



PRACTICAL PATHWAYS FOR SUPPORTING WORKING FAMILIES THROUGH OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

REPORT RELEASE JANUARY 2026

South Dakota's Child Care Task Force was convened in 2023 to strengthen the state's child care system and later focused specifically on out-of-school time (OST) care for school-age children. In 2025, with support from the South Dakota Afterschool Network, the Task Force examined OST access, workforce, quality, and sustainability through data review and three in-person convenings with practitioners, policymakers, and researchers. Insights from these discussions, synthesized with support from the Afterschool Alliance, informed the Task Force's policy recommendations to expand high-quality OST opportunities across the state.

KEY ISSUES



ACCESS GAP

About **60,000 school-age children** in South Dakota need afterschool or summer care. Only **around 20,000 children are currently served**.



QUALITY AT RISK

When **staff turnover is high**, programs struggle to maintain consistent relationships and quality experiences for kids.



AFFORDABILITY PRESSURE

The average cost of school-age care in South Dakota is **about \$7,862 per year**.

For a single parent earning the median income, this equals to **over 24% of annual income**.



WORKFORCE SHORTAGES

OST programs rely heavily on part-time staff, often earning **near or below \$15 per hour**.

Low pay leads to high turnover, forcing programs to cap enrollment or close classrooms.

KEY FINDINGS

Demand Outpaces Supply: Demand for school-age care far exceeds available spaces across the state.

Access: Rural and tribal areas face the largest gaps in access.

Cost Affects Workforce Stability: Affordability challenges push families out of the workforce.

Funding and Partnerships Key: Programs with stable funding and strong partnerships are delivering positive outcomes for kids and families.

Quality Matters: High-quality programs show stronger academic, social, and behavioral outcomes, regardless of setting.

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**STABLE
FUNDING**



**WORKFORCE
SUPPORT**



**PROGRAM STABILITY →
BETTER OUTCOMES FOR
KIDS & WORKING FAMILIES**

WHY OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME MATTERS TO...



WORKING PARENTS

When parents have access to quality, reliable care they can work full-time, maintain steady employment, and support family economic stability.



EMPLOYERS

When parents are supported with reliable care, employees show up consistently, reducing absenteeism and keeping turnover low.



CHILDREN

When children have access to high-quality programs, they stay safe, engaged, and supported academically and socially, resulting in increased academic achievement and long-term positive outcomes.



COMMUNITIES

When we close the gap for communities experiencing a lack of access to quality programming, communities benefit through workforce expansion and supported families and youth.

SOLUTIONS THAT FIT SCHOOL-AGE OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Top Legislative Priorities

- Create a consolidated state governance structure for child care and afterschool programs.
- Establish a designated, ongoing funding stream for early care and OST programs.
- Partner with higher education/research organizations to conduct a return-on-investment study.
- Create a legislative caucus or coalition focused on children and youth.

2. Administrative Actions

- Establish a regular feedback loop with OST providers on licensing.
- Strengthen outreach and access to school-age training.

3. Field-Led Initiatives

- Develop voluntary statewide quality standards.
- Update mapping of school-age OST access to identify supply and demand.
- Develop an afterschool cost model reflecting program realities.

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