Being recognized has boosted my confidence and has motivated me to continue developing my skills as an educator. It's encouraging to know that my progress is seen and valued, and it inspires me to keep striving for excellence and support others on their journey as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of Pathways. This experience has reminded me that growth takes time, consistency, and a willingness to keep trying. I once heard someone say, “Every accomplishment starts with a decision to try.”

Joan's story is a powerful reminder of the impact dedicated educators have on young children, families, and the broader community. Through her commitment to growth and nurturing care at Kids World Learning Center, she continues to model what it means to be an engaged and reflective professional. Her journey in the Pathways highlights how investing in yourself as an educator can create lasting, meaningful change for the children and families you serve.

If you are an early childhood or school-age care educator and would like to become a member of Pathways, please connect with [Nichole Lanning](mailto:Nichole.Lanning@sdece.org). You can find more information at <https://sdece.org/pathways/>



Apply to be a member of Pathways

Congratulations to the 750+ educators participating on the South Dakota 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 celebrate and get a welcome kit to you soon!



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

Don't miss out! [Sign-up](#) for the Play is Learning Challenge is still open for current Pathways members, but does close on Sunday, May 17, 2026.

SD ECE Resources



Summer Weather Preparedness

As spring and summer storms roll in, it's important for child care providers to be ready for sudden weather emergencies. While storms can be frightening, having a solid plan in place will help keep the children in your care safe and calm.

SD ECE Resources offers many tools to help you create or update your emergency preparedness plans. Don't wait, start today to ensure your program is storm-ready. Use the links below to explore each resource.

[Emergency Preparedness: South Dakota Resources](#)

[Emergency Preparedness: Planning](#)

[Emergency Preparedness: Checklists](#)

[Emergency Preparedness: Hurricanes & Tornadoes](#)

[Forms, Policies, & Templates: Click Jump to Forms: Scroll Down to Safety](#)

- Basic Emergency Plan
- Basic Emergency Plan: Supporting Documents
- Disaster Checklist for Child Care Professionals
- Emergency Contact Information & Consent Form for Families
- Emergency Contact Information & Consent Form for Staff
- Emergency Plan Template
- Emergency Preparedness Checklists
- Red Cross Tornado Safety Preparedness



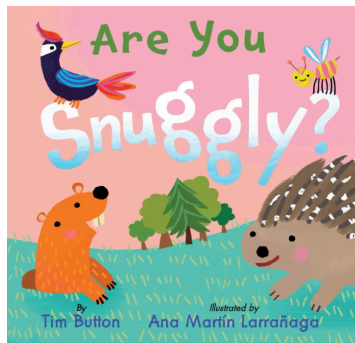
Preparedness can turn a scary situation into a safe one. With a little planning and regular practice, your child care program can be ready for whatever summer weather brings!

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.

Sharing books and stories with the children in your care supports early literacy by building language skills, strengthening comprehension, and encouraging curiosity. Making reading part of your daily routine helps foster a lifelong love of learning.



Find out who's snuggly—and who's not—in this playful interactive board book featuring woodland animals and a surprise mirror at the end!

Are You Snuggly? invites young readers to explore the natural world through a cozy, read-aloud journey, asking animals like bees, turtles, and woodpeckers if they're snuggly—until the surprise final page reveals the snuggliest creature of all: the reader!

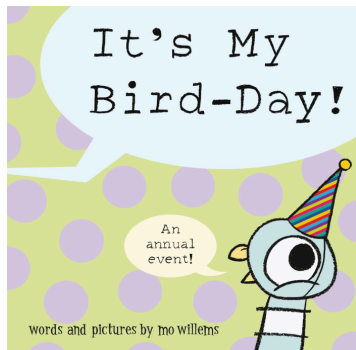
With rhythmic text, warm sunset-colored illustrations by Ana Martín Larrañaga, and a novelty mirror, this charming board book is perfect for bedtime, Valentine's Day, or everyday snuggles—building early vocabulary, promoting bonding, and boosting confidence through gentle repetition.

Reading age: 0-4 years

From #1 *New York Times* bestselling, award-winning author and illustrator Mo Willems, comes the highly anticipated annual event, The Pigeon's BIRD-DAY!

The Pigeon has the hat. And the hot dog cake! He is ready for the presents! But ... do YOU think The Pigeon can handle his BIG bird-day surprise!?!

Reading age: 4-8 years

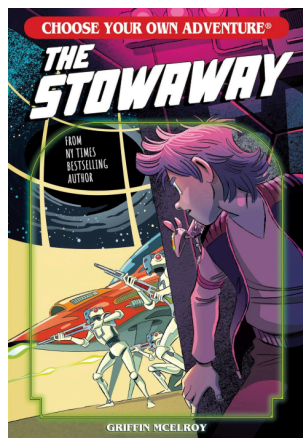


From Griffin McElroy comes a laugh-out-loud science fiction thrill ride you won't be able to put down.

In the farthest reaches of a war-torn galaxy, a military transport cruiser barrels toward a supermassive black hole. The crew has vanished. The security drones have gone haywire. And the ship has flown light years off-course. It falls to a single passenger to decide the fate of this doomed voyage: A stowaway tucked into a pocket of the ship's hull. Unfortunately for the reader, YOU are that stowaway.

It's your turn to sit at the table with your friendly neighborhood Game Master Griffin McElroy as he guides you down paths both hilarious and harrowing. Can you evade deadly robots, find the missing crew, and escape the ship before it reaches its final, fatal destination? Or will the Astral Order get you first?

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

[SD Association of Child Care Directors \(SDACCD\) Summer Retreat](#)

Sioux Falls, SD; June 12, 2026

[SD School-Age Care Alliance \(SoDakSACA\) Conference](#)

Sioux Falls, SD; October 8-10, 2026

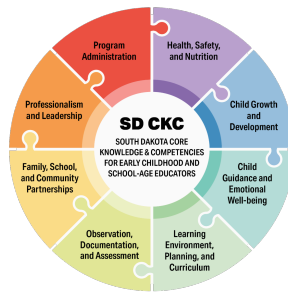
[South Dakota Early Childhood Education Conference](#)

Sioux Falls, SD; April TBD 2027



Stay in the loop with the latest news from Quality Care South Dakota!
Subscribe to our newsletter and never miss a beat.

Subscribe to The Loop



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 their child care and school-age programs.

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
- Jen Johnson, SDSU Early Childhood Education Lecturer

[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

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!