

What's at Stake for SD Children

What All SD State Legislators Need to Know

Healthy Development: The first 3 years of life shape all the rest and represent the most rapid period of brain development, setting the stage for all future learning and life success.ⁱ When we fail to support the healthy development of young children, beginning even before birth, and to ensure the physical and mental health of their parents, we limit opportunities for children to thrive and succeed.

Supported Families: Young children develop in the context of their families, and all families benefit from supports to be the best parents they can be for their children. Families living in poverty or in low-income households experience many obstacles and face challenges raising a family. Families must have resources to meet their basic needs for food, health care, jobs that pay a living wage, safe affordable housing, home visiting and parenting education services, and much more. Child care is an essential support for parents to be able to work, which increases family economic security while also providing children with access to high-quality early learning opportunities.

Educational Success: Research shows that access to high-quality early learning is one of the most reliable ways to drive student achievement.ⁱⁱ A young child's brain development in the first few years lays the foundation for all future development (e.g., school readiness and success). Children who attend high-quality early education programs enter school ready to succeed (i.e., academically, socially, and emotionally). They are more likely to read by third grade, graduate high school, attend college, and obtain employment, and less likely to need behavioral interventions or become involved in the criminal justice system.

Economic Prosperity: Economic growth depends on smart investments. Investing in high-quality early care and learning results in a 13% return on investment,ⁱⁱⁱ and reduces taxpayer expenses for remedial education, health care, and other societal problems. In South Dakota, more than 50,400 children under age six (74%) live in families where all parents work.^{iv} Child care as an industry has an economic impact of \$279 million, which includes revenue from both center-based care and home-based care.^v When families do not have the child care they need, parents' work productivity falls, resulting in costs to parents, their employers, and, ultimately, taxpayers.

Every Child's Potential: Policymakers have an opportunity to ensure that all children grow up in a family and community where each child can reach his or her potential. For many children, child care is their early learning program. Parents depend on child care to work and children depend on it to grow and thrive, which impacts their future potential to contribute to South Dakota's economy. We must ensure that all children have access to a sound basic education starting in early childhood, with equitable opportunities to achieve their full potential regardless of their race, family income, or zip code.

ⁱ Harvard University Center on the Developing Child, Brain Architecture. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/>

ⁱⁱ Dana Charles McCoy, Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Kathleen M. Ziol-Guest, Greg J. Duncan, Holly S. Schindler, Katherine Magnuson, Rui Yang, Andrew Koepp, Jack P. Shonkoff, Impacts of Early Childhood Education on Medium- and Long-Term Educational Outcomes, 2017. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/0013189X17737739>

ⁱⁱⁱ García, Jorge Luis, James J. Heckman, Duncan Ermini Leaf, and María José Prados. "The Life-cycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program." University of Chicago, 2016. https://heckmanequation.org/www/assets/2017/01/F_Heckman_CBAOnePager_120516.pdf

^{iv} U.S. Census Bureau, Table B23008, Age of Own Children Under 18 Years in Families and Subfamilies by Living Arrangements by Employment Status of Parents, 2019 American Community Survey 1 Year Estimates.

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=b23008&g=0400000US46&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B23008&hidePreview=true>

^v Committee for Economic Development, Child Care in State Economies: 2019 Update, 2019. <https://www.ced.org/childcareimpact>