

Provider Appreciation Day is a special day to recognize child care providers, teachers and other educators of young children everywhere. Started in 1996 by a group of volunteers in New Jersey, Provider Appreciation Day is appropriately celebrated each year on the Friday before Mother's Day. The founding organizers saw the need to recognize the tireless efforts of providers who care for children of working parents. Momentum and support for this event has grown each year and recognition presently includes individuals and government organizations throughout North America, Europe and Asia. A national study, The National Economic Impacts of the Child Care Sector, sponsored by the National Child Care Association, found that there are at least 2.8 million people who earn their money by teaching and caring for young children or by working in directly related jobs. As the demand for child care continues to increase, who's minding the kids is crucial.

Today's child care professionals are the world's unsung heroes. This profession is one of the most underpaid occupations in the country; yet research shows that early childhood is the most critical developmental period in a child's life. It takes a special person to work in this field and the contribution these individuals make to the quality of children's and families' lives too frequently goes unnoticed. Provider Appreciation Day offers a unique opportunity to recognize and commend the unselfish dedication, commitment and compassion that child care providers demonstrate every day.

We challenge you to take action now. Provider Appreciation Day needs your support to continue to be successful. Individuals and community leaders can network with child care groups to plan events, schedule media coverage and issue proclamations. Begin now to contact parents, community groups, child care agencies, government leaders and others so that everyone who wants to support child care providers has the opportunity to participate in this important recognition event in your community. Even the smallest of efforts mean so much to those who have your children in their care. Your provider's smile will be your reward.

Ideas for Parents

- Get together with other parents to create a surprise
- Send flowers, cards or a handwritten note of appreciation
- Bring breakfast or lunch for your provider and for the kids
- Work with your child to create a special remembrance
- Buy something for your provider's play area
- Give your provider a paid day off, a raise, or a bonus
- [Order](#) an official Provider Appreciation Day logo item as a gift
- Key in on your provider's hobby and buy an appropriate gift
- Check to see if your employer provides scholarships for toys, equipment or training that you can sponsor as a parent

Do not let this day go by without a special thank you to this person who is so important to you and your child!