

Child Care Resource & Referral Services Assisting Parents and Providers

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There are more than 600 Child Care Resource and Referral agencies throughout the country, serving nearly every zip code, assisting parents to find child care. They help make a stressful and chaotic process calmer and more understandable.

Child care resource and referral agencies deliver an interrelated set of “core” services to families, child care providers, and communities. The data and insights derived from the delivery of these connected core services together inform and strengthen a complex and often fractured early care and education and school-age child care system.



Core Services of CCR&Rs Throughout the United States

- 98% of CCR&Rs offer consumer education (help for parents to understand different child care settings and key questions to ask providers when looking for child care)
- 98% of CCR&Rs offer child care provider training across a broad array of topics
- 92% of CCR&Rs offer on-site technical assistance
- 88% of CCR&Rs offer parent referrals (through the phone or internet)
- 74% of CCR&Rs offer training related to launching a child care business and how to become a child care provider within the state
- 73% offer assistance to providers in response to licensing referrals to comply with state rules
- 42% of CCR&Rs administer subsidies to low-income families
- 40% of CCR&Rs sponsor provider participation in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

✓ CCR&Rs help parents find child care

Choosing child care is one of the most important decisions families make, but all too often they must rely on word-of-mouth. Local CCR&R organizations help parents take the guesswork out of choosing care - giving them referrals to local child care providers, information on state licensing requirements, availability of child care subsidies, and other forms of assistance for which families may qualify.

CCR&Rs also support families who choose relatives and neighbors to care for their children while the parents work. CCR&Rs provide guidance by phone, in person, and in other ways, such as the internet, that are tailored to each individual family. CCR&Rs put added emphasis on assisting families who have difficulty finding care such as those with infants and toddlers, those with special needs children, those transitioning off of welfare, and those needing care during irregular or non-traditional hours. Because all child care needs are not alike and because all child care resources are unique to each community, ensuring that R&R counselors meet the needs of individual families and communities is a priority.

✓ **CCR&Rs support families to raise healthy children...**

By talking with parents one-on-one, CCR&R counselors gain a unique understanding of the delicate balance of family life, particularly for low-income families. They understand that finding high-quality child care is just a first step to raising happy, healthy children. Through parent/family workshops, hotlines, and newsletters, CCR&Rs reach out to parents with trusted, local information that enables them to make informed choices.

✓ **CCR&Rs build the supply of child care...**

In many communities, demand for child care far outstrips supply. CCR&Rs provide an entry point to the child care field, helping providers meet and exceed licensing requirements. CCR&Rs also support providers by offering low-cost or free training on diverse topics like health & safety, child development, licensing requirements, child nutrition, sound business practices and more.

✓ **CCR&Rs improve the quality of child care...**

No one has a greater impact on the quality of care than the people who work with children every day. That is why CCR&Rs across the country provide ongoing professional development opportunities to child care providers and staff. CCR&Rs help improve the quality of care for all children.

✓ **CCR&Rs bridge child care and education...**

High-quality child care has many benefits, including preparing children for school. CCR&Rs strive to create child care settings that help children grow and learn. Educating parents about early learning and the components of quality care is also a major part of CCR&R services. Partnering with schools to support early learning programs and children's transition from early care and education into kindergarten is also part of what CCR&Rs do to

support young children. CCR&Rs are dedicated to informing communities about the important links between early learning and later success in school.

✓ **CCR&Rs document child care needs and trends...**

What makes CCR&Rs unique is their ability to gather information to better understand family needs. CCR&Rs are the major source of information about the local supply, cost and features of child care. CCR&Rs are also able to track trends about the changing needs of families and to analyze the strengths, weaknesses and gaps in early care and education and school-age child care and routinely publish/disseminate this information to help local and state public policy makers, employers, funders and others make good decisions about systemic and strategic investment.

✓ **CCR&Rs tell the child care story...**

By providing resources, documenting community needs, and creating new ways to meet those needs, CCR&Rs bring the voices of children, families, and child care providers to the public in order to galvanize support for addressing the needs of families, employers, child care providers and others concerned about child care issues.

In the broadest sense, the field of community-based child care resource and referral (CCR&R) defines its mission as *"doing whatever it takes to make early care and education and school-age child care work for families and communities"* from within the community served. The specific services that each CCR&R offers as it pursues this mission are determined by community needs and by the kinds of structures and activities that local leaders and planners envision and develop.