

## National Child Care Provider Appreciation Day

ARLINGTON, VA — Child care organizations and parents across the globe are joining together the Friday before Mother's Day, May 7, to celebrate Provider Appreciation Day. Provider Appreciation Day is a special day to recognize child care providers, teachers, school-age program staff, child care center directors and staff, and all those who work with children and are responsible for their education and care. It is estimated that there are nearly 2.8 million child care providers in the United States and that more than 11 million children under age five are in their care.

"By applauding the dedication of child care providers on May 7, we remind our communities of the importance of high-quality child care, and let providers everywhere know that we recognize and value their important work," said Linda K. Smith, executive director of the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), the host organization of Provider Appreciation Day. "It is important that the care a child receives during the first five years of life be of high-quality because approximately 90 percent of brain development occurs during those years."

In recent years, local governments across the United States have joined many governors in proclaiming this day of recognition. Around the globe, Department of Defense installations celebrate Provider Appreciation Day by recognizing those who care for the children of military parents living both at home and abroad. The celebrations this year promise to carry on and strengthen Provider Appreciation Day. Events such as lunch-

eons, parades, dedications, and other recognition celebrations are planned throughout the United States in an effort to honor child care providers for their hard work and commitment to children.

Provider Appreciation Day is a special day to recognize child care providers, teachers, and other educators of young children everywhere. Started in 1996 by a group of volunteers in New Jersey, Provider Appreciation Day is appropriately celebrated each year on the Friday before Mother's Day. The founding organizers saw the need to recognize the tireless efforts of providers who care for children of working parents. Momentum and support for this event has grown each year and recognition presently includes individuals and government organizations throughout North America, Europe, and Asia.

To learn more about Provider Appreciation Day or for ideas on how you can thank your child care provider, visit [www.providerappreciationday.org](http://www.providerappreciationday.org).

NACCRRA, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, is our nation's leading voice for child care. We work with more than 700 state and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies nationwide. These agencies help ensure that families in 99 percent of all populated zip codes in the United States have access to high-quality, affordable child care. To achieve our mission, we lead projects that increase the quality and availability of child care professionals, undertake research, and advocate child care policies that positively impact the lives of children and families.

