

# THE IGNITE INITIATIVE CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL IN AMERICA

What is a CCR&R?

## Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) in America

More than 11 million children younger than age five are in some form of child care in the United States. Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies are a vital resource for families, child care professionals and communities. Located in nearly every community in the nation, CCR&Rs emerged over 30 years ago as a grassroots child care referral service to empower working families to make informed child care choices.

As a nationwide system with touchpoints at the local, state and national level, CCR&Rs support families by helping them navigate complicated child care systems and by conducting initiatives that increase the quality, affordability and accessibility of child care.

Today, more than 400 local CCR&Rs, along with their state CCR&R networks, are the leading voices for stronger child care licensing regulations, higher investments in child care systems, subsidies and greater recognition of the importance of high-quality child care for all children.

## Helping Parents Find Child Care

CCR&Rs help take the guesswork out of choosing child care. Trained CCR&R staff provide guidance - by phone, in person, and/or via the Internet — tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual family. They provide families with information about local child care options and connect families with programs participating in the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). When the supply is tight, many CCR&Rs reach out to child care providers to help families locate openings for infants & toddlers, care during non-traditional hours, care for children with special needs, and other targeted populations. CCR&Rs also provide

parents with information about state licensing requirements and financial assistance to help families pay for child care.

## Building the Supply of Child Care

CCR&Rs provide an entry point to child care. They recruit and help potential child care professionals learn about licensing requirements, health and safety regulations, child development and effective business practices. CCR&Rs also work with local and state governments and the private sector to combine resources to build and maintain the supply of quality care, targeting child care deserts and types of care with the greatest shortages, such as infant/toddler care, nontraditional hour care and care for children with special needs.

## Improving the Quality of Child Care

CCR&Rs provide community-based professional development and technical assistance opportunities to child care professionals and staff – both to meet licensing requirements and to achieve the highest levels of quality. In many states, CCR&Rs are the foundation of quality improvement support for child care professionals, supplying coaches to child care programs participating in QRIS, facilitating family child care networks and advocating for greater incentives and compensation for child care professionals.



### CONTACT

**Phone:** 703-341-4107

**Email:** [jen.bump@usa.childcareaware.org](mailto:jen.bump@usa.childcareaware.org)

**Website:** [usa.childcareaware.org](http://usa.childcareaware.org)

### ADDRESS

1515 N. Courthouse Rd.  
3rd Floor  
Arlington, VA 22201

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## Illustrating Child Care Needs and Trends

CCR&Rs are the primary source of data about child care. They use their comprehensive databases to track and monitor trends, including the changes in cost, quality, and supply of care available in states and local communities. As local and state child care experts, CCR&Rs are at the forefront of using data to visualize community child care needs with geographical mapping tools.

## Engaging New Partners

CCR&Rs partner with business leaders, health care professionals, school teachers and others to elevate child care as a primary concern for the entire community. CCR&Rs collaborate with other support systems to promote a vision of child care that nurtures the whole child and includes a focus on physical and mental health, literacy, socio-emotional growth, special needs and offers a culturally appropriate and enriching environment.

## Telling the Child Care Story to Move the Needle on Public Policy & Investment

CCR&Rs bring the voices of children, families and child care professionals to the attention of the public and policymakers by providing resources, documenting community needs and creating new ways to meet those needs.

When appropriate, CCR&Rs harness their extensive data and unique relationships with parents, child care professionals and community partners to drive public policy and funding decisions at the state and local levels.

Many state CCR&R systems have joined Child Care Works, a grassroots movement powered by Child Care Aware® of America to engage advocates to elevate public will in support of high quality, accessible, affordable child care for all children.



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