

UNITY AND DIRECTION
FOR A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION



Throughout the U. S., child care resource and referral agencies act as communities' child care experts, helping parents locate providers and advocating for early care and education. These R&Rs are the core of the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), founded in 1987. By 1999, the coalition needed a new governance structure, a plan for visibility, and a sense of its future, so it engaged Fern Tiger Associates to assess the world of R&R, make recommendations, and lead and implement NACCRRA's strategic plan.

The three-part process (assessment, planning, and implementation) required travel throughout the country to conduct interviews with 90 regional and national child care leaders. The unevenness in quality from one state to another emerged as a challenge, which FTA ascertained could be addressed in part by changes in NACCRRA's structure. FTA designed a governance system that could strengthen statewide networks and empower local members. The new structure and other recommendations helped to improve efficiency and to clarify NACCRRA's purpose: to unify its members and advance better child care policymaking through member support, research, and advocacy.

More than 700 R&Rs nationwide – from powerful statewide networks to community-based agencies – united around their focus on improving *all* R&Rs and the state of child care in America.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL AGENCIES has more than 700 R&R member agencies in every state nationwide with whom it joins in advocacy, training, and leadership development programs.

In conjunction with the strategic plan that FTA produced for NACCRRA, the firm's report about the context of R&R received a good deal of attention. "Child Care Resource and Referral at a Crossroad" depicted the pressures facing child care – from welfare reform to devolution to a changing workforce and the resulting needs of families. It provided a framework of priorities and a way to articulate the role of R&R and became the focus of a publication produced by FTA for R&Rs: "A Greater Good."

