



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **EIGHT LOCAL HOME-BASED CHILD CARE PROVIDERS EARN NATIONAL ACCREDITATION**

***Nearly a quarter of Ohio's highest-quality, home-based providers  
are located in Franklin County***

COLUMBUS, OH – Eight home-based child care providers in the Columbus area are being honored today by Franklin County and United Way of Central Ohio's Start Smart initiative for their recent designation as nationally accredited providers. Each earned accreditation status from the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) for superior levels of early care and education.

According to the NAFCC, approximately 2,300 providers have received accreditation worldwide (including military bases located outside of the United States). Of those, 33 are in Ohio with nearly 25 percent providing care to children in Franklin County.

"Achieving national accreditation is an outstanding accomplishment," said Sally Yurchuck, Start Smart Director. "These eight providers have proven their commitment to the highest-quality care and education for infants, toddlers and preschoolers by completing a rigorous improvement and qualification process."

Both home providers and child care centers can achieve national accreditation which can be a long and challenging process. Home providers and centers may spend up to two years in a process of self-study, improvement, training and upgrading. It is time-consuming, costly and demanding. Home providers do the bulk of this application activity on their own time, during evenings and weekends.

Start Smart, a local early childhood initiative led by Franklin County and the United Way of Central Ohio, helps home providers and centers with national accreditation. Start Smart partner agency Action for Children provides technical expertise and guidance to those working toward accreditation, and Start Smart provides financial incentives and rewards to home providers and centers that earn accreditation.

"Accreditation is a major stepping stone in reaching the goal of increasing the quality of care and education for Franklin County's youngest citizens," said Rebecca Sheridan, project coordinator for home accreditation, Action for Children. "With Start Smart's help, eight providers and 76 centers have received national accreditation. Over the past 5 years of the Start Smart initiative, approximately 129 home-based providers and 245 child care centers in Franklin County have worked toward national accreditation status."

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“Receiving national accreditation means a lot to me,” said Kimberly Doughty, owner of *Kimberly’s Karing Services* in Gahanna. “It means growth and improvement on both a professional and personal level. Accreditation has raised my standards. I’m happy, the parents are happy and the children are benefiting – which is the best part.”

According to a study conducted by the Families and Work Institute, accreditation improves the quality of care that children receive and increases providers’ professionalism, self-esteem and leadership skills.

The NAFCC Accreditation standards cover the following five areas of quality: relationships, environment, activities, developmental learning goals, safety and health and professional and business practices. Accreditation is considered valid for three years, after which time providers must re-qualify and apply.

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**Accredited Home Child Care Providers for January 24, 2006**

Vercie Burks	Columbus
Kimberly Doughty	Gahanna
Esther Drafton	Columbus
Brenda Gentry	Columbus
Joan Kaniaris	Columbus
Carol Lepsik	Grandview Heights
Christina Lytle	Canal Winchester
Debora Wallace-Wood	Columbus