



SCANNING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT LANDSCAPE IN SOUTH DAKOTA

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JANUARY 25, 2021

Appendix B: Programs and resources for South Dakota's young children and their families

Family support, parenting, health, and nutrition programs

Birth to Three. The South Dakota Birth to Three program serves children from birth to three years old who have developmental delays or disabilities. This program is a family-focused, in-home service, designed to empower adults to learn about the development of their children.¹

Bright Start Student Home Visiting Program. The Bright Start Student Home Visiting Program strives to maximize the effectiveness and the infrastructure strength of the South Dakota Department of Health, by supporting the health of all South Dakotans throughout their lifetimes. The program features home visits with families by registered nurses in order to ensure the health and well-being of children.²

The child welfare system. As a group of federally funded and supported services, the child welfare system is “designed to promote the well-being of children by ensuring safety, achieving permanency, and strengthening families to care for their children successfully.”³ In 2018, 3,719 children under the age of 18 were in circumstances that warranted an investigated report, a rate of 17 per 1,000; this rate was far lower than the national rate of 48 per 1,000.⁴ In 2018, 677 children under the age of six were in South Dakota's foster care system.⁵

Health insurance. Medicaid draws on a combination of federal and state funding to provide insurance to eligible children and families. In April of 2020, 78,405 children in South Dakota under the age of 18 were eligible for Medicaid.⁶

Nurse-Family Partnership. The Nurse-Family Partnership serves 21 counties across South Dakota, working with low-income women who are pregnant with their first child, from the time of pregnancy through the child's second birthday. The partnership intentionally strives to implement a two-generation model in order to improve pregnancy outcomes, child health and development, and the economic self-sufficiency of families.⁷

South Dakota Department of Social Services (SDDSS). The SDDSS offers a number of resources for parents and child care providers, including topical webinars for providers and a Responsive Parenting Training Class that helps parents

respond to their children in ways that encourage and enhance development.⁸ The department also offers five Early Childhood Enrichment training programs in the cities of Aberdeen, Brookings, Pierre, Rapid City, and Sioux Falls.⁹

South Dakota Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). WIC is a federally funded public health program that provides support for a healthy lifestyle for mothers, infants, and children up to age five. The program provides supplemental nutritious foods, supports breastfeeding, and provides referrals to health care services. In 2017, WIC served an average of 16,409 people per month, improving birth outcomes and reducing Medicaid costs.¹⁰

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a state- and federally funded assistance program designed to “[promote] family responsibility and accountability and [encourage] self-sufficiency through work.”¹¹ In 2019, South Dakota spent 3 percent of its \$30 million in TANF allocations (about \$800,000) on child care and \$0 on pre-kindergarten, compared to 17 percent and 9 percent national averages, respectively.¹² In December 2020, 2,713 families, including 4,993 children, across the state received an average of \$461.07 in TANF benefits.¹³

Early learning programs

Child and Adult Care Food Program provides reimbursements for meal expenses for child day care centers, family and group day care programs, and adult day care centers, based on the size and income of families served.¹⁴

Child Care Aware provides resources for providers and families across the state to assist in child care needs.¹⁵

Head Start, Early Head Start, Early Head Start-child care partnerships. South Dakota Head Start and Early Head Start is a federally funded early childhood program designed to serve children from birth to age five who are from families with incomes below the poverty line. South Dakota has eight tribal and eight nontribal comprehensive Head Start and Early Head Start programs that promote education, health, and access to resources for families.¹⁶

Regional programs. There are a number of district-specific programs available. For example, Sioux Empire United Way offers a five-week program in a few cities called Ready to Start, where children who have not attended pre-kindergarten but have a demonstrated need can receive additional services.¹⁷ Additional age-specific programs and early childhood education are available through programs like Head Start at the district level.

SD Step Ahead. With a number of locations across the state, the South Dakota Department of Education’s SD Step Ahead provides resources for early childhood programming for children from birth through preschool.¹⁸

United Way of the Black Hills. The United Way of the Black Hills sponsors a number of programs to support families in the Black Hills area as they invest in their youngest children. For example, the **Baby’s First Book Bag** program exists to provide additional resources for the home libraries of at-risk families in the Black Hills area.¹⁹

Resources for American Indian children and families

Family Spirit. A program designed for, by, and with American Indian families, Family Spirit supports parents from pregnancy to three years after the birth of their child. The home intervention is behaviorally focused.

Head Start and Early Head Start. South Dakota has eight tribal Head Start and Early Head Start programs to promote education, health, and access to resources for families.²⁰

Indian Child Welfare Act. This federal act “ensures Indian families receive culturally appropriate services” through agreements between the state and tribal nations in areas including, but not limited to, child protective services, foster care, and adoption proceedings. The Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, the Oglala Sioux Tribe, the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribe, and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe each has agreements with the state concerning the care of their families and children.²¹

Indian Health Service. The Great Plains Area Office, located in Aberdeen, South Dakota, works to provide health care to 130,000 Native Americans living in South Dakota and three of its neighboring states through seven hospitals; eight health centers; and other, smaller care units. Additionally, its Area Epidemiology Program is actively researching diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and other applicable health concerns in the communities it serves.²²

Opportunity Gap Work Group. In August 2020, Governor Kristi Noem formed an Opportunity Gap Work Group to evaluate ways in which South Dakota “can close the achievement gap for its economically disadvantaged students.”²³ Though not focused on early childhood development, this work group may serve as an avenue by which to address the gaps beginning in the early years of young South Dakotans’ lives.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ South Dakota Department of Education, “[South Dakota Birth to Three](#).”
- ² Children’s Home Society, “[Bright Start Home Visiting Program](#).”
- ³ Child Welfare Information Gateway, *[How the Child Welfare System Works](#)*.
- ⁴ KIDS COUNT Data Center, “[Children Who Are Subject to an Investigated Report in the United States](#).”
- ⁵ KIDS COUNT Data Center, “[Children in Foster Care by Age Group in the United States](#).”
- ⁶ South Dakota Department of Social Services, “[Number of People Eligible for Medical Services](#).”
- ⁷ Nurse-Family Partnership, *[South Dakota State Profile](#)*.
- ⁸ SDDSS, “[Responsive Parenting Training and Class Information](#).”
- ⁹ SDDSS, “[Training and Education](#).”
- ¹⁰ South Dakota WIC Program, *[Annual Report Federal Fiscal Year 2017](#)*.
- ¹¹ SDDSS, “[TANF Frequently Asked Questions](#).”
- ¹² Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *[South Dakota TANF Spending](#)*.
- ¹³ SDDSS, *[December 2020 Data](#)*, “Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): Families, Recipients, and Benefits Data.”
- ¹⁴ South Dakota Department of Education (SDDE), “[Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).”
- ¹⁵ Child Care Aware of America, “[South Dakota Resources](#).”
- ¹⁶ [South Dakota Head Start Association](#).
- ¹⁷ Sioux Empire United Way, “[Ready to Start](#).”
- ¹⁸ SDDE, *[SD Step Ahead](#)*.
- ¹⁹ United Way of the Black Hills, “[Black Hills Reads](#).”
- ²⁰ See endnote 16.
- ²¹ SDDSS, “[Indian Child Welfare Act \(IWCA\)](#).”
- ²² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Indian Health Service: The Federal Health Program for American Indians and Alaska Natives, “[Great Plains Area](#).”
- ²³ SDDE, “[Opportunity Gap: Improving Educational Outcomes for Disadvantaged Learners](#).”