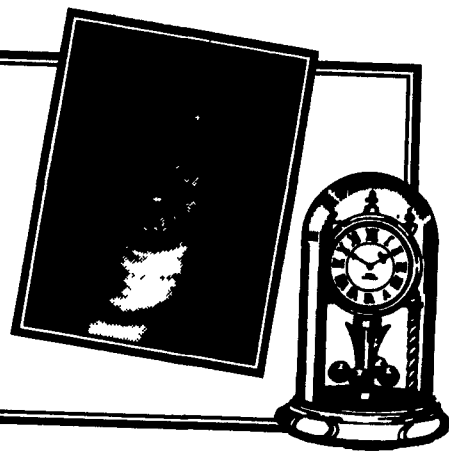


**Taking Time**  
by  
**Rebecca Escott**



some responsibility. Child care providers play a crucial part, encouraging and stimulating children as they develop. In Pennsylvania, we have approximately 8,000 registered/licensed child care facilities. There are many others who care for a few neighbors or relatives in their home. These people help shape our future as they care for our children.

Unfortunately, sometimes we take child care providers for granted. Many are paid low wages, only a few cents above minimum wage. Parents rush in and out of the center and may not even acknowledge the importance of the provider. This past week, many educational organizations celebrated The Week of the Young Child with festivals or special programs. The week of May 4th has been designated Teacher Appreciation Week, with Friday, May 8

being Child Care Provider Appreciation Day. Child care providers, like elementary school teachers, high school instructors, and college professors are educators. Let's take time in the next few weeks to say a special thank you to people who work with young children - in day cares, nursery schools, Sunday School classrooms, playground groups.

Show them that we appreciate the energy and care they give to the children in our community. Here are some ideas to inspire you.

Show your child care provider you value them by:

- Volunteering for a day at the center to see how the day is spent.
- Bringing flowers.
- Sending a card of thanks, feedback on a project, positive

observation. (This is a great idea for someone who is too pressured at pick-up and drop-off times.)

- Bringing in items that are requested for craft projects.
- Surprising an overworked child care professional with pizza for supper. If you know someone who has a family day care business, this would be a real treat!
- Giving a gift certificate to a favorite beauty salon or coffee shop.
- Celebrating the provider's birthday with something special.
- Purchasing a small toy or program materials.
- Saying, "You're doing a great job" when you pick up a child.

•Telling the child care worker, "It's nice to know that I can leave my child here with you, knowing they are in a safe, happy, learning place. He/she loves to be here."

Surprisingly, when surveyed, the things providers requested most as a sign of value and respect from parents were a simple spoken "thank you" and the courtesy of paying and picking up children on time.

Children are a precious treasure. Take time this week to value them and to value the people who hold their hands and help them grow.

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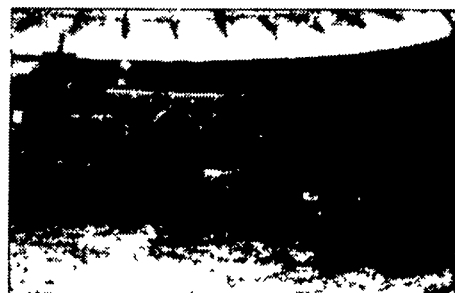
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