

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Child Care Provider Appreciation Day is May 9

BISMARCK, N.D. – Behind many working parents there is a child care provider caring for their infants and children. This important pillar supporting North Dakota's younger workforce employs about 3,400 regulated or legally recognized providers. In honor of their contributions, Governor John Hoeven has proclaimed May 9, 2008, Provider Appreciation Day.

"Child care providers and pre-school teachers offer vital support to working parents," said Carol K. Olson, executive director of the N.D. Department of Human Services. "They do a tremendous job of providing care and early learning experiences for thousands of North Dakota children and deserve our gratitude and recognition."

Earleen Friez, president of North Dakota Child Care Providers Inc. said, "We are pleased that the Governor has proclaimed his support for child care providers. Access to needed child care is vital for children, families, and economic development."

Olson said parents choose from a variety of care giving situations including licensed providers and unlicensed providers such as relatives, neighbors or friends. Olson's department regulates some child care providers and has data on those providers.

According to the department, last year 1,667 licensed child care providers, 919 unlicensed self-certified providers, and 785 unlicensed "approved relative" providers together had the capacity to serve about 42,117 North Dakota children. In 2007, an estimated 108,104 children in North Dakota were age 13 or younger according to the Census Bureau.

Licensed child care providers care for children in homes, centers, and pre-schools, as well as in after-school care programs. They undergo North Dakota's sexual offender and child abuse and neglect background checks, as well as initial and ongoing health and safety inspections. They must also participate in ongoing training.

"Approved relative" providers care for relative children who qualify for child care assistance. They are unlicensed, but undergo North Dakota's sexual offender background checks. Self-certified providers are unlicensed, declare that they comply with some health and safety standards, and undergo the state sexual offender and child abuse and neglect background checks. "Approved relatives" and self-certified child care providers are not inspected or monitored unless county officials receive a complaint.

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In addition, the Tribes in North Dakota register and license child care providers.

For extra peace of mind, parents should know that the Department of Human Services maintains a registry of both licensed and unlicensed child care providers who voluntarily participated in state and federal background checks. Called the “Care Check Registry,” this registry lists the names of individuals who have no child abuse and neglect records with the department, and no relevant criminal history with the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Parents can access the registry at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childcare/carecheck/registry.aspx.

The Governor’s Child Care Provider Appreciation Day proclamation can be viewed on the Web at <http://governor.nd.gov/proc/docs/2008/05/20080509.pdf>.

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