

# The Daily Parent

A NEWSLETTER FOR WORKING PARENTS

ISSUE NO. 49

## CELEBRATING CHILD CARE PROVIDERS: Provider Appreciation Day and Every Day

**W**hen you're looking for child care, you want the best care you can find. You look for a safe, loving program where your child will feel happy and secure. You look at the following things to judge the quality of child care:

- Good health and safety practices
- Clean, fun, learning environment
- Right number of providers to children; providers are with children at all times
- Skilled, trained and educated providers
- The program welcomes parents and families to visit when they want
- Well-managed program

High-quality child care has all of these qualities, and more. But when you are choosing child care, what is it that you'll be looking at first and foremost? Your biggest interest will be who is providing care for your child. The provider, teacher, or staff person is the person you trust with your child's health, safety, and overall well-being when you are not there.



### Why Celebrate Your Child Care Provider?

Being a child care provider is not an easy job, but it certainly is one of the most important. It is also one of the lowest paying and least celebrated. There are nearly 2.3 million child care providers who care for children under age 5 in the U.S. The average wage for providers is only \$8.68 an hour or \$18,060 a year—close to the national poverty level.

These wages certainly do not reflect the importance or the demands of a child care provider's work. (See page two for some examples of other occupations that receive higher salaries than child care providers.)

Further, even though child care providers work hard and have a very important job, sometimes the nature of the job means that they don't have access to health care or other important benefits. As a profession, they don't always get the respect they deserve. And, working with children all day, even though it is rewarding for many child care providers, is also isolating work with little adult contact.



You already know that your relationship with your child's provider is key to good child care. It is really important that you and your provider have good, open communication. That way you can express your feelings and views, ask questions, and get to know just how the child care program is working with your child. In turn, your caregiver should be available to listen and support you when you need it. You should always feel well informed and welcome to observe and contribute to your child's program.

### In This Issue

Provider Appreciation Day .....	2
Occupations by Hourly Wage .....	2
What You Can Do to Support Providers .....	3
For More Information .....	4

# The Daily Parent – CELEBRATING CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

When you think about the training, skills, and responsibilities good child care providers have, it is important to acknowledge their roles and support them with positive feedback. Child care providers, like all workers, need to be recognized for the work they do. As a parent, you are in the best position to do this.



and make it possible for many parents to work and contribute to the national economy. Provider Appreciation Day began in New Jersey in 1996. A group of volunteers put it together to bring attention to and applaud the every day dedication and good work of child care providers. Since 1996, year it has been on the Friday before Mother's Day. This year it is celebrated on **Friday, May 11**.

## Provider Appreciation Day

Provider Appreciation Day is a yearly event for parents and the Community to recognize the importance of child care providers. Providers support families

Now, Provider Appreciation Day is put together by a national, nonprofit organization that goes by the same name. Provider Appreciation Day's mission is to help bring worldwide recognition to support the invaluable work of child care providers. With a partnership with the

### OCCUPATIONS WITH A HIGHER HOURLY WAGE THAN CHILD CARE PROVIDERS (From Bureau of Labor Statistics May 2005 Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates)

Occupation	Hourly Wage
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	\$8.87
Service station attendants	\$8.94
Food servers, non-restaurant	\$8.98
Locker room, coatroom, and dressing room attendants	\$9.02
Bus drivers, school	\$11.71
Grounds maintenance workers, all other	\$11.78
Office clerks, general	\$11.82
Woodworking machine setters, operators, and tenders, except sawing	\$11.83
Barbers	\$11.88
Concierges	\$12.08
Door-to-door sales workers, news and street vendors, and related workers	\$12.19
Cleaning, washing, and metal pickling equipment operators and tenders	\$12.19
Dietetic technicians	\$12.20
Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks	\$12.80
Veterinary technologists and technicians	\$12.84
Skin care specialists	\$12.90
Library technicians	\$12.95
Building cleaning workers, all other	\$12.99
Order clerks	\$13.18
Pesticide handlers, sprayers, and applicators, vegetation	\$13.22
Models	\$13.26
Proofreaders and copy markers	\$13.30
Upholsterers	\$13.46
Animal control workers	\$13.50

# The Daily Parent – CELEBRATING CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS, LIKE ALL WORKERS,  
NEED TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR THE WORK THEY DO.

National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), Provider Appreciation Day also brings individuals and government organizations throughout North America, Europe and Asia working together to work with the same goal. Celebrations and recognition activities include:

- state and local government proclamations,
- local media coverage,
- business and community events, and
- personal acknowledgement of providers by parents.

## What You Can Do to Support Providers

To recognize your child care provider or others in your community on Provider Appreciation Day, decide how you'd like to show that appreciation. Get together with other parents, community leaders, business leaders, or act individually to let your child care providers know that you appreciate them. This is just one opportunity to say 'thank you' to providers who help young children feel safe and secure and get a good start in early learning.

Your recognition can take many forms. Here are suggestions from the Provider Appreciation Day website on what you can do:



### As a Community:

- Hold special ceremony or event, such as a parade or community picnic
- Organize for raising scholarship money to send providers to an early care and education conference
- Ask government officials to sign a proclamation
- Purchase new equipment or material for child care program
- Plan a luncheon or dinner to honor child care providers
- Call and ask local restaurants, retail stores to donate thank you gifts

### As Individual or Group of Parents:

- Say "thank you" with a note or a card
- Work with your child on a special homemade gift
- Buy a personal gift for your provider around his or her hobby or interest
- Organize a breakfast or luncheon
- Hold a special event or ceremony
- Write an editorial to your local newspaper

- Give your provider a paid day off, a raise or bonus
- Hold Your Own Provider Appreciation Day Event at the Program

Whatever way you choose will bring not only more public attention to the role of child care providers, but it will be a way for you to show individual child care

# The Daily Parent – CELEBRATING CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

providers their efforts do not go unnoticed or unappreciated. It's a wonderful chance to thank child care providers and support them. It is also a great time to publicly recognize them and keep the importance of child care and early education in the minds of the community and government officials.



## For More Information

- ***Is This the Right Place for My Child?: 38 Research-Based Indicators for High-Quality Child Care.*** [www.naccrra.org/parent/quality\\_indicators.php](http://www.naccrra.org/parent/quality_indicators.php). This Booklet and checklist were created as a guide for parents to help them better judge quality when considering child care programs. Unlike most guidelines for selecting child care, this booklet explains why each question is important and how it relates to the quality of care. All of the questions are based on research about what is important to your child's health, safety, and development.

- **Provider Appreciation Day, [www.providerappreciation.org](http://www.providerappreciation.org).**

This website has information on how the Day got started, as well as ideas and gifts you can purchase to show support for your child's provider or for all child care providers at the state and local levels.



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