Dear Friend,

Welcome to the first biannual report published by the New Jersey Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NJACCRRA). NJACCRRA is a non-profit organization composed of child care resource and referral agencies serving the twenty-one counties of New Jersey. Child care resource and referral agencies are dedicated to supporting, enhancing, and developing the system of child care in New Jersey. We believe that all children deserve access to high quality, affordable child care, and we exist to help programs and professionals provide that care. We also recognize that families need support in understanding and accessing the child care options in their community, and we are a consortium of local agencies that help them do so.

There are close to 540 staff members working in child care resource and referral agencies in New Jersey. These professionals might spend their day helping a parent locate a child care center, informing a family child care provider about home safety regulations, educating a family about subsidy program eligibility, or organizing a professional development training or conference. Whatever they do, they do it with a knowledgeable courtesy based on a commitment to children, and we are proud to highlight their achievements in this report.

Just as a family is only as strong as the relationships supporting it, so too is the strength of NJACCRRA’s work. The staff at CCR&Rs partner with hundreds of community groups working relentlessly to address the tough issues of availability, affordability, and quality. We could not have met the accomplishments presented in this annual report without strong collaboration. For that, we thank the caregivers, stakeholders, donors, and friends who move us toward our mission each day.

Sincerely,

Linda Kriegel
President, 2004-2005

Nancy Thomson
President, 2005-2006

New Jersey Child Care Economic Impact Council
History and Mission of Agency

The roots of NJACCRRA began in the late 1980s when a small group of representatives from child care resource and referral agencies began meeting to form a single voice for child care issues in New Jersey. Membership grew over the years, and in 1998, the New Jersey Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies became a private, non-profit organization. NJACCRRA's membership is open to private, non-profit, or public agencies whose main purpose is the direct provision or coordination of child care resource and referral services (CCR&R) to the general public. Current membership includes representation from each of the CCR&R agencies serving the twenty-one counties of New Jersey.

NJACCRRA's main purpose is to develop and maintain accountable local CCR&R services. Child care resource and referral agencies serve as the link between child care providers in a community and the families of the children for whom they care. Every county in New Jersey has a CCR&R agency. These agencies exist to help families choose and access the child care option that is best for them. In addition, CCR&Rs work to ensure that the people who provide child care, whether in a child care center or family child care home, have the support and training they need to be strong caregivers and professionals.

NJACCRRA also works to positively impact early care and education policy, funding, and service integration through several types of activities which support the professionals and programs working in New Jersey's child care system. Professional development, advocacy, data collection, and information dissemination activities are central to NJACCRRA's mission.

Today, NJACCRRA is a leader in New Jersey's child care field, bringing together hundreds of the most dedicated and knowledgeable early care and education professionals in the state — each of whom are committed to ensuring that New Jersey's families have child care options that are accessible, affordable, and of the highest quality.

There are 11,416,676 babies and toddlers living in the US. Each day, six million children under the age of three spend some or all of their day being cared for by someone other than a parent.

There are 333,000 children under the age of three in New Jersey. They represent 4% of the state's population.

There are 150,000 mothers of children under the age of three in the state's workforce.
Census 2000

There are more than 100,000 children in NJ's after-care programs. However, an estimated 23% of the state's school-age children must take care of themselves when the school day ends—almost all of whom would participate in an after-school program if it were available to them.
NJ School-Age Care Coalition
During the past two decades, NJACCRRA evolved from a group of concerned professionals to an inclusive membership organization with focused efforts to elevate quality and improve accessibility within the child care community. Between 2004 and 2005, NJACCRRA took several major steps toward creating organizational infrastructure and improved communications that would support this growth:

**Hiring an Association Coordinator**

Upon reviewing NJACRRA’s ever-growing intentions within the state’s child care system, members recognized the need to retain someone capable of providing coordination and support to organizational activities. In 2004, NJACCRRA hired its first association coordinator and took an important step in maintaining the membership’s ambition and focus.

**Using Technology to Manage Data**

During 2005, New Jersey’s child care resource and referral agencies began using NACCRAware, a web-based information management software program. Implemented under collaborative efforts with the NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development and the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, NACCRAware allows CCR&Rs to collect, report, and distribute information in an efficient, meaningful, and cost-effective manner.

**Publishing a Membership Newsletter**

The organization published its first edition of NJACCRRA News during the fall of 2004. This newsletter, published three times each year, provides members with information on current trends and opportunities in the early care and education field by highlighting developments related to funding, advocacy, professional development, and research.

**Hosting an Internet-Based Resource**

In the spring of 2005, www.njaccrra.org was launched to disseminate early care information and share ongoing updates for child care providers, parents, members, employers, and businesses. Site visitors are presented with information about NJACCRRA and their local CCR&Rs, advocacy tools, press releases, notices of statewide events, and NJACCRRA publications.
Helping Parents Make Informed Child Care Choices

Selecting quality child care is one of the most important decisions a parent will make. New Jersey’s CCR&Rs helped thousands of families find and access quality child care that best fit their needs, including full-time, part-time, weekend, after-hour, or culturally-specific child care. Between 2004 and 2006, our child care specialists helped over 60,000 parents take the guesswork out of choosing child care.

Linking Families with Child Care Resources

New Jersey’s CCR&Rs work to connect parents with supportive child care resources. The New Jersey Cares for Kids program provides financial subsidies for child care on behalf of parents who are employed or attending school or training. Participants of Work First New Jersey are also eligible for child care subsidy assistance if they need child care to work, look for work, or participate in an approved work activity.

Promoting High Quality Child Care Resource and Referral

Between 2004 and 2006, five NJACCRRA members obtained credentialing through Child Care Aware, an intensive quality assurance review offered through a cooperative agreement between NACCRRA and the Child Care Bureau of the US Department of Health and Human Services, which seeks to ensure that New Jersey’s families have access to consistent, high-quality consumer education and referral services. The remaining CCR&Rs in New Jersey are actively completing the credentialing process. The Child Care Aware quality assurance credential sets high standards for community child care resource and referral agencies across the country and is achieved only after an organization can demonstrate that it implements sound policies and best practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCR&amp;R services to parents each year.......</th>
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<tr>
<td>40,000 referrals to local child care programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>20,900 responses to requests for infant and toddler care</td>
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<tr>
<td>8,100 responses to requests for pre-school care</td>
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<tr>
<td>6,900 responses to requests for school-age care</td>
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<tr>
<td>4,600 responses to requests for before- and after-school care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230,000 phone calls responding to child care subsidy requests</td>
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<td>25,000 families assisted with child care subsidies</td>
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</table>
Support and Technical Assistance

New Jersey’s CCR&Rs exist to support the more than 4,000 licensed child care programs and 3,400 registered family child care homes in the state. Recognizing the demanding, yet critically influential work required of the child care provider, New Jersey’s CCR&R staff members provide training, technical assistance, and ongoing support to professionals caring for more than 280,000 children each year. This work includes helping program directors problem-solve about staffing issues and helping professional caregivers develop their knowledge and skills. CCR&Rs perform site visits to provide mentoring and support, disseminate regulatory requirements, compile mailings that keep child care providers updated, and publish details on upcoming workshops and conferences.

Professional Training

New Jersey’s CCR&Rs are the dominant provider of professional education for early care and education practitioners across the state. The New Jersey Professional Development Center for Early Care and Education conducted a 2005 study of training events for child care providers in New Jersey. Results revealed that NJACCRRA members accounted for 71% of all training hours delivered.

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<th>Child Care Programs Supported</th>
<th>October 2004 through September 2005</th>
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<tr>
<td>4,000 licensed facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>3,400 registered homes</td>
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<tr>
<th>Technical Assistance Services</th>
<th>October 2004 through September 2005</th>
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<tr>
<td>6,400 site visits conducted</td>
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<tr>
<td>40,000 technical assistance calls</td>
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<tr>
<th>Training and Professional Development</th>
<th>October 2004 through September 2005</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,300 training sessions held</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31,000 child caregivers educated</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

"Having staff who are educated in developmentally appropriate practice is a key indicator of quality in early care. CCR&Rs provide staff with the tools to improve the quality of child care in their community.”

Nancy Thomson
NJACCRRA President '05-'06

"Children in high-quality child care demonstrate greater mathematical ability, greater thinking and attention skills, and display fewer behavioral problems than children in lower-quality care. These differences hold true for children from a range of backgrounds, with particularly significant effects for children at risk.”

Peisner-Feinberg, 1999

"Parents need to know where child care is available in their community, if it's good quality, and how they can get help paying for it. Policy-makers need to know who is--and isn't-- being served by available resources. CCR&Rs have the information we all need to create the best choices.”

Leslie Calman
The Family Initiative of NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund
The New Jersey Family Child Care Advocacy Project

Recognizing that family child care providers are perhaps the most underrepresented segment of caregivers in the child care network, NJACCRRA commissioned a study to examine the state of family child care in New Jersey. With generous support from the Child Welfare League of America and The Schumann Fund for New Jersey, NJACCRRA initiated The New Jersey Family Child Care Advocacy Project in the fall of 2004. The study was the first comprehensive, documented reference on a system of care supporting thousands of children in the state. The study documented the characteristics of registered providers caring for children in their homes, explored the support available to these providers through local child care resource and referral agencies, and reviewed how other states have used family child care providers in pre-kindergarten programs. This information expanded the foundation of advocacy for family child care providers, developed a resource to help shape legislation regulating family child care, and provided direction for defining the role of family child care homes in New Jersey’s overall early care and education plan.

The New Jersey Child Care Economic Impact Council

NJACCRRA members participated in the New Jersey Child Care Economic Impact Council, formed in August 2004 under the leadership of the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy at Thomas Edison State College. The Council, composed of early childhood providers, advocates, business leaders, and government officials, conducted the first statewide economic impact study to ever focus on the child care industry in New Jersey. The study captured the contribution that the child care industry is making to the workforce, to business, and to the economy of the state. Results demonstrate how New Jersey’s child care industry is a critical driver of economic development - creating jobs, raising revenue, reducing employee absenteeism, and enabling parents to seek employment. Findings broaden support for early care and education programming by extending beneficiaries to include employers, local government, economists, redevelopers, and New Jersey’s diverse business community.
Offering Experience and Expertise

NJACCRRA supports its advocacy efforts by gathering information and data for special-interest working groups, government offices, elected officials, media outlets, and other non-profit organizations. Some highlights of this work:

♦ In March of 2005, NJACCRRA reached out to over 600 school districts, informing them of opportunities to develop preschool programs and access CCR&R services in their community. Members also supported school districts applying for dollars through the Early Launch to Learning Initiative, which increased the availability of local, high quality preschool services.

♦ During February of 2006, NJACCRRA distributed a specially-printed booklet, “The State of Family Child Care in New Jersey,” which outlined the strengths of the state’s family child care system to more than 1,000 state leaders and decision-makers.

♦ NJACCRRA distributed more than 4,000 newsletters with a special focus on advocacy to professionals working in the child care community. The issue included tips, tools, and resources to empower them as effective advocates.

♦ NJACCRRA engages the state’s business community in family-friendly practices through www.njaccrra.org. A special section of the website is devoted to educating the private sector about how child care issues impact the workplace and how employers can support families in need of child care.

Influencing Regulatory and Legislative Decisions

NJACCRRA rallies friends of the child care community around issues affecting children in early care and protecting programs from cuts. Members routinely contribute professional expertise and direction to policy-makers, distribute calls to action on pending legislation, visit legislators in support of early care and education issues, and provide advocacy training programs to encourage community mobilization. NJACCRRA members were present at all major budget hearings between 2004 and 2006, including participation in NJDHS Budget Forums, NJ Assembly Budget Committees, NJ Senate Budget and Appropriations Committees, Child Care Development Fund State Plans, and discussions around forming a department of Children and Families within the state’s government.

During the 2004 budget process, NJACCRRA members were instrumental in securing an increase in the cost of living allowance for agencies contracting with the NJDHS and in the State’s child care subsidy program for parents. This support affected thousands of child care providers and families across the state.

More than 25 NJACCRRA members composed the New Jersey delegation at National Child Care Resource and Referral Association’s Annual Policy Symposium in Washington, D.C. during February of 2006. Every NJ legislator received a personal visit from their local CCR&R representative who shared concerns about the cost of child care, the availability of affordable child care, and pending child care legislation.

“To be effective advocates, all we have to do is tell our stories: the story of the work we do, the story of the families we serve and the challenges they face in finding and paying for quality child care, and the story of the thousands of child care providers who each day care for hundreds of thousands of children in our state. We need to tell these stories to our legislators and policy-makers so that the decisions they make are based on knowledge about real needs in our communities.”

Linda Kriegel
NJACCRRA President
2004-2005

“It is well documented that brain development in the first three years is the most significant time ... we are advocating for funding an infant/toddler specialist in each county’s child care resource and referral agency. The reports from long term studies ... continue to show a tremendous return on the investment. In times of limited funding available in the State budget, here is an opportunity with a proven return on every dollar invested.”

Tom Zsiga, representing NJACCRRA in testimony given at ‘06 Budget Hearings of NJ State Assembly

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Representing Child Care Issues Across New Jersey

NJACCRRA members serve more than 150 local, county, state and national initiatives affecting early care and education. NJACCRRA’s mission is represented on work with the following boards, committees, task forces, and organizations:

Atlantic Bay Association for the Education of Young Children
Atlantic City Workforce Investment Bureau
ARC of NJ - Prevention Committee
Asbury Park Community Collaborative
Asbury Park Early Childhood Council
Association for Children of New Jersey’s Medication Administration in Child Care Work Group
Atlantic County Advisory Commission on Women
Atlantic County Human Services Advisory Council
Atlantic County Women’s Center’s Sexual Assault Response Team
Atlantic County Youth Services Commission
Bergen County Human Services Advisory Council
Bergen County Head Start
Bergen County Healthy Families
Bergen County Health Department
Bergen County Safe Schools, Healthy Students
Bloomfield College Board of Trustees
Brookdale Community College
Burlington County Coalition Against Tobacco
Burlington County Early Childhood Advisory Council
Burlington County Head Start
Burlington County Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition
Camden County Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition
Camden County DYS Advisory Board
Camden County Human Services Advisory Board
Camden County Workforce Investment Board
Camden Healthy Start
Camden Strengthening Families Advisory Board
Cape May Early Care Coalition
Cape May Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition
Cape May Human Services Advisory Council
Cape May League of Women Voters
Cape May Workforce Investment Bureau
Cape May Commission on Women’s Child Health Regional Network
Coalition of Infant/Toddler Educators—All State Chapters
County College of Morris
Camden County Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition
Cumberland County Lead Initiative
Cumberland County Sheriff Traffic Safety
Early Childhood Advisory Council & Early Learning Initiative, Morris School District
Essex County College
Essex County Human Services Advisory Council
Family Child Care Organization
First Book of Mercer County
Gateway-Maternal Child Health Organization
Gloucester County Department of Health
Gloucester County DYS Advisory Council
Gloucester County Early Childhood Education Advisory Council
Gloucester County Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies
Gloucester County Human Services Advisory Council
Mecklenburg County Workforce Investment Board
Mecklenburg Healthy Start
Mecklenburg Strengthening Families Advisory Board
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Camden County Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition
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Cumberland County Sheriff Traffic Safety
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Essex County Human Services Advisory Council
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First Book of Mercer County
Gateway-Maternal Child Health Organization
Gloucester County Department of Health
Gloucester County DYS Advisory Council
Gloucester County Early Childhood Education Advisory Council
Gloucester County Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies
Gloucester County Human Services Advisory Council
Mecklenburg County Workforce Investment Board
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Gateway-Maternal Child Health Organization
Gloucester County Department of Health
Gloucester County DYS Advisory Council
Gloucester County Early Childhood Education Advisory Council
National Women’s Law Center
to ignore.”
trying to find quality and low-income families face everyday struggles that understanding of the systems and their deep early care and education CCR&Rs. Their unique the advocacy efforts of years have been fueled by victories that we have won for families and children were the 2004 and 2005 recipients of the Aletha Wright Award for Excellence in Early Care and Education. This honor, awarded by the New Jersey Child Care Advisory Council, recognizes leadership, dedication, and excellence in the field.

“I was able to solve my problem. The fact that you provided a listing right away so that I was able to go to the places or call immediately was most helpful.”
Bergen County parent

“The victories that we have won for families and children over the past twenty years have been fueled by the advocacy efforts of CCR&Rs. Their unique grasp of their community’s early care and education systems and their deep understanding of the everyday struggles that low-income families face trying to find quality and affordable child care is difficult for policymakers to ignore.”
Helen Blank
National Women’s Law Center
Planning NJACCRA's Next Steps

While proud of the momentum and focus demonstrated by the results achieved between 2004 and 2006, NJACCRA members continue to look forward at the work ahead of them. Key issues directing future activities:

♦ An estimated 4,000 eligible low- and moderate-income families are currently wait-listed for a child care subsidy. NJACCRA members will advocate for additional funding of the New Jersey Cares for Kids (NJCK) subsidy so that all families in need of assistance may access this critical support program.

♦ New Jersey’s reimbursement rate is not consistent with the child care market rate. NJACCRA members will work toward increased child care subsidy reimbursement rates so that they are equitable with current rates. NJACCRA is also pursuing a statewide study to document New Jersey’s child care market rate. Until then, families are forced to either pay the difference between the center rate and voucher payment or limit their child care options—often sacrificing the quality of their child care arrangement.

♦ New Jersey’s licensed and registered child care providers are required to meet only minimum standards. There are no methods in the state’s child care system to recognize which programs operate above regulatory requirements or measure existing indicators of quality. NJACCRA members will work toward establishing a tiered rating system that will inform consumers and recognize standards of quality in child care centers and family child care homes.

♦ Despite the fact that they are the most vulnerable population in care, there is no formal education program and little specialized training for caregivers of infants and toddlers in New Jersey. NJACCRA members will work toward placing an infant and toddler specialist in each child care resource and referral agency to provide mentoring, training, and modeling for infant and toddler caregivers and establishing an infant and toddler teaching credential.

♦ Given the influential role that child care programs and staff hold within the state’s infrastructure and on the developmental progress of New Jersey’s children, it is critical that data about the workforce, programs, policies, market rates of existing programs be available. New Jersey lacks a broad base of reliable information describing these elements. NJACCRA is working to propose a comprehensive study to document the quality, workforce, market rates, general operations, and business practices within child care programs operated through New Jersey’s licensed centers and facilities.
Financial Statement

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<th>2004-2005</th>
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<td>Program Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL EXPENSES</td>
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Acknowledgement of Donors

Is it with grateful appreciation that NJACCRRA recognizes The Schumann Fund for New Jersey and the Child Welfare League of America for their generous support. Grants awarded by these organizations support NJACCRRA’s work to ensure that New Jersey’s children receive safe, affordable, and high quality early care and education programming.
NJACCRRA
New Jersey Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
NJACCRRA, P.O. Box 55816, Trenton, NJ 08638-6816

2004-2005 Officers
Linda Kriegel, President
Bergen County Office for Children
Phyllis Sanders, Vice President
Camden County Division for Children
Jan Philips, Treasurer
Child Care Connection
Jen Freund, Secretary
NORWESCAP
Child and Family Resource Services
Gail Payne, Trustee
Urban League of Hudson County
Christa Weis, Trustee
EIRC-Southern Regional
Child Care Resource Center

2005-2006 Officers
Nancy Thomson, President
Child Care Connection
Phyllis Sanders, Vice President
Camden County Division for Children
Pat Mennuti, Treasurer
Community Coordinated Child Care of Union County
Rebekka Zydel, Secretary
Child & Family Resources
Gail Payne, Member-at-Large
Urban League of Hudson County
Elmoria Thomas, Member-at-Large
EIRC-Southern Regional
Child Care Resource Center

Member Agencies
Atlantic County: Atlantic County Women's Center
Bergen County: Bergen County Office for Children
Burlington County: Burlington County CAP
Camden County: Camden County Division for Children
Cape May County: EIRC-Southern Regional Child Care Resource Center
Cumberland County: Tri-County CAP
Essex County: Programs for Parents
Gloucester County: EIRC-Southern Regional Child Care Resource Center
Hudson County: Urban League of Hudson County
Hunterdon County: NORWESCAP Child & Family Resource Services
Mercer County: Child Care Connection
Middlesex County: Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen
Monmouth County: Child Care Resources
Morris County: Child & Family Resources
Ocean County: The Children’s Home Society of NJ
Passaic County: North Jersey Community Coordinated Child Care Agency
Salem County: Tri-County CAP
Somerset County: Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen
Sussex County: NORWESCAP Child & Family Resource Services
Union County: Community Coordinated Child Care
Warren County: NORWESCAP Child & Family Resource Services

www.njaccrra.org