

For Immediate Release

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Indiana Ranks 22nd
*NACCRRRA Releases We Can Do Better: 2011 Update,
Ranking of State Child Care Center Regulations and Oversight*

Indianapolis, IN – The National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA) released a report today scoring state laws governing child care center program requirements and oversight. In *We Can Do Better: 2011 Update*, NACCRRRA scored and ranked the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense (DoD) on 10 program requirements and five oversight benchmarks. State rankings show modest improvements since 2009; however, the report reveals that most states do little to protect the health and safety of children in child care.

The average state score was 87 out of 150 points—the equivalent of 58 percent, a failing grade in any classroom in America. Only DoD earned a B. Four states earned a C; 21 states earned a D; and half of the states earned a failing grade. Indiana received a score of 61%.

“Parents want their children to be safe in child care. They logically assume that a child care license means that there are program standards and oversight by the State,” said Linda K. Smith, NACCRRRA’s Executive Director. “But, the reality is that most state licensing requirements are weak and oversight is weaker. The status quo is unacceptable. There is simply a lack of accountability for those who care for our children.”

Indiana has improved child care program requirements since NACCRRRA’s last update in 2009. Indiana is cited as having “progress made,” which includes criminal-history checks for licensed facilities, child abuse registry cross-check, and inspection reports posted online for public use. Indiana requires safe sleep training. In fact, over 10,000 individuals have been trained in safe sleep practices during the last three years. Indiana licensing regulations for child care centers also address the six basic child development domains which strengthen the ranking. Only 10 states require comprehensive background checks, and 21 states conduct inspections yearly or less frequently, with some states conducting inspections once every five years. Twenty-six states require that regular inspection reports and complaint reports be posted online to help parents make informed choices about their children’s care.

“Most importantly, in Indiana, we have recognized the difficult decision that parents have to make when choosing child care, and we have recognized that while licensed providers meet the NACCRRRA-recommended minimum health and safety standards, high quality child care involves much more than just these basic standards. This is why Indiana has created Paths to QUALITY™, a child care quality rating and improvement system. This system assists providers in improving the quality of care offered by increasing teacher education and improving learning environments and activities. Paths to QUALITY is also a tool to help parents identify and choose high quality care,” says Melanie Brizzi, Director of the Bureau of Child Care, Family and Social Services Administration.

“Preventable tragedies, like the recent child care fire in Houston where four young children died, continuously plague our child care system in America,” said Smith. “The safety of a child in child care should not depend upon the state in which the child lives. There have been so many stories in the news

lately in a number of states that, collectively, they should serve as a wake-up call to Congress and states that child care program requirements and oversight need to be strengthened. We must do better.”

More than \$10 billion in federal funds is spent on child care every year. To ensure that children are in settings that are safe and promote healthy development, NACCRRRA recommends that Congress reauthorize and strengthen the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) law to:

- Require background checks, based on fingerprints, and a check of the sex offender registry and child abuse registry for all child care providers paid to care for unrelated children.
- Require states to establish minimum health and safety requirements and enforce them through regular, unannounced inspections of all licensed child care programs.
- Require states to post inspection findings on the Internet so that parents can make informed choices in selecting child care.
- Require all child care workers to have at least 40 hours of initial training (including CPR, first aid, and other basic safety and health training, in addition to child development) and complete 24 hours of annual training.
- Authorize the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to withhold funding from states that do not require minimum protections for children and that do not conduct regular, unannounced inspections of child care settings.
- Increase the quality set-aside to 12 percent, gradually increasing it to 25 percent, on par with Head Start.

Visit <http://www.naccrra.org/publications/naccrra-publications> for a full copy of *We Can Do Better: 2011 Update*.

About NACCRRRA

NACCRRRA, the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, is our nation's leading voice for child care. We work with more than 600 state and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies to ensure that families in every local community have access to quality, affordable child care. To achieve our mission, we lead projects that increase the quality and availability of child care, undertake research, and advocate child care policies that positively impact the lives of children and families. Visit us at www.naccrra.org to learn more about NACCRRRA and how you can join us in ensuring access to quality child care for all families.

About Child Care Answers

“We want families to know that they can turn to us for information about Paths to QUALITY™, child care referrals, and resources while looking for high quality child care. Our services are free and customized for each family,” says Mindy Bennett.