

# Helping All Children Get Ready for School



**How Community Organizations Can Include Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregivers in Programs and Services**



Minnesota  
**Child Care**  
Resource &  
Referral Network



When not with their parents, many Minnesota infants and toddlers are in the care of relatives, close friends and nearby neighbors. These caregivers provide a strong foundation for children's success in school and life.

## **Family, friend and neighbor caregivers**

want what is best for the children in their care. In our state and around the country, networks of community organizations, tribes, policymakers and early learning advocates are developing new strategies to reach and support these caregivers. Many caregivers welcome support and help, such as information on child development and school readiness, health and safety, positive discipline resources and toys. They are also often interested in opportunities to be linked to community services and other caregivers. Providing these supports to family, friend and neighbor caregivers helps ensure quality care and learning success for every child.

## How your organization can help...

You can support children's caregivers through the work you already do:

- Reach caregivers through parents. Encourage parents to share relevant information and resources with caregivers.
- Co-sponsor an educational "Play & Learn" group for parents, caregivers and children in partnership with your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency.
- Include articles about family, friend and neighbor care in your newsletter.
- Name programs and activities in a way that is inclusive of non-parental caregivers and multigenerational participants. For example, "Positive Discipline for Parents and Caregivers," "Adult-Child Playtime," or "Family Activities." Or, refer directly to grandparents, aunts and uncles.
- Include family, friend and neighbor caregivers in your service design plans.

Recognizing and supporting our children's caregivers is a community effort. You can play a significant part in this necessary work. When family, friend and neighbor caregivers receive the services they need and have up-to-date information on child development, home safety, nutrition, and learning activities, the children in their care are better prepared for school and life.

## Family, friend and neighbor caregivers

provide the most common type of care for Minnesota's youngest children. An estimated 46 percent of Minnesota families use family, friend and neighbor care as their primary child care arrangement. Of these caregivers, 52 percent are grandparents.

## Family, friend and neighbor caregivers

provide informal, legal unlicensed home-based child care. As legally unlicensed providers, they must only care for relatives and/or children from one additional family.

For more information and for partnership opportunities:

The Child Care Resource & Referral community in Minnesota helps families find child care and understand their care options, supports child care providers—including family, friend and neighbor caregivers—through grants and education and informs the community on the importance of child care.

### **Quality Care and Education for Every Child**

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