

# UCSC Childcare Access Policy

(Policy SA-0002)

## ***Part I: Introduction & Background***

### **A. UCSC Child Care Services Mission Statement**

The mission of Child Care Services is to promote access to higher education through provision of affordable, accessible, quality developmental child care for university parents. We assist parents to reach their educational and career goals; strengthen the recruitment, retention and graduation of students, particularly non-traditional underrepresented, and at-risk students; support faculty and staff recruitment, retention, diversity, and productivity; and support the university's research, teaching, and community service goals.

### **B. Principles Used in formulating Childcare Access Policy**

Three broad principles were agreed upon by the members of the CCAC Policy Subcommittee as we worked on the development of the campus access policy for childcare.

- *Policies should serve the best interests of the child* – In any decisions about childcare it is essential to consider the impact of these policy decisions on the experiences of the children and families involved. For example, children's emotional lives are harmed when their care-giving situation is constantly changing or when people they care about are suddenly absent. Therefore, we will propose policies that would strive to maintain continuity of care for the children served.
- *Policies should serve the child care needs of the university community* – Because the mission of childcare on campus is to serve the students and employees of the university, policy decisions will be geared toward maximizing the campus' ability to serve the needs of those who are currently affiliated with the campus as students, staff, and faculty.
- *Policies should recognize the different needs of the different members of the campus community* – Our goal is not to come up with a policy that is "one size fits all" in nature. Rather, we will strive to design policies that are sensitive to the varying requirements of the lives of parents who are students, faculty members, and university staff.

### **C. History of Child Care on UCSC Campus**

UCSC Child Care Services came into existence in 1976 with the original goal of providing child care services to the student population. The original program served families with 2 to 5 year olds. Family Student Housing offered a small school age

program during the academic year. In 1985 a year-round infant/toddler program for 3 to 36 month old children was added. In 2000 Child Care Services assumed responsibility for the well – established Family Student Housing School Age Program, serving families with 4.9 – 12 year olds and incorporated the previously vendor-operated Granary program serving families with 2 to 5 year olds. The Granary then became the 2 to 4 year old program and the Children’s Center became the Pre-K program. In 2003 the Children’s Center became a year-round program.

Originally the Children’s Center, Infant/Toddler, and School Program were for student families. The School Age Program served faculty and staff in their summer program only. Under the previous vendor, the Granary was the only facility that served faculty and staff families with an enrollment target of 1/3 faculty and staff, 1/3 student and 1/3community families. With the incorporation of the Granary, Child Care Services adopted the enrollment target of 1/3 faculty/staff and 2/3 students in all programs. Child Care Services has not served community families since 2003 due to the lack of space.

As far back as 1984, the need for additional child care space was recognized both on campus, and systemwide to support recruitment and retention of faculty and staff as well as to accommodate the increasing enrollment of student parents. With the rapid expansion of the campus population in recent years, the need for additional child care has become critical.

In 1986 the UC Office of the President made funds available to all of the campuses for new construction based on a report by a system-wide faculty welfare committee. UCSC administrators committed \$1 million and accepted a pledge of \$1 million in matching funds from OP for the addition of 100 new child care spaces. The campus drafted our first Program Planning Guide; however, due to the lack of additional funds the new facility has not been constructed.

To further address child care concerns system-wide, President Atkinson requested each campus establish a Child Care Advisory Committee (CCAC) to address campus-specific child care needs. In 2003, the UCSC Child Care Advisory Committee was established as a subcommittee of the Campus Welfare Committee.

At the time of the development of this access policy, childcare on the UCSC campus is in short supply, especially for faculty and staff, and especially for young children. Only 6 spaces are available on campus for children under 12 months, and only two of those are available to faculty or staff. Compared with the other UC campuses on which data are available, UCSC has the smallest number of spaces available to faculty and staff. Several UC campuses have moved ahead in making use of the matching funds from UCOP, yet our campus has not yet been able to secure the promised funds because plans for the new center have not be finalized. Childcare is a crucial factor in recruiting and retaining a diverse and gender-balanced faculty, staff, and student population. Recent surveys of UCSC faculty, staff, and graduate students demonstrate that our campus community sees new childcare spaces as an urgent priority for the campus, and that these views are held even by the majority of those who have not personal need for childcare themselves (see Appendices?) Our hope is that this access policy will be put to use as the campus makes a commitment to the creation of new child care spaces.

## D. Child Care Policy Development Process

The CCAC, a subcommittee of the Campus Welfare Committee, is made up of students, faculty and staff. It has been meeting monthly since its formation, establishing three subcommittees to address issues of: fund development, focused on raising funds for a new facility; communications, to conduct surveys on child care needs and views and raise campus consciousness on child care issues; and the policy subcommittee, working on this policy development.

Once the CCAC was formed, one of the first priorities was to develop an access policy. The policy subcommittee analyzed a variety of issues germane to the development of an access policy, i.e.:

- The best interests of a child.
- Various funding strategies available: California Department of Education grants, parents paying full fees, sliding fee scales, etc.
- Current and anticipated demand from the university community, students, faculty and staff, and visitors.
- Current and anticipated composition of childcare spaces available in each age range.
- Eligibility for both wait lists and enrollment.
- Possible allocation models for the various constituency groups.
- Similar models at other universities and businesses.

Significant research and effort was spent evaluating the campus's Housing Access Policy and we conferred with the Housing staff to determine criteria considered when drafting their policy. To an extent, the Housing Access Policy was used as an initial model for the Child Care Access Policy, however the two policies diverged because of the distinctive nature of child care.

## *Part II: Childcare Access Policies*

### A. Introduction

The Childcare Access Policies were established to provide UCSC campus constituencies with a clear understanding of Child Care and Early Education Services' policies and procedures. These policies are composed of a description of the child care wait list, enrollment, and leave of absence policies. Much of our child care funding comes from grants from the California Department of Education. The terms **grant-eligible** and **fee-for-service** are used throughout this document to distinguish between those families who are eligible to be funded by these grants and those who pay their own fees. Grant-eligible refers to a family who meets the income and need criteria as established by the terms and conditions of the grant for a subsidized child care space. Grant eligible families are assigned a rank based on state supplied criteria. Fee-for-service refers to a family who does not qualify for or chooses not to accept a grant subsidized space.

A key component of the Childcare Access Policies is the policy regarding enrollment access for the different members of the campus community. One overarching goal of the Childcare Access

Committee has been to work toward providing more access to childcare for faculty and staff, while also maintaining access for students. The proposal, therefore, is to move toward an Enrollment Access Policy whereby 50% of the available spaces are allocated to faculty and staff, while 50% are allocated to students, but to move gradually toward these percentages only as new childcare spaces are added to the campus. We return to this Enrollment Access Policy in Part I, Section D, after discussing policies regarding the wait list.

## **B. Wait List Policies**

The wait list was developed as a means to allocate available spaces fairly and equitably. It also allows CCEES to provide information about wait list placement to families. This information is complex, however, because of the specific requirements for deciding priority for grant-eligible families, and because of the fact that children on the waiting list get older and move in and out of eligibility for different classrooms. We attempt to clarify these complexities in the following sections.

### **1. Eligibility for the Wait List**

All UCSC campus employees and students are eligible to enter their name on the child care wait list, provided they meet both of the following criteria:

- a. The employee/student or their spouse is pregnant, is a custodial parent, or is a legal guardian, or has been approved as a foster or adoptive parent. (Foster and adoptive parents do not need to have a date for a child to be in their custody.)
- b. The employee or student is officially affiliated with the UCSC campus in one of the following four groups. New students and newly hired employees are eligible as follows:
  - **Non-Senate Academics:** Includes non-senate academic appointees as defined in APM 110, for example lecturers, librarians, post-doctoral and visiting researchers. Student academic titles are not included in this category. Eligible after receiving a year-long appointment of at least 50% time for 11-month titles, or an appointment for the three quarters of an academic year for 9-month titles that averages to at least 50% time.
  - **Senate Members:** Includes members of the Academic Senate as defined in APM 110. Eligible for the wait list after acceptance of an official offer of appointment.
  - **Staff:** Includes all career staff employees. Eligible after acceptance of an official offer of career appointment for 1 year or longer of at least 50% time.
  - **Students:** Graduate and Undergraduate students enrolled in courses or enrolled in an advanced degree program. Students are eligible when they apply to the University or are admitted to the GATE program.

### **2. Wait List Categories**

Parents are grouped into the following categories according to family income and UCSC campus affiliation. Families are included in all wait list categories which pertain to their UCSC campus affiliation and income level.

- a. Grant Eligible

- Grant Eligible Low income (as defined by grantor, e.g. State Department of Education) undergraduate and graduate students.
  - Grant Eligible Low income employees. These employees will be considered for spaces when the low income student wait list is exhausted. Their spaces will continue to be included in the faculty and staff allocation totals. (This priority for students may need to be dropped, however, pending the State's new Centralized Eligibility List.)
  - Child Protective Services referred families
  - Department of Education Preschool Grant for 3 & 4 year olds 3 hours per day
- b. Fee for Service
- Fee-for-service faculty and staff who pay the full fees
  - Fee-for-service (not grant-eligible) undergraduate and graduate students who pay the student rate, a reduced fee subsidized by student registration funding.

### 3 Criteria for Ranking of Wait Lists

- a. When considering filling an open space, the first criterion will be to choose either the Student list or the Faculty/Staff list; this decision is based on maintaining the 50/50 balance (or as close as possible to 50/50) for each age group.
- b. Once it is known whether the space will be a Student or Faculty/Staff space, the next question is whether there is room for a grant-eligible family.
- c. Different criteria are used to prioritize the families in the two wait list categories:
  - Grant eligible low income families are prioritized by need, as determined by state supplied rankings.
  - Fee-for-service families are prioritized by date of application for the wait list.
  - **However, because openings are specific to certain age groups and classrooms, a family's place on the relevant wait list may change as the children get older.**
- d. Within categories additional priority is given as follows:
  - Students taking 10 units or more and working toward a degree are prioritized before part time students.
  - Siblings of currently enrolled child(ren) are given priority
  - Previously enrolled child(ren) are given priority to re-enroll in the program. Applies to children enrolled for one academic year.
- e. To earn the full California Department of Education Grant, families who are eligible for grants are given priority over fee-for-service families when there is grant subsidy money available.
- f. Once a family is contacted regarding an open space, a meeting will be scheduled with the program coordinator. The program coordinator makes the final decision about placements, based on developmental appropriateness of the classroom situation for the child.

#### 4. Procedures for Wait List

After a family has applied to the wait list (B.1. *Eligibility*), they are grouped into categories based on their campus affiliation and family income. It is possible for a family to be placed in more than one category, depending on their campus affiliation (B.2 *Wait List Categories*). At the same time the family is also placed on the wait lists for the CCEES program which matches the age of the child (i.e. Infant/Toddler, Granary, Moon room, etc.).

A child's position on the wait list changes as the child ages and becomes eligible for a new program. Each time a space becomes available, an ordered list is generated from the wait list of children eligible for that space. Grant-eligible families are organized by their state-supplied ranking. Fee-for-service children are arranged by the date the family applied to the wait list. When a child becomes eligible for the next classroom, their place in the list of eligible children for a new space may be either higher or lower than their position had been for spaces in the previous classroom. For example, a child may have been at the top of the list for the Granary Moon room, but the list for the Granary Sun room could have children who have been on the waiting list for a longer time, resulting in that child "moving down" in priority. Another factor influencing position on the wait list is priority enrollment. Priority enrollment is extended to children who were previously enrolled in a CCEES program, or who have a sibling currently enrolled in a program (B.3 *Priority Enrollment*).

When a space becomes available CCEES determines which category applies to that space (faculty/staff vs. student and grant-eligible student vs. fee-for-service), using the allocation policies described in section C1. The wait list categories are examined to determine which child is next in line for a space. After a child is identified for an open space, the family is notified and a meeting is arranged with the program coordinator. If there is a fit between the child's developmental level and the classroom, the family is offered the space (C. *Enrollment*).

#### C. Enrollment

##### 1. Space Allocations

50% of spaces in each program are allocated for students, including both undergraduate and graduate students on the same list. The other 50% of spaces are allocated to non-senate academics, senate faculty and staff. Academic appointees and staff are included together on a single wait list.

##### 2. Accepting or Declining a Space

Before a space can be accepted, proof of campus affiliation must be provided. Documentation includes proof of enrollment (letter of acceptance, or valid and current student identification card), or proof of employment (valid and current identification card, pay stub, or letter of hire).

Program coordinators determine whether a family is offered a space, depending on the fit between the child's developmental level and the classroom where the space is available. Decisions may be appealed to the Director.

If the offer of a space is declined, the family may elect to remain on the wait list. A family will usually be removed from the wait list if they refuse or do not respond to three

offers. A family who has refused three offers may request to remain on the wait list, but will be moved to the end of the list and given a new application date.

### **3. Half-Day Spaces**

At the time a space is offered to a family, the family may request a half-day space (five days; either morning or afternoon). Though half-day spaces may be available in all programs there is a limited number, with a very limited number of half-day spaces available in the Infant and Toddler program.

## **D. Leave Policies**

### **1. A Leave from the University**

It is in the best interest of the child to keep enrollment as consistent as possible. However, Child Care and Early Education Services recognizes that some parents may need to take a leave from school or work for a variety of reasons. Child Care and Early Education Services endeavors to balance the needs of families with staffing, funding, and grant requirements. A prolonged leave presents funding challenges for both families and Child Care and Early Education Services.

When a currently enrolled parent goes on an official leave, they maintain their eligibility for campus child care. The leave of absence criteria for low-income grant-eligible families differs from those for fee-for-service families, and is governed by grant terms and conditions.

### **2. Options available during a leave**

A Family may request a leave from childcare while the parent is on a leave from the University, as long as the family continues to be affiliated with the university. Approval of these requests will be determined by Child Care and Early Education Services. For grant-eligible families, leave of absence may be granted as long as the leave does not conflict with grant terms and conditions.

- The child remains in attendance in the program while the family is on leave. The space is paid for by the family
- The child does not attend the program, the space is held, and the family continues to pay for the space during the leave
- The family withdraws the child and goes back on the wait list with the elevated priority of “previously enrolled”

## **E. Additional Considerations**

### **1. Loss of Eligibility**

Childcare eligibility ends on the last day of affiliation with the University. There is no “grace” period. Exceptions may be requested, see Section E-2.

### **2. Exceptions**

Requests for exceptions to policy (regarding fees, loss of eligibility, late fees, etc) can be made to the director, who has the authority to determine exceptions .

### 3. Appeals

A family may appeal the director's decision concerning their exception request to a review board (to be established by the Executive Director of Residential, Dining and Family Services) **The review board will consist of one student, one staff, and one faculty member.**

### 4. Change in parents' affiliation to the university

When the nature of a family's affiliation changes (for example, from student to staff), their childcare will continue under the new affiliation, even if this temporarily "over enrolls" their newly defined population. This is in keeping with the over arching principle that we consider what is best for the child.

Examples:

Family 1:

*A family of one student parent and one employee parent.* The family is enrolled in child care as a student family. The student-parent graduates. The family is now a faculty/staff family.

Family 2:

*A student parent.* The student graduates and accepts a job/appointment with UCSC. The family is now a faculty/staff family.

**5. On-going Policy Review and maintenance** The CCAC will review the child care access policy on a regular basis as needed or requested, and no less often than every three years.

### **Part III: Implementation**

Prior to release for campus-wide review and comment, the draft policy will be vetted by all appropriate entities.

The proposed change from the 2/3 student and 1/3 faculty/staff space allocation to the 50/50 allocation will be implemented as new spaces are added to established and/or proposed programs. New spaces will be allocated to faculty/staff until the program group reflects the 50/50 balance. Upon each occasion where new spaces are added, the allocation of spaces for each group will be re-evaluated to ensure there is no loss of spaces for students.

## Appendix I

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

This is a preliminary list of FAQs developed to respond to common questions regarding the Child Care Access Policy. More questions and answers will be incorporated based on input received during the comment period, and as part of subsequent review and maintenance of the Access Policy.

#### **1. When are we eligible for the wait list? How do I put my child on the Wait list?**

To place your child on the wait list you must be officially affiliated with the university. *See Part II B1, pages 4 and 5 for eligibility criteria.* Applications can be obtained in person or by mail. Currently we do not have applications available by e-mail.

#### **2. What is Fee for Service?**

Fee for Service refers to families who pay full tuition for child care. These are families who are not eligible for State Department of Education low-income child care assistance. *See Part II, B.2 Wait List Categories, page 5*

#### **3. What is grant eligible?**

Grant Eligible refers to families eligible for low-income child care support from the state department of education.

*See Part II, B.2 Wait List Categories, page 5*

#### **4. What is required to verify my family's eligibility for subsidized care?**

If you are offered a subsidized child care space you will be asked to set up an Intake Appointment. You will need to present all financial and income information. This will include paycheck stubs, financial aid letters, scholarship or fellowship letters, information on self-employment and bank statements as well as other sources not listed here. The State requires that all income sources must be documented.

*See Part II, B.2 Wait List Categories, page 5*

#### **5. Can I be on more than one wait list?**

Yes, you may qualify to be on more than one list. The fee you are charged is based on the wait list being used. For example: If your family is on both the Faculty/staff and Student Fee for Service wait lists, and you are offered a space allocated for Faculty/Staff and not from the Student Fee for Service spaces, you will be charged the Faculty/Staff rate.

*See Part II, B.4 Procedures for Wait list, page 6*

#### **6. I'm a staff (or faculty) member, why did my child's position on the wait list change from the last time I contacted Child Care Services?**

Faculty and Staff are sorted on the wait list according to the date of their application. A child's position on the wait list changes as they age and move from program to program due to the particular children in that age group and are re-ordered by date.

*See Part II, B.3.c. Criteria for Ranking of Wait Lists, page 5. and B.4 Procedures for Wait list, page 6*

**7. I'm a low-income student, why did another child move ahead of mine on the wait list?**

Low-income, grant eligible children are assigned a rank according to State of California, Department of Education guidelines. Spaces are offered based on this ranking, not on the length of time a child has been on the wait list.

*See Part II, B.3.c. Criteria for Ranking of Wait Lists, page 5*

**8. How many spaces are available for staff and faculty? How many in each program?**

Currently, students (including graduate students) receive approximately 70% of spaces, and staff and faculty receive approximately 30%. This ratio will change when additional spaces are added. At which time, the ratio will change to a 50-50 allocation between students and staff/faculty.

Age Group	Infant	Toddler	2-3yrs	3-4yrs	4-6yrs	K-6	Total	Allocation
Total Spaces	6	12	15	20	24	36	113	
Students	4	8	10	14	16	24	76	67%
Staff/Faculty	2	4	5	6	8	12	37	33%

*See Part II, A Introduction, page 4*

**9. What happens if I decline an available space?**

You may decline to take a space offered to you. You have the option of remaining on the wait list. If you refuse or do not respond to three offers you will be removed from the list unless you ask to remain on the wait list. In order to remain on the wait list after declining three offers, you will be assigned a new wait list date.

*Part II C.2 Accepting or Declining a Space, page 7*

**10. Are part-time spaces available and how do I get one?**

Preference is given to full time spaces, however, a limited number of half day spaces are available in most programs.

*See Part II C. 3 Half Day Spaces, page 7*

**11. What is priority enrollment?**

Priority enrollment is by date of child's original application. Subsidized children are covered by grant regulations. Siblings of currently enrolled children are given priority. This is a child care industry standard. Children who were previously enrolled, and are returning to the program are also given priority. For example, a child whose parent has been on a leave, would be granted priority enrollment.

*See Part II B.3.d. Priority Enrollment, page 6*