



## January Newsletter

SAVE THE DATE

# CHILDREN'S DAY

*at the Capitol*

**Empowering South Dakota  
Children and Families**

## Children's Day at the Capitol

**January 11th, 2023**

Join ELSD and other advocates in the Rotunda at the Capitol building in Pierre.

We are happy to partner with Center for Prevention of Child Maltreatment, the Afterschool Network and Children's Home Society of SD with this event.

For event agenda, and sponsorship opportunities, please click the 'more information' button below.

[More Information](#)

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**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**



SEPTEMBER 21ST - 22ND

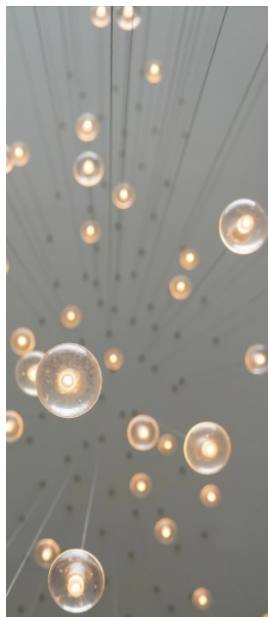
## Save the Date

### 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](#)



## CHILDCARE BUSINESS COLLABORATIVE

West River

\*\*Rescheduled: Friday, January 6, 2023 | 1 - 3 p.m.\*\*

# West River Business Collaborative Meeting

**Friday, January 6, 2023  
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM MST**

Location:  
The Journey Museum and Learning Center  
222 New York St, Rapid City, SD 57701

Would you like to learn about South Dakota solutions taking place right now in the business field? Join us for a conversation where we discuss current solutions and future, long-term sustainable solutions.

This group will discuss the current landscape of early learning, current South Dakota solutions happening around the state, other regional solutions, and long-term discussions and planning.

[Register](#)

## In the News

### How South Dakotans are Making Child Care Affordable and Available



Employees and their children pose for a photo in front of a Pioneer Bank & Trust branch (Courtesy of Pioneer Bank & Trust)

SD Searchlight did an amazing job highlighting many of the Early Learner South Dakota partners and their active innovations in child care. Read the article below to learn more

[Read Article](#)

## Meet our ELSD Team



### Spotlight: Darbi Hunt

Darbi Hunt began leading the Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC) early childhood work in 2018. She also serves as the Family Lead for South Dakota's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Collaborative, assists with grant administration, and teaches and coordinates Common Sense Parenting. Darbi has always been passionate about every child having a good start in life and her work supports this passion.

Darbi graduated Summa Cum Laude from Black Hills State University with a Bachelor of Science in Applied Psychology in 1997 and started at Black Hills Special Services Cooperative in 1998. She has had the opportunity to work in many programs throughout BHSSC; each one has taught her something new and contributed to her personal and professional growth. She started with the Developmental Disabilities Division where worked as an Individual Program Coordinator, Foster Care Coordinator and Residential Coordinator. She served as the Director of the Black Hills Foster Grandparent Program for 10 years, then worked with a few other programs before becoming the Birth-Five Projects Manager.

Darbi serves on several boards and committees including South Dakota's Learn the Signs Act Early Team, and the Education, Innovation and Research Task Force.

Being a mom to boy-girl twins is the most important part of Darbi's life. She enjoys spending time with them, her husband and many other family members. Darbi is an advocate and friend to a woman who receives services in Lemmon, SD. Darbi's hobbies include reading, hiking and cooking.

## National Partner Feature



## Spotlight: ReadyNation- Council for Strong America

Early Learner South Dakota is fortunate to have a relationship with Council for Strong America, Ready Nation. They help our partners in business to advocate and bring a strong voice to the business case for child care.

ReadyNation leverages the experience, influence, and expertise of more than 2,000 business executives to promote public policies and programs that build a stronger workforce and economy. Since 2006, ReadyNation members have made a bottom-line case for effective, bipartisan investments in children as the future workforce that will drive success in the global marketplace. In South Dakota, ReadyNation released a report in 2022 highlighting the challenges parents with infants and toddlers face in the workforce due to the lack of high-quality, affordable child care. The cost to South Dakota's economy is estimated to be at least \$146 million per year in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue. ReadyNation's business leader members provide an important voice to help the state move towards solving these issues.

[Learn More](#)



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