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May 11, 2017
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DCF Celebrates Child Care Provider Appreciation Day

(MADISON) – Dropping a son or daughter off at a child care center never gets easier for parents, but thanks to the dedication, love and care from child care providers, parents are able to ease their minds as they head to work to support their families. From center directors and staff to family child care providers, the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) joins agencies across the nation on May 12th in recognizing these outstanding individuals on National Provider Appreciation Day.

Nearly 4,300 licensed providers care for over 220,000 children in Wisconsin. Providers play a crucial role in children's lives by providing not only basic care like feeding and diaper changes, but also helping them reach developmental milestones through age-appropriate, educational activities.

"Countless studies have found that quality early child care and education helps lay the foundation for children's success in school and beyond," said DCF Secretary Eloise Anderson. "Child care providers help parents engage their children and stimulate early brain development. This day offers an opportunity for all of us to show Wisconsin's child care providers how much we appreciate the positive role they play in our children's lives."

To support the success of children in Wisconsin, the Department launched the YoungStar program in 2011 to help providers across the state improve the quality of their care and to provide parents with meaningful information to make informed child care decisions. Through the program, child care programs are rated on a scale of 1 to 5 Stars based on education, learning environment, business practices and the health and well-being of children.

To highlight improvement efforts made by care providers in 2016, the Department is recognizing 182 child care programs from around Wisconsin with monetary awards as part of the Race to the

Top Early Learning Challenge grant. These programs have increased the quality of early care and education they provided, thereby improving their star ratings in any range from the 2 Star to 5 Star levels. The awards – with the amounts tiered by program size, star increase and the number of children served in the program – can be used to fund resources for the child care programs.

One of this year's Challenge grant recipients is Chrissy Moore, operator of Luv 'N Learn, a licensed family child care in DeForest, Wisconsin. Chrissy has been a child care provider for nearly 20 years after starting her career in child care at the Child Development Center on the military base where her husband served.

From family care providers like Chrissy to center directors and staff, the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) joins agencies across the nation on May 12th in recognizing these outstanding individuals on National Provider Appreciation Day.

To find regulated child care providers and see YoungStar ratings visit <http://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov>.