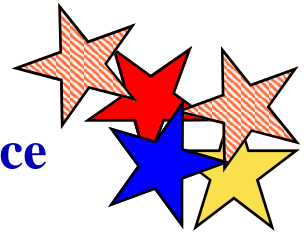




## Celebrating 15 Years of Service CDSA Child Care Resource and Referral



*In youth the days are short and the years are long; as we age the years are long; as we age the years are short and the days long. ~Nikita Ivanovich Panin*

How true this is!! Remember how long it used to seem from one birthday to another when you were a child. Think of how often children report their age including the half year!! Yet to me it is hard to believe that CDSA's Child Care Resource and Referral, formerly referred to as Child Care Finders, completed its 15th year of service to providers, families, and communities in northwest Oklahoma.

Over the past 15 years research on how early experiences impact the brain has led to increased awareness of the importance of the early years and the significant role of those who care for young children—parents, child care providers, and others. In 2000, the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies released *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: the Science of Early Childhood Development*. This report recommended that our society make a major reassessment of how we address the needs of young children. In response to the increased awareness of the importance of the early years, several new initiatives were born: Scholars to support child care providers in seeking higher education; STARS to provide tiered reimbursement; and REWARD which provides financial incentives for both educational level and years of service.

During this same period of time, there has been significant change in the way Resource and Referral staff respond to parents' requests for assistance in finding a child care provider. Educating parents on what to look for when choosing child care and providing them with more information on how to ensure that childcare settings are safe, stimulating, and compatible with their child has been a major focus. In 2009, Child Care Finders was awarded the Quality Assurance Certification by Child Care Aware. The certification is a national voluntary program designed to ensure that families across the nation have access to consistent, high quality services that help them make informed choices about child care. Last fall while working to complete paperwork accompanying accreditation, it was very much like the opening quote....some days seemed very long yet here we almost a year later and I do not know where the time has gone!! As we all work together to improve the quality of child care, the next 15 years are certain to bring new and exciting initiatives.

*Dianne Juhnke*

Director of Early Childhood Services, CDSA

### Services to Families

During fiscal year 2009, there were over **500 calls requesting care for approximately 800 children**. Over half of the child care requests were for children under three years of age. Approximately 52% of the callers indicated that they would be using child care subsidy to assist with paying for child care. Families were also offered information on ways to use earned income tax credit to pay for child care.

### Services to Providers

In fiscal year 2009, Child Care Resource and referral answered over 250 provider assistance calls. In addition, over 100 child care providers participated in training facilitated by Child Care Resource and Referral. There were over 100 visits to the "Resource rooms." A quarterly newsletter was sent to over 400 child care providers on the data base.

### Services to the Community

Child Care Resource and Referral participated in over 50 meetings across the service delivery area to discuss early care and education issues. Staff met with both federal and state legislators to provide information on the needs of children and families across the state of Oklahoma, particularly in northwest Oklahoma.

*CDSA's CCRC is a member of the Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral Association, a statewide network of eight regional Child Care Resource and Referral agencies. The Association provides funding and support to help Child Care Resource Center offer quality child care resource and referral services to families, providers, businesses, and the community.*