



## February Newsletter

### DSS CHILD CARE GRANTS AVAILABLE

DSS has recently released 3 new grants that are now available! Below is a brief overview, please visit the DSS website in the 'Learn More' button for any questions or for more information.

#### **Expansion and Start Up Grants:**

- Deadline **February 1st 2024**
- Find the **Overview HERE**
- Apply and ask questions **HERE**

#### **Infant and Toddler Grant Opportunity:**

There are 3 different variations to this grant; Child Care Center, Group Family, and Family child care.

- Deadline **ROLLING** (until funds are spent)
- Find the overview and grant application **HERE**
- You are encouraged to reach out to your local enrichment office to discuss these grants more. You can find your enrichment office **HERE**.

#### **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Child Care Stabilization Grant:**

Learn more **HERE**

[Learn More](#)

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# South Dakota Early Childhood Education Conference



## 2023 South Dakota Early Childhood Education Conference

### "Revitalizing the Early Childhood Profession"

Dates: April 13th-15th, 2023

Location: 100 4th St. SW, Huron, SD 57350

For over 25 years the South Dakota Head Start Association and South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children have been partnering to bring professional development to South Dakota's early childhood education professionals. The conference is held in April of each year and always features an array of nationally renowned keynote speakers, great workshops, networking opportunities and fun!

**Are you interested in submitting a proposal for a breakout session?**

**[Click here to fill out the proposal.](#)**

**DUE DATE IS TODAY!**

[Register Here](#)

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# SAVE THE DATE



SEPTEMBER 21ST - 22ND

## Save the Date

### 2023 Early Learner South Dakota Summit September 21st - 22nd, 2023

Please join us for our 2023 Early Learner South Dakota Annual Summit! The two day summit agenda will include valuable discussions on early childhood education in South Dakota, business solutions, sustainability updates, and networking opportunities.

Event location, schedule and lodging details to be announced.

[Reserve Tickets](#)



## West River Business Collaborative Success

Our West River Business Collaborative had 46 in attendance, and 8 different communities represented.

With over 100 individuals involved statewide, we will be continuing this conversation and our next meeting will be scheduled via zoom on **March 15th from 2:00 - 3:30 PM MT / 3:00 - 4:30 PM CT.**

If you are interested in joining you can email: [info@earlylearnersd.org](mailto:info@earlylearnersd.org)

Check out this story released by SDPB, covering the January 6th collaborative gathering:

SDPB News  
Article



## Administrative Rule Changes at DSS

**Stay involved in the conversation around the administrative rule changes happening within DSS.**

The South Dakota Department of Social Services (DSS) is evaluating the state's child care licensing standards (administrative rules of South Dakota, ARSD) and processes. The State has gathered initial feedback from a small group of child care providers to help guide us in the proposed rewrite of South Dakota's child care licensing standards.

Be on the lookout for new proposed rules and public hearings in the coming months.

DSS Licensing

Community Updates





## Early Learner Rapid City Community Meeting

**Thursday, Feb 16th from 5:30 - 7 PM  
At the Monument in the Alpine Room**

The Early Learner Rapid City (ELRC) Advisory Committee invites you to join the Early Learner Rapid City Community meeting. ELRC will share the history of their work and impact on early education and child-care efforts in Rapid City to date. At the end, there will be an opportunity to learn more and get involved in new sub-committees.

**All are welcome! Dinner will be covered. Please register by Thursday, February 9th.**

[Get Tickets](#)

## Meet our ELSD Team



### Spotlight: Jess Gromer

Jess Gromer is currently the Program Officer for the John T. Vucurevich Foundation (JTVF) located in Rapid City, SD. Their mission is to invest in

organizations to enhance the quality of life for disadvantaged individuals and families with an emphasis on building prosperity from cradle to career. Her primary role is assessing the gaps and opportunities in the systems placing barriers to prevent families out of poverty. This includes investing in early learning, barriers to housing and childcare as well as assisting families and individuals in obtaining a living wage.

Jess is the lead staff person for the Early Learner work at JTVF. Prior to this position she has 15 years of nursing experience as a hospital staff nurse, a Regional Community Health Nurse for the SD Department of Health, and a Research Manager RN for the Center for Health Outcomes and Prevention Research for Sanford Research. Most of her career has been spent working in various roles within the maternal child field.

As a community health nurse, she worked in areas of health disparities and disease prevention, health education and case management. Her role with Sanford Research included working extensively with granting organizations and outcome management. There she managed project start-ups and shut-downs, project implementation, evaluation, grant reporting, and community relations. She worked with study partners from various geographical areas including New York, Boston and South Africa as well as multiple Northern Plains tribal partners from across North and South Dakota.

She has co-authored several publications related to her work within the Prenatal, Alcohol, Stillbirth and SIDS (PASS) Network. As a recent empty nester, she enjoys golfing with her husband and friends and spoiling their new lab puppy. She is very involved in their church and doing whatever she can to help her children navigate adulthood.

## National Partner Feature



### Committee for Economic Development (CED)

Early Learner South Dakota is fortunate to have a relationship with the **Committee for Economic Development** of The Conference Board (CED). They help our partners in support of policies, resources and data, and business stakeholder engagement that promote investment in early childhood education.

For over 50 years, CED has produced research and developed tools that advance investment in early childhood education. As a non-partisan, non-

profit organization, access to quality, affordable child care has been a core policy area for CED business leaders.

Last year, CED released a 4-part report series about the **Economic Role of Paid Child Care**, including state fact sheets on **child care usage** and **labor force participation**, plus a wide array of **data visualizations**. CED has also mapped **the supply of child care** in South Dakota to support discussions with policymakers about access to much needed child care for working families. From data to cost modeling to policy option discussions, CED helps support a variety of strategies to ensure that working parents have child care choices in their communities.

[Learn More](#)



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