

# A Strong Minnesota Needs a Strong Child Care System



*Resources that Empower Parents*

*Resources that Enrich the Early Childhood and School-Age Care Fields*

*Resources that Build Community Connections*

**Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network  
2005-2006 Annual Report**





*"I am an important part of my families' lives and my community's well being. I've always known this but it's nice that society in general is beginning to take notice."*

—Minnesota Child Care Provider



*"Knowing my children are safe, happy and learning allows me to head off to work each day with peace of mind"*

—Minnesota Parent

# Answering the Call to Create a Stronger Minnesota

## A Word from the Executive Director

We began the past year as we have every year in our long history of service; by answering the call from one parent looking for child care guidance and by reaching out to the first of many child care providers with critical professional development and community support services. We proudly end the year with a stronger Minnesota—tallying over 18,000 parents empowered with resources on finding care in their community and tools for recognizing quality child care and over 2,000 educational trainings and conferences offered to child care providers.

We take a moment to toast this progress and we feel truly honored by the trust these parents and child care providers have placed in us. At the same time we are acutely aware of parents who are on their own facing daunting child care choices, namely low and moderate income families. These are the same parents (research shows us) who face an uphill battle in affording, arranging and accessing quality care that fits their needs. Further understanding that the demographics of this information gap directly mirror the achievement gap in our state—and that the achievement gap, which begins in the early years, is impacted by child care choices—it is with a great sense of urgency that we reach out in new ways to these communities. As our system enters our second year of offering special outreach referrals designed to meet the unique needs of these families, we have begun the very conversations that will change the state. Also entering our second year of offering interpreting services in Hmong, Spanish and Somali it is our intent to offer ongoing support throughout the child care experiences faced by the diverse families we serve.

Alongside our growing parent education services, we've launched new initiatives to reach child care providers with education that truly improves the lives and care experiences of children. The breadth and depth of our professional development services have grown to offer educational opportunities created to help children reach school ready to learn and succeed. Our collective vision to bring quality care and education to every child has taken us deep into the communities of Family, Friend and Neighbor caregivers, a growing group of Minnesotans who care for children who

are often a part of their extended family, neighborhood or circle of friends. We have taken the lead in researching and implementing the best practices for creating meaningful outreach to this yet unserved population of care providers and are committed to helping them do their jobs well and receive the support they need.

There is enormous work yet to come in our efforts to strengthen the child care system. Our hope is a stronger state which lifts the burden of our early education system off the shoulders of parents and providers alone and makes the most of public/private partnerships to deliver quality care and education to our children. It is with a clear sense of direction and a healthy dose of hope, therefore, that we answer the first phone call of the year and the broader, clarion call we've received to create a stronger Minnesota.



Ann McCully  
Executive Director  
The Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network

# The Voices of Minnesota Child Care

## **Dina Mendez\*, Mother of Adriana, Tomas and Kaitlin**

Like most families, we needed to find child care that we trusted, could afford, was close to home and fit our family. We hadn't a clue what was out there and the child care resource and referral counselor I talked to really drew us a road map. I knew that I wanted to find a place that would be good for my children and care for them the way I care for them at home, but I was having a hard time knowing just what that would mean or what questions to ask. The CCR&R counselor helped me to understand that I was right to feel like this decision was a big one—I wasn't just being a worry wart—and it's OK to start out

a little overwhelmed. We talked about how finding good care for my kids was not just a matter of finding someone to watch them while I was at work, but rather finding the place where my littlest one could begin an important time of learning and beginning to trust friends and new adults. And it is where my school-age children will build on what they learned at school that day and find space to build on their interests and passions.

My phone conversation with the R&R let me in on the fact that they've researched these things (they know exactly what good daycare looks like!) and also helped me come up with a concrete game plan. All three of my children are such individuals that what I was really looking for was a place that



*“So as I searched I asked myself, ‘Do the kids here seem happy?’ and ‘Do the teachers seem happy and do they seem to want to meet my children?’”*

would allow my quiet Adriana to come out of her shell at her own pace (at this time she was only talking while I was in the room) have plenty of space for Tomas to play basketball after school (his one true love) and where Kaitlin could know her big brother was close by. This seemed like a tall order but the truth is it's just what they all need to be happy. And I need to know they're happy to head off to work each morning. After coming this far, I felt comfortable enough with the counselor to let her know I had even more questions involving finding a place that would accept my children into the early evening as my husband and I occasionally work split shifts. She didn't think our crazy schedules were so crazy at all and had lots of answers. I've thought about this child care resource and referral counselor often as her kindness and all the information she passed along made the biggest difference for us. I really spent time thinking about what we needed from a care provider and how these teachers would really be joining our family in many ways. So as I searched I asked myself, "Do the kids here seem happy?" and "Do the teachers seem happy and do they seem to want to meet my children?"

The place we found has been really wonderful. At our center Adriana is allowed to be the quiet kid she is but she is also encouraged to speak up when she has a thought. She's a happy girl these days! Tomas tells me his jump shot is getting better and better in his after school program. And, Dan, his after school teacher has tied in all these basketball stats Tomas has memorized to some much needed math help. Kaitlin has found a group of girlfriends to spend the afternoons with. She's comfortable at the center and doesn't need to be next to Tomas to feel secure. I feel good about where my children spend their days and I feel proud that I am able to provide these good experiences for them.

*\*Last name changed by request.*

*"I feel good about where my children spend their days, and I feel proud that I am able to provide these good experiences for them."*



# The Voices of Minnesota Child Care

**Karen Chanhassen\*, Minnesota Child Care Provider, Caregiver for: Lily (3), Jonas (8), Katrina (4), Elijah (6 mos.), Rosie (3), Benjamin (5) and Audrey (9)**

Around ten years ago, I had my eyes opened to a profession that holds the answers to children's educational needs and the economic needs of my community. Imagine how I felt discovering that this profession is the one I was already working in. This is why I like to say that when I started out as a child care provider, I was simply a "babysitter", because that's how I viewed myself. Over the years, I've come to realize, (thanks in large part to the community and educational opportunities I've found through my child care resource and referral agency) that I am a professional caregiver and educator.

My child care resource and referral contacts were with me from the beginning. I received guidance on starting my own business/child care program back in the 80s (oh my goodness has it been that long?) I participated in the countless training hours which have given me a great education in child development and child care. I received program improvement grants here and there which allowed me to purchase new books and toys and keep my home safe for the children with updated cribs and fencing. And most recently, I've joined in Eager-to-Learn online classes offered by the R&R which allow me to stay up on the latest techniques in the field in the evening from home.

It is my privilege to work with children every day and what an adventure to guide them through their learning and growth. My colleagues at the R&R have truly been partners in this adventure. When I imagine my career without them I see myself as an isolated babysitter and ultimately the children in my care would have been the worse off for it. It is no exaggeration to say that the folks in my field change the world everyday. Valuing that work for all it is has been the best gift anyone could have given me and the kids!

*\*Last name changed by request.*

*"...thanks in large part to the community and educational opportunities I've found through my CCR&R agency... I am a professional..."*





*“It is my privilege to work with children every day and what an adventure to guide them through their learning and growth.”*

# Why Does Child Care Matter in Minnesota?

With current numbers on Minnesota children in licensed child care topping 360,000\* and over 14,300 care facilities operating in the state, child care is a key component of Minnesota's economic, social and educational picture. With the highest rates of working mothers in the country, Minnesota truly depends upon our large workforce of child care providers to keep life moving. Among the varied settings

in which children receive care and learn, child care is by far the most common. And, as mounting research suggests that the early years represent a time of fantastic brain growth and development for children, growing numbers of parents and policymakers are coming to understand the need to connect children with well-trained teachers and high-quality programs to stimulate their learning.



## **With so many of our children in care, quality care is crucial.**

- 75% of Minnesota families use child care.
- 28% of children are in child care full time (35 hours or more a week.)

## **Our youngest citizens can benefit in long-term ways.**

- Children who spend their early years in quality child care settings are found to develop better language skills, score higher in school readiness tests and develop fewer behavioral problems in school.
- As these children enter adulthood, studies show they are more likely to attend college and become homeowners and are less likely to be dependant on welfare.

## **School age children continue to need quality care.**

- Quality out-of-school time care is associated with greater academic achievement, school attendance and time spent on homework.
- Studies also show a decline in risk-taking behavior in children who participate in positive out-of-school time care.

*\*Number of Minnesota children who spend some portion of their day in a licensed child care setting.*

# 2005-2006 What is the State of Child Care in Minnesota?

## Affordability and Accessibility

- The cost of child care has the greatest impact on the budgets of low-income families, who commonly spend 28% of their income on child care expenses.
- 10% of gross income spent on covering child care expenses is considered affordable.
- 36% of low-income parents, as opposed to 14% of all other parents, report child care problems as a leading cause in their decision to not accept or keep a job.
- Minnesota recently dropped from a ranking in the top five U.S. states for helping low-income parents afford child care. We are now in the bottom ten states.
- 5,000 Minnesota families are currently on the waiting list for child care assistance.
- A family of four with two young children, one preschooler and one infant, can expect to pay around \$18,500 annually for child care in the metro area and around \$13,200 in greater Minnesota.
- As a comparison, State College tuition for the 2006-2007 school year is \$4,280 and State University tuition totals are around \$6,690.

### Average Weekly Cost of Care by Age Group in Child Care Centers

	Metro Area	Greater Minnesota
Infant	\$263.64	\$164.48
Toddler	\$221.04	\$146.49
Preschool	\$194.60	\$135.51
School age	\$176.65	\$128.47

### Average Weekly Cost of Care by Age Group in Family Child Care Settings

	Metro Area	Greater Minnesota
Infant	\$151.04	\$119.31
Toddler	\$140.25	\$113.33
Preschool	\$131.65	\$109.74
School age	\$118.21	\$105.67



# 2005-2006 What is the State of Child Care in Minnesota?

## Supply

### Total number of child care programs in Minnesota

Number of Child Care Centers	881
Number of School Age Care Programs	571
Number of Family Child Care Programs	11,954
Number of Head Start Programs	349
Number of Preschools	563

- Minnesota has seen the closing of 247 child care programs across the state this year. Each closure is a three-fold loss, representing not only the disappearance of the providers in question but of the training and on-the-job experience they take with them and of the stability and close relationships which help children learn.
- Average income for a family child care provider is estimated at just over three dollars an hour.

## Emerging Trends

- Family, Friend and Neighbor Care: 46% of Minnesota families rely on a family, friend or neighbors for their primary care arrangement.
- 31% of families surveyed this year report that the cost of care is too high for their budget while child care providers report increasing difficulties staying afloat financially.
- 36% of families surveyed report a shortage of child care (no openings for their child's age) as a problem.
- Child care center use is rising for preschoolers: 60% of children ages 3 to 5 use center based care (up from 41% in 1999.)



# Why Does CCR&R Matter in Minnesota Child Care?

When it comes to child care, quality counts. The Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network is committed to a strong Minnesota supported by a strong child care system. Child Care Resource and Referral agencies across Minnesota work in their local communities to help parents find child care, identify quality care and understand financing options. CCR&R agencies further work to empower child care providers through professional development opportunities and community support.

## Parents Served in 2005/2006

- 18,058 parents received child care referrals and information on quality through our personalized phone service or through mnchildcare.org.
- 97% of families using CCR&R services would recommend CCR&R services to other people who need similar assistance.
- 95% of families using CCR&R services feel they have improved their ability to search for child care.

## Child Care Providers Served in 2005/2006

- 96% of providers surveyed report feeling very (57.6%) or somewhat (38.4%) satisfied with the services they have received.
- 96% of providers surveyed would definitely (55.1%) or probably (40.4%) recommend CCR&R services to others in need of similar assistance.

## Financial Support

Low wages, high turnover and out-of-reach educational options represent a significant strain on child care providers and their field as a whole. The CCR&R Network addresses these issues through program improvement grants, educational scholarships and supplementary income grants.

- \$1.8 million delivered in grants to improve quality in child care.
- Just over \$634,000 was awarded as scholarships and grants by the T.E.A.C.H. and REETAIN programs this year.

## Professional Development

- 2,017 trainings and conferences were sponsored or cosponsored by CCR&R.
- Attendance at these trainings and individual conference sessions topped 50,000.

*“Programs characterized by educated teachers are consistently associated with a wide array of favorable child development outcomes.”*

—William Gormley,  
*Promoting School Readiness in Oklahoma:  
An Evaluation of Tulsa’s Pre-K Program*

### Sources:

*MNCCR&R Data Tracking Program; NACCRRAware; Wilder Research Center: Child Care Use in Minnesota 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey; Child Care Resource and Referral, Results of Referral outcomes follow-up surveys; Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregivers*

*Anderson-Butcher, D., Newsome, W.S., & Ferrari, T.M. (2003). Participation in boys and girls clubs and relationships to youth outcomes. Journal of Community Psychology, 31(1), 39-55*

*American Youth Policy Forum, (2003). Finding fortune in thirteen out-of-school time programs: A compendium of education programs and practices. Washington, DC: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, tuition data*

*State Child Care Assistance Policies 2006: Gaps Remain with New Challenges Ahead, National Women’s Law Center Abecedarian Project, Child Parent Center Program, High Scope Perry Pre-School Project.*

*Minnesota Department of Human Services: Cost of Child Care: Legislative Report on Cost Containment Options in the Child Care Assistance Program*

# The State of Child Care: A Vibrant Civil Dialog

*"Child care providers are critical to our state's well-being. They are one of our states largest workforces in their own right and they are every day supporting the existing workforce by providing care for their children and creating a strong workforce for the future."*

*—Ann McCully, Executive Director, The Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network, WCCO Radio*

*"A new national survey by The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies group lists Minnesota as one of the most expensive states in terms of child care. The survey finds child care costs are rising nationwide, becoming a family expense that's more and more difficult to meet."*

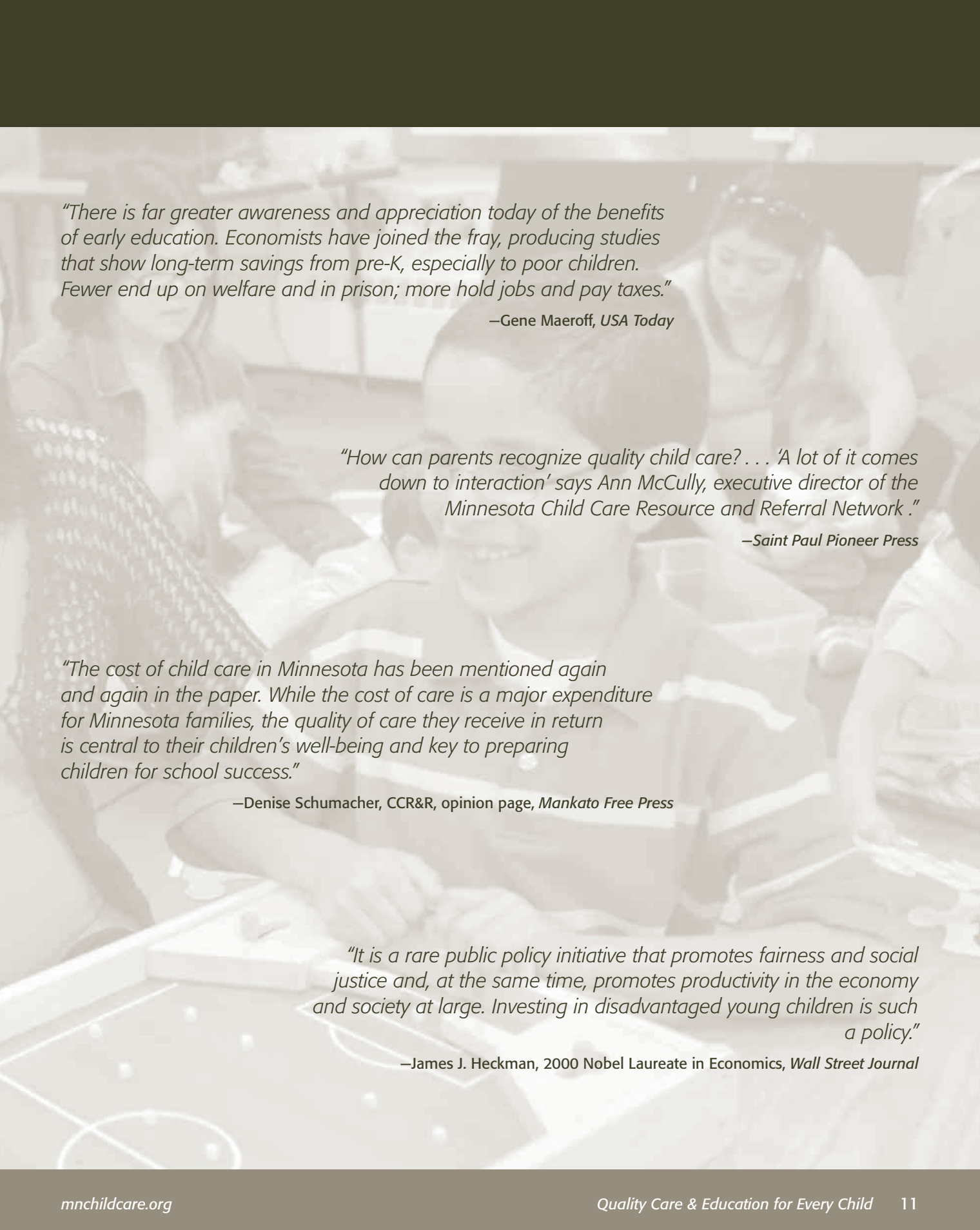
*—Minnesota Public Radio*

*"At age 40, children who were in high-quality preschool programs are now providing a return of \$12 for every \$1 initially invested by taxpayers into early education and \$5 per \$1 invested back to each individual. When those children turn 50, the numbers will increase dramatically again. The positive effects on future generations are just starting to become clear."*

*—Chad Dunkley, President of the Minnesota Child Care Association, Minneapolis Saint Paul Business Journal*

*"Programs characterized by educated teachers are consistently associated with a wide array of favorable child development outcomes."*

*—William Gormley, from Promoting School Readiness in Oklahoma: An Evaluation of Tulsa's Pre-K Program*



*"There is far greater awareness and appreciation today of the benefits of early education. Economists have joined the fray, producing studies that show long-term savings from pre-K, especially to poor children. Fewer end up on welfare and in prison; more hold jobs and pay taxes."*

*—Gene Maeroff, USA Today*

*"How can parents recognize quality child care? . . . 'A lot of it comes down to interaction' says Ann McCully, executive director of the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network."*

*—Saint Paul Pioneer Press*

*"The cost of child care in Minnesota has been mentioned again and again in the paper. While the cost of care is a major expenditure for Minnesota families, the quality of care they receive in return is central to their children's well-being and key to preparing children for school success."*

*—Denise Schumacher, CCR&R, opinion page, Mankato Free Press*

*"It is a rare public policy initiative that promotes fairness and social justice and, at the same time, promotes productivity in the economy and society at large. Investing in disadvantaged young children is such a policy."*

*—James J. Heckman, 2000 Nobel Laureate in Economics, Wall Street Journal*

# Resources that Empower Parents

## A Word from the Associate Director

Our new organizational tagline, "Quality Care and Education for Every Child" is now beginning to accompany many emails and banner our brochures at an opportune moment in time, a moment when we are poised to take significant steps forward with such a promise. The direction of our work, and indeed our field in general, affords us the unique opportunity to help Minnesota's parents usher in a new era of child care. And so this short, but powerful, phrase appropriately accompanies us as we undertake large scale efforts to improve our delivery of information and grow our parent education programs.

We have extensive parent focus groups underway in which we are asking parents how we can best serve their needs, throughout their time in child care. With the understanding that our services are only as effective as they are relevant to the current and diverse needs of Minnesota parents, we enter this long-term conversation eagerly and with faith that it will deliver many valuable lessons. When all is said and done we will have new tools at hand to guide and work with parents from the first search for infant care, to their transitions to preschool, all the way through to their after school program questions.

This year has also brought unprecedented growth for our online child care search options with a 300% growth in web visitors bringing our annual total to 249,518. We are proud to be offering child care information where parents are and when they need it. Word of our in-depth supports (beyond the initial search for caregivers) is reaching parents across the state and our consultation calls have risen in kind. In an effort to ensure that every consult we offer is nothing short of excellent and in a move to recognize the ongoing quality of our child care counselors, we are undergoing a national certification process and will soon be "Quality Assured" by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. The recognition (a CCR&R equivalent of a Better Business Bureau endorsement) will offer parents an extra reason to trust us with their child care questions and concerns.

We are further honored to announce the Network as the organizing home for the just-born, Quality Rating System Pilot for Minnesota. The QRS is a voluntary system which will provide parents in specific geographic areas with program ratings and support in recognizing quality programs. We are energized to join the growing number of U.S. states that offer parents solid, quantifiable and research-based information on their child care options.

It is with these important new projects in place and tremendous hopes for the coming year that we welcome 2007 as the year Minnesota will make great strides in bringing quality care and education to every child.



Karen Fogolin

Associate Director

The Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network

# Resources that Empower Parents

The changing needs of Minnesota parents continue to be the guiding star for the system of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies in Minnesota. Our network's system of 18 community agencies offers comprehensive listings of child care providers—including child care centers, family child care, preschools and out-of-school-time care—accompanied by resource tools designed to help parents identify quality programs, ease their child's period of adjustment and remain involved in their children's care. We also connect families to a broad set of care and recreation options including community centers, camps, Early Childhood Family Education programs and others. Our staff is made up of highly skilled, knowledgeable members of the child care community with a commitment to the diverse populations that make up Minnesota families. Our referral staff is currently undergoing a process of "Quality Assurance" which, when completed will allow us to join the ranks of the best in child care resource and referral nationwide.

## Highlights of the CCR&R System 2005-2006

- Special outreach referrals, which target the unique child care needs of low income families, totaled 4,194. (November 2005-June 2006)
- 18,058 parents received child care referrals and information on quality through our personalized phone service or through mnchildcare.org.

The outcomes of our referral and parent education services are measured each year in an effort to better understand the needs and situations of families in Minnesota. The ease or difficulty with which our families find their ideal care arrangement informs our work for the coming year and offers a snapshot of the supply of quality care in the state.

Of 1,721 families surveyed by Wilder Research:

- 97% of families using CCR&R services would recommend CCR&R services to other people who need similar assistance.
- 95% of families using CCR&R services feel they have improved their ability to search for child care.
- 33% received child care assistance.

## Gaps in Availability

Of the families surveyed, the following barriers to their search were noted:

47% report problems with finding type of care (18%), preferred schedule (28%) or location (21%).

## Gaps in Affordability

Child care makes up a significant percentage of a family's budget. The cost of child care for one year often exceeds the cost of college.

31% of families report problems with the cost of care (cost is too high).

## Gaps in Quality

Quality child care is important for the social, emotional and cognitive development of children.

16% of families report problems finding quality care.

*Sources: MNCCR&R Data Tracking Program; NACCRRAware; Wilder Research Center: Child Care Resource and Referral, Results of Referral outcomes follow-up surveys.*

*"After working with the CCR&R counselor I see myself as a consumer of child care and I understand child care to be my child's first classroom. This is a change in thinking that has changed my decisions."*

—Minnesota Parent

# Resources that Build Community Connections

## Who are Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregivers?

A large and growing group of Minnesota children are cared for by members of their extended family, family friends and neighbors (termed Family, Friend and Neighbor caregivers.) Many families choose this type of care to maintain close familial, cultural or community ties.

- On average, FFN caregivers have provided care to children for 11 years.
- About 45% have taken college classes in child development, nutrition or health and safety.
- 91% of FFN caregivers strongly agree or agree that taking care of children is the best part of their day.

## Why Does FFN Care Matter In Minnesota?

- For many parents in Minnesota, Family, Friend and Neighbor caregivers are the preferred type of care and their chosen support for getting to work and school everyday.
- 46% of Minnesota families use FFN care as their primary child care arrangement.
- An estimated 150,000 households in Minnesota provide child care for family, friend and neighbors.

## Why Does the Child Care Resource and Referral Community Matter in the Minnesota FFN Community?

To remain true to our vision of supporting quality care and education for every child in Minnesota, our system has lead a field-wide effort to reach out to the growing ranks of family, friend and neighbor caregivers. These yet, unserved caregivers carry tremendous potential to impact life in our state by preparing the children in their care for school and life.

## FFN Response

- The Family, Friend and Neighbor community is eager to receive community support and education
  - 81% of FFN caregivers are interested in receiving support from child development specialists and interaction with other FFN providers to improve the quality of care they deliver.

- 58% of FFN caregivers would like to receive information or training on helping prepare the children in their care for school.
- 53% would like to receive information or training on issues of health and safety.

## Minnesota Sparking Connections Initiative

- The Minnesota Sparking Connections Initiative has been piloted in Minnesota by the CCR&R Network and the CCR&R community. The goal of this groundbreaking, national effort is to support the work of FFN caregivers and, in turn, serve the children in this type of care, their families and the greater community.
- “Child Care Resource and Referral agencies are uniquely positioned to develop traditional and nontraditional partnerships to enhance quality early care and education on both a local and statewide level.” (From the Minnesota Sparking Connections report.)
- Emerging Promising Practices
  - Expand traditional professional development learning opportunities to include FFN care providers. Offer relevant information on school-readiness and health and safety in formats that go beyond the traditional classroom (such as home visiting and other relationship based trainings).
  - Incorporate FFN care in parent consultation as a valid choice for parents calling for child care referrals.

## Eager-to-Learn

- Eager-to-Learn, our online learning program for those who care for children, has effectively reached out to Family, Friend and Neighbor caregivers with important learning tools.

*Sources: MNCCR&R Data Tracking Program; NACCRRAware; Wilder Research Center: Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregivers. Minnesota Sparking Connections Report: Child Care Resource and Referral Strategies for Supporting Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregivers.*

# Resources that Build Community Connections

## What is Minnesota's Quality Rating System?

Minnesota's QRS is intended to support our children by creating a research-based rating system for identifying and quantifying quality in child care.

"The Quality Rating System pilot allows us the opportunity to chart a thoughtful course to a new system of quality in child care. It will empower parents with trustworthy information, rating the quality of their care options and supports child care providers with specific steps to improving quality. It is time to move beyond lip service to the education of our youngest children and take action. Offering this comprehensive consumer guide is the right action to take."

—Karen Fogolin, MN CCR&R Associate Director, Minnesota Quality Rating System Task Force

## Emerging Trends

### Quality is an issue

- Though only 50% of our children are entering kindergarten ready to learn, research shows that quality child care can reverse this trend and offer our youngest citizens lifelong benefits.
- A study conducted this year demonstrated that one quarter of Minnesota's child care centers are hitting the mark for "good" quality care. An approach which encourages incremental progress towards quality, the Quality Rating System pilot is designed to raise this figure.

### Quality Rating Systems are becoming an accepted standard nationally, for raising the quality of early education

- The National Child Care Information Center reports that as of May 2006, 13 states use Quality Rating Systems.
- 25 states are in the process of building Quality Rating Systems.

### Communities are looking for quality

87% of parents say they would find it helpful if their community had a child care quality rating system that would give them information they could use for selecting the highest quality care.

Of Minnesotans polled in 2006, 71% believe that making sure all children in Minnesota start kindergarten with the knowledge and skills they need to do their best in school is extremely important and should be a top priority for the state.

### Child Care Providers are committed to quality

Attendance at CCR&R professional development and training sessions this past year topped 50,000.

## The CCR&R Community and Quality Rating in Minnesota

The Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network is proud to provide the meeting place for policy makers, child care providers and parents and to bring the newest innovations in child care policy to the main streets of Minnesota. It is in this spirit that we have become the organizing home for newly piloted child care Quality Rating System. Built upon the understanding that child care settings across Minnesota will differ dramatically, but the things children need to grow and develop in healthy ways remain a constant, the QRS represents an important new tool we hope to offer to the Minnesota parents who turn to us.

### The good work of QRS is underway

Child Care Resource and Referral staffers have started the community outreach and consultation work that will make QRS a reality. Consulting with child care providers on the "Environmental Rating Scale" tools and equipping them with preparatory trainings such as Not by Chance: Child Care that Supports School Readiness have begun.

#### Sources:

*A Snapshot of Quality in Minnesota's Child Care Centers Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale, MNCCR&R Data Tracking Program; NACCRRAware*

*Ready 4K, Hart Research and Associates: Minnesotans' Attitudes Towards Early Care and Education*

*Minnesota Department of Education: Minnesota School Readiness Year Two Study*

*Wilder Research Center: Child Care Use in Minnesota 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey*

# Resources that Build Community Connections

With just over 600 new and continuing local partnerships working statewide, CCR&R staff represent an important group of leaders, activists and advocates in their communities. From leading local child care association boards, to facilitating school-readiness coalitions and launching new initiatives to better serve children with special needs, CCR&R staff strengthen Minnesota with their commitment to community building.



## **Accomplishments 2005-2006**

A traveling lending library of bilingual reading materials visited child care settings in Kandiyohi, Meeker, Renville and McLeod counties.

CCR&R outreach staffers from the Granite Falls area launched efforts to create partnerships with migrant families in an effort to empower these families with information on quality child care.

An effort in the Chaska area has brought early literacy training to Spanish speaking child care providers.

Community family literacy events and other "Family Fun Days," cosponsored by CCR&R have made an impact for children and families in the Leech Lake reservation.

Resources for Child Caring, serving the greater Metro area, have sponsored events to bring autism resources and information to Hmong and Spanish speaking families.

# Resources that Enrich the Child Care Fields

## Why Child Care Providers are Important in Minnesota

The community of committed professionals who are educating our youngest children and youth also represents a driving force in our economy. A force which enables parents to get to work, ensures a productive future workforce and represents an important income-generating industry in its own right.

### Total Number of Child Care Programs in Minnesota

Number of Child Care Centers	881
Number of School Age Care Programs	571
Number of Family Child Care Programs	11,954
Number of Head Start Programs	349
Number of Preschools	563

**Languages spoken in care facilities across the state include:** Spanish, American Sign Language, Arabic, Cambodian, Dakota, English, Hmong, Lao, Ojibwe, Russian, Somali, Serb/Croatian and Vietnamese.

Child care providers are operating on the edge. On average, centers statewide are operating at a profit of almost one percent.

## Why the Child Care Resource and Referral Community is Important to Child Care Providers

- We support parent choice with a more stable, empowered and educated child care workforce. From a list of important considerations in choosing child care, the special training of the caregiver is the top “very important” reason overall (73%) and the most important consideration for parents of children nine and younger.
  - The system of child care resource and referral agencies statewide are embedded in the child care community and represent a trusted vehicle for delivering the latest in learning opportunities, be they newly required by state law or simply mandated by the changing needs of our children.
  - *TEACH/REETAIN* - our scholarship and grant programs create a more stable child care workforce with a turnover rate of just 14% (compared to an estimated 30% in the field as a whole.)
  - The *Not by Chance: Child Care that Supports School Readiness* initiative has equipped more than 2,300 caregivers with tools to support school readiness in our state’s children.
  - *Eager-to-Learn* our online learning option offers excellent, affordable, accessible options in professional development.



# Resources that Enrich the Child Care Fields



## Highlights of the CCR&R System 2005-2006

- 2,017 educational and training sessions held for child care providers
- Attendance at these trainings and individual conference sessions topped 50,000.

### Key Training Topics Offered

### Sessions

Assessment and Planning for Individual Needs	71
Child Growth and Development	373
Families and Communities	72
Health, Safety and Nutrition	625
Interactions with Children	130
Learning Environment and Curriculum	428
Other/Special Event	89
Professional Development and Leadership	133
Program Planning and Evaluation	96

- Financial Support—\$1.8 million delivered in grants to improve quality in child care.
- This year, the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network initiated a conversation with the child care providers we serve in an effort to better understand how our services are meeting their needs.
  - 627 providers responded to our call for feedback
  - 96% of providers surveyed report feeling very (57.6%) or somewhat (38.4%) satisfied with the services they have received.
  - 96% of providers surveyed would definitely (55.1%) or probably (40.4%) recommend CCR&R services to others in need of similar assistance.
- The Sharing the Wisdom of Many Voices Trainers and Leaders Conference was co-hosted by the CCR&R Network professional development department in September of 2006 and attracted over 160 participants.

#### Sources:

*MNCCR&R Data Tracking Program; NACCRRAware; 2005 Child Care Provider Satisfaction Survey, MNCCR&R Network*

# Resources that Enrich the Child Care Fields

## Grants

A mended fence in Duluth, an updated, safer crib purchased in Pelican Rapids, a class on child development for staff at an Albert Lea child care center or new art supplies for the year coming home to a family child care program in South Minneapolis. These are the types of “bricks and mortar” improvements to child care programs made possible by the Child Care Resource and Referral Grants Program in Minnesota. Without these awards, such purchases, projects and educational undertakings would simply be out of reach for the vast majority of child care providers who are barely breaking even.

## Why do grants to child care providers matter?

These program improvements can lead directly to improved quality of care and, as growing research demonstrates, it is the quality of child care our children receive which charts the course for their future.

- Many program improvement grants are used to keep facilities safe and up to current licensing standards. Each program that remains in business because of the (oftentimes minimal) site improvements made possible by a grant is one more small business operating in Minnesota and one less group of families missing work during their search for new child care situations. Such unscheduled absenteeism has been shown to cost small businesses an annual average of \$60,000 and large companies an annual average of \$3.6 million. 25% of Minnesota’s working parents with children under five say child care problems have prevented their taking or keeping a job.
- On average, child care centers statewide are operating at a profit of almost one percent.
- Family child care providers’ average hourly wage is estimated to be around \$4.95 in the metro area and \$2.83 in greater Minnesota.

## Accomplishments 2005-2006

- \$1.8 million delivered in grants to improve quality in child care.
- 3,622 grant applications were received.
- 2,612 grants were awarded.
- Grants awarded to infant and toddler caregivers added 1,428 spaces to the pool of available child care.
- Grants awarded to school age caregivers created 122 spaces to the pool of available child care.

*Sources: MNCCR&R Data Tracking Program; NACCRRAware; 2005 Child Care Provider Satisfaction Survey, MNCCR&R Network; Minnesota Department of Human Services: Cost of Child Care: Legislative Report on Cost Containment Options in the Child Care Assistance Program*

*“Grant opportunities are essential for early childhood programs to remain financially viable while attempting to comply with licensing rules. This grant offered us financial assistance to replace worn equipment and provide much needed staff training opportunities. ”*

*—Minnesota Child Care Provider*

# Resources that Enrich the Child Care Fields

## **A Word from the Professional Development Director**

During 2005-2006, Child Care Resource & Referral continued its tradition of providing the largest number of child care training opportunities in the state. From intimate local settings, to large regional conferences, to multi-week online courses delivered in the comfort of home or work settings, CCR&R provided classes on a wide variety of topics to diverse audiences. In addition to meeting ongoing continuing education needs, the CCR&R professional development delivery system is engaged in a long-term effort to improve the quality and diversity of courses available for early childhood and school-age care providers. CCR&R believes that the purpose of training is to educate. By expanding the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs of individuals who care for children, the ultimate goal of CCR&R training is to positively impact the experience of children in all child care settings. To reach that goal, the MN CCR&R Network continues to work with its system of CCR&R agencies to look for new ways to deliver training that supports a continuum of adult educational needs.

Educational research shows that training and education will be most effective if learning activities are sequenced to support the natural, predictable process by which most people learn. To be responsive to the broad spectrum of our clients' learning needs, the CCR&R professional development system will begin to deliver longer, more in-depth classes. Through their structure and instructional strategies, these courses will offer students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding, as well as to develop their hands-on skills. This level of training has been available in pockets throughout the state and it has been available online through the MN CCR&R Network's Eager-to-Learn courses (see page 22 for more information). Beginning in January, 2007 with the statewide delivery of the Not By Chance, Quality in Practice classes (see page 21 for more information), CCR&R will begin to make higher level learning opportunities more accessible across the state.

In order to fulfill its commitment to providing a range of educational opportunities, the MN CCR&R Network will continue to work with the Minnesota Department of Human

Services Child Development Services team, as well as other partners and stakeholders. The CCR&R professional development system will work within the broader state-funded professional development system to ensure that course content reflects the most current knowledge and best practice; that training opportunities at any level lead to recognized credentials and accreditation; that trainers are qualified, experienced and supported; and that all levels of training are accessible and affordable. The MN CCR&R Network recognizes that this new vision for professional development represents a departure in many ways from past training delivery efforts. The Network professional development staff, along with our partners in the CCR&R system are prepared and committed to devote the time, effort, resources and strong leadership needed to ensure that child care providers have access to meaningful education and professional development opportunities.



Mary Wynne  
Professional Development Director  
The Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network

# Resources that Enrich the Child Care Fields

## Not By Chance: Child Care that Supports School Readiness

The centerpiece of the professional development system's drive to ensure that children across Minnesota arrive at kindergarten ready to learn, the Not by Chance: Child Care that Supports School Readiness trainings equip child care providers an in-depth understanding of three important tools the Department of Human Services supports to increase quality child care:

- The Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress which describe goals for young children's knowledge and abilities;
- The Minnesota Core Competencies which define goals for child care providers knowledge and abilities; and
- Environmental Rating Scales which is a set of tools for understanding and measuring the quality of a child care or school age care program.

Changing the landscape of CCR&R professional development by introducing a training curriculum intentionally structured with multiple learning levels, the Not By Chance training initiative has completed a remarkable year of growth, doubling the number of trainings offered across the state. At the heart of this growth is a drive to build on the existing excellence of Minnesota child care providers—by offering information and resources to measure this excellence and take it to the next level—and a commitment to explore, at every turn how the critical information within the curriculum can be most relevant and widely used. Asking at the opening of each meeting: "How can we reach the most children with this curriculum?" the initiative's leaders and the diverse task forces they brought together have undertaken translation of curriculum handouts, the creation of culturally useful translations of child care terms and the recruitment and support of bilingual trainers. Receiving a nod from higher education leaders in the state, the training has become a course requirement for child development students at Central Lakes College and is now offered for credit at Metropolitan State University.

As Not By Chance enters its second full year of training delivery, we, as a field, are enjoying a more solid foundation in bringing quality care and education to every child and a richer and more diverse training system.

### Program Accomplishments 2005-2006

- 95 Not By Chance trainings were held in communities across Minnesota and via the Internet.
- 1,133 people received training in the Not By Chance training curriculum.
- Those trained include licensed family child care providers, child care center staff, school age care staff, parents and family, friend and neighbor caregivers, child care licensing and Child Care Resource and Referral staff.
- Trainings are now available in Hmong, Spanish, Somali, Arabic, Amharic and Tigrinya.
- Over 90% of people who received the training rate the course as excellent or good.



# Resources that Enrich the Child Care Fields

## Eager-to-Learn

2005-2006 has been a year of constant new ventures for Eager-to-Learn, the e-learning program of the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network. The program—designed to bring quality, affordable educational options to those who care for children—saw record enrollment this year, built upon constant and innovative outreach efforts. Introducing new course listings and an online forum for child care center directors, a course and community-building effort around the “Red Flags of Development” curriculum for parents and piloting the SEEDS of early literacy training in Spanish, Eager-to-Learn has continued to lead the way in e-learning.

Timely course offerings are supported by an ongoing drive to bring the program, courses and technology involved straight to parents, child care providers and leaders in the field. Mary Wynne, Professional Development Director comments,

“We believe that Eager-to-Learn offers powerful educational opportunities and so we are committed to introducing the program far and wide and ensuring that our courses are accessible, affordable and meaningful.”

Eager-to-Learn has made significant strides in this effort to deliver accessible educational options anywhere and everywhere they will matter. The year has seen the introduction of targeted course selections which allow child care center programs to design their learning around their center’s naptime or afternoon down time, a newly launched selection of course offerings in Spanish and a hands-on outreach effort which brought new computers and start up technical support to a group of highly motivated Spanish-speaking child care providers in the Twin Cities metro area.



### Program Accomplishments 2005-2006

- Total number of participants: 586
- Eager-to-Learn has enrollment from 14 states
- 57 courses were offered by 21 professional instructors
- National advertising and publicity campaign
- National Partnerships: a growing number of states within the national CCR&R community are expressing an interest in using the strong infrastructure and support system in online learning that Eager-to-Learn offers.

# Resources that Enrich the Child Care Fields



## **T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood\* MINNESOTA program**

## **REETAIN (Retaining Early Educators Through Attaining Incentives Now) Grant Program**

2005-2006 brought the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood MINNESOTA program and the REETAIN (Retaining Early Educators Through Attaining Incentives Now) Grant Program measurably closer to their goals of supporting a well-educated, well-compensated child care workforce. The complimentary programs work closely to support child care providers throughout their professional lives and present a powerful counterweight to the low wages and high turnover rates which plague the field and impact children everyday. The programs are built upon a demonstrated connection between well-educated child care professionals who are financially able to remain in the field and the school-readiness and well being of the children they care for.

## **Well Educated Teachers, Higher Compensation and Lower Turnover in the Field Creates a Strong Child Care System in Minnesota**

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood MINNESOTA, the professional-development scholarship arm of the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network has pushed for a year of continued excellence.

### **Program Accomplishments 2005-2006\***

- 198 scholarships awarded
- Recipients attended 32 colleges and universities statewide
- 2,221 college credits were purchased by the program on behalf of recipients
- \$250,334 was awarded in scholarships
- T.E.A.C.H. recipients saw a 9.25% increase in wages this scholarship year
- The average turnover rate among T.E.A.C.H. recipients is around 2.5% as opposed to near 30% in the field as a whole

### **Course Achievements/Credentials**

- 1,804 college credits were earned by recipients
- 15 recipients have earned an A.A. degree
- 3 recipients have earned a B.A. degree

The REETAIN (Retaining Early Educators Through Attaining Incentives Now) Grant Program works to increase the quality of child care in our state by reducing staff turnover and rewarding high education levels among child care professionals. REETAIN has focused this year's efforts on supplying grants to supplement the income and/or enhance the program of qualified professionals.

This year REETAIN awarded 160 grants totaling \$393,500. By applauding and supporting excellence in the field of early childhood and school age care the program works to help Minnesota's children thrive.

Just over \$640,000 dollars was awarded as scholarships and grants by the T.E.A.C.H. and REETAIN programs this year.

*\*July 2005-June 2006*

# Resources that Enrich the Child Care Fields

## Infant and Toddler Training Initiatives

### Program for Infant Toddler Care Training

Celebrating 12 years of educating and supporting the state's child care providers, the Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC) trainings (also known as ITTI training) has set the standard of care for a generation of our youngest children. The PITC leaders in Minnesota are ushering in this next year of work with an eye towards innovations yet to be made and reflections on the changing population of children and caregivers served. The training empowers caregivers with the most current research on the needs of infants and toddlers and the latest techniques to encourage positive outcomes for these children.

### Highlights from 2005-2006

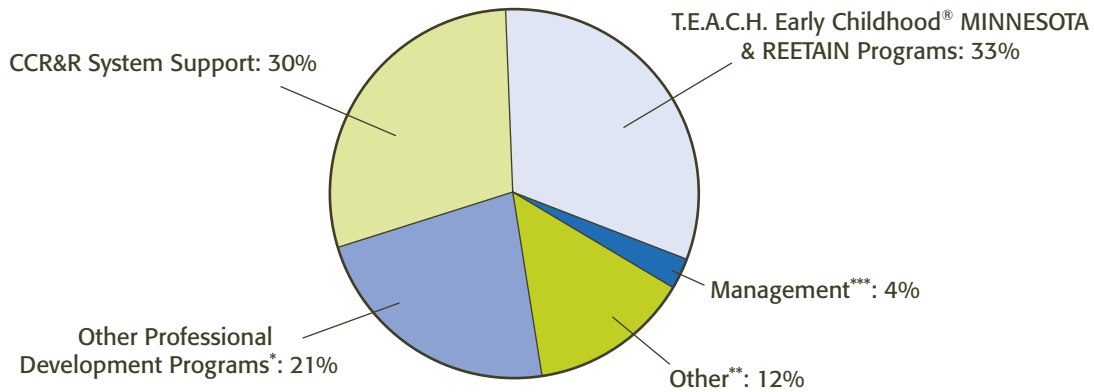
- An excellent pool of trainers around Minnesota are now well-versed in the curriculum and are offering workshops for infant and toddler caregivers on such topics as Social Emotional Growth and Socialization, Group Care, Learning and Development and Culture, Family and Providers.
- PITC trainers attended "Bridging Cultures in Early Care & Education", a training designed to help early childhood educators, including infant/toddler caregivers, provide more culturally responsive care.
- An adaptation of the PITC curriculum was developed for child care center directors.
- Two members of the Native American community and one member of the Hmong community were trained and mentored in offering the PITC curriculum.
- Funds to further support the professional development of PITC trainers were distributed to help PITC trainers attend the Sharing the Wisdom of Many Voices Conference for Trainers and Leaders in September, 2006.
- 69 trainings were offered to over 580 participants in communities across Minnesota and via the Internet.

### The Ounce Scale MN Child Care Project

The **Ounce** Scale MN Child Care Project offers statewide training administered through the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network with funding provided by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The Ounce Scale is an observational tool for getting to know children from birth to age 3 and a half and offers information for parents and caregivers on topics including how young children express who they are, demonstrate trust and develop language. The tools provide a system for understanding children, communicating with parents and assessing child development. The statewide training initiative equips caregivers with the Ounce Scale set of assessment tools including a family album, observational records and the standards for developmental profile. The Ounce Scale was introduced in 22 training sessions to 104 participants between July 2005 and June 2006.

# Network Financials

## Network Expenditures by Program Area 2005-2006



\*Other professional development programs include: Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers, Eager-to-Learn, and Not By Chance: Child Care that Supports School Readiness.

\*\*Other includes the Sparking Connections program. It also includes pass through funds for statewide training conferences, special projects, and professional service organization.

\*\*\*Management includes: management, administration, and fundraising costs.

### 2005-2006 Donors

Minnesota Department of Human Services • McKnight Foundation

Jay and Rose Phillips Foundation • Rochester Area Foundation

Otto Bremer Foundation • St. Paul Traveler's Foundation

Beverly Foundation • Watson Foundation

University of Minnesota (USDE Grant 5349A010152)

Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board (#90L0045) • Bremer Bank

# Network Financials

## MINNESOTA CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL NETWORK STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

September 30, 2006 (With Comparative Totals for 2005)

	2006	2005
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$ 417,741	\$ 283,810
Cash-restricted	835,785	757,385
Total cash	<u>1,253,526</u>	<u>1,041,195</u>
Grants receivable	583,652	120,561
Contributions receivable	135,000	10,000
Prepaid expenses	13,235	21,720
Total current assets	<u>1,985,413</u>	<u>1,193,476</u>
Equipment	46,621	46,621
Less accumulated depreciation	(28,911)	(23,034)
	<u>17,710</u>	<u>23,587</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 2,003,123</u>	<u>\$ 1,217,063</u>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
Accounts payable	\$ 103,484	\$ 26,609
R.E.E.T.A.I.N. scholarships payable	267,250	291,750
Accrued expenses	46,982	38,664
Refundable advances	923,186	402,766
Total current liabilities	<u>1,340,902</u>	<u>759,789</u>
Net assets:		
Unrestricted net assets	298,220	263,844
Temporarily restricted net assets	364,001	193,430
Total net assets	<u>662,221</u>	<u>457,274</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 2,003,123</u>	<u>\$ 1,217,063</u>

# Network Financials

## MINNESOTA CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL NETWORK STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

For the Year Ended September 30, 2006 (With Comparative Totals for 2005)

	2006			2005
	Unrestricted	Temporarily restricted	Total	
Support and revenue:				
Government contracts	\$ 2,284,962	\$ -	\$ 2,284,962	\$ 2,503,642
Contributions	6,000	350,500	356,500	175,000
Program income	85,350	-	85,350	82,416
Investment income	27,451	-	27,451	14,187
Miscellaneous	4,554	-	4,554	63
Reclassification to unrestricted	58,075	(58,075)	-	-
Net assets released from restrictions upon satisfaction of program restrictions	121,854	(121,854)	-	-
Total support and revenue	2,588,246	170,571	2,758,817	2,775,308
Expenses:				
Program services	2,448,387	-	2,448,387	2,761,229
Management and general	96,840	-	96,840	99,753
Fundraising	8,643	-	8,643	24,427
Total expenses	2,553,870	-	2,553,870	2,885,409
Change in net assets	34,376	170,571	204,947	(110,101)
Net assets, beginning of year	263,844	193,430	457,274	567,375
Net assets, end of year	\$ 298,220	\$ 364,001	\$ 662,221	\$ 457,274

(A full copy of our audited financial statement is available upon request.)

***The Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network supports communities by:***

Helping parents find child care, identify quality care and understand financing options.

Advocating for parents, children and child care providers.

Improving the quality of child care by supporting child care providers and delivering professional development opportunities.

Using the wealth of data captured by the CCR&R system to tell the story of the child care field and to support policy discussions surrounding early care and education issues.

***The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies believes that:***

All children have a right to be cared for, both in and outside the home, in safe, healthy and nurturing environments.

All children should have access to early learning experiences that help them arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.

All families must have access to high quality, affordable, accessible child care for their children.

All parents must have a choice of appropriate learning and care-giving environments for their children.

Every community must have a strong child care delivery system that includes child care resource and referral in order to coordinate training, supply building, planning and policy and education efforts on child care needs.





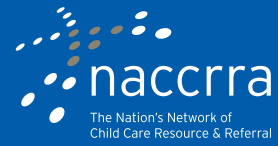
*“These courses and all the support I’ve received have been the highlight of my year. What I have learned has opened up my eyes to the world of the kids and all they need form me!”*

—Iliana Sanchez, a Chaska resident and sponsored participant in the SEEDS of Early Literacy Program.

*“By receiving this grant, we were able to open another infant room and provide care for 8 more babies in our community. Since there is a lack of child care in our community this was a great asset.”*

—Minnesota Child Care Provider





**Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network**  
380 Lafayette Road, Suite 103, St. Paul, Minnesota 55107 • [www.mnchildcare.org](http://www.mnchildcare.org)