

Proposal to Create a Pilot Child Care Drop-In Center
 at Central Connecticut State University
 January 24, 2012

Submitted by:

Child Care Task Force of the Faculty Senate
 Board of Directors - Early Learning Program (ELP)
 Work-Life Balance Sub-Committee - Committee on the Concerns of Women (CCW)
 Ruthe Boyea Women’s Center
 Student Government Association¹

Background:

On May 9, 2011, the Child Care Task Force and the Work-Life Balance Committee of the Committee on the Concerns of Women submitted a report to the Faculty Senate regarding child care needs on campus, which the Faculty Senate approved. This expanded a 2008 report to President Miler by CCW completed in the Spring of 2008. One of the specific recommendations on the 2011 report includes a drop-in child care center located on the main campus (please see report, Child Care Needs at CCSU, Spring 2011, for details). Students, faculty, and staff would use this center for short-term, intermediary child care to attend class, meetings, or campus events. The Early Learning Program, which is located off campus, would administer the center.

In the spring of 2008, the CCW Child Care sub-committee administered a campus-wide survey to gauge the interest and needs of child care services on campus. Of the 486 students, faculty and staff who completed this survey:

- 48% claimed to have missed an on-campus event or class due to lack of child care
- 80% claimed to know people on campus who could use an on-campus child care service

From: Glaser, Leah and Beth Merenstein. 2008. "Work-Life Balance (Including Child Care Needs) at CCSU." CCW, Subcommittee Report.

According to findings from a second survey funded by the Office of Diversity and Equity, with support of the CCSU-AAUP and the Faculty Senate, many CCSU students with children are in need of part-time, evening care or emergency drop-in care:

<u>Which of the following would be of use to you? Check as many as seem appropriate.</u>	Response Total	Response Percent
Evening Care (after 6pm)	29	58%
Emergency Drop-Off Care (irregular hours)	25	50%
Full-day Care	25	50%
School Holiday/Vacation Care	23	46%
Half-day Care	21	42%
After-school Care	19	38%
List of local child care providers	11	22%
Sitter Web Site (where parents/caregivers could locate individual providers)	8	16%

From: Pearson, A. Fiona, Jason B. Jones, and Candace Barrington. 2010. Student Child Care Survey, Central Connecticut State University, Summary Report.

¹ The SGA passed a resolution to approve and support this proposal on Wednesday, February 1, 2012.

Final

In addition, survey results reveal that the social and academic experiences of CCSU's student parents are being negatively affected due to their lack of access to convenient and affordable child care. Seventy-four percent of student parents surveyed reported that they frequently or occasionally missed time from school or class due to their lack of child care. In addition, 88 percent of students reported that they frequently or occasionally miss campus-based events as a result of lacking child care. When asked about child care and academic success, 42 responded that a lack of adequate child care has frequently or very frequently interfered with their success, and 58 percent of students have frequently or occasionally brought their children to campus and/or class due to a lack of child care. Clearly, these findings reveal that many students do not yet have access to consistent and affordable child care and they believe that lacking such a resource is negatively impacting their academic experience.

Proposal:

We propose that CCSU provide a space on campus for a **pilot drop-in child care service** that will provide the opportunity to: (a) assess the need and demand for such a service on campus to improve attendance, retention, and graduation rates of students and retention and dependability of faculty and staff; and (b) provide short-term, intermediary drop-in care until the long-term construction plans of the university are addressed and space is available for on-campus child care facilities that meet long-term campus needs. In addition, the service can provide employment and valuable work experience for student workers, supplementing academic programs in Elementary Education, Social Work, etc.

According to Connecticut's *Statutes and Regulations for Licensing Child Care Centers and Group Day Care Homes* (March 2011), the drop-in child care service that we are proposing is exempt from state licensing requirements. According to "Sec.19a-77 - 'Child day care services' defined. Exclusions. Additional license," a space providing the services we are recommending does *not* meet their definition of a "child day care service" because it is a

" (5) Drop-in supplementary child care operations for educational or recreational purposes and the child receives such care infrequently where the parents are on the premises."

We consulted with the Department of Public Health, and they confirmed that as long as parents are on the main college campus, they are considered on the "premises."

Space: We are requesting a space between 700 to 1200 square feet with access to a bathroom facility on the same floor. A Drop-in Center this size should be large enough to accommodate up to 15 children, ages 3-14. This service is meant for short-term care and thus would not necessarily require large amounts of space for children to engage in physical play. The space would ideally include a sink.

Location: A drop-in child care center would need to be centrally located with access to campus parking. Presumably, this space would be available for other uses during the hours it is not open as a drop-in center. Since this is a pilot program, the space needed may expand due to demand and could potentially move to another location as the university continues its own physical expansion.

Management and Staffing: The Early Learning Program, which currently provides pre-school education for children ages 3-5 and before and after school care for children ages 3-14, would manage and staff the Drop-in Center. The ELP will determine hours of operation, registration and cost. The ELP will work with members of the CCSU community to subsidize the cost of such care for CCSU students and equip the space with toys, books, games, puzzles, etc. Because this is a pilot program, the ELP and the Child Care Task Force will collect and maintain the Center's use data in order to assess the needs of drop-in services, adjust hours, and make long-term campus child care recommendations accordingly.