

**Family Services Needs Assessment  
California State University Channel Islands**

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**Executive Summary**

**The Needs Assessment**

The need for childcare and dependent adult care on campus was assessed using web-based surveys, focus groups, interviews and web-based research and searches of college and university services for children and dependent adults. On web-based surveys, 265 students, and 271 faculty and staff provided information on their need for child and dependent adult care. Focus groups were conducted with students, faculty and staff on campus (10 participants) and then with students at a local community college (8 students). Key administrators on the CI campus and directors of childcare centers at universities and community colleges in California and regional Head Start program shared their perspectives and expertise through face-to-face interviews. We examined the websites of CSU and UC campuses for information about child and elder care services. We reviewed the results of a recent study of local farmworkers and their needs for childcare because the campus is bordered by farms.

Twenty-two percent of students and 37% of faculty and staff have indicated some or great adverse effects due to the lack of services for children or dependent adults on campus.

Forty-seven percent of students and 68% of faculty and staff indicated that childcare should be an important campus priority when taking into account all priorities for campus. Nineteen percent of students and 12% of faculty and staff indicated that it was not important.

For adult dependent care, 20% of students and 26% of faculty and staff rated it as an important priority. Thirty-two percent of students and 26% of faculty and staff indicated that adult dependent care was not important.

Other supportive services that students would like include stress management programs (49%), on-line or independent study courses (45%), website with resource and referral information on childcare and adult care (37%) and a support group focused on family issues (35%). Faculty and staff would like a website with resource and referral information on both childcare and adult dependent care options (56%); stress management (45%) and on-line and independent study courses (41%).

Overall, there is strong administrative support for a childcare center on campus. There were questions about what it meant to have dependent adult care on campus, so there was cautious support, depending on what we meant and the need expressed. Administrators emphasized that we should be inclusive of other stakeholders in our planning, for example include the local planning council, government and state organizations, and the local military. The proposal will be strongest if we have a

variety of groups coming to the table together to plan and finance the facility and involve local childcare and after-school care groups in planning.

### **Recommendations**

As the center unfolds, it is important to link it directly to the campus mission and to academic programs such as Early Childhood Studies, Nursing, Psychology, Sociology, Arts and Sciences. Faculty members in some of these programs have already expressed strong interest in supporting this effort.

An on-campus childcare center provides laboratory opportunities for the study of children and families for psychology, sociology, nursing, education, science, and arts. It provides another opportunity for university students to complete service learning and experiential work in their chosen field. It is recommended that the center, by design, include multicultural and multilingual children and staff so experiences with these dimensions will be available to CI students.

It is recommended that sufficient space be provided in the center so that community members such as local farm workers can have a place for their children's childcare needs and so that students, faculty and staff will have space for their children to attend. The university is continuing to grow and therefore a center to be built should be of sufficient size to allow for growth and expansion. The priorities for service should be to serve students first, then faculty, staff and community members.

The emphasis at the center should be on the education and care of children. To be maximally beneficial to the children and also to university programs that will use its services, by design, the center should emphasize high quality programming and curriculum. The center should provide parenting and family support groups.

CI students, faculty and staff indicated a need for extended hours for care. It is recommended that the center be designed to accommodate children during all hours during which classes are scheduled and while the Library and other campus labs are open.

The center should be designed so that a variety of registration options are available: full-time, part-time and drop-in care. Drop-in care staffing can be managed by having a two-week advance registration rather than the more traditional annual or semi-annual registration associated with full- and part-time care.

The numbers of students, faculty and staff with dependent adult care needs does not warrant a center at this time. However an expanded website with options for families with these needs would be beneficial. Additionally, support groups and/or counselors who can discuss family needs and provide referrals would be beneficial. Another possibility is to provide a multi-generational center combining the needs of more active dependent adults with a childcare program.

### **Plans for 2012-2013**

Once the needs assessment is disseminated widely and plans to respond to the needs are complete, sources of funding will be sought to develop the services articulated in the campus plan.