



# Circuit

SOUTH DAKOTA PARENT CONNECTION  
2023



*"I just want to thank you again for taking the time to speak with me. I can't begin to tell you how much I appreciate the guidance; we've been so in the dark. You've revived my confidence." - Parent*

*"Thank you so much for the direction and compassion. I feel very empowered to take on this mountain and chip away to find the best ways to help my son. I sincerely appreciate the guidance. I'll stay in touch." - Parent*



## What We Do

At South Dakota ParentConnection, helping families and professionals has been at the heart of our work since 1985. We serve families with children with all disabilities and special needs. Our caring and knowledgeable staff are parents and family members of children with disabilities who can relate to the challenges you face.

These experienced staff listen to your concerns, provide information that will help you better understand your role, and help develop a comprehensive plan for addressing your unique needs. We help improve your level of understanding so that moving forward you can be more empowered to advocate for your child.

Our website provides access to our publications, resources, and events happening in your community. Discover helpful videos that provide educational instruction and guidance on important parenting topics.

Based on the concerns we hear from families, we have created and introduced several new materials this year. Find these and many other resources on our website at [www.sdparent.org](http://www.sdparent.org).

- [Understanding and Preventing Bullying](#)
- [About ADA/504/IDEA, Which Laws Do What?](#)
- [Exiting IEP Services and Supports](#)
- [Understanding Guardianship and Alternatives](#)



# From Dr. Carla Miller, Executive Director

We have heard from many families about the concern and confusion over what happens when their child leaves school-based services after the age of 18. This has included several questions about guardianship and alternatives to full guardianship. South Dakota ParentConnection partnered with Disability Rights South Dakota to create a very useful and timely guide for parents and professionals to use in understanding this complex topic. The new guide was highlighted at several conferences this spring and summer such as Lighting the Way, the Division of Developmental Disabilities Conference, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Conference.

To get a copy, contact South Dakota ParentConnection at [sdpc@sdparent.org](mailto:sdpc@sdparent.org) or download a copy of the guide by visiting our website at the link below.

### [Preparing for the Future: Understanding Guardianship and Alternatives](#)

Because of the calls we have been receiving related to transition, we have also started offering a parent training series called *Transition To Success* led by Betsy Drew, one of our Outreach Specialists. Partnering with local school districts, parents and young adults learn important information on how to plan for their future, including resources available in the community to support this phase in life.



Teaching professionals can also learn ways of engaging parents and students in dialogue and how to best use planning for the future.

To learn more about *Transition To Success* call (800) 640-4553.



*"We received so much valuable information that will be useful for our son and us to use of the next several years. The information made us think of new ideas for the future."*

- Parent



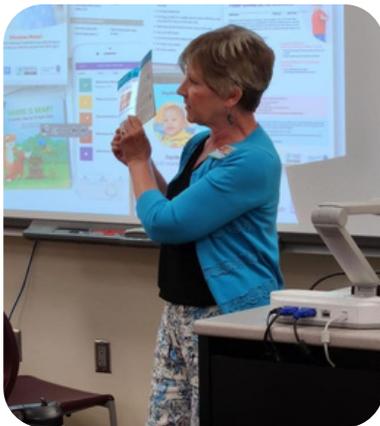


South Dakota ParentConnection is here to support the whole family including the littlest among us and siblings of someone with a disability. We are once again hosting *Sibshops*.

*Sibshops* is a nationally known program that provides young brothers and sisters of kids with special developmental concerns with peer support and information in a lively, recreational setting.

This past year Outreach Specialist, Kris Sellers held 3 *Sibshops*. The siblings who attended had fun together meeting other siblings with like experiences, laughing, talking, and learning more about their sibling's disability.

*"I like getting to meet other kids who have a sibling with a disability and learning about other disabilities." - Sibling*



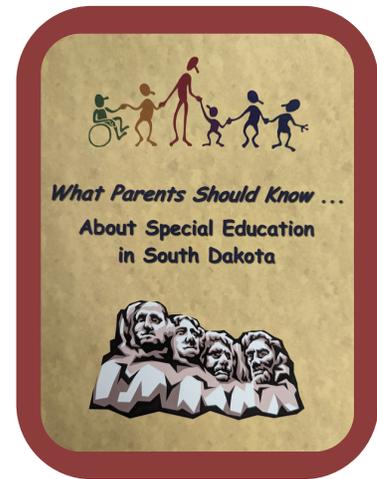
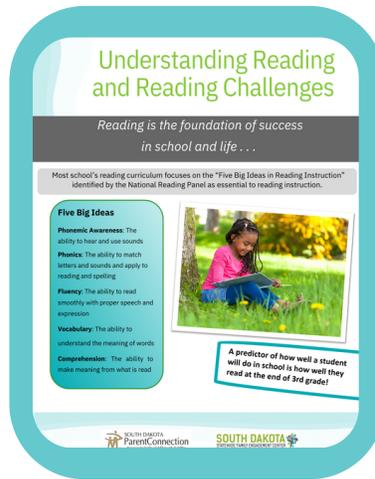
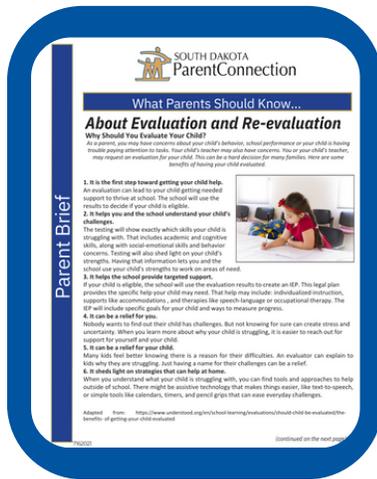
On staff at South Dakota ParentConnection, Lisa Sanderson, is the acting Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Act Early Ambassador for South Dakota. The goal of this initiative is to help families know early development milestones so, that if there are concerns, they can act early to get concerns addressed.

The program has grown to include over 110 state-wide partners and has distributed over 43,000 materials related to understanding early developmental milestones. For more information about the Act Early Initiative or how to access materials reach out to Lisa Sanderson at [lsanderson@sdparent.org](mailto:lsanderson@sdparent.org).

*"Thank you for the information and thank you for listening last week. With a recent diagnosis, starting therapies, being on wait lists, etc. this has been a difficult process for our family all together. Things I thought could help this process and/or our family have been very disappointing and honestly have put nothing but added stress on us, and more specifically me. It's hard being the mama bear sometimes!" - Parent*



# South Dakota ParentConnection Resources



## Early Childhood

- [What Parents Should Know...The Important Role They Play in Their Child's Early Development](#)
- [What Parents Should Know...Sensory Processing](#)
- [Understanding Red Flags of Concern For Your Child](#)

## Social Emotional Development & Behavior

- [Social Emotional Development; What You Should Know](#)
- [When Behavior is a Concern...A Guide for Parents of School-Age Children](#)
- [What Parents Should Know...Understanding and Preventing Bullying](#)

## Other Resources

- [What Parents Should Know...Parent Rights and Responsibilities in Special Education](#)
- [What Parents Should Know...Back to School Tips for Parents of Children with Special Needs](#)
- [Section 504; What You Should Know](#)

If you would like South Dakota ParentConnection to provide training on any of these resources or topics, please call us at (800) 640-4553 or email at [sdpc@sdparent.org](mailto:sdpc@sdparent.org).

## South Dakota ParentConnection Website

South Dakota ParentConnection has been busy making updates to the functionality and performance of our website to make it the go-to site when searching for reliable information and resources to support families with children with disabilities. Online information has increasingly become more used and we are working to provide our users the best experience.

Check back often in the coming months to see the exciting changes we have planned for 2024!

# Our Impact

**Provided individual assistance to families and professionals**  
**4,214**

**Resources provided to families and professionals**  
**1,026**

**Families and professionals attended trainings**  
**1,336**

**Web users learned more about resources to help them**  
**14,663**

**Web views for information on-demand 24/7**  
**66,036**

**People read about South Dakota ParentConnection and events in online articles and on social media**  
**42,013**

**100% of families surveyed reported they feel more able to advocate for their needs with those serving their child**

**100 % of families surveyed indicated they feel more confident to make more informed decisions to help their child and recommend South Dakota ParentConnection to other families**

# HOW YOU CAN HELP

## *What makes South Dakota ParentConnection unique?*

- Connecting families of children with disabilities or special health needs to information and resources in an environment of support, hope, and respect is at the heart of our work.
- Knowledgeable staff with personal experience in supporting children with exceptional needs and are prepared to provide timely accurate information when you call.
- State-wide resources and learning opportunities provided on our website are available when you need them from anywhere.

## **Your gift will make a difference**

**We need your help to continue to serve the growing number of families that need assistance. Your financial support helps us to...**

- Continue to provide materials on topics like behavior concerns and understanding rights and responsibilities at no cost.
- Offer in-person and virtual learning opportunities for parents and professionals.
- Provide timely information to parents and professionals in person, on our website or on social media.



Does your employer have a Matching Gift Program?  
Ask them to include South Dakota ParentConnection  
among the programs they support.

To donate scan the QR code or visit our [website](#).

***Thank you!***



# MANY HELPING HANDS

*South Dakota ParentConnection is privileged to work with very dedicated and knowledgeable staff and board members. We are so grateful for the work they do with us on behalf of South Dakota families and individuals with disabilities and long-term healthcare challenges.*

## South Dakota ParentConnection Staff

**Dr. Carla Miller**  
Executive Director

**Lisa Sanderson**  
Grants Coordinator

**Jennifer Wentzel**  
Navigator Program Coordinator

**Kris Sellers**  
Outreach Specialist

**Betsy Drew**  
Outreach Specialist

**Tina Kenser**  
Outreach Specialist

**Courtney Temple**  
Outreach Specialist

**Ken Randall**  
Operations Manager

**Pam Brown**  
Program Support Specialist

## Volunteer Board Members

Kristi Wallin, Sioux Falls  
President

Andrew Renke, Sioux Falls  
Co-President

Amber Winkler, Sioux Falls  
Secretary

Elizabeth Krogstad, Sioux Falls  
Finance Chair

Mohammed Anis Abdellatif, Sioux Falls

Elizabeth Welfl, Spearfish

## Welcome New Members

Haley Coss, Miller

Lorna HerManyHorses, Rosebud

Lora Barthelman, Sioux Falls

Myriah Ventura, Sioux Falls

Chris Nickles, Sioux Falls

***We wish to also express our appreciation for the following Board Members who have completed their terms.***

Chris Bordeaux, Pine Ridge  
Kristen Sauer, Aberdeen  
Vicki Stewart, Sioux Falls

Rose Carroll, Howard/Harold area  
Amira Lawrence, Sioux Falls