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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



If you spend any amount of time with me, you will know I love Star Trek, sewing, and superheroes. But, most of all, my beloved hero is Mr. Fred McFeely Rogers. In 1992, Mr. Rogers was asked to give the prayer at the commencement ceremony for Boston University. As he was introduced and stepped to the podium, the 5400 graduates stood up, whooped, shouted, and waved their caps. They suddenly broke into a long audience body wave that rippled through the

graduating class all the while chanting his name! Mr. Rogers, an ordained Presbyterian minister, stood there shyly. The stoic academics behind him unsure about and unprepared for the response from young adults who had clearly grown up watching and loving this man. As the cheering, chanting, and body wave continued, Fred Rogers wondered how he would ever calm the crowd enough to offer a prayer, all the while smiling and nodding at the graduates and their families. Finally, in a very quiet voice he leaned into the microphone and asked, "Will you sing with me?" To which the crowd erupted again into cheers. Finally, he softly began. "It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood." To which all the graduates locked arms and began swaying and singing with this humble, influential man. His prayer that day was simple, yet as profound as his life work and message, thank you for our families, thank you for our friends and our teachers and bless these graduates to influence the world for good; as their families, friends, and teachers have done.

I have loved Mr. Rogers from a very early age. His message and work shaped my entire life: Love your "neighbors" near and far; learn all you can; treat the earth with respect; be kind, always; but most of all, treat children with love and respect, teach them early and teach them well.

As I look back on the work of those working in CCFR and UKids Child Care Programs who are striving to create a nurturing and stimulating environment for children, I couldn't be more proud. They have worked tirelessly to help children and their parents feel safe, loved, and inspired to explore their full potential and to foster a neighborhood of learning for children and their student-parents.

One of the highlights of the year has been to focus on adaptability and resilience. The world around us constantly evolves, and our ability to embrace change has allowed us to meet the unique challenges and opportunities that arouse. Together we have navigated through uncertain times and emerged stronger, always putting the well-being of children at the forefront of our decisions. It is heartwarming to see children, parents, and staff develop meaningful friendships and skills that will serve them in future endeavors. Mr. Rogers would be very proud, and so am I.

Warm Regards, Shauna Lower

"What really matters is helping others win, too, even if it means slowing down and changing our course now and then." Mr. Rogers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Primary Purpose

The Center for Child Care and Family Resources (CCFR) strives to support the goals of Student Affairs at the U of U by helping studentfamilies in the quest for enrolling, persisting, and graduating from the University. CCFR endeavors to align their goals and activities to allow student-families with young children to attend their classes, study, work, and rest.

Mission

The mission of CCFR is to support and coordinate information, program development, and services that enhance family resources as well as the availability, affordability, and quality of child care for University families and patients. We are committed to providing inclusive support that promotes positive change and engagement with individual families.

Child Care Subsidies for Student-Families

CCAMPIS and Middle-Income subsidies pay child care fee directly to child care programs on behalf of student-parents to alleviate the high cost of care. Both CCAMPIS and Middle Income subsidies play a crucial role in promoting educational opportunities for studentparents. By easing the financial burden of child care, these subsidies enable student-parents to balance their academic responsibilities with their parenting duties, increasing the likelihood of academic success and graduation.

Parent Night Out

Student-parents have the immense responsibility of balancing their studies with parenting duties. By offering Parent Night Out child care this allows them to take a break and recharge, to get some rest and relaxation. Thus, enabling them to better focus on their own well-being, reducing stress and improving mental health.

We offer quality child care, qualified staff, <u>free</u> of charge, alternating at our two student child care programs, UKids Presidents Circle and UKids East Village one Saturday every month.









Finals Week

Finals Week child care provided by CCFR in collaboration with ASUU and UKids Presidents Circle designed to support studentparents who have the additional responsibility of caring for their children while preparing for and taking their final exams. This service provides them with free child care during the stressful finals week, enabling them to focus on their studies without the added burden of worrying about their children's well-being. Student-parents can dedicate more time and attention to their studies, improving their chances of performing well during final exams.

Diaper Bank

Affordable child care and housing is not the only financial burden that student-parents face while pursuing their educational goals. Small needs for their children such as food, diapers, and baby wipes become a balancing act as well. Juggling the costs of education, living expenses, and child care can be particularly challenging making it difficult for them to afford essentials like diapers. CCFR provides a free diaper bank for student-parents who may be struggling to afford an adequate supply for their young children. One time per month, student-parents can pick up a supply of diapers, wipes, and formula for their infants and toddlers.

Early Childhood Education Intern Students

CCFR collaborates with The Department of Family and Consumer to provide Early Childhood Education Internships at three UKids Child Care Programs. The internship is an invaluable opportunity for students to gain practical experience in ECE and apply their classroom learning in a real-world setting. The students have a chance to observe and assist experienced teachers, participate in classroom activities, interact with children and their families, and learn about the various aspects of ECE. In offering our classrooms as student learning environments we are bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, fostering a new generation of competent and confident early childhood educators.







STATUS OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Child Care Subsidies for Student-Parents

The Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) and Middle Income subsidies are two forms of assistance designed to support student-parents in paying for child care expenses while they pursue their educational goals at the University of Utah. CCAMPIS is a federal program, offered through the US Department of Ed., which provides funding to CCFR to offer child care services and subsidies to income eligible student-parents. These subsides can significantly alleviate the financial burden of child care costs, enabling student-parents to focus on their studies without worrying about the well-being and care of their children. Secondly, Middle-Income subsidy is provided through ASUU funding and revenue through CCFR to target student-parents who



fall outside the specific income bracket. These subsidies aim to bridge the gap for families who do not qualify for CCAMPIS but still face significant financial challenges in paying for child care services. By providing financial support for child care expenses, Middle Income Subsidies make higher education more accessible for student-parents, allowing them to pursue their academic goals while ensuring their children receive quality, on-site care.

In July 2022 a new request for grant proposal was released by the US Department of Ed. The CCFR director, Shauna Lower, successfully wrote for an obtained a new 4 year CCAMPIS grant. The additional CCAMPIS grant funds has enabled us to hire 4 full-time teachers which has made a significant impact on our student child care programs, UKids Presidents Circle and UKids East Village. It allows the child care programs to improve the quality of care and education they provide to the children without raising the cost of care to the student-parents.

Furthermore, \$75,826.97 was distributed to child care programs on behalf of 40 student-families to support access to quality child care service for 50 children. This financial assistance will not only relieve some of the financial burden for the families but also allow the parents to focus on their educational goals while knowing their children are well taken care of. To enhance the CCAMPIS, our Middle-Income subsidy provided \$7,250 to 6 student-families who otherwise would not qualify for low-income eligibility, however because of high costs of going to school and raising a family, still find it difficult to pay for the high cost of care.

Overall, the allocation of the CCAMPIS and Middle-Income subsidy funds has been highly effective in enhancing both the child care programs and the educational pursuits of the student-parents.

Name of Center	# of CCAMPIS Awards	Amount of CCAMPIS Award
UKids East Village (Student Program)	22	\$35,109.60
UKids Guardsman Way	4	\$3,830.05
UKids Presidents Circle (Student Program)	11	\$16,453.38
BioKids	2	\$5,687.50
Off-Campus	1	\$14,746.44
Total	40	\$75,826.97

Student Child Care

In order to improve our student-parent educational outcomes and persistence to graduation CCFR operates two student child care programs, UKids East Village and UKids Presidents Circle to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children while their parents or guardians pursue their educational goals. Our primary focus is supporting student-families by offering specialized child care programs tailored to the unique needs of students.

We can do this in a number of ways:



Flexible scheduling: We understand that student schedules can vary significantly due to classes, exams, and other academic commitments. To accommodate, we offer flexible child care scheduling options that align with the parents' class schedules



Enriching Curriculum: Our child care programs are designed to provide a stimulating and enriching environment for children. We incorporate ageappropriate educational activities and play to encourage learning and development while the parents focus on their studies



Supportive Community: We foster a sense of community among studentfamilies within our child care programs and help them find their people. By connecting parents with other student-parents, they can share experiences and support each other in their educational journeys



Qualified Staff: Our staff are trained professional who have experience in early childhood education. They create a supportive and caring atmosphere, ensuring children receive the attention and care they need during their time at our facilities. They are also mentors to those who are in ECE programs who are learning to work with young children in the field.



Communication and Involvement: We maintain open lines of communication with parents to ensure that their child's needs are met and to address any concerns or questions they may have. We also encourage parent involvement in our programs to strengthen the bond between the family and center.



Access to Resources: As part of our commitment to supporting educational goals, we provide access to resources and information that may be helpful for student-parents, such as parenting workshops, educational materials, and referrals to additional support services if needed.

UKids East Village

Located in the East Village Community Center, UKids East Village (EV) provides care based on a full-day model. Student-parents may enroll their children for two, three, four, or five full days per week. EV's hours of operation are 7:00 am - 6:00 pm, M-F. EV is licensed for 60 child slots ages 6 weeks - 5 years, however the



center is not running at capacity due to a teacher shortage. A full 3+ classroom is closed due to an unfilled teacher position.



UKids Presidents Circle

Located in the Alfred Emery Building, UKids Presidents Circle (PC) provides part-time care for student-parents on a "block care" system. Student-parents enroll their children in two-hour blocks throughout the day and week according to their semester schedules. Parents can enroll for up to 24 hours or



12 blocks per week. PC's hours of operation are 7:00 am - 7:00 pm, closed every semester break. Parents must enroll every semester. Licensed capacity for part-time child slots is 52 at one time.



Throughout the academic year, CCFR in conjunction with the two student child care programs partner with Utah Community Action/Early Head Start as part of a nationwide child care alliance. Early Head Start allocates funds to cover the wages and benefits of full-time teachers in two infant classrooms, accommodating a total of 16 children. Additionally, EHS supplies diapers, food, and social services for the 16 student-families. UKids Child Care Programs provides the physical space, hires the teachers, and ensues compliance with health, safety, and quality standards by providing the quality child care to the children. This collaboration gained national recognition for being among the first of its kind in the country.

By having regular access to on-campus child care, and making it affordable for student-parents has contributed to the overall well-being of student-parents. In a survey conducted in April 2023, they share they can attend their classes, participate in study groups, as well as engage in self-care activities, hobbies, and exercise, all of which contribute to their school-life balance. However, a nationwide teacher shortage has continued to affect our child care programs. We have struggled to find qualified staff to fill the vacancies. Currently we have three classrooms that are completely empty because of unfilled teacher positions. In March 2023, CCFR raised the base-wage for BA qualified teachers to \$18.00 per hour. This has helped with the pool of candidates, however, we are still running at a deficit. As we continue to recruit and retain qualified staff, we have been working on a professional development system as well.

CRCL Professional Development Standard

To continue to recognize and reward our teachers and caregivers who actively participate in training and demonstrate a commitment to professional development we began to plan for an internal career ladder system to incentivize staff to further their skills and knowledge. The Child Care Retention and Continuum of Learning (CRCL) is a dynamic professional development incentive program meticulously crafted to foster employee retention by promoting continuous growth and learning within the realm of early childhood education (ECE). This innovative initiative provides a monetary incentive to employees upon the successful completion of trainings encompassing eight distinct areas of expertise in ECE. Comprehensive training resources are made available across multiple platforms, ensuring accessibility and convenience. By nurturing the development of a knowledgeable and dedicated teaching staff, CRCL aspires to enhance the quality of care offered, cultivating an environment of continuity and expertise that ultimately benefits the children entrusted to their care.

CRCL is due to be rolled out to staff August 19, 2023 at our Summer Celebration retreat.



Health and Safety Trainer

We recognize that finding and retaining qualified professional teachers and staff is key to success of the UKids Child Care Programs. Investing in training programs that provide pre and in-service training is a major priority for CCFR. It significantly enhances the skills and knowledge of our teachers and staff, leading to quality care and better learning outcomes for children, as well as better communication and relationships with parents and other staff members.

A specific pre and in-service health and safety curriculum has long been a requirement for the Utah Child Care Licensing regulations. Each center administrator has struggled to provide initial training and keep staff up-to-date on current licensing regulations and teaching strategies. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a CANVAS training was developed for staff to complete at home. We found that staff were spending a wide range of times on the training from 10 minutes to 20 hours. The training both pre and in-service was timed at 6-8 hours. In addition, there were varying learning results.

Our goal was to hire a Health and Safety Trainer who would on-board and provide on-going required training in a more congruent fashion. In September 2022 we hired a Health and Safety Trainer who had been a teacher with CCFR/UKids for 4 years. Upon her hire she immediately updated the CANVAS training and provided a series of quizzes and tests which staff need to pass with a 75% rating. She began requiring new hires train in our main CCFR office with her there to answer questions and identify individual learning outcomes. Her training of new hires began the end of October 2022. We immediately saw an improvement in new staff behaviors when they started in the classroom for the first time. New teachers had developed skills and learned techniques that were not demonstrated prior to the one-on-one training. The in-person training insured that all new staff were spending the required amount of time on their training, were passing their quizzes and tests by the 75% requirement or were being re-trained by Mallory and retaking the tests if the minimum score was not obtained the first time. Also, Mallory was present to walk them through the more complex portions of their job, such as electronic documentation and recording. 52 new employees have been trained with a total of 331.75 hours of training completed thus far.

Month	New Hires	Hours of Training
October 2022	2	6.25
November 2022	5	43.25
December 2022	6	46.5
January 2023	7	56
February 2023	13	69.5
March 2023	4	27
April 2023	6	35.75
May 2023	5	21.5
June 2023	4	26
Total	52	331.75

By January 2023, with on-boarding in place, CCFR administration began to assess the on-going training that was in place. Much like the pre-service, the in-service regulatory and quality training options needed to improve. While we are in the early stages of this assessment. She is working to create an assessment and training program that will identify the specific training requirements, what are the existing strengths of our program, the areas that need improvement, and what will be the training delivery methods. In the meantime, we needed to continue to deliver on-going training, therefore she revised the new employee training to accommodate the regulatory needs for our in-

service providers and we required everyone complete that training on CANVAS in March 2023. We also required the stipulation that everyone pass the tests by 75%. Because of child care licensing requirement we needed a 100% completion rate. By April 2023 the Health and Safety Trainer was able to confirm that completion for 110 staff members.

By prioritizing pre-service and in-service training and by hiring a dedicated Health and Safety Trainer, we have taken a significant step toward attracting, developing and retaining qualified teachers and caregivers who will provide high quality care and education for the children, providing peace of mind for parents so they can attend classes and achieve their educational goals.



MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Resource and Referral Services

CCFR plays a crucial role in supporting the university's faculty, staff, and students by offering a comprehensive range of valuable services. One of the key services provided by CCFR is assisting with child care referrals, helping individuals find suitable child care facilities located conveniently near campus or even in their residential areas. This service proves to be an invaluable resource for those seeking reliable and safe child care options.

Moreover, the dedicated counselors at CCFR go above and beyond to ensure personalized attention and guidance for every individual. They offer one-on-one consultations via Zoom or in-person, tailoring their approach to the specific needs and preferences of each person seeking assistance. These consultations are thoughtfully designed to address any concerns, answer questions, and provide comprehensive information about the available options and other resources. During each consult, which typically lasts about 45 minutes, the counselors delve into the details to match the unique requirements of the families with the best fitting solutions.





Parent Night Out

Student-parents find it difficult to balance not only the financial needs of attending school and raising a family, but also the social and mental strains it places on them. Balancing studies with parenting duties can be overwhelming and very isolating at times. Parent Night Out, and in some cases Parent Day Out, can provide student-parents the gift of time, relaxation, and release from stress. Having uninterrupted time away from child caregiving duties can provide a student-parent time to engage in hobbies, exercise or pursue other leisurely activities.

CCFR, in collaboration with ASUU and UKids Student Child Care Programs, offers a Parent Night Out (PNO) for student-parents one Saturday every month. The service is provided free of charge. Children are cared for at one of the student child care programs, UKids East Village or UKids Presidents Circle, by their qualified staff. In December and June a Parent Day Out is scheduled. This gives parents the opportunity to shop or participate in activities that may not be available during the 5:30-9:30 evening hours. During the 2022-23 academic year, 169 families participated in PNO. Staff cared for 287 children ages 6 weeks to 10 years old. Student-parents have reported that having regular access to free child care during PNO contributes to their overall well-being.



Finals Week

CCFR through a partnerships with ASUU and UKids Presidents Circle has been providing free child care during finals week for 18 years. This initiative showcases a commitment of the CCFR office to the well-being and success of student-parents, by recognizing the unique needs of parenting students and promoting a supportive and inclusive campus environment. By offering support and care for their children during a crucial time like finals week, we can ease the burden specific to parenting students but actively contribute to their academic success. Being able to focus on their exams and coursework without worrying about child care can make a huge difference in their ability to perform well in their studies.

All student-parents, regardless of enrollment in an on-campus child care program, can participate in Finals Week care. Pre-registration is required in order to plan for teaching staff, but remains completely free for student-parents. During the 2022-23 academic year, 87 families participated in the service, 103 children between the ages of 6 weeks and 6 years received care.

87 families 103 children 97% Extremely participated 6 weeks-6 yrs. Satisfied

UKids Guardsman Way

Located at 545 Guardsman Way, UKids Guardsman Way (GW) is the largest child care program on campus. It can serve up to 125 children of university families. GW accepts children 6 weeks-6 years old throughout 10 separate classrooms. Those classrooms include three infant rooms, three toddler rooms, three preschool rooms, and a private kindergarten.



In the past, GW has primarily focused on providing child care services to children of faculty and staff. However, a new student scale fee has been implemented and 16 slots are reserved specifically for student-parents. This initiative reflects a commitment to supporting student-parents and recognizes the importance that child care has on their academic pursuits while also meeting their family responsibilities. By offering child care services specifically aimed at student-parents, CCFR and GW acknowledges the unique challenges that student-parents face and seeks to create an environment that fosters academic success while catering to the needs of the whole family. This approach can contribute to a more inclusive and supportive campus community. Student-parents can form social groups connected with their children in specific age groups, meet while attending parent/child activities, and bond of shared experiences. The child care programs are uniquely poised on campus to help student-parents find their people, passion, and purpose.





UKids Health Centers

In August 2022, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) child care task force completed a site visit of UKids South Jordan in order to gain a better understanding of the procedures involved in providing drop-in child care within a healthcare setting. While there might be other instances of drop-in care during healthcare visits across the nation, the child care series offered at the University of Utah health clinics stood out as an exemplary model. The Program Coordinator presented this procedural model to the group of VA representatives.

Impressed by the presentation, the VA decided to adopt the University's drop-in child care model as the basis for implementing similar services in over 170 of their healthcare facilities across the United States. Their goal was to have up to 85 of these units operational by the end of 2023. The VA expressed their admiration for the UKids Child Care operation, "touting it across the United States as the model to strive towards."

To ensure the success of this initiative, the VA collaborated with a team of researchers from Duke University. In June 2023, the Duke Research team visited South Jordan and spent an hour with the UKids South Jordan team, collecting qualitative data from the health center to inform their own model. During the visit, the UKids South Jordan team emphasized the complimentary aspects of their services, the innovative approach to providing high-quality care in drop-in format, and the increasing demand for child care in unconventional settings to support working families.

The collaborations and success of this program between UHealth Clinics and the three UKids Health Drop-In Child Care Centers is important to the mission of CCFR as the program generate \$50,000 of revenue per year that is used to fund Middle-Income subsidy to help student-parents pay for child care.



MAJOR CHALLENGES

Staffing

Hiring and retaining our child care staff continues to be a major challenge and concern for our department. The ability to attract and retain qualified staff is essential for maintaining our high-quality of care standard and meeting the demand of child care services on campus. This challenge is not unique to the child care programs at the University, but is a crisis facing the nation as a whole. This issue has several overarching reasons that are industry wide. We are trying to address several of them as outlined below. However, we are not likely to overcome most of these challenges in the near future with the current resources available to our department.

Shortage of Qualified Staff

One of the primary issues facing the child care industry is a shortage of qualified staff. Child care centers often struggle to find and hire individuals with the necessary qualifications, such as early childhood education degrees or relevant certifications. This shortage can lead to increased workloads for existing staff, compromised quality of care, and difficulties in meeting accreditation requirements.

To address this issue, CCFR is participating in an Early Childhood Education Internship Program in collaboration with the Department of Family and Consumer Studies. Qualified interns in the child development program are placed in our UKids Child Care Programs and under the direction of and experienced educator and given lead responsibilities in early childhood classrooms. Student interns participate in classroom activities, interact with children and their families, and learn the various aspects of the early care and education field. These experiences help the student intern develop skills such as effective communication, classroom management techniques, and understanding child development. Often times, the child care programs hire the student interns as qualified full-time teachers.



Low Compensation

Child care workers and early educators are typically paid low wages compared to other professions with similar educational requirements. The low compensation levels make it challenging to attract and retain talented individuals in the field.

Of course, increasing funding to the child care programs would seem the best solution to increased wages. During the pandemic and subsequent years, federal and state governments have offered sustainability grants to child care programs including all three UKids Child Care Programs on campus. This allowed for two bonus payments and the increase in wages for all teaching and caregivers. However, grant funds are to be discontinued in September 2023. Without the sustainability grant funds, parent tuition rates will need to be increased substantially to sustain the increased wages that were implemented during the previous year.

High Staff Turnover

Due to the combination of low pay and demanding work conditions, the child care sector experience high staff turnover rates. Frequent turnover disrupts the continuity of care and hampers the establishment of strong relationships between staff, children, and families. It also places an additional burden on remaining staff members who must constantly adapt to new team members and pick up added duties as staff members leave.

While some of our child care staff have remained at UKids, a survey in May 2023 shows that well over 2/3^{rds} of the UKids child care staff have worked 1 year or less. We continue to work diligently on training, professional development, and staff moral to retain qualified, professional staff.



Lack of Professional Development Opportunities

Professional development is crucial for maintaining high-quality child care practices. However, limited access to ongoing training and development opportunities is a significant concern in the industry. Insufficient funding and resources as well as time away from caregiving duties for professional development programs hinder the ability of child care staff to enhance their skills, stay updated with best practice, and advance their careers.

Over the past year, our department has made significant progress in creating a comprehensive professional development plan. The introduction of a Health and Safety Trainer and onboarding process, along with the implementation of in-service training, a mentor/coaching training program, and the initiation of a career ladder system, have set a solid foundation for the growth of our PD plan. We are now preparing to launch this new program. However, we are aware that addressing time away from caregiving duties and refining delivery methods will remain the primary challenges for our developing system.

Rising Costs

As the cost of living continues to rise and inflation affects the overall economy, our child care programs are feeling the effects of those increases. Utility, food, and regulatory fees are just a few of the expenses that are rapidly growing. In addition, the rising cost of wage and benefits in an industry that operates on very small margins, has made the operation of the UKids Child Care Programs very difficult. With the end of federal and state sustainability funds from the COVID-19 pandemic ending in September 2023, the increasing operational costs of a quality early care and educational program will need to be passed on to parents through increased child care fees. Current tuition rates for student-parents are already at record high levels and with the high demand for the available child care spaces, student-parents are facing significant financial and accessibility challenges. This makes it critical to find subsidy funds to help student-parents pay for the ever increasing child care tuition that helps support quality child care. CCFR will continue to advocate for student-family friendly initiatives and funding that make it possible for parenting students to enroll, persist, and graduate from the University of Utah. Our goal is to remove child care and raising a family as a barrier to earning their degree.

New/Continuing Strategic Initiatives

New Name

- Rebrand the department to Student Parent Support Center with same goals.
 - New mission: We support student well-being and success by removing barriers, creating inclusive, supportive environments and empowering student-parents and their families.
 - New vision: Our vision is for student-parents to discover their passion, people, and purpose by providing inclusive spaces and resources to help them successfully balance the demands of parenting while furthering their education.

Early Childhood Educator Interns

- Continue to collaborate with Family and Consumer Studies to offer real world early childhood education internships.
 - Certify three of our master teachers in nation-wide coaching program through Weber State training program to be better equipped to mentor interns.

CRCL

- Implement CRCL with current child care teachers and caregivers.
 - Roll-out of new program begins August 19, 2023.

Student Parent Support Services

- Increase family centers activities throughout the semester.
 - o one family centered activity per semester,
 - Family movie night, a trunk or treat, and spring family picnic.