

CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL OF CENTRAL IOWA

2008 Annual Report

Region 4: Serving Polk, Boone, Dallas, Hardin, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Story and Warren Counties

www.centraliowachildcare.org
800-722-7619



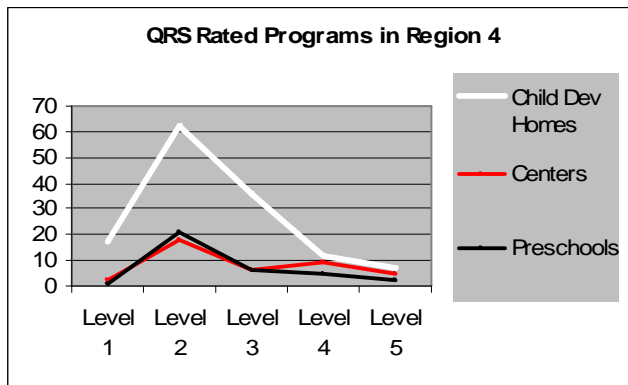
Lending a Helping Hand.....

Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) offers communities, early care and education professionals, and parents a unique blend of direct services, planning expertise and data collection. CCR&R agencies work to connect families with the quality early care and education options and facilitate professional development opportunities for the adults who care for and educate our youngest Iowans. CCR&R also works to build the supply of quality care and education in communities and collects data that impact local and statewide policy decisions to help families and communities ensure that Iowa's vision is met:

All children, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.

2008 Highlights

► **Technical assistance, including on site consultation to providers and programs increased by 35%** in FY 08. The Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS) continues to be a catalyst in motivating programs toward quality improvements. Counties that are able to provide financial supports through partnerships with their local Empowerment Board or United Way report that grants and other financial incentives might be the "carrot" that opens the door to consultation, but it is the **relationship** that develops between the provider and the consultant that **begins the quality improvement process.**



► **Training participation by licensed child care center and preschool staff increased by 33%.** The increase in training participation can be attributed to several factors: program participation in the QRS, Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and staff credentialed as Child Development Associates, all require additional hours of professional development.



► In early 2008, **Training Assessments** were mailed to all 3,389 child care programs in the CCR&R of Central Iowa region. 10% were returned to CCR&R. Information from the Training Assessment will be used by local provider service staff to plan trainings to meet provider needs. Providers and programs confirmed that evenings are the preferred time for attending training. Time was reported as the number one barrier to attending training. Providers want more training on curriculum, stress management, staying motivated and preventing burnout.

► As a result of provider interest in quality improvement, driven by the QRS and the availability of quality improvement grants in many counties, on site consultation services continue to expand. CCR&R consultants developed a consultation tool: **Steps to High Quality Purchases** to assist providers and programs in identifying and setting goals for quality improvement and to make the most impact with grant funds.

► **To evaluate and improve consultation services**, all programs and providers receiving on site consultation were asked to complete a Consultation Survey. Consultants were rated on multiple areas on a one to four scale (four being the highest). **The average score was 3.90.**

"I have to tell you I was a little nervous about my first home visit, but the Child Care Home Consultant really made me feel comfortable with the process. She was so helpful I was tempted to write in 5's on the Consultation Survey."
— New Child Care Home Provider

► Development of the **Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral Network** continued in FY 2008. The National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA) recognizes the developing Iowa CCR&R Network as a "state-partnered" network, one of only three states working with this model. Under this structure, Iowa CCR&R and the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) work collaboratively to ensure quality, accountable CCR&R services through state wide coordination, monitoring and evaluation. To strengthen this partnership, DHS has employed an Iowa CCR&R Professional Development Program Manager. Dawn Collins was hired in September 2007 to work closely with Iowa CCR&R in coordinating professional development efforts.



CCR&Rs build brighter futures.

Child Care Resource and Referral meets a need that no one else does -providing the bridge between parents, providers, community leaders, and policy makers. By offering a unique blend of direct services and planning expertise, CCR&Rs help families and communities ensure that their children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.

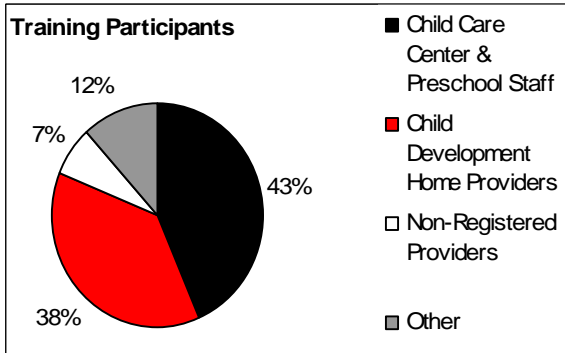
—National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies





Professional Development

3,354 individual providers (non-duplicated) participated in class sessions offered as a part of a series or a single workshop, an **increase of 13%** from the previous year. Classes covered **221 different topics**. A total of **11,075 participants** took part in training opportunities ranging from pre-service requirements such as Universal Precautions, Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting, First Aid and CPR to the foundational series for providers entering the field (ChildNet, Welcome to Child Care, Welcome to School Age Care). Training also included advanced training opportunities for experienced providers, such as the Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC) training. Providers ready for higher education are referred to the TEACH Iowa scholarship program that supports providers in completing a Child Development Associate credential and attending college. **134 Child Development Home providers** and **58 center based staff** attended college on a TEACH Iowa scholarship in FY 08, this included **49 TEACH Participants who received a Child Development Associate credential**.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & CONSULTATION

A variety of CCR&R of Central Iowa staff provide technical assistance (TA) and consultation to child care programs in central Iowa to assist providers and programs in meeting regulatory requirements, connecting training to implementing best practice and planning for quality improvements and participation in the QRS.

GRANTS & INCENTIVES

Grants and financial incentives are often the "carrot" that leads providers and programs into CCR&R services. Through partnerships with United Way and local Community Empowerment boards, **101 home based programs** and **132 centers and preschools** received grants specifically tied to consultation and quality.

"Thank you SO much for the follow up yesterday. I did make it to Module 8 and am now 100% done with the ChildNet modules! I called in today to set up a ChildNet certification visit-my next big step is to get ChildNet certified and then QRS here I come!" —*Email to a Child Care Home Consultant*

# of child care providers completing series training	ChildNet	Welcome to Child Care	Welcome School Age Child Care
FY 06	107	48	93
FY 07	229	36	52
FY 08	139	20	41

► The increase in Child Development Home (CDH) providers completing the 25 hour ChildNet (CN) series in FY 07 was a direct result of a surge of interest in the QRS. QRS Level 2 requires CN certification for CDH providers. In future years we anticipate a steady increase in the number of providers completing CN as reflected in completion rates from FY 06 to FY 08.

► Completion rates for Welcome to Child Care (WTCC) for center staff continues to decrease as directors choose to have staff participate in New Staff Orientation (NSO) training instead of WTCC. NSO training is also a way for centers to receive QRS points for a Level 3-5 rating. A workgroup will be convened in FY 08 by the Iowa CCR&R Network to revise and update WTCC to better meet the needs of center staff.

► Before and after school age program directors report that the surge in Welcome to School Age Care (WTSAC) training several years ago was the result of sending all staff to the series. Most directors are sending only newly hired staff and report increased retention rates for staff. Only the Des Moines Public Schools require WTSAC attendance of all staff.

Technical Assistance (TA) Includes phone calls, resources, office and on site consultation. In FY 08:

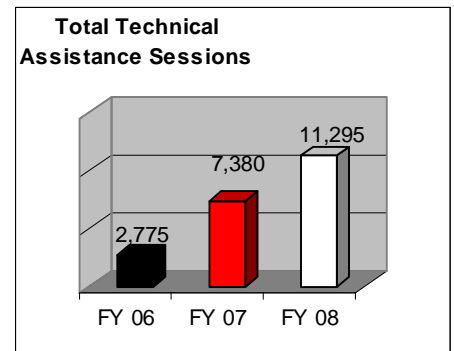
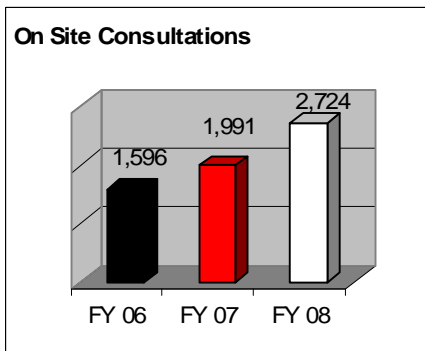
- TA increased by 35%.
- 32% of all TA was provided to licensed child care centers and preschools.
- 68% of all TA was provided to child care homes.
- 24% of all TA sessions were on site consultations.

"The consultant gave us much needed information on classroom arrangement and the best use of space. She gave us many ideas for improvement."
—*Child Care Center Director*

QRS

Since the introduction of the QRS in 2006, provider and program requests for TA has sky rocketed. **TA through CCR&R has increased by 75% since 2006, on site consultation by 60%.**

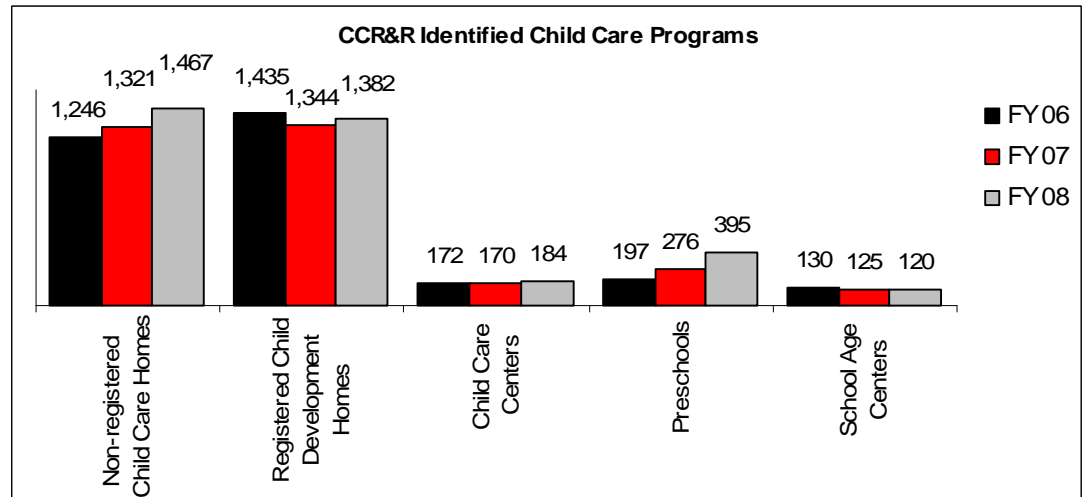
There are a total of **209 QRS rated programs** in central Iowa. **20** of these programs reapplied and received their **second QRS rating**.





“Child Care Resource and Referral is the gateway to child care in a community, it is the critical link that brings parents and providers together, that provides them support, and helps make it all work everyday for children and families.”

Joan Lombardi
Author, Time to Care



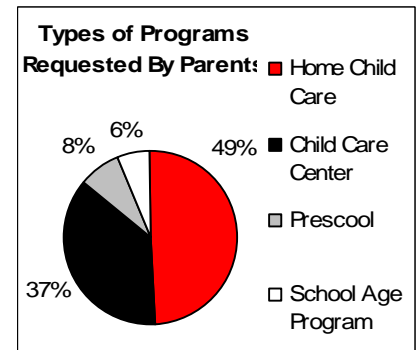
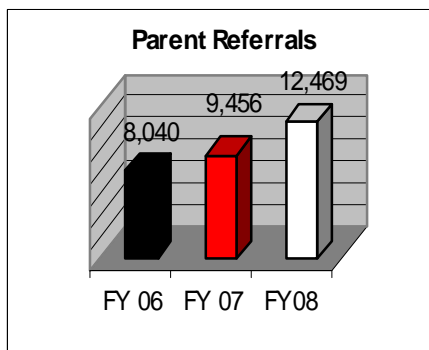
BUILDING THE CAPACITY

CCR&R is charged with identifying all child care options within the communities they serve. There were two trends observed in FY 08. For the past three years the number of non-registered child care homes has continued to increase as child care home providers continue to self-select in two directions. Providers who view themselves as professionals and are committed to meeting regulatory requirements, improving quality and providing child care long term tend to become registered Child Development Home providers. Providers who see themselves as short term “accidental” or “convenience” providers choose to be non-registered.

The ability to identify school district preschool programs as the result of school districts receiving Department of Education grants to offer free preschool to four year olds, preschool programs’ interest in the QRS and the consultation and incentive programs of CCR&R to help with quality improvements has resulted in a significant increase of preschool programs on the CCR&R database. We suspect this may be a duplicated count as more existing preschools programs are funded as state grant preschools by school districts.

HELPING FAMILIES FIND QUALITY CHILD CARE

Parent Referral Counselors are trained to interview parents to get specific information to determine the family’s child care needs. Parents are asked questions about the child’s age, special needs, the hours and days of the week or location needed. Parent Referral Counselors then search the CCR&R database to match the family’s needs to available child care. The more information the Parent Referral Counselor has about the care the parents are looking for, the better the match. Referrals to child care increased by 25% from FY 07 to FY 08.



#1 GOAL CONSUMER EDUCATION

Parent Referral Counselors are allowed to only make referrals, not recommendations to parents looking for child care. Because child care regulations and oversight is relatively low in Iowa, finding and identifying quality child care becomes the parents’ responsibility. Iowa’s registration system for Child Development Homes is confusing to parents who do not understand that homes are not licensed or inspected regularly and that center licensing inspections are bi-annual. As Linda Smith, Executive Director of NACCRRRA states, “Parents don’t know what they don’t know.”

Parent referral Counselors are committed to providing parents with the resources to make good child care choices. Parent Referral Counselors provide consumer education to parents during phone and face to face interviews. Parents are sent referral packets with written information to help parents know what to look for in choosing child care. Parents conducting their own child care searches via the CCR&R website (www.centraliowachildcare.org) can download and print materials to help them choose the best care for their child. As a Quality Assured agency, CCR&R is committed to providing high quality consumer education.

NACCRRRA STATE CHILD CARE RANKINGS

We Can Do Better:
NACCRRRA’s Rankings of Child Care Center Standards and Oversight, 2007

Iowa ranked 37

Leaving Children to Chance:
Standards and Oversight of Small Family Child Care Homes, 2008

Iowa ranked 46





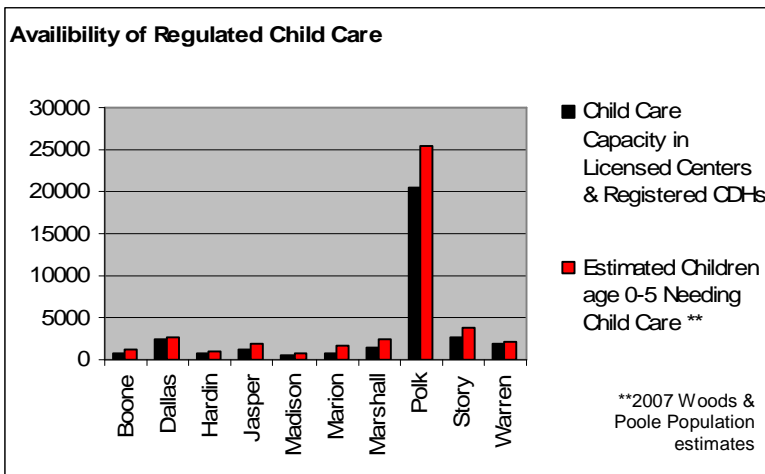
Attending child care was a positive experience for me. I formed a personality that I would not possess without the experience of going to child care since I was a baby. The freedom of choosing what I wanted to do everyday and the creativity that brought out in me is something I'll forever be indebted to child care for. The creativity has made me a person that is capable of thinking in a way that is all my own. The freedom that was handed to me throughout the day was also accompanied by rules, guidelines, and lessons - I not only learned skills necessary to prepare for kindergarten, but control and listening skills. It also taught me to make friends and be a friendly and outgoing person, who knows how to form lasting bonds with others.

—Central Iowa High School Student

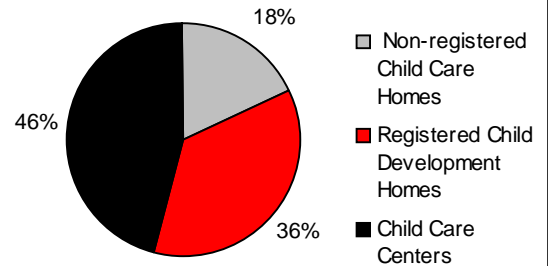
QUALITY CHILD CARE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

“Parents know that the person who cares for their child many hours a week makes a difference in their child's life and well-being. Both common sense and research tell us that children's brains are growing most quickly during their first years of life, and that their experiences during these critical early years lay the foundation for the rest of their lives. As a result, child care affects the way that children think, learn, and behave. Studies repeatedly have shown that high-quality child care - care that provides a loving, safe, stable and age-appropriate stimulating environment - helps children enter school ready to learn. Studies have shown that high-quality care has an even greater impact on children from families that earn low incomes. And, that poor-quality care - which is too often not stimulating, uncaring, and even unsafe - deprives children of the strong start they need.

—NACCRRA



Where Are Children Cared For?



IOWA NEEDS QUALITY CHILD CARE

According to the U.S. Census Bureau **72% of Iowa's children under six are living with working parents.** This number jumps up to 79% for children over age six. While the chart to the left shows gaps between the estimated need for child care and the availability of regulated child care, this doesn't tell the whole story.

Many parents would be unable to work without care for their children. Quality care supports a productive workforce by allowing parents to go to work confident that their children are well cared for in a safe and secure environment that encourages discovery and learning.

Child care regulations in Iowa are rated by NACCRRA as among the lowest in the nation. The State of Iowa does not require a child care home provider to register if caring for five or fewer children. While licensed centers are inspected bi-annually, child care homes are merely registered. The required 20% spot checks of homes by the Iowa Department of Human Services is primarily for complaints.

Parents don't always choose regulated care. The CCR&R of Central Iowa's database for FY 08 includes **1,467 non-registered providers**, most of them identified because they accept children receiving Child Care Assistance. These non-registered providers have the **capacity to care for 7,335 children.** We don't know how many more non-registered child care homes there are. An unknown number of children are cared for by unidentified non-registered providers including informal friend, family and neighbor care.

QUALITY PRESCHOOLS

As a community based program, CCR&R is in collaboration with many local school districts applying for Department of Education grants to offer free preschool to four year olds. A side affect resulting from an increase in preschool options is that Child Development Homes and Child Care Centers are reporting fewer four year olds in their care and subsequent loss of income.

For child care information and data in your community, contact your local Child Care Resource & Referral office:

Boone County 515-432-6034	Jasper County 641-792-6433	Marshall County 641-752-7162	Warren County 515-961-5067
Dallas County 515-993-3813	Madison County 515-462-9452	Polk County 515-246-3566	
Hardin County 641-648-4201	Marion County 515-993-3813	Story County 515-294-8833	For region wide information: 515-246-3566

www.centraliowachildcare.org