

# Cochran plays role in battling child poverty

## Spotlight On

UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTH DAKOTA

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Growing up in poverty is one of the greatest threats to healthy child development.

"Poverty and financial stress can impede children's cognitive development and their ability to learn, and those risks posed by economic hardship are greatest in children who experience poverty when they are very young, and children who experience persistent and deep poverty," said Carole Cochran during a presentation at the Muenster University Center on March 28.

Cochran is project director of South Dakota KIDS COUNT, which is located at USD's Beacom School of Business.

With funding provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT collects and publishes data regarding the demographics, health, education, economics and safety of children.

According to the most recent KIDS COUNT data, 22 percent of children in the United States are living in poverty, the poverty line translated as \$22,811 for a family of two adults and two children.

In South Dakota, the rate is 19.4 percent – more than one-fifth of the state's children, living

in 34 counties.

"That's about 39,000 children in South Dakota living in poverty," Cochran said. "To put that into perspective, those 39,000 children would fill Target Field, the home of the Minnesota Twins. That's a lot of kids."

These rates are present despite the fact that the parents of most of those children holding down jobs.

In 2011, 79 percent of South Dakota children under the age of six had all available parents in the labor force.

Cochran said this translates to about 51,000 children.

The numbers are even higher for children ages 6-12, with 74 percent, or 57,000 children, she said.

The use of public assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Medicaid are increasing as well, she said.

South Dakota KIDS COUNT was founded in 1993.

"Over those 20 years, we have assembled a lot of data on demographics, health, education, economic and safety about children and families in South Dakota," Cochran said.

"Why are data important? They're going to help us describe a problem, answer a question, help



us set priorities, and help us monitor changes. They're going to give us the magnitude of the problem, either through a number or a rate.

"They're going to give the scope of the problem so we can see changes over time, whether good or bad. They're going to give us relative standing," she said.

South Dakota KIDS COUNT uses its data to public a yearly fact book which contains about 50 indicators of child well-being.

It also produces special reports and a monograph series.

"These are often the basis of public policy decisions, and an important resource for those who are seeking and awarding funding, not only for foundations but in the private sector," Cochran said. "Most of those indicators are

county-level information and you can access through the Kids Count Web site."

Virtually all of this data is available through the KIDS COUNT Data Center.

"We take data, we sort it, we arrange it in a meaningful way so advocates, policy makers and interested citizens can use that data to improve child well-being in South Dakota," Cochran said. "Here's your challenge: Do you see some ways that you could use this data? Is there something that you can do to impact children and families in your county, your region or the state in a positive way?"

For more information, visit <http://www.usd.edu/business/south-dakota-kids-count/index.cfm>.

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Moving Sale: Treadmill, kitchen table, coffee/end tables, bed, filing cabinet. Glider, rocker, carpet cleaner, baby items, miscellaneous.

### Eagles (Downtown Vermillion)

**Saturday, 4/20, 11am-4pm**  
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### 1890 Seed - Feed

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### 2000 Notices

**Al-Anon meets Monday** night at 7:30 p.m. in St. Paul's Church, 10 Linden Ave. Call 605-624-4166 for information.

**Attention Democrats: Meeting** at Pro's Bar and Grill April 10th, 12:00-1:00PM. Speaker is Ben Nesselhuf. Subject is McGovern Day, April 20th.

**Do you have** a desire to stop drinking? Join us at the Vermillion Unity AA Meetings held at Trinity Lutheran Church in the Sletwold Room (north entrance). Soaring Spirits group is Tuesdays at 7:30p.m., Happy Hour Group is Saturday at 7:30p.m., and a Steps & Traditions Study group is Sunday at 7:30p.m. All meetings are non-smoking and handicapped accessible.

**Driver Licensing Schedules:** Vermillion 7a.m.-5p.m. Thursday & Friday; Yankton 7a.m.-5:30p.m. Tuesday, Thursday & Friday; Elk Point 8:30a.m.-4:30p.m. 1st & 3rd Wednesday; North Sioux City 8:45a.m.-4:30p.m. 2nd, 4th & 5th Wednesday. Call 1-800-952-3696 or visit [www.state.sd.us/dps/dl](http://www.state.sd.us/dps/dl) for more information.

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**205 E. Pleasant, Elk Point - \$154,900**  
Beautifully maintained 2 story: 2058sf, 4 bedrooms, 1/2 bath on the main, full bath, shower in basement. Preserved original wood floors, trim, 5 panel doors, open stair. Features maid's back stair, sliders to deck, huge kitchen. Many updates in the last 5 years.

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