



Every week, about 2.3 million individuals earn a living caring for and educating children younger than age 5 in the United States. About 1.3 million are providing care in licensed settings, such as child care centers and family child care homes.¹ The remaining 1.1 million caregivers are paid relatives, friends or neighbors.

Child care providers have an enormous impact on children's development. Research shows that better trained providers lead to higher quality care and more positive outcomes for children. A provider's skill level helps determine whether children in care are safe and have the early learning experiences they need to succeed in school. Children in the care of inadequately prepared providers spend more of their day in aimless activity and show delays in language and social development. Yet most child care providers lack the training and education needed to provide a quality environment.

Training is important. Initial training helps ensure providers have a base of knowledge about how children develop before beginning to work with children. It also acquaints them with basic health and safety skills such as first aid and CPR, practices related to sleep position of infants, information about the danger of shaking babies and the prevention of other hazards such as children swallowing small objects or drowning in small amounts of water.

Annual training supports initial learning and helps providers improve their skills, deepen their understanding about how children learn and stay up-to-date in changes in health and safety practices. Annual training can also reduce the isolation of family child care providers.

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Unfortunately, training requirements vary by state and few states require adequate initial training or ongoing training. **The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) requires no minimum training for child care providers.** As a result, only 13 states require child care providers in centers to have initial training in early childhood development prior to working with children. Fewer states have such requirements for providers in family child care homes.

- The number of required annual training hours for caregivers in most states is very low and insufficient to ensure they have the knowledge and skills needed to care for young children. Twenty-three states require fewer than 15 hours of annual training.
- More than one-fifth of states do not even require staff to be trained on fire safety and other health and safety skills.²

According to a 2010 nationwide poll conducted by NACCRRA, **most parents' perceptions about child care licensing standards far exceed the reality of government policies.** For example, the majority of parents believe child care providers are required to have training in CPR or first aid, basic health and safety practices and in child development.³ NACCRRA's parent polling found:

- 94 percent of parents support requiring paid child care providers caring for unrelated children on a regular basis to have basic training in health and safety practices and child development before working with children.
- 88 percent of parents support an annual training requirement for providers.

Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) play a major role in training the child care workforce. Between local CCR&R agencies and State CCR&R Networks, more than 650,000 child care providers (in both child care centers and family child care homes) receive training every year. Individual workshops typically last about three hours, while planned series or sequences generally consist of seven classes or workshops for a total of nearly 24 hours. About 7 percent of providers receiving training from CCR&Rs are relatives who have sought out workshops to strengthen their caregiving efforts.

NACCRRA supports policies that

- Ensure child care providers have access to a continuum of professional development opportunities, beginning with quality community-based training programs that are linked to career ladders and tied to higher education.
- Give incentives for child care providers to improve the quality of care and education they provide.

NACCRRA recommends that Congress:

- Reauthorize CCDBG in the 112th Congress and create a quality community-based training system for child care run by the CCR&R Network in every state.
- Require all paid child care providers (caring for unrelated children on a regular basis) to have a minimum of 40 hours of training in child development and behavior guidance, learning activities, first aid/CPR, recognizing child abuse, and basic health and safety practices prior to working with children.
- Require all paid child care providers caring for unrelated children on a regular basis to attend at least 24 hours of ongoing training annually.
- Expand minimum training requirements for directors of child care programs that result in a credential for directors and administrators of early care and education programs.
- Create and expand more online training opportunities, training to better address children with special needs and training in languages other than English (where a community needs assessment shows that many providers have limited English proficiency).

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2010). Child care workers. *Occupational outlook handbook, 2010-11 edition*. Retrieved February 23, 2011, from <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos170.htm>

² NACCRRA. (2011). We can do better: 2011 Update: NACCRRA's ranking of state child care center regulations and oversight. Retrieved from <http://www.naccrra.org/publications/>

³ NACCRRA. (2010). The economy's impact on parents' choices and perceptions about child care. Retrieved February 23, 2011, from <http://www.naccrra.org/publications/naccrra-publications/>