



Early Childhood Programs and Economic Development OR Why our Profession Should Matter to EVERYONE!

Renae Boehmer

Most of us work with young children for many reasons, one of which might be that we don't normally enjoy dealing with economics – especially on the community or statewide level. It can be enough of a challenge to balance two checkbooks – one personal and one business.

But, since we are advocates for young children, it's time we looked at the big picture, outside of the immediate care they receive in our homes. We all know that quality care is important to the individual children. We all love the little ones in our homes and want their futures to be bright. But, in addition to the impact we have on the few children we serve, there is a greater impact we are having on society that is very exciting!

The Marshall Center for Business and Economic Research released a study on October 9, 2005, that states: **“Investing in early childhood development – programs like Head Start, prekindergarten, preschools, family child care homes and child care centers – is probably more important than any other current economic development effort.”**

How many companies have Governor Rounds and other officials courted to relocate or expand in South Dakota? Although rarely viewed as economic development, this study states that investment in early childhood development is actually one of the most productive investments available. The returns come in the form of higher graduation rates, more college completion, higher incomes and generally better lifestyles.

Then, they say what the key to all these economic returns is: QUALITY. The kids need good ratios. They need meaningful interactions with their caregiver/teacher. Teachers need support, mentoring relationships and more training.

So, what does this mean for us? It means that, as we work with government officials and businesses, we now have evidence that what we do affects the entire community – and it is worthy of the dollars these organizations have to spend.

To view the report in full, go to www.marshall.edu/cber/research and click on “The Economic Impact of Early Childhood Development Programs in West Virginia.”



Parents in the Workforce

For most parents, work is a necessity, not a choice. The increasing number of families with both parents working, the rise in single parent families, and the higher cost of living have caused major changes. Instead of a child-rearing model in which daytime care of young children is left to parents, early care and education is now also provided by caregivers outside the home. South Dakota leads the nation in the percentage of women in the workforce with children under 6 and 6-17.

At 47 percent, South Dakota also has the highest percentage of children under age 6 in paid child care so parents can work. That percentage is twice the national average of 26 percent. In South Dakota, 73 percent of children under age 6 live with families where all parents are in the workforce (Map 5).

[http://www.usd.edu/brbinfo/
BusinessReviews/2005/
mar05revCC.pdf](http://www.usd.edu/brbinfo/BusinessReviews/2005/mar05revCC.pdf)



Christmas Card Swap!

Children just love getting mail, especially Christmas cards! Here's an opportunity to have many cards come to your day care.

Sign up for the swap by Nov 28, by emailing me at advocacy@sdfcc.org. Each sign up will receive a list of participants with name and address by the 30th so they may plan around this theme and activities for the week making your own cards, having children autograph, etc. and then mailed by Dec 6. I did one with a Yahoo group and had a USA map (we just need a SD map) and put pins in where they came from and had quite a geography lesson and how long they took to get from point A to B. This is for the older ones of course and the younger ones just loved going to the mail box and opening mail for a couple of weeks and seeing the pretty colors and designs. We then hung them on a wall to make a Christmas tree (like building blocks and anticipation to see how big the tree would get), thus learning a shape. We know ahead of time how many are participating so you know how big your tree will be. Great fun for the children. No two cards are alike so seeing the differences also. A lot of educational points to this also. Postal dates how long it takes from point A to point B and so on. Marking of calendar how many received this day. I could go on and on! I love these type projects. Always **t e a c h i n g a n d l e a r n i n g !**

Lavonne Luellman



Pausing to Consider

Dawn Wahl

I had a mom who used me as an emergency back up provider one day recently.

Her boys were older—the eldest was 8. I noticed that as dinner progressed, the younger boy ate everything. The older one picked through his food, leaving most of it. Then, after awhile he said, “I tasted everything. Can I be done?” Well, the general rule around here is that the food is the child’s food once I put it down. They are free to throw it away. I do usually ask them to sit there until most everyone is finished so that there isn’t the “domino effect” of children throwing away food just because everyone else is doing it. So I said yes, he was excused.

I commented to the mom about his eating and her response has been on my mind ever since. “He used to eat everything until when he was two years old I took him to this woman for care. I am so sorry I did. I’d come pick him up and he’d be inside while the other kids were outside playing. I kept thinking he had just woken up or something like that. Then eventually my older daughter told me that the woman kept him in the high chair till 3 or 4 o’clock every day—until he ate all his food. If he didn’t, he couldn’t go outside. For two years he wouldn’t eat anything except hot dogs and peanut butter

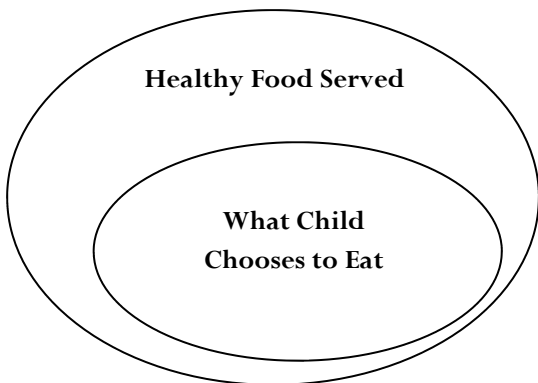
sandwiches. I took him to doctors and everything. Now I just ask him to take a bite of everything and eat just what he likes. He has learned to like a few more foods, sloppy joes is new, but it’s still a problem. I wish I’d never taken him to her. ”I thought back to my early struggle with seeing day care kids throw food away—and how hard that is to watch. So where did I learn “It’s their food after you put it in front of them”? **In my CDA class.** I had read different articles before, and I did try to “let it go” but I was emotionally tied to the food I cooked and served! “What! I bought that, I cleaned it, I cooked it, I’ll clean up from it and you just want to put it into the garbage! And let’s not forget those farmers who sweated to get it to us—and the grocers and food packagers and truck drivers and now you want the garbage men to work hard taking it away!” It was only after doing a research paper on eating disorders did it really click—the more attention we pay to the behavior, the more we force, the more they will rebel. Kids cannot be made to eat. It’s damaging to try to make them. I remember my mother-in-law’s story. Her children visited their step-grandmother who proudly said that all 5 had eaten beets for supper. Now, Edna KNEW her children wouldn’t eat beets. Sure enough, a few days later, grandma was calling to say she had found beets in the dirt in the planter, under the rugs and behind pillows on the couch! Edna had found some in pockets, too!

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I found in my research that the solution for the picky eater is quite simple, really. The adults choose to serve healthy food choices to the child. The child chooses of those foods the ones he will eat. When the meal is “finished” because the child indicates he doesn’t want any more by getting down, playing, throwing food, or even by asking, he is excused. There is no more food available until the next scheduled snack or meal. No short order cooking to meet the child’s desires, either.



Perhaps you are thinking, “But the parents don’t feed him healthy choices! They let him just drink milk and eat bread! And the candy and fast food! He NEEDS this food! I’m there to make sure he gets it to stay healthy!” I decided that all I can do is try my best, try to teach the parents to limit the fast food and snacks, and then let the parents be the parents. In the long term, I guess it’s better to leave kids with a good attitude toward eating in general than worry about a certain food today.

So now I use family style service, they serve their own portions, they are in control of what they take most of the time, and what they eat. I might encourage them to eat the meat or the vegetables, but then I remember to do it gently and let them make their own choices. And we see new ones finally copying the established children and deciding that fresh broccoli with Ranch dressing really is quite good. I’m so glad to know that I’m not damaging any little person’s enjoyment of food as he grows. **And I’m really glad I took Child Development through our CDA program.**

What Do the South Dakota’s Early Childhood Enrichment Sites Provide?

On-site technical assistance on issues such as behavioral management, developmental encouragement and financial management.

Early childhood education including professional growth classes on issues such as child development, age-appropriate activities, effective guidance and program management.

Child Development Associate (CDA) training and mentorship.

Resource lending libraries with professional resources, information, early childhood publications, and a developmental toy and equipment library.

Convenient and affordable on-site vision, hearing and developmental screenings for children ages 3 to 5.

Telephone consultations for early care and education professionals and parents.

Information on issues such as behavior management and developmental encouragement.

Employer Worksite Expos which provide parent education on such topics as child care, health and safety issues.

[Click here for a schedule of training in your area and for contact information.](#)

<http://www.state.sd.us/social/CCS/Training/Calendar/calendar.htm>





The Food Program: Are you Crazy?

Did you know that the Child and Adult Care Food Program is a program of the federal government? Does that surprise you?

I am here to tell you that once in awhile there is a federally-funded program that makes sense. This is a program that supports proper nutrition for children and adults in approved programs. Registered or licensed family child care qualifies. That sounds like a reasonable goal, right?

Basically, you get reimbursements for serving children nutritious meals. **If you income-qualify, you can also be reimbursed for meals you serve your own children while you have day care children present.**

What's the catch, you ask? Well, you have to enroll the children, list them on a meal count form (given to you) and indicate on the form the meals that they eat on the days they are there, keep track of the times the children come and go (a parent sign-in sheet really keeps this part easy), plan your menus ahead of time, serve the kinds of food that qualify, in the amounts that are appropriate for the ages of the children, and write down if you changed the menu for that meal. You send in a claim form once a month based on the numbers you wrote down each day. (Fill out a piece of paper and let them know how much money you want - I can deal with THAT!)

Sure, some providers are reimbursed more for the meals they serve than others. It doesn't sound fair and maybe it isn't. BUT, we all get something. Something is better than nothing. A little money is better than no money in my mind. It's an immediate raise without having to go through your daycare parents to get it. Bonus!

For those providers who don't automatically qualify for the higher rates (there are several ways that you might), the families in care might qualify, based on their income level, enabling you to get the higher rates for the meals served to those children.



If you aren't currently on the food program, it's definitely something to consider. For more information, contact your regional food program sponsor. See the map on this web page: <http://www.sdfcc.org/FPPProfessional/Nutrition.htm>



Comments from Tom Copeland about the CACFP Food Program

"What if your husband came home from work and said, 'I just got a raise. Should we accept it?' Joining the Food Program is tax-wise just the same as your husband getting a raise."

"If each parent said they would pay you \$442 more per year to care for their child, would you accept their money? That's the same effect financially as joining the Food Program at the lower Tier II rate."

"Getting some money is always better than getting no money. Tier II is better than no money at all."

"It is easier to participate on the Food Program than it is to raise your rates."

"It is true that your taxes will go up if you join the Food Program, but you can pay for these taxes out of your reimbursement and still have money left over."

"Joining the Food Program is a lot like winning the lottery each month. You will pay taxes on the lottery winnings just like paying taxes on Food Program reimbursements."



Steps to Becoming State-Registered

1. Call your local licensing worker.

<http://sdfcc.org/FPPProfessional/StateRegulation.htm>

Your licensing worker can share information with you by phone or in person. You will be given an application packet which includes a copy of applicable rules, financial planning guide, marketing information, Family Day Care Handbook, and food program flyer.

2. Fill Out and Submit Your Application.

Submit your completed application materials to your licensing worker. Once your signed application is filed with the licensing worker, you are considered to be "in process". Your licensing worker will call or send letters to your three personal references. These references cannot be related to you.

3. Central Registry Screening

A central registry screening is completed for all of your household members.

4. Immunization Records

You will need to have immunization records for all household members under 18 years of age.

5. City Approval

You will need to get your city's or county's approval for operation if it is applicable.

6. Get a Physical Exam

You will need to have had a physical exam within the past year.

7. Inspection

Once all of your paperwork has been submitted and approved, the licensing worker will arrange an inspection of your home. The inspection is usually unannounced.

8. Your Registration Is Completed

Your registration certificate is issued after all the requirements are met. The time frame is 120 days for licensing to complete their work. You should consider developing written day care policies (but they are not required). You are also encouraged to purchase insurance coverage for the child care operation. You will also be given the information to contact your local food program sponsors, or you can get the information at <http://sdfcc.org/FPPProfessional/Nutrition.htm>

For a **Summary of Regulations** for Family Child Care, go here:

<http://www.sdfcc.org/FPPProfessional/StateRegulation.htm>

What Do I Get Out of Being Registered?

- ◇ satisfaction of knowing you meet state standards for minimum safety and health of children
- ◇ prestige from a certificate, which is displayed for parents and the public
- ◇ free referrals to parents looking for quality child care through the ECE offices
- ◇ eligibility for participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- ◇ eligibility to care for children receiving financial support through the federal child care assistance program
- ◇ technical assistance is offered by the Division of Child Care Services staff--including guidance through the registration process, starting a child care business, sample forms, parent contract examples, safe food handling practices, SIDS prevention, disaster preparedness information, etc.
- ◇ on-site technical assistance and/or phone consultations with ECE staff on issues such as effective guidance, child development, age-appropriate activities, childhood illnesses, etc.
- ◇ receive information regarding training opportunities, networking events, and other resources available to child care providers.
- ◇ purchasing child care liability insurance is easier if you are registered.
- ◇ opportunity to be matched with a mentor through the Family Child Care Mentor Program
- ◇ access to a toy and resource lending library available at each of five Early Childhood Enrichment Sites (ECE)
- ◇ receive information pertaining to child care: community resources, health bulletins, Early Childhood Enrichment newsletters
- ◇ opportunity to apply for health and safety grants
- ◇ opportunity to participate in the Pathways to Professional Development Program and the WestEd Infant-Toddler training program



How I Have Benefited from State-Registration

JoAnne Geiser

We lived in Nebraska when my children were preschool age. The community was fairly large with a college, the county seat and other industry making it easy to find employment. There were three private preschools, a "teaching" preschool lab at the college and many family child care providers available with skill and quality ranging from very worrisome to a perceived high quality. I was not the kind of person who planned ahead well, creating a burden for any child care provider we used. Combined with my high expectations in regard to my children's care, it should be no surprise that we went through six providers for my eldest child during her first year of life! I admit to leaving my children with providers that I had not checked out thoroughly and in child care arrangements that I knew were not a good fit simply because I had not planned well and had run out of time. Call it part of my education as a parent. I came to understand that registered care was not a guarantee that I would find everything I considered to be quality, and unregistered care was always, always a crap shoot.

Eventually I came to know an unregulated care provider that did everything the way I liked to have done. She was, of course, highly prized in the community and nearly impossible to get a spot with, much less two. She was operating legally, but was "turned in" by a provider who lost a family to her care. Because of the perception of being "turned in", she ended up with some families leaving, and our family was able to have the spots that were made available. Nebraska is more stringent than some states, with unregulated providers allowed to operate only if they were serving 3 or less families with a total of less than 8 children. Even after she was operating as a regulated provider, she kept her numbers to 8 or less. She said to me several times during the first few months that she was amazed at what she didn't know about child nutrition prior to being on the food program. She shared with me the materials the nutrition program gave her and it was indeed an eye opener. It was wonderful how she worked with the children in her care, and kept all of us parents happy as well. She seemed to make it look effortless; my feeling was that she really loved children and would have done it for free.

Within the next year, she had been asked to be part of a state-wide family child care improvement program and was working with other providers across the state to let unregulated providers know the benefits of being involved with the state agencies. I don't know if the process ever completely converted her husband to being a fan of regulation, he was concerned that the "babysitting" didn't interfere with their family life or conflict with their position in the community. He would have been happier to have her continue to provide care "quietly."

About a year later, we moved from the community and I decided to become a registered child care provider in the area where we relocated. There was never any doubt in my mind that I would be regulated, because of the positive results I observed with my own children's care provider. I have been providing registered care for 15 years now, trying every day to be the provider that our dear Mary was to my young children so many years ago.



We would LOVE to have you tell us how being state-registered has benefited your business, or tell us your reasons for remaining unregistered. It's easy! Just go here, type in what you want us to hear and press "submit." You can write it in your word processing program first, if you like, then copy and paste it into the text box. <http://www.sdfcc.org/FPAdvocacy/AdvocacyHome.htm>



Noah's Party from Grandma

By Lynette Lohan

With Due Respect to Laura Numeroff and her book, "If You Give a Pig a Party."

If you give a grandson a party, he's going to ask for a cake.

When you give him the cake, he will want some horses on it.

When he sees the horses on the cake, he may want to ride a pony.

Then you'll have to find a pony in the country to ride.

After he rides the pony, he will want some family and friends to help celebrate his birthday.

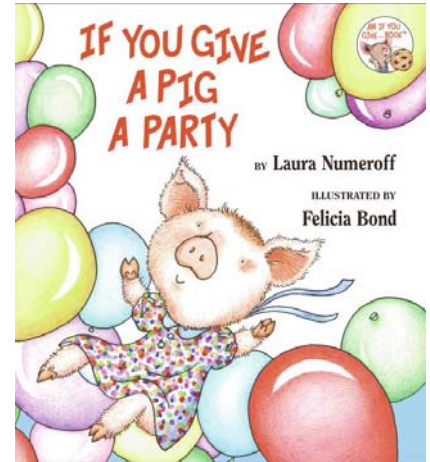
So, you'll travel back to town and play with family & friends at a park.

While eating supper, he will have his eyes on that cake with candles on it.

And chances are he will want to blow out those 3 candles and open gifts.

When he opens the gifts, he may find a stick horse,

and chances are, if he finds a stick horse, he's going to want to ride around his cake and say "Yeeee Ha"!



Tip from Lynette: If you tie a book to a special occasion, you can relive the memories each time you open the book!

TALK with babies and young children:

Talk with babies and young children a lot. The more words they hear the more they are likely to learn.

Talk with babies and toddlers during daily activities. A young baby will connect conversation with pleasure; an older baby will begin to learn words.

Engage babies in frequent, back and forth conversations, even if their part consists mostly of babbles and gestures. Eventually, they will use more and more words.

As a child begins to put words together, elaborate her language to keep the conversation going.

Include young children in adult conversations. It makes them feel important, and also gives them opportunities to hear and practice new words.

<http://www.awealthofwords.com/>

