



# Parents and Child Care in Indiana

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## **IACCRR and Indiana's Families**

There are over 500,000 young children living in Indiana today. More than 300,000 of them have child care needs because one or both of their parents work outside the home. Unfortunately, selecting child care is not always a clear and easy choice, with the varying types of care, levels of quality, costs, and logistics to sort out. Fortunately, parents can and do search out information to best select and secure appropriate care for their young children. IACCRR is uniquely positioned in the child care field to inform, educate, and direct parents toward solid, high quality choices that match their family's needs and the unique needs of their child. IACCRR is involved in all aspects of making this an informed choice for high quality care for young children by working with providers to improve quality, with parents to understand options and quality checklists, and with communities to improve the systems of care available to families and children.

In 2009, IACCRR's eleven local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies served over 14,000 families via referrals and child care information, as well as supported more than 6,000 internet child care searches (IACCRR Annual Report, 2009). In addition, IACCRR's agencies enrolled over 1,900 providers in Paths to QUALITY™, expanding a program that has now positively impacted more than 70,000 children in Indiana (Indiana Family and Social Service Administration, Division of Family Resources, Bureau of Child Care, 2010). Local agency mentors delivered more than 10,000 hours of consultations to assist child care programs throughout Indiana. Likewise, IACCRR and its agencies provided trainings to support licensure and/or registration in each of Indiana's 92 counties, serving over 1,400 Orientation I participants and almost 1,000 Orientation II participants in 2009.

In order to further support specific needs and populations in Indiana, IACCRR administers four additional referral and information resources: the Better Baby Care Initiative (BBCI), the Safe Sleep Initiative, Hispanic Outreach, and the Indiana Partnership for Inclusive Child Care (IPICC). Through the BBCI, IACCRR's agencies have given over 500 provider trainings, 300 hours of technical assistance (which included specialized on-site support to create high quality infant/toddler child care environments), and 1,200 enhanced referrals (which are designed to help families in their child care search and to promote

continuity of care for infants and toddlers). The Safe Sleep Initiative, in its third year, now boasts over 10,000 persons trained by agency and IACCRR staff. In 2009, IACCRR served Indiana's Hispanic population by supporting 200 Spanish child care referrals, 250 participants who attended trainings in Spanish, and 80 participants who attended the first Annual Latino Early Childhood Conference. Finally, in order to support inclusive child care for Indiana's children with special needs, IACCRR's agencies provided more than 200 trainings to providers (designed to equip child care providers with knowledge and resources to successfully include children with special needs in child care), delivered 400 hours of technical assistance (which included specialized on-site support to enhance all children's access to high quality child care environments), and helped more than 200 families via enhanced referrals.

### **What do Hoosier Parents Want?**

Parents in Indiana want safe, quality child care for their

<b>Table 1: How important are the following factors for parents who are trying to find child care?</b>	
	<b>Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree</b>
<b>Safe environment</b>	99%
<b>Experience of caregivers</b>	98%
<b>Good reputation</b>	97%
<b>Education of caregivers</b>	96%
<b>Caregiver training related to working with young children</b>	95%
<b>Curriculum or activities for children</b>	95%
<b>Program schedule (Days/Times)</b>	94%
<b>Child-to-caregiver ratio</b>	91%
<b>Location</b>	89%
<b>Cost</b>	89%
<b>Paths to QUALITY rating</b>	89%
<b>Opportunities for parents to participate in program activities</b>	86%
<b>Caregiver training related to working with children with special needs</b>	78%
<b>Religious affiliation</b>	32%

*Source: IACCRR, 2009-2010. Based on analysis done on follow-up telephone surveys conducted by Infotel for referrals done between October, 2009 and March, 2010. Analysis by IACCRR, 2010.*

children. Based on the results of IACCRR's ongoing follow-up surveys of parents who have received referral services, Table 1 lists (in ranked order) which factors parents rated as important in trying to find child care. It

is worth noting that 4 of the top 5 rated items relate to providers: reputation, experience, training, and education. Parents want caregivers who are positive, experienced, and trained to care for and educate their young children.

**Information is the Key to Quality**

Indiana’s parents want information and use it directly in how they *search for care* and in how they *select care*. Ninety-two percent of parents surveyed said that the local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) helped them make a more informed choice when they were selecting child care. More specifically, parents were more informed about different child care options (83%), about what to look for when trying to find high quality child care (85%), about how to use Paths to QUALITY™ in a child care search (79%), and about resources that meet their family’s needs (84%). Along with increased knowledge about child care, quality options, and resources, Indiana’s parents put (or intend to put) this information into use. It is clear, therefore, that when armed with information about options and quality, parents put knowledge into practice and select child care accordingly. Table 2 summarizes the actions parents have made or will make based on their interaction with a CCR&R.

**Table 2:**

**Which of the following steps did you or do you intend to take after your contact with the CCR&R?**

<b>1. I looked for or intend to look for a child care program participating in Paths to QUALITY.</b>	77%
<b>2. I interviewed or intend to interview the child care programs over the phone before visiting.</b>	92%
<b>3. I asked or intend to ask if the caregiver has training and education related to caring for children.</b>	92%
<b>4. When visiting child care programs, I counted or intend to count the number of adult caregivers and the number of children.</b>	88%
<b>5. I used or intend to use the checklist given to me by the CCR&amp;R to help identify a safe, healthy, and nurturing place for my child.</b>	76%
<b>6. I checked or intend to check violation history of child care programs before selecting a child care program.</b>	74%
<b>7. I contacted or intend to contact the child care programs' references to learn about other parents' experiences.</b>	80%
<b>8. I asked or intend to ask the caregiver how I can stay involved after my child is enrolled.</b>	82%

Source: IACCRR, 2009-2010. Based on analysis done on follow-up telephone surveys conducted by Infotel for referrals done between October, 2009 and March, 2010. Analysis by IACCRR, 2010.

IACCRR’s services increase the efficiency of selection of quality care as well by informing parents of quality providers based on the parents’ own criteria (hours of operation, cost, location, teacher-to-child ratio). A brief summary of how this process works for parents follows:

1. IACCRR gives parents a number of providers based on criteria parents give them.
2. Parents choose to call or e-mail a number of these providers.
3. Based on phone and e-mail information, parents then choose to visit providers.
4. Parents then select a provider.

Based on the parents surveyed by IACCRR, this process begins when a majority of parents (80%) are given between 3 and 15 referrals. Based on these referrals, a majority of parents (73%) then contact between 1 and 10 of those providers/programs via phone or e-mail. Finally, about half of parents (51%) visit between 1 and 5 programs/providers. Table 3 demonstrates how this process, beginning with the call by the parent for referral services, allows for an efficient match with a quality provider meeting the family’s and the child’s needs.

<b>Table 3: Referral and Search Process</b>						
	0	1 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16 or more
<b>Number of programs IACCRR/Agency referred parents to:</b>	28	92	278	327	151	74
<b>Number of providers parents called/e-mailed</b>	238	200	373	144	19	9
<b>Number of providers/programs parents visited</b>	465	355	152	12	1	2

Source: IACCRR, 2009-2010. Based on analysis done on follow-up telephone surveys conducted by Infotel for referrals done between October, 2009 and March, 2010. Analysis by IACCRR, 2010.

Through this process, more than 40% of parents found child care through the CCR&R within 3 weeks of their referral contact (with 18% finding it another way, and 34% still searching). For those who did not select a provider referred by the CCR&R (either finding one another way, not finding one yet, or no longer looking for one at all), the reasons for not doing so are informative. The top four reasons given by parents for not having found child care within 3 weeks of their referral experience are displayed in Table 4.

**Table 4: Top Reasons Parents Do Not Have Child Care After Working with CCR&R.**

<i>Child care providers were not reasonably priced.</i>	33%
<i>There were not openings in the programs.</i>	19%
<i>The programs couldn't accommodate parents' schedules.</i>	19%
<i>The programs were of low quality.</i>	13%

Source: IACCRR, 2009-2010. Based on analysis done on follow-up telephone surveys conducted by Infotel for referrals done between October, 2009 and March, 2010. Analysis by IACCRR, 2010.

This indicates that even when parents are given information to make a solid choice for quality child care, some obstacles remain to their securing it: cost, availability, operating hours, and lack of enough quality spaces.

***IACCRR Effectively Leads Parents to Quality!***

Through IACCRR's direct work by its eleven local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, it has a constant and consistent feedback loop from parents searching for child care in Indiana. It is evident that when armed with solid information and direction, Indiana's parents respond by searching out quality child care for their young children. Parents agree that their knowledge is increased regarding a variety of critical elements of the child care system and quality early experiences for their children. In addition, parents use the vital information from IACCRR and its agencies to efficiently search out child care that meets their family needs.

**Table 5: Parents Rate the Quality of CCR&R Services as Outstanding**

	Percentage of Parents Agree/Strongly Agree
<b>A. My needs were understood.</b>	95%
<b>B. My questions were answered.</b>	95%
<b>C. The staff was knowledgeable.</b>	96%
<b>D. I was treated with courtesy.</b>	98%
<b>E. The information given to me was accurate.</b>	95%

Source: IACCRR, 2009-2010. Based on analysis done on follow-up telephone surveys conducted by Infotel for referrals done between October 2009 and March 2010. Analysis by IACCRR, 2010.

The services IACCRR provides are invaluable to Indiana's parents and thus, to Indiana's young children. IACCRR has a unique connection with parents as it is a starting point and resource for valuable information and connections within the early learning and child care communities. As Table 5 demonstrates, parents who have used IACCRR's agencies' services throughout the state confirm that IACCRR does an outstanding job of meeting their needs in a professional and personal manner.

***IACCRR and its Agencies Inform, Train, and Serve***

In the current Information Age, knowledge and delivery of reliable, relevant information are more important than ever. IACCRR is uniquely able to fill the delivery role in the child care arena. It has a track record of serving many of Indiana's families and children with solid referrals, its providers with research-based practice and resources, and its communities with a touch point for matching family needs with local child care provision. It has done so with the highest levels of professional and personal care. A quick review of how important IACCRR's services have been and continue to be for Indiana's families, children and communities follows:

- **Over 14,000 families** received referrals and child care information in 2009.
- Local agency mentors delivered more than **10,000 hours of consultations** to assist child care programs throughout Indiana.
- **Safety and Provider quality and training** are most important to parents in their search for quality child care.
- **92% of parents agree** that the local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) helped them make a more informed choice when they were selecting child care.
- **More than 40% of parents** found child care through the CCR&R within 3 weeks of their referral contact.
- **95% or more of parents** rate CCR&R services as outstanding.

Survey Note: IACCRR conducts ongoing follow-up surveys of parents who use CCR&R services across the state. A random selection of 20% of parents in each of the 11 agency areas are surveyed on a variety of topics. Oversampling is done of parents who receive an enhanced referral in order to accommodate low population and sample sizes. For this report, N=991 parents receiving referrals between October, 2009 and March, 2010. Valid responses only were used to calculate percentages and totals.