

Student Child Care Survey

Summary Report



Central Connecticut State University

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Dr. A. Fiona Pearson, Department of Sociology

Dr. Jason B. Jones, Department of English / President, CCSU - AAUP

Dr. Candace Barrington, Department of English / President, Faculty Senate

INTRODUCTION:

In the Spring of 2010, we surveyed students at Central Connecticut State University to assess 1) their perception of the campus's provisions for parents/guardians and 2) their needs for child care on campus. The on-line survey, constructed using Select Survey software, was available to students on Central Pipeline from April 26th through May 21st, 2010. To encourage student participation, we provided all survey respondents with a coupon for a free cup of coffee or bottle of water at Jazzman's Café located in the Burritt Library.

A total of 344 students responded to the survey, which according to the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, Dr. Braden Hosch, is currently a standard expected student response rate for surveys administered on-line at CCSU. Students without children under the age of 14 answered 13 questions that focused on demographic characteristics and their perceptions of CCSU's campus and childcare resources. Students with children under the age of 14 answered an additional 12 questions regarding their current child care resources and needs. All survey questions and responses are provided in Appendix A of this report.

Overall, the findings below reveal that the vast majority of students on campus, whether or not they currently have child care needs, are supportive of attending to the needs of students with young children. In addition the report reveals that women and students identifying as racial/ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected by these issues. Below is a brief overview of selected responses that speak to students' immediate concerns regarding child care on campus.

FINDINGS:

Perceptions of and Support for Child Care

The findings from this survey clearly reveal that the majority of student participants believe that providing child care on campus is important; however, it is equally clear that their status as a parent or guardian of at least one young child affects their respective perceptions. When asked to evaluate the statement "CCSU appears to support the needs of students who are parents/guardians," 25 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed and 31 percent strongly agreed or agreed (see Table 1 below). 44 percent of all students, however, were undecided. When these students are divided into two groups, one containing all students with at least one child under the age of 14 and one containing all students without children under the age of 14, we see distinct differences emerging. Of those students without children, 48 percent are undecided. We also see that the vast majority of those respondents who strongly agree and agree with the statement that CCSU supports students with young children are students without young children. Only eight percent of students with young children strongly agree or agree, and 65 percent disagree or strongly disagree with such a statement. These findings clearly demonstrate that parents with young children view the campus differently from most students without young children, and the vast majority of these parents do not believe CCSU is supportive of their specific needs.

Table 1 – Comparison of Perception of Support Resources for Student Care Givers

<u>All Students:</u>		Response Total	Response Percent
Strongly Agree		22	6%
Agree		85	25%
Undecided		151	44%
Disagree		66	19%
Strongly Disagree		19	6%
Total Respondents		343	100%

<u>Students Without Children Under Age 14:</u>		Response Total	Response Percent
Strongly Agree		20	7%
Agree		82	29%
Undecided		136	48%
Disagree		41	14%
Strongly Disagree		6	2%
Total Respondents		285	100%

<u>Students With Children Under Age 14:</u>		Response Total	Response Percent
Strongly Agree		2	3%
Agree		3	5%
Undecided		15	26%
Disagree		25	43%
Strongly Disagree		13	22%
Total Respondents		58	100%

When we examine students’ perceptions regarding the importance of providing campus-based child care, we see comprehensive support (see Table 2 below). 83 percent of all students surveyed expressed support of such provisions reporting that they strongly agree or agree that “Creating campus-based child care is important.” Only six percent disagreed and none strongly disagreed. Once again, when we break down these responses by dividing students into two groups, those with children under the age of 14 and those without, differences emerge. Those students who were undecided or who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement did not have young children—all students with young children reported support for creating campus-based child care. Interestingly, however, 80 percent of students without young children nonetheless responded that they strongly agree or agree that providing such resources on campus is important to them. These results clearly reveal that the majority of students, whether or not they have young children believe providing child care on campus is important.

Table 2 – Comparison of Importance of Creating Campus-based Child Care

<u>All Students:</u>		Response Total	Response Percent
Strongly Agree		154	45%
Agree		131	38%
Undecided		37	11%
Disagree		20	6%
Strongly Disagree		1	0%
Total Respondents		343	100%

<u>Students Without Children Under Age 14:</u>		Response Total	Response Percent
Strongly Agree		105	37%
Agree		122	43%
Undecided		37	13%
Disagree		20	7%
Strongly Disagree		1	0%
Total Respondents		285	100%

<u>Students With Children Under Age 14:</u>		Response Total	Response Percent
Strongly Agree		49	84%
Agree		9	16%
Undecided		0	0%
Disagree		0	0%
Strongly Disagree		0	0%
Total Respondents		58	100%

Effects on Academic Experience

Of the students surveyed, 58 report having children under the age of 14, and 50 of those students answered questions regarding the ways that a lack of child care has affected their academic experiences (See Table 3). 74 percent of those students report that they frequently or occasionally miss time from school or class due to their lack of childcare. Not only are these students missing valuable school or class time, they are foregoing attending campus-based events: 88 percent of students report that they frequently or occasionally miss such events as a result of lacking child care. When asked about child care and academic success, 42 respond that a lack of adequate child care has frequently or very frequently interfered with their success. Further, 58 percent of students have frequently or occasionally brought their children to campus due to a lack of child care. Clearly, these findings reveal that many students do not yet have access to regular and affordable child care and they believe that lacking such a resource is negatively impacting their academic experience.

Table 3 – Effects on Academic Experience

<u>While at CCSU, I have missed time from school or class due to lack of child care.</u>		Response Total	Response Percent
Very Frequently		5	10%
Frequently		6	12%
Occasionally		26	52%
Rarely		9	18%
Very Rarely		4	8%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			293

<u>While at CCSU, I have missed a campus event or co-curricular activity due to a lack of child care</u>		Response Total	Response Percent
Very Frequently		16	32%
Frequently		14	28%
Occasionally		14	28%
Rarely		2	4%
Very Rarely		4	8%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			293

<u>Dealing with issues related to child care has interfered with my ability to succeed in school</u>		Response Total	Response Percent
Very Frequently		15	30%
Frequently		6	12%
Occasionally		15	30%
Rarely		9	18%
Very Rarely		5	10%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			293

<u>I have brought my child(ren) to CCSU's campus due to a lack of child care.</u>		Response Total	Response Percent
Very Frequently		4	8%
Frequently		5	10%
Occasionally		20	40%
Rarely		6	12%
Very Rarely		15	30%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			293

Demographic Characteristics

Upon examining the demographic characteristics of students with young children who responded to our survey, we again see distinct trends. The vast majority, 74 percent, of these student parents are women (see Table 4 below). In addition, the majority, 61 percent are married, 14 percent are separated or divorced and 24 percent are single or unmarried.

To better assess the meaning of these percentages, it is helpful to compare them to University numbers.¹ According to Spring 2010 enrollment records, 53 percent of CCSU’s undergraduate and graduate population are women. Women were much more likely than men to respond to this survey, with only 30 percent of all 344 respondents identifying as men (See Table 5 below). In addition, we see distinct trends when examining racial/ethnic data. 18 percent of survey respondents identified as Latino or Hispanic which is again higher than the University percentage, which in Spring 2010 was 6.6 percent.² The percentage of student parents identifying as Black or African American, 23 percent, is also significantly higher than 2010 enrollment records of 8 percent. Although 74 percent of all students at CCSU self-identify as White, only 55 percent of the student parents responding to this survey identified as White. We see here emerging a portrait of student parents that predominantly comprises women and racial/ethnic minorities. CCSU currently has no means of comprehensively and thus accurately assessing the demographic characteristics of student parents on campus, but this exploratory survey provides an indication of the characteristics of that particular population.

Table 4 - Demographic Data – Student Parents (N=58)

What is your gender?		Response Total	Response Percent
Male		13	26%
Female		37	74%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			8

Which ethnic category best describes you?		Response Total	Response Percent
Hispanic or Latino		9	18%
Not Hispanic or Latino		40	82%
Total Respondents		49	100%
(skipped this question)			9

Response Response

¹ CCSU Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. 2010. “Spring Headcount Enrollment by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Undergraduate and Graduate Students). Available On-Line <http://www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=4825>.

² Ibid.

<u>Which racial category best describes you?</u>	Total	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0%
Asian	3	6%
Black or African American	11	23%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%
White	26	55%
Other	7	15%
Total Respondents	47	100%
(skipped this question)		11

<u>What is your current marital status?</u>	Response Total	Response Percent
Single	12	24%
Married	30	61%
Separated	1	2%
Divorced	6	12%
Widowed	0	0%
Total Respondents	49	100%
(skipped this question)		9

Table 5 – Gender and Racial/Ethnic Comparison

Selected Demographic Characteristics	Child Care Survey All Students N = 344	Child Care Survey Student Parents N = 58	CCSU - Spring 2010 All Students N = 12,141
Women	70%	74%	53%
Hispanic or Latino	8%	18%	7%
Black or African American	9%	23%	8%
Asian	8%	6%	3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	0%	Less than 1%
White	73%	55%	74%

Note: Due to rounding, columns may not total 100 percent. Additionally, percents reflect totals for respondents who answered the questions. Information regarding missing data can be provided upon request.

Child Care Needs

When asked which child care resources would be most helpful, the majority, 58 percent respond that evening care is most needed. 50 percent respond that emergency drop-off care and 46 percent report that care during school holidays and vacations is also necessary. 50 percent need full-day care, however, upon examining the amount of money that these student parents currently pay per week for child care of any kind, we see that what they can or are willing to spend is limited. Only six percent of these students are paying more than \$200 a week for child care and 36 percent pay nothing. Although students have clear child care needs, they may not be willing or able to financially meet those needs. Current tuition at the Early Learning Program, which provides child care services for CCSU faculty & staff and the New Britain community, is \$155 per week for full-time enrollment and the center can only service 26 students aged 3-5. Clearly, this single source of child care provided by CCSU cannot alone meet the needs of students on campus. These findings demonstrate that more affordable and flexible resources are necessary if CCSU is to meet students' current child care needs.

Table 6 – Child Care Needs

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

<u>How much do you currently pay for child care per child per week?</u>		Response Total	Response Percent
none		18	36%
\$1 - 50		6	12%
\$51 - 100		9	18%
\$101 - 150		10	20%
\$151 - 200		4	8%
\$200 - 250		1	2%
over \$250		2	4%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			293

Selected Qualitative Comments

40 of 344 survey participants provided answers to the following two open-ended questions. Only students with children under the age of 14 answered the first question. 21 parents with children under the age of 14 and 19 students without children under the age of 14 answered the second question. These responses present a more comprehensive description of problems faced by students with young children and propose some creative solutions to those problems. All qualitative comments can be provided upon request.

1) What is most important to you when selecting child care arrangements?

- If somebody is making an effort, my request is to have a place on a campus, maybe just a small room to accommodate children for those evening meetings. There are so many students on campus. They can of-course help if they want. I am ready to help if I am available that day or evening. I feel the same thing for evening class. This fall is my last year and most of the classes are evening hours and I have no idea what am I going to do. Thanks again for at least thinking about this aspect as this is a very big issue for some of us.
- Quality care provided by a licensed center. Staff must be friendly, qualified, have a degree, first aid & CPR certified, background checked, etc.
- Finding trustworthy individuals to provide a safe and nurturing environment for my son. Cost is also a factor.
- Quality caring staff, peaceful and clean environment, outdoor play available, lower cost, available at off hours.
- Safety, credentials, ability of staff to make me and my child feel comfortable, environment, affordability, programming (In this order).
- Time, cost, quality of service. i.e. if they are teaching them while they are in their care. and who are watching the kids, their background
- The environment should be safe and of course the person should be trustworthy. I always have a problem attending evening meetings because that time day cares are closing, after school is closing and I have to request a friend for help and I end up with someone with an attitude. So what are my options left: NOT TO ATTEND THE MEETING.

2) If you would like to add any additional information regarding your child care experiences or needs, please include those comments here:

- I believe that child care would be a great addition to CCSU. It would create job opportunities for students and allow parents to get a degree even though they have children, in turn creating more money for the University in general.

- I was surprised to find that CCSU does not have a daycare facility on campus, especially with the amount of students that are education majors. These students could work at the facility to get experience working with children or volunteer. It is difficult for students to get to class if they have a child and no child care available to them. For example one student in my child psychology class had to bring her three-year-old child to class and had to sit outside the classroom in order to not disturb the lecture but still get credit for attendance. Also, this service should be affordable because the students are all ready paying for their classes and books and some of them probably cannot afford a daycare that is located off campus. I work for a KinderCare and can relate to the need for daycares and how costly it can be for parents.
- Every vacation, holiday or snow day causes stress. I have to spend a lot of time arranging for childcare on these days so that I don't have to miss class.
- The ability to have a safe place to send my child in the evenings and Saturdays would have been a huge assistance in my efforts to complete my undergraduate degree. I am moving on to graduate studies at CCSU and these services would be incredible helpful.
- I have had a GPA of 3.74 previously. This semester I have struggled with school vacations or lack of childcare. Due to this, I have had to Withdraw from my first class at CCSU. This adds to the amount of time I am in this program and jeopardizes my Financial Aid. Also, I have NEVER attended an activity or club on campus - my spouse works when I am not in class.
- A daycare at CCSU would benefit students who have children greatly. I personally will graduate this year, however when I think back on the days when I took evening and Saturday classes and my husband had to work it really was challenging to find someone who you are comfortable with to take care of your children. Things would have been a lot different and less stressful for me as a student had I had that as an option. I hope that people who come after me will be able to take advantage of a daycare on campus and make life with children and school a whole lot easier.
- I may suggest a childcare that can be charged by the hour. This would be great for a parent taking only one or two classes and doesn't need half or full-day daycare. It should also be considered that we are parents who are also college students, and some of us may have tight budgets due to our financial situations. I also believe that the child care environment needs to be one that engages the children in activities that are beneficial to their learning. It should not be a free-play time. CCSU is a learning environment and the child care should reflect that as well.
- It would be nice to have child care on campus, student parents should have the same opportunities that non parent students have. I think it would be an interesting opportunity to have a child care center run by students who are psych majors and show an interest in developmental psychology.
- I currently use the ELP @ CCSU for my four year old that is off campus. I don't particularly like the location of the building. If the center was on campus I'd like it a lot more. I also think that

the tuition charge should be lower for students who are not currently working. My husband works, but we have a mortgage and house related expenses and the price of childcare is outrageous.

- My brother and I were in daycare at CCSU when my mom was working on her MA in the late 80's and it helped my mom finish her degree while she was unemployed. On campus childcare is very much needed because many people can't afford daycare while they are struggling to get their degrees. I have seen classmates (and teachers actually) who have had to bring their children to class with them because they had no other option. Please make this an option for CCSU students!!

CONCLUSIONS:

The findings in this report reveal students' overall support of and need for child care resources on CCSU's campus. The majority of students surveyed believe that creating campus-based child care is important. In addition, the majority of students with young children do not yet believe that CCSU supports the needs of students who are parents or guardians as is clearly demonstrated in their overwhelming belief that a lack of child care is negatively affecting their academic success. These students report that inadequate child care is affecting their academic accomplishments and their ability to remain in school. Further, as demographic data here reveals, women and racial/ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected by these issues, which can dramatically affect their long-term academic success.

Students list a number of ways that students with or without children can benefit from an expansion of child care resources on campus. Offering increased levels of reasonably priced or free child care could:

- Provide a means of employment for students.
- Provide training opportunities for student interns interested in childhood development or education.
- Allow student parents to attend classes.
- Allow student parents to join clubs and attend campus-based cultural events.

Based on the findings in this study, we further suggest that providing reasonably priced or free child care could also alleviate stressors that disproportionately affect women and racial/ethnic minorities. These stressors affect both student parents' academic achievement and their ability to complete their degrees. A lack of child care resources is clearly perceived by all students and attending to such a need would result in improving not only students' perceptions but their experiences on CCSU's campus.

Appendix A

CCSU Child Care Survey – Spring, 2010

This survey about child care is being conducted by members of the Faculty Senate’s Child Care Task Force to determine CCSU students’ perceptions regarding students’ current child care arrangements and needs. Participation in the survey is anonymous and your responses will not be attributed to you in any way. Results from the survey will be used to assess campus climate and to identify ways that child care needs at the University can be addressed effectively. For questions about this survey, please contact Dr. A. Fiona Pearson (Maria Sanford, Office 30412, 860-832-3137, pearsonaf@ccsu.edu).

CCSU Child Care Survey 2010

Respondents:	343 displayed, 344 total	Status:	Open
Launched Date:	04/26/2010	Closed Date:	05/21/2010

1. Student ID number:

2. I see parents/guardians with their children on CCSU's campus.

		Response Total	Response Percent
Very Frequently		14	4%
Frequently		45	13%
Occasionally		150	44%
Rarely		87	25%
Very Rarely		47	14%
	Total Respondents	343	100%

3. CCSU appears to be a child-friendly campus.

		Response Total	Response Percent
Strongly Agree		31	9%
Agree		127	37%
Undecided		100	29%
Disagree		70	20%
Strongly Disagree		15	4%
	Total Respondents	343	100%

4. CCSU appears to support the needs of students who are parents/guardians.

		Response Total	Response Percent
Strongly Agree		22	6%
Agree		85	25%
Undecided		151	44%
Disagree		66	19%
Strongly Disagree		19	6%
Total Respondents		343	100%

5. Creating campus-based child care is important.

		Response Total	Response Percent
Strongly Agree		154	45%
Agree		131	38%
Undecided		37	11%
Disagree		20	6%
Strongly Disagree		1	0%
Total Respondents		343	100%

6. Are you a parent or guardian of any children under the age of 14?

		Response Total	Response Percent
Yes		58	17%
No		285	83%
Total Respondents		343	

7. What are the ages of each child under 12?

		Response Total	Response Percent	
view	First Child's Age		47	14%
view	Second Child's Age		22	6%
view	Third Child's Age		7	2%
view	Fourth Child's Age		1	0%
view	Sixth Child's Age		1	0%
Total Respondents		50		
(skipped this question)		293		

8. What type of child care arrangements do you now have?

		Response Total	Response Percent
Live-in care at my home (partner, spouse, grandparent, etc.)		15	30%
Private home care/unlicensed (e.g. relative, friend, etc.)		14	28%
Private home care/licensed		3	6%
Child care center		9	18%
Nursery or preschool		4	8%
After school program		3	6%
Other view		3	6%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			293

9. Our family finds our current child care arrangement's quality to be excellent.

		Response Total	Response Percent
Strongly Agree		10	20%
Agree		20	40%
Undecided		10	20%
Disagree		10	20%
Strongly Disagree		0	0%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			293

10. Our family finds our current child care arrangement's location to be convenient.

		Response Total	Response Percent
Strongly Agree		13	26%
Agree		16	32%
Undecided		5	10%
Disagree		15	30%
Strongly Disagree		1	2%
Total Respondents		50	100%

(skipped this question) 293

11. How much do you currently pay for child care per child per week?

		Response Total	Response Percent
none		18	36%
\$1 - 50		6	12%
\$51 - 100		9	18%
\$101 - 150		10	20%
\$151 - 200		4	8%
\$200 - 250		1	2%
over \$250		2	4%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			293

12. While at CCSU, I have missed time from school or class due to lack of child care.

		Response Total	Response Percent
Very Frequently		5	10%
Frequently		6	12%
Occasionally		26	52%
Rarely		9	18%
Very Rarely		4	8%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			293

13. While at CCSU, I have missed a campus event or co-curricular activity due to a lack of child care.

		Response Total	Response Percent
Very Frequently		16	32%
Frequently		14	28%
Occasionally		14	28%
Rarely		2	4%
Very Rarely		4	8%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			293

14. I have brought my child(ren) to CCSU's campus due to a lack of child care.

		Response Total	Response Percent
Very Frequently		4	8%
Frequently		5	10%
Occasionally		20	40%
Rarely		6	12%
Very Rarely		15	30%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			293

15. Dealing with issues related to child care has interfered with my ability to succeed in school.

		Response Total	Response Percent
Very Frequently		15	30%
Frequently		6	12%
Occasionally		15	30%
Rarely		9	18%
Very Rarely		5	10%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			293

16. I would consider using child care facilities at or near CCSU if they were available to me.

		Response Total	Response Percent
Definitely		32	64%
Probably		11	22%
Possibly		7	14%
Probably Not		0	0%
Definitely Not		0	0%
Total Respondents		50	100%
(skipped this question)			293

17. Which of the following would be of use to you? Check as many as seem appropriate.

		Response Total	Response Percent
Full-day Care		25	50%
Half-day Care		21	42%
After-school Care		19	38%
Evening Care (after 6pm)		29	58%
Emergency Drop-Off Care (irregular hours)		25	50%
School Holiday/Vacation Care		23	46%
Sitter Web Site (where parents/caregivers could locate individual providers)		8	16%
List of local child care providers		11	22%
Total Respondents		50	
(skipped this question)			293

18. What is most important to you when selecting child care arrangements?

View responses to this question [view](#)

Total Respondents 40
 (skipped this question) 303

19. What is your gender?

		Response Total	Response Percent
Male		91	30%
Female		215	70%
Total Respondents		306	100%
(skipped this question)			37

20. What is your current marital status?

		Response Total	Response Percent
Single		251	82%
Married		45	15%
Separated		1	0%
Divorced		8	3%
Widowed		0	0%
Total Respondents		305	100%
(skipped this question)			38

21. Which ethnic category best describes you?

		Response Total	Response Percent
Hispanic or Latino		25	8%
Not Hispanic or Latino		279	92%
Total Respondents		304	100%
(skipped this question)			39

22. Which racial category best describes you?

		Response Total	Response Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native		2	1%
Asian		25	8%
Black or African American		27	9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		0	0%
White		219	73%
Other view		25	8%
Total Respondents		298	100%
(skipped this question)			45

23. What is the degree level of the program in which you are currently enrolled?

		Response Total	Response Percent
Undergraduate		266	88%
Graduate		34	11%
Not Applicable (non-matriculating)		3	1%
Total Respondents		303	100%
(skipped this question)			40

24. I usually take classes each semester at CCSU

		Response Total	Response Percent
Part-Time		38	12%
Full-Time		268	88%
Total Respondents		306	100%