

# Early Learner SD

Quarterly Newsletter



## Coordinator's Comments - by Janessa Bixel

### Community Inspiration

What began as a conversation with a group of people who support learning in our state has grown into a statewide initiative to support all early learners. The work that Early Learner Rapid City has done in the last year has been inspirational at the very least. There are members from all aspects of the community involved in supporting early learning. Their success has led to the development of an amazing toolkit to help other communities jump on board to develop their own early learning communities.

[www.earlylearnersd.org](http://www.earlylearnersd.org)

**1**  
**AWARENESS**  
 ALL CHILDREN NEED access to quality learning experiences

**2**  
**ADVOCACY**  
 GET INVOLVED.  
 Learn the facts and spread the word

**3**  
**ACTION**  
 We have RESOURCES to help bring Early Learning to your community.



### Communities

Early Learning improves the lives of all South Dakotans.



### Families

Parents are a child's first teacher!



### Providers

Supporting safe, healthy learning environments is important.



## Initiative Progress

In 2019, the SDAIEYC received a sub-grant from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to support advocacy of early learning in our state. We are into the beginning of our year two grant and the work is continuing as planned.

## Committee Updates

### Data Committee - by Carmen Stewart & John Swanson

The Data subcommittee has communicated regularly through Zoom meetings and e-mail since the Strategic Planning meeting in October. Highlights from the past three months include members meeting as stakeholders with the Montana Policy and Budget Center regarding the transition of SD Kids Count data center, supporting the launch of the EarlyLearner SD website by providing input and data, creation of a fact sheet on Head Start waiting list numbers that are now available to the public and planning for monthly fact sheets highlighting data regarding demographic changes in our state regarding young children.

### Marketing Committee - by Kayla Klein

The Early Learner SD has been hard at work over the past year. The first items on our 'to-do' list was to create a logo and brand to go along with logo. We used the company Mile Up marketing to start this process. The first draft of the logo was unveiled at the October stakeholder meeting. A few changes were requested

then, and now the logo and brand are being used by the state stakeholder group along with all of the Early Learner communities. Our next goal was to complete the Early Learner SD website by December 18<sup>th</sup>, in order to launch in during the Rapid City Early Learner interview with SDPB in their 'Where Do We Go From Here' segment. There have been many comments and additions to the site since its first unveiling. We plan to continue to strengthen the site and add information/resources/data when needed.

The marketing is now into its public awareness campaign, working with Mile Up. We have created table display materials, post cards with vital information to be handed out, and an infographic that explains the relationship between the state and the local communities. The next phase of our process will be to make youtube/FB/google ads, mailers and other awareness pieces. The marketing group continues to work with Mile Up and will approve any ads before they are released. The marketing group would also like to see the encouragement of No Small Matter screenings and/or community round table discussions around Early Learning as well as more SD communities becoming Early Learning communities.

### Public Policy Committee - by Fran Apland

Early Learner South Dakota representatives attended Early Learner Day at the Capital on February 6<sup>th</sup> to advocate for quality early learning experiences for all children.

Public Policy Forum in Washington D.C. - focus for South Dakota: SDAIEYC Grant, Early Learner SD, and Early Learner communities. The legislative assistants were sincere in reaching out to them for help. Current important national Early Learning topics are CCDBG, PDG, Higher Learning Reauthorization to invest in high-quality early childhood education and educators, as well as small businesses related to Family Child Care and centers. Connections to support our work - National League of Cities, 1000 Days, NAEYC State Policy, and New America.

## EARLY LEARNER COMMUNITY TOOL KIT

This toolkit, developed by United Way Black Hills Reads, will help you start the conversation in your community and will provide you and your community with support.

Access the [Early Learning Toolkit](http://www.earlylearnersd.org) - or online at [www.earlylearnersd.org](http://www.earlylearnersd.org) under "Communities"

