

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
600 East Boulevard Avenue – Department 325, Bismarck ND 58505-0250**

Contacts: Paul Ronningen, Children and Family Services Division Director, 701-328-1725; or Heather Steffl, Public Information Officer, 701-328-4933

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 12, 2006

Governor Hoeven Proclaims Child Care Provider Appreciation Day

BISMARCK, N.D. - Governor John Hoeven has issued a proclamation recognizing May 12 as Provider Appreciation Day as part of a national effort to recognize child care providers and educators of young children.

“While parents are a child’s first teachers, child care providers and pre-school teachers do a tremendous job of providing care and early learning experiences for thousands of children in our state,” Hoeven said. “They deserve recognition for their dedication and the important role they play in our children’s future.”

According to the North Dakota Department of Human Services, which is responsible for child care licensing and training, parents can choose from a variety of caregivers. The agency has data on licensed providers and two types of unlicensed providers who participate in the child care assistance program.

As of May 1, 2006, the agency reported that there were 1,678 licensed child care providers, 809 “relative approved providers,” and 896 self-certified child care providers in the state. Together, they have the capacity to serve about 41,190 children. North Dakota’s child population totals about 103,719 individuals ages 0 to 13 (Census Bureau estimates).

Earleen Friez, vice president of North Dakota Child Care Providers Inc. said, “I encourage people to express their thanks and appreciation to child care providers throughout the year. Adequate child care is vital for children, families, and economic development within our state.”

Licensed providers care for children in their homes, in centers, in pre-schools, as well as in school age care programs. They undergo background checks and initial and ongoing inspections related to health and safety standards, and must participate in ongoing training. Relative approved providers are unlicensed, are related to the children in their care, and are subject to background checks. Self-certified providers are also unlicensed, and they self certify that they comply with some health and safety standards. They are not inspected or monitored unless county officials receive a complaint. In addition, the Tribes in North Dakota register providers.

Child care is the tenth largest occupation in North Dakota. The proclamation can be viewed at <http://www.nd.gov/humanservices/info/news/2006/20060512-provider-apprec-proclamation.pdf>.

###