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# The Time to Act Is Now: Addressing the Challenges of Being a Student, Staff, or Faculty Member at DU While Also Being a Parent to Young Children

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## The Time to Act Is Now: Addressing the Challenges of Being a Student, Staff, or Faculty Member at DU While Also Being a Parent to Young Children

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# **THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW**

**Addressing the challenges of being a student,  
staff or faculty member at DU while also being a  
parent to young children**

**Elinor Brereton, editor**

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The study was designed and coordinated by Spring 2018 Applied Anthropology's students, under the supervision of Alejandro Cerón, course instructor. Elinor Brereton, graduate student, coordinated much of the work and gave it intellectual coherence. Study design, data collection, analysis and report writing were carried out by the students who took the class as part of the course requirements. Students were organized in the following groups:

PREVIOUS EFFORTS: Andrew Bair, Jeneba Berety, Shailyn Lineberry, and Owen McDevitt.

"THE FISHER PROBLEM": Madison Sussmann, Dylan Atkins and Carolyn Kemp.

INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES: Aimee Spencer, Brooke Connelly, Alya Garrison-Ahmed and Funmilayo Olukemi.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS: Kassandra Neiss, Kirsten Fetrow, Rebecca Kelley, and Sophie Van Den Handel.

CHILDCARE OPTIONS: Grace Going, Elizabeth Gouin, Blaise Van Brunt and Margaret Wolf.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The growing number of undergraduate and graduate students who are simultaneously raising children while attending school requires the attention of institutions that want to support their students through the completion of their intended program. Compared to traditional students, these students have greater time and financial restraints, lower graduation rates, and require accommodation, support, and resources to help them maintain their academic standing. This issue is not isolated to just students however. Staff and faculty at academic institutions are also balancing their family and work responsibilities. With an increase in the number of households where one or two adults work full time, more institutional employees are having to negotiate issues of childcare, parental leave, and the ways in which their family responsibilities are perceived by colleagues and employers.

In 2017, it was found that many DU community members were struggling with issues of childcare, a child friendly environment at work, and institutional policies related to childcare at the University. These findings led to a study, conducted by the Applied Anthropology class of 2018, aimed at identifying solutions and recommendations for the aforementioned challenges. The study was exploratory and utilized mixed qualitative data collection and analysis methods. The class conducted interviews, surveys, and archival research and used thematic analysis techniques to identify overarching themes that informed the findings and suggestions of this project. Through this research three major needs were identified: clear communication of policies, accommodations for students, and on-site day care.

Respondents from this and previous studies at DU identified that classroom policies, policies regarding parental leave, available childcare, and Fisher were being communicated either ineffectively or inaccurately. This has led to confusion, frustration, feelings of job insecurity, and unmet expectations regarding what resources and support DU actually offers parents. There is also a lack of policies in place for student parents, which makes creating schedules and fulfilling academic requirements more challenging for these nontraditional students. The most significant issue identified however was the lack of childcare at DU and the desire for an on-site daycare center. Respondents explained that Denver has a limited number of available, convenient, and affordable daycare options, that Fisher is not meeting their needs, and that they would like to see a facility designed specifically for DU students, staff, and faculty.

In response to these challenges, this study suggests the assemblage and dissemination of accurate and clearly communicated childcare related policies, the creation of policies for

student parents, and an on-site daycare facility for the DU community. Research and efforts to understand and alleviate these challenges have occurred at DU since the 1970s, and many of the identified needs and desired solutions have not changed over the past fifty years. However, because previous efforts have been powered by those in need of services, the momentum behind each effort has inevitably dissolved. A way to accomplish and sustain these suggestions and actively work towards making DU a more child and family friendly campus is by creating a permanent employee position at DU to handle these issues. This would help centralize information and policies, assist with their clear communication, and focus consistent and sustainable efforts towards helping DU students, staff, and faculty balance their work and family life.

# INTRODUCTION: THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

by Elinor Brereton

In the United States, 4.8 million students are raising dependent children while pursuing their education (Gault et al. 2014). This is over a quarter of all undergraduate students, and of this number only 33% attain their desired degree (Gault et al. 2014). The growing number of undergraduate and graduate students who are simultaneously raising children while attending school requires the attention of institutions that want to support their students through the completion of their intended program. These students often have greater time and financial restraints than traditional students and require accommodation, support, and resources to help them maintain their academic standing (Gault et al. 2014). As student demographics change, institutions will continue to see greater numbers of diverse students, including those with young children. Addressing this challenge will increase institutions' abilities to retain, attract, and support these students in a way that promotes education as well as a healthy work/life balance. This issue is not isolated to just students however. Staff and faculty at academic institutions are also balancing their family and work responsibilities. With an increase in the number of households where one or two adults work full time, more institutional employees are having to negotiate issues of childcare, parental leave, and the ways in which their family responsibilities are perceived by colleagues and employers (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006, Hochschild 2013).

In 2017, it was found that many DU community members were struggling with issues of childcare, a child friendly environment at work, and institutional policies related to childcare at the University (Cerón et al 2017). These findings led to a study, conducted by the Applied Anthropology class of 2018, aimed at identifying solutions and recommendations for the aforementioned challenges. To address the project, the class was divided into five separate groups: Policies, Child Friendly Environment, Childcare, Fisher, and Previous Efforts. These five groups were made up of fourteen undergraduates, six graduate students, and one course instructor. The study was exploratory and utilized mixed qualitative data collection and analysis methods. The groups conducted interviews, surveys, and archival research and used thematic analysis techniques to identify overarching themes that informed the findings and suggestions of this project. Three of the groups (Policies, Child Friendly Environment, and Childcare) focused on the needs identified by DU students, staff, and faculty, while the Previous Efforts and Fisher groups focused on understanding why adequate responses to these challenges have failed in the past.

The Policy group identified that poor communication of institutional policies was a significant challenge for DU parents. A frequent complaint was that the Fisher Early Learning Center was being advertised both online and during the hiring process as a DU daycare center, when it's actual mission is to equally serve the DU and larger Denver community through a lottery system, making enrollment challenging. Other issues of communication included classroom policies, policies regarding parental leave, and available childcare. From a survey conducted for this study on primarily undergraduate students, only 14% thought policies regarding students with children were clear. This impacts students' ability to select classes that may or may not have more lenient policies regarding classroom attendance and absences. Several respondents also identified the current online information as confusing, hard to find, and inaccurate. This miscommunication led to frustration regarding what exactly DU offered parents as resources and support. Finally, though DU's parental leave policies are generous when compared to other institutions, some respondents identified feelings of job insecurity when utilizing this type of leave due to inconsistencies between departments regarding their level of child/family friendliness.

The Child Friendly Environment group focused on the opinions of undergraduate students regarding their classroom environment and identified responses from staff and faculty about their departments. The group surveyed a classroom of undergraduate students to explore how they perceived their peers and instructors with children and what their level of comfortability would be having more children on campus as well as in the class room. The majority supported their peers in need of accommodation and were responsive to the idea of making DU a more child friendly institution. Those staff and faculty who discussed the friendliness of their department said that when departments were supportive, it made their ability to balance work and life much easier. However, for those who felt that their department, or the University in general, was not child friendly, they were impacted by feelings of job insecurity, inability to attend evening meetings, and feelings of guilt when family related emergencies detracted from their work responsibilities. Of the issues identified however, a lack of childcare on campus was overwhelming the most frequently mentioned.

The Childcare group discovered that a significant proportion of respondents identified the lack of childcare at DU as an issue, and on-site daycare as a desired solution. Respondents explained that Denver has a limited number of available, convenient, and affordable daycare options, that Fisher is not meeting their needs, and that they would like to see a facility designed specifically for DU students, staff, and faculty. This imagined facility was described as providing full time, part time, summer, evening, and drop-in services. Especially with the increase of parents who work or attend school full time, the cost of daycare and its availability in general are now serious decision factors for students and employees as to

whether they can continue their academic and professional lives. Several respondents identified the cost of community daycare as being comparable to their regular paycheck, and that it may be more cost effective to stay at home and care for their child full time.

These three groups identified that many DU parents felt that institutional policies either did not exist or were not communicated effectively, that the level of friendliness found in classrooms and departments impacted parents' abilities to balance their work and family responsibilities, and that the lack of on-site childcare was a significant issue. These needs are consistent with the needs recorded in surveys and previous efforts regarding childcare that date back to the 1970s at DU.

The Previous Efforts and Fisher groups focused on these consistently identified needs by researching the origins of Fisher, historical efforts at DU, and why no adequate response has ever been permanently articulated to address these concerns. They discovered through archival research and interviews that efforts aimed at addressing the challenges of maintaining a work/life balance specifically regarding childcare have been addressed at the University of Denver as far back as the 1970s. The first group, the Committee for Women on Campus, started in 1974. This group identified similar issues to those identified in the 2017 report and made several recommendations to the University. Though some of these recommendations were implemented, after a financial crisis at DU in the 1980s, they were later dissolved. Similar efforts were made throughout the 80s and 90s until 1996, when the Women's Coalition reignited efforts and piloted a proposal for an on-campus daycare center, later to be known as the Fisher Early Learning Center. Though it was proposed as a solution for students, staff, and faculty at DU, it was actualized as something to be shared with the greater Denver community. Resulting from the efforts of the Women's Coalition, Fisher was opened in 2000 and while its mission statement clearly describes it as a place for both DU community members and the larger Denver community, it is still often presented to new employees as a DU daycare center. Sharing the facility with the community at large, as well as the arbitrary lottery system, made enrollment unattainable for 80% of the participants in this study, negating Fisher as the solution to childcare on campus at DU. The miscommunication surrounding Fisher has led to unmet expectations and frustrations for students, staff, and faculty. In 2006 another task force was created which presented then Chancellor Robert Coombe with several recommendations, some of which have been implemented, though with limited success. These previous efforts over the past fifty years at the University of Denver show what a consistent, serious, and complicated challenge this is, how difficult permanent solutions are, and how much it requires institutional attention.

These findings have led to several suggested solutions for the University to better support its community. The first being a clear, consistent message regarding parental leave policies and family related policies in general. This includes making the information more accessible, consistent, and accurate online, as well as establishing policies for undergraduate and graduate students who may need to take parental leave or have other accommodations regarding their schedule. These accommodations may include allowing students with children to have priority registration for classes and increasingly the availability of more flexible class schedules. The second recommendation is to create an on-site daycare facility. Respondents going back from the initial survey in 1974 identified this as a desired solution and the need remains today. Especially because of the lack of other childcare resources throughout Denver, an on-site facility for DU would provide parents with an invaluable resource. This facility should provide a wide range of services that focuses exclusively on the DU community.

A way to accomplish both of these suggestions and actively work towards making DU a more child and family friendly campus is by creating a permanent employee position at DU to handle these issues. Because previous efforts have been grass-root movements, powered by those in need of services, the momentum behind each effort has inevitably dissolved. Creating a permanent position at the University of Denver to centralize, organize, and communicate childcare related policies, and propose and design solutions such as student schedule accommodations and on-site childcare for all DU parents would effectively sustain these efforts and put an end to the cycle of task forces and coalitions. In order to maintain its competitiveness, DU must retain and expand its outstanding staff, faculty, and student body by providing resources and support for those that need it most. Improving DU's ability to accommodate nontraditional students and staff and faculty balancing work and family life ensures DU's commitment to inclusive excellence and its strategic initiatives of 2025.

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# 1. PREVIOUS EFFORTS

by Andrew Bair, Jeneba Berety, Shailyn Lineberry, and Owen McDevitt.

*“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”*

- George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*

Childcare at DU is not a new problem. Nor is institutional investigation into childcare a novel ideal. In fact, it seems that roughly every ten years an initiative is formed to address this very issue, yet no effective action has ever been taken. Despite the good intentions of all parties involved, affordable and accessible childcare has always remained an issue for parents in the DU community. Therefore, the purpose of this section of the report is to examine previous childcare movements that have taken place at DU and understand why they have proven unsuccessful.

## 1970's

Although campaigns for affordable childcare on campus didn't begin in earnest until the mid-1990's, childcare is inherently tied to a broader women's issues narrative at DU. It is important to understand the wider context before considering any specific problem.

While women had been part of the faculty, staff, and student body of DU for many years, it was not until the 1970's that a specific women's faculty group was created. In 1974, the chair of the economics department, Dr. Doris Drewery, and a sociology professor, Dr. Edith Sherman, founded the Committee for Women on Campus. With several other female faculty members, including anthropology's own Dr. Sarah Nelson, the group met in Dr. Sherman's living room and discussed the unique trials and tribulations faced by women on campus.

At this time, the primary issues that concerned the committee were “the numbers.” This included the hiring of women, their salaries, and their chances at tenure. Although women were being hired as faculty at the university, most departments seemed to think that one woman was enough. Similarly, women were markedly underpaid compared to their male counterparts. Dr. Sherman was especially concerned with this, as she had found out that despite being well regarded in her field and one of the more senior members of her department, she was drastically the least paid. She was able to demand a raise equal to

her stature, but it was met with anger and irritation from her colleagues. Finally, women were rarely tenured. It was common to hire female professors when “they were young and pretty” as adjuncts and recycle them for someone younger when they got old enough to go up for tenure. Dr. Nelson, for example, went up for tenure along with three male colleagues. Despite having a superior CV and academic reputation, she was denied her application. This decision was fought by the rest of the committee and Dr. Nelson was granted tenure. The next year, two other women received tenure as well.

As these sorts of issues were being combatted, sexual harassment began to enter the national spotlight. The Committee for Women on Campus, headed by Dr. Nelson as president, wrote up a set of rules and guidelines for sexual harassment at DU, something that had never been done before. Dr. Sherman investigated the secretarial pool and discovered that they were both being harassed and were poorly paid. The committee also received a tip about the activity of a specific male professor, who they investigated and reported first to the dean and later the vice-provost, who fired the offender.

It is clear why childcare concerns at DU had yet to be raised. The women of DU faced larger and more pressing issues that demanded their attention first

## **1980's**

Moving into the 1980's, the Committee for Women on Campus was still fighting a battle with the university over the salary differential between men and women. Dr. Drewery used connections in Washington to hire a lawyer to fight for salary rights. The committee was also able to establish a university funded women's research center.

However, disaster was imminent for the university. Years of poor economic planning combined with the purchase of the dilapidated and debt-ridden Colorado Women's College caused DU to teeter on the edge of financial ruin. In 1983 and '84 the administration decided to close several departments to keep the school alive. Specifically, many female heavy departments were put on the chopping block. In fact, anthropology was slotted to be closed, but a letter writing campaign kept the department alive. Not so lucky were the dance program, the library school, the nursing program, and several other female oriented departments. The women's research center, only just founded, was also closed.

During the height of the tumult, Daniel Ritchie came to the university, bringing with him wealth and stability. By the late 1980's, a women's studies program had been formed, taking up the mantle of the previously closed women's research center. With the lawyer from DC by their side, the Committee for Women on Campus was finally able to even up salaries. The major “numbers” oriented concerns taken care of, the committee was able to broaden its scope to include other groups and issues. One of these was the payment and treatment of

the primarily migrant worker grounds crew. Another, at long last, was childcare for faculty and staff.

## 1990's

The 1990's were a decade that brought about the most transformative change to the university for women's representation on campus as well as childcare with the founding of the Women's Coalition in 1995. The Women's Coalition started out as a small group of women on campus who shared the same interests and struggles in terms of maintaining a healthy work-life balance, promoting the increase of women's leadership roles within the university, and increasing awareness about the challenges associated with childcare. In its early months, the Women's Coalition at the University of Denver acted primarily as a support group for women and mothers on campus. Then in 1996, the Coalition adopted a structure within the group that allowed it to have more accountability. There were six sections of representation within the Women's Coalition: undergraduate, graduate, staff, faculty, middle management and senior leadership. The Women's Coalition inspired the annual Women's Conferences, which today is known as HerDU. After the Women's Coalition gained more accountability within the university and after the success of the Women's Conferences, many people began to see a need for solving issues surrounding childcare at DU as well as for the surrounding community. Inspired by talks at the first Women's Conference, the Staff Women's Associate and Network (SWAN) investigated different local daycares, got costs, figured out their programming, and returned with a summary of what the group wanted and presented it to the university. The women involved wanted a daycare that was on campus, close by, and affordable.

After two years of planning with the psychology and education schools, in 1998 a proposal titled "Donne and Sue Fisher Early Learning Center at the University of Denver" was presented to the to the chancellor. The proposal stresses the importance of Fisher becoming a "national model" for other universities, "The University of Denver commits to quality and innovation in developing a national model program for early learning, which would meet the needs of some DU employees' children and some families in the community" (Fisher Proposal, 1998). The proposal also incorporates the three most important components to the success of Fisher Early Learning center labeled, "Service to DU and the Community," "University Opportunities in Training and Research," and "Community Commitment." The proposal states that these components were originally aimed to, "interrelate, intersect and are interdependent in producing a unique leadership model and community resource."

Despite the rhetoric in the proposal and the cutting-edge approach of the program, Fisher was far from the affordable and approachable childcare that SWAN and many other DU community members desired. Thus, the issue of childcare at DU continued into the twenty-first century.

## 2000's

Just a few years after the creation of Fisher, in 2003-2004 the Women's Leadership Council (WLC) and the Staff Advisory Council (SAC) prepared a Survey of Childcare Needs in association with Human Resources at DU under Dick Gartrell. The report of the survey mentions that the WLC questioned the ability of Fisher to provide adequate childcare for the DU community (Alter et. all, 2004). The results show that around half of the DU community members surveyed are somewhat dissatisfied with their current childcare solutions. More than that, a large majority of respondents expressed a direct correlation between childcare arrangements and work-related concerns. Overall, the survey determined that Fisher was currently insufficient and would only become more insufficient in the future as childcare demand rose.

Likely in response to the 2004 survey, in March of 2006, the Human Resources department initiated a Child Care Task Force. The Task Force initially consisted of 15 committee members and 6 ad HOC members and met monthly for 16 months. On June 8th, 2007 the Child Care Task force wrote an executive summary on what they had accomplished, failed, and future recommendations. The first thing that the task force did was assess surveys and interviews that were conducted in spring of 2004. The task force then conducted interviews of their own to University of Denver parents and inspected other sites such as the Auraria Early Learning Center and Porter Adventist Hospital. They found that Porters was having the same demand problems as The Fischer Early Learning Center.

The Task Force then created a website which was publish in December of 2006 and exposed to the University of Denver community by a publicity campaign held in January and February of 2007. This site was designed by a University funded non-appointed employee by the name of Kate Burns. The website included information about why the task force was created, what they did, information for child care, and multiple resources for any parents that were confused. The site also educates the community on available openings for enrollment at the Fischer Early Learning Center and other child care providers in the DU area. During their publicity campaign the site attained 420 visits in January and 352 in February (Task Force Report, 2007).

After the website, the Task Force expanded to make sure that their work now involves Fisher Early Learning Center. The Task Force wanted to make sure that individuals at DU were educated about the different opportunities at Fisher. That's why they tried to eliminate "lengthy and uncertain waitlist process" (Task Force Report, 2007). The Task Force also try to assist parents who couldn't get into Fisher find better alternatives around the DU area. The Task Force did make several attempts to pattern with outside organization. A collaborative relationship with outside organizations and members of the community was important for the Task Force meeting their goal of providing resources for students, faculty, and staff.

Task Force members were also interested in partnering with Qualistar Early Learning. Qualistar main job is to provide valuable information and resources relevant to childcare. The partnership with the organization would make it possible for students, staff, and faculty members to have access to their website which has information on different quality providers. The university's Human Resource Center and the Fisher Early Learning Center planned on financially supporting this effort, but it soon fails when the Task Force was forced to cancel this service due to a "dramatic cost increase" (Task Force Report, 2007).

The next step that the task force took was to adopt the Work Options Group program which included subsidized backup and emergency elder and childcare to reduce family stress and workplace absenteeism. Dick Gartrell proposed that DU adopt this program for the 2007-2008 academic year. The community hoped that this program make the campus more family friendly. The board of Trustees agreed and approved the human resources budget to adapt this program in July of 2007. The plan that was contracted included emergency child and elder care drop in/emergencies for one hundred hours per year for each faculty or staff member. The report did not give a full report of this service, but interviewees say the service was discontinued after a few years due to lack of use and expense.

After the Work Options Group program was adapted the task force set out to improve upon and understand student child care needs. They acquired Joseph Gary and Troy Hashimoto, two students at D.U who worked with the Task Force to help understand student childcare needs. In January of 2007 the student childcare needs subgroup was formed to assess the needs of undergraduate and graduate level students with children and make recommendations on how to improve upon their work life balance. This group researched other schools with a more developed student child care basis and developed surveys to find the population of students with children at D.U. the survey was planned for spring of 2007 but was postponed to the fall of 2007.

In June of 2007, the Task Force published a summary of their work in a report. The report included all the above information as well as future recommendations and ongoing plans. The recommendations included exploring capacity options for child care, assessing needs for students with children, exploring solutions for infant care support and drop in care support, exploring supplemental resources to Fischer Early Learning Center, and evaluating resources and programs periodically. The ongoing plans that were listed included reconfiguring the task force to be a part of the human resources committee, advisory committee meeting quarterly, subgroups to keep working on issues, and continued student representation.

## **2010's**

After the Task Force of 2007, there was an eight-year lull in reported childcare action on DU's campus. However, in 2015 the HR Vice Chancellor initiated a new childcare taskforce. The group looked at childcare services at difference universities of similar size and

composition to DU and sent out another survey on childcare needs and preferences to the university community. However, due to personal reasons, this new taskforce stalled and has remained dormant ever since.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

Over the past four decades, there have been several attempts to understand and provide childcare needs at DU. Research and analysis of the previous efforts has revealed three primary themes.

### **1. Documentation and Turnover**

Overall, it has proven very challenging to access information related to previous childcare efforts. Typically records of initiatives do exist somewhere, oftentimes in the DU library special collections, but they are difficult to find. Compounding this, the bureaucratic structure of the administration makes it difficult to pinpoint which specific individuals might prove helpful. Many times, we reached out to departments only to be redirected to someone else, who would in turn redirect us again, and so on.

Similarly, administrative and staff positions at DU seem to turnover faster than childcare initiatives can keep up. Most of the individuals who served in the 2007 task force, for example, have left DU and are difficult to track down. The living memory of previous efforts is wiped clean before the next one can occur.

Therefore, it has become clear from our research that childcare initiatives, and women's groups in general, repeatedly tread the same ground. To quote Dr. Sarah Nelson, on the formation of the Women's Coalition in 1995 after the turmoil of the 1980's:

“There are or there was a kind of different organization of women that in the 80's when the big bomb went off at DU and everything changed and departments disappeared, there was an awareness that no one seemed to ever remember there had been the Committee for Women on Campus. There was a group of women's administrators and secretaries and faculty supposedly and there is every spring a meeting for women's issues, but there seemed to be no institutional memory of what had gone on before. At last, we have someone creating this (\*sarcastically\*)!”

Additionally, the surveys performed in 2004, 2007, and 2015 all cover very similar material. Perhaps if there was more institutional memory and better documentation of previous efforts, childcare solutions could make more progress.

## 2. Kids Grow Up

The time window of need for childcare is small; only about three or four years. Once they're old enough, children can enter primary school and the childcare problem is essentially solved. Although stakeholder parents might be invested in a childcare campaign initially, the bureaucratic wheels of a large institution like DU turn slowly. By the time action might be taken, the stakeholder parent is suddenly more worried about issues related to having older children. To quote Theresa Hernandez, the ex-president of the Staff Advisory Council:

“And then when the clock is ticking while you try to do this, the kids are growing up. So, by the time you get to ‘oh, we have something in place’, ‘oh we don’t need it now...’ And they grow up so fast...”

As opposed to some other women’s issues, like salary or sexual harassment, childcare is only a temporary problem. For parents, it is easier to suffer through the three or four years of challenging childcare solutions than fight DU. As English Professor Eleanor McNeese wrote via email correspondence:

“I was not involved with the formation of the first early learning center as that was long past my own sons’ time (they’re now 28 and 30). Most of us back then simply bit the bullet and procured childcare often at great cost and transportation issues.”

This is not to find fault in the stakeholders, it is simply the nature of the problem. Relating to the first theme above, it is so crucial to have good and accessible documentation of childcare efforts in the past. The next generation needs to know the successes and mistakes of the previous one.

## 3. Stakeholder Input

Finally, this is perhaps the fundamental issue that has caused a lack of a permanent solution to childcare at DU. In past initiatives, parental stakeholders have gathered and raised their concerns to the administration. Although the administration was receptive, the decision-making, logistics, and end results were completely removed from the stakeholders. The Fisher Early Learning Center provides a perfect example of this process in action. While Fisher was well intentioned, it did not actually meet the desires and needs of the stakeholders who requested action. Quoting Dr. Nelson on Dan Ritchie’s Fisher initiative:

“It [Fisher] was kind of a different concept... He [Ritchie] never got the purpose of it, or our idea of the purpose. The purpose was to help staff with young children, or faculty occasionally.”

If the same women who proposed a childcare center at DU remained involved for entirety of its creation process, perhaps Fisher would have been the solution the community needs.

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## 2. “THE FISHER PROBLEM”

### THE FISHER EARLY LEARNING CENTER IN CONTEXT

by Madison Sussmann, Dylan Atkins and Carolyn Kemp

#### Introduction

The notions of what a mother should be and what an academic should be are contradictory. The idealized academic is often based on classical philosophy, such as the “Socratic method, dialectical reasoning, and an appreciation for the life of the mind” (Stockdell-Giesler and Ingalls 2007, 38). There is a “100% model of an academic” that assumes the scholar works tirelessly in pursuit of her research. While this might be seen more as stereotypical conclusion, academics today face high time demands and an increasing pressure to publish (Springer, Parker, and Leviten-Reid 2009, 436). These conceptualizations of the lone scholar working endlessly in the pursuit of knowledge does not take into consideration the professors and researchers who are parents or caretakers. The cultural ideologies that surround motherhood, similar to those around academia, are more based in perceptions than in reality, but they heavily influence the conversation around the issue. For example, there has been a discourse of ‘choice’ that has arisen around parents who are also professionals (Springer, Parker, and Leviten-Reid 2009). Parents ‘choose’ to take time off, and they chose to have children. Professional and student parents are all around us. Some of them may choose to hide the fact that they have children out of fear of judgement, but with more women than men now enrolling and graduating from U.S. colleges and universities the standards of support need to be reconsidered (Stockdell-Geisler and Ingalls 2007). The authors of the article, “Faculty Mothers,” write that “Workplaces that honor family life and respect a diversity of schedules, family structures, and personal commitments outside of work can go far to reduce gender inequalities” (Stockdell-Geisler and Ingalls 2007). This is a topic that has been addressed by female employees at the University of Denver since the early 1970s, and due to insufficient outcomes of substantial efforts, the issues still persist today. In 1996 there was an issue identified and a willingness to find a solution; however, when the proposal was presented it did not reflect the original concerns. In the two years, between 1996 and the submission of the proposal in 1998, the intentions of the program changed. In 2000 the opening of the Fisher Early Learning Center near the DU campus was proposed to be the solution to the child care needs. Due to the processes of putting together a proposal and the implementation, the University of Denver opened a renowned child care facility that has been used as a state and national model for early childhood education, but not the solution to affordable and accessible daily child care for the DU parent community.

By placing the Fisher Early Learning Center into the context of its own history and the history of women's empowerment efforts on the DU campus, the differing perceptions of what Fisher offers compared with what DU parents think it offers are illuminated. In 1996, the women of DU needed a child care facility to take care of and education their children while they are at work; in 1998 an Early Learning Center was proposed that would use DU resources of the College of Education, Social Work and Philosophy to sustain and operate the facility' and in 2000 the doors opened to an exclusive child care center that only had space for roughly 90 DU children from the ages of six weeks to five years where admission was based on a lottery system (Metzger 2000, Haith, Henry, and Linder 1998, Fisher Early Learning Center 2018). The questions to keep in mind are "what is the mission of Fisher?" and "why do DU parents believe it is the answer to their child care needs?" Through interviews, surveys, archival research, and qualitative analysis the research team tasked with unraveling "the Fisher problem" suggests that the differences in perceptions arise from the narrative of women's empowerment surrounding the creation of Fisher, the indication of Fisher as a child care resource by DU websites and hiring committees, and the lack of awareness of Fisher's own missions.

## **What is the Fisher Early Learning Center?**

The Fisher Early Learning Center, located on the corner of Evans St. and High St., is a pre-school educational center that is affiliated with the University of Denver and provides teacher positions for the master's students in the Early Childhood and Special Education program at the Morgridge College of Education to gain hands-on, practical experience. What sets Fisher apart from a day care, other than the required licensing, is that Fisher is designed with child driven education in mind.

"The mission of Fisher Learning Center is to provide children with a continuum of learning experiences in an inclusive setting that reflects research based practices, celebrates diversity and addressed the uniqueness of each child. Through family and community partnerships and high professional standards, Fisher offers an quality program that establishes a foundation of skills and knowledge essential to the development of competent and caring young children" (Fisher Early Learning Center 2018).

In relation to the care needed by the Denver and University of Denver community, Fisher is quite small and has a low admittance. However, this allows them to celebrate the diversity and uniqueness of each child. No child faces discrimination based on their background. This is common among many preschools and daycares in the area. Fisher is not exclusive to children of parents who work at or attend the University of Denver. Instead, Fisher is a resource for the larger Denver community.

“Fisher provides an active and engaging learning environment that fosters all aspects of development through comprehensive and multidisciplinary activities. A curriculum comprised of structured and child-directed activities provides a diverse approach to teaching that facilitates children’s abilities to master new skills and expand their horizons. Trained and skilled professionals from a variety of disciplines form teaching teams that provide quality care and education to children in an inclusive setting” (Fisher Early Learning Center 2018).

Fisher employs a “lottery system” approach for application acceptance. To enroll a child, one must fill out an application and submit it each year by February. Once submitted, applications are randomly selected based on the age of the child until each class for that age group is full. This is Fisher’s method to avoid any kind of unfair bias to application characteristics, because all new applicants have the same odds of being enrolled. Something important to note is that there is priority given to children who have siblings already enrolled in the program. In an interview with a student teacher at Fisher, it was indicated that there was a 50/50 ratio maintained between children of DU affiliated parents and children of the wider Denver community. However, this information has not been confirmed.

## **History of the Appeal for Child Care on Campus**

The call for accessible child care for DU faculty, staff, and students stemmed from the efforts to advance women in academia of the 1970s. Then, in the mid-1980s the University of Denver faced financial strife and this led to the closure departments and outcry from the few remaining women. The dispute led to the creation of several women’s groups that offered support and, later, administrative action to the underrepresented women and mothers in academia. One of these groups created the Women’s Conference in 1995 which subsequently proposed the program that became the Fisher Early Learning Center. Since, then, with child care needs still remaining unmet, further research we conducted in 2007 and now in 2018. The issue of available and affordable child care is a continuously re-emerging topic that remains unanswered. The historical context of Fisher helps to demonstrate the confusion of what is needed versus what is offered.

In 1974 a group of women in faculty positions came together to form the Committee for Women on Campus. In these early years, the main focus was on “the numbers”. They worked toward equal pay, hiring opportunity, and tenure selection. The Committee offered a support role to the fellow women on campus who were underrepresented and in a time when there were very few women faculty. To better understand what it was like to be a female professor and department chair, we met with Dr. Sarah Nelson. She was president of the Committee for Women on Campus in the late 1970s. She described that they were

the voice of the women to the administration. One of the founders of the organization discovered that, despite being well regarded in her field, she was being paid far less than her male counterparts. Upon further scrutiny of the circumstances of women on campus, they realized that the secretaries were being harassed and poorly paid. The committee helped to define sexual harassment in terms of DU policy and advocated for women who were being mistreated.

In the mid-1980s, 1983 and 1984, the University of Denver was in financial trouble. The institution began closing a series of departments in order to stay afloat. Most of these departments, such as the nursing school, that were being eliminated were the one's dominated by women. Eventually, the eye fell on Anthropology, and Dr. Nelson had to fight to keep her department alive. During the turmoil, other women's groups were forming on campus. One was the Women's Coalition. While the Committee for Women on Campus was made up of faculty and department heads, the Coalition consisted of administrators, staff, and students. Like the Committee, the Women's Coalition was first focused on supplying support, but in 1996 they turned to advocating for and implementing DU policy. In 1995 the Women's Conference was established, and in 1996 it was entitled "DU Women Networking and Mentoring Women." This is where support turned to advocacy. During the breakout sessions, women from all throughout DU and the Denver community came together and "identified needs and concerns of women on campus, such as a desire for greater connections across constituencies and a structure to make that happen, day care, wellness, attention to balancing personal and professional life, lack of support from some male supervisors to attend the conference, and professional development opportunities" (Metzger 2000). Based on the Fisher Early Learning Center's website, this was the conference that spurred the creation of the center. The process and specifics of the creation will be discussed in the next section, but it is important to note here that when Fisher opened, it was not the child care facility that had been imagined, and it did not answer the questions of everyday child care for parents at DU.

In 2006 there was a child care task force created to address the needs of DU parents as revealed in two surveys conducted earlier that year. The task force was an 18 member committee that proposed possible solutions to the issue of child care at DU. They formed a contract with Qualistar to help provide additional child care resources to parents, proposed a benefits package to help with child care and elder care, suggested more collaboration and communication with Fisher, and launched the [du.edu/childcare](http://du.edu/childcare) webpage. As seen with the previous efforts taken a decade before, the solutions did not exactly accomplish their missions. For example, the [du.edu/childcare](http://du.edu/childcare) webpage is unhelpful, and Fisher is listed as the first resource available for parents. None of these efforts has had the intended outcome of their creators, and that has led to the issue of child care to be addressed again in 2017 and 2018.

In 2017, the Cultural Anthropology class conducted sixty-four surveys to access the realities of being in academia and being a parent. These surveys showed that issues of work/life

balance, guilt, lack of child care, and lack of support are still prevalent at DU. The findings of this research gained the attention and interest of the Vice Chancellor for Campus Life and Inclusive Excellence, Dr. Liliana Rodriguez. Now, the 2018 Applied Anthropology class has conducted research into possible areas for practical solutions. This will be discussed later in the report, but the Fisher Early Learning Center, despite being referenced frequently as a child care option, is not the solution to the problem. When its doors opened in 2000, the mission in place was different than that of the women who one campus. Still today, it is unable and unwilling to be the day care that DU needs.

## **The Creation of the Fisher Early Learning Center**

In 1994 a Survey of Fairness and Respect was initiated by the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor with the intent of obtaining an objective assessment of inclusion at DU (Committee on Men & Women at DU 1996). There were four objectives for the survey: 1) to learn of the concerns of employees, 2) provide the university with information to aid in community building activities, 3) eliminate all forms of discrimination, and 4) address issues of diversity and inclusion based on a specific set of actions (Committee on Men & Women at DU 1996). In 1996 the Committee on Men and Women at DU distributed the survey to all university employees. 673 surveys were completed and sent to the Athena Group consulting firm for analysis (Committee on Men & Women at DU 1996). In respect to child care, the results showed that policies for family life support and eligible leave to care for newborns, ill children, and elderly adults were in the top five of the rank-ordered list of eighteen priorities. Additionally, day-care and flex-time were at the top of the lists for most respondents between the ages of 25 and 54 but were less important to employees outside of that age range (Committee on Men & Women at DU 1996).

As a response to the surveys, the university made improvements to a number of its programs already in place. One of such programs was of Professional Development and Mentoring. In addition to the survey, in 1996, there was a Women's Mentoring and Networking Conference led by a group of women now known as the Women's Coalition (Committee on Men & Women at DU 1996, Women's Coalition 2018). The aim of the conference was to demonstrate how women can support each other and assist in the development of university programs to address their needs. Approximately 300 members of the faculty and staff were in attendance (Committee on Men & Women at DU 1996). In small groups, the attendees identified the concerns and needs of women on campus, and one of the main points that came out of the conference was the need for day-care on campus (Metzger 2000). A group of women made up of managers and staff worked with the Director of Special Programs to develop a proposal for an early childhood educational program (Committee on Men & Women at DU 1996). Within the next two years there would be a feasibility study and a proposal submitted to the Chancellor.

The proposal entitled "Donne and Sue Fisher Early Learning Center at the University of Denver: 'Where the Journey of Learning Begins'" outlines the purpose, the goals, and the

processes of implementation. Despite the creation of the proposal originating from discussion of women's advancement on DU's campus, the outline offers very little mention of service to DU parents. The focus is more on building a state-of-the-art teaching model based on the "integration of development across cognitive, language and communication, sensorimotor, and social emotional domains" (Haith, Henry, and Linder 1998). There is a focus on interfacing with DU resources, for example the College of Education, and service to the DU and Denver Community, but there is no recognition for the particular needs of DU parents. Somehow, through the proposal process, the need for accessible child care for all DU parents was misplaced. During an interview with a key informant who was involved with the childcare concern mentioned that the changes made to the original recommendation was convoluted due to different women's groups getting involved and the integration of the ideas and needs of different departments within the university. For example, the effort was originally lead by the Women's Coalition, but the Staff Women's Association and Network conducted the research into other child care programs in the area. Another possible reason that the proposal for Fisher changed from a daycare to an early learning center was the involvement of other schools at the university, such as the College of Education, the School of Social Work, and the Philosophy Department. With all of these groups working together it seems that the daycare program needed to expand to accommodate all of the needs of the different departments involved. When the doors opened in 2000, the mission was to be "the best in early child education," and it seems like that goal still holds today. Unfortunately, with Fisher DU received a well-renowned and successful early learning center, but the issue of everyday child care remained.

The origins in women's empowerment gives the impression that Fisher was the solution the women where in search of. The website still boosts of its grassroots beginnings and ties to the Women's Conference on its website.

"The need for child care on campus was evident in 1993 when a grassroots movement headed by employees Lisa Biro and Connie Stultz Busch gained momentum within the University of Denver Community. It continued when the issues of child care was broached as a to concern at the 1996 Women's Conference, and the push for an early learning center on campus began in earnest when a feasibility committee was formed to study on-campus child care" (Fisher Early Learning Center 2018).

However, as it can be seen in the continuous re-appeal for child care on campus, Fisher was conceptualized as the solution, but during the creation process, it became something else entirely. Still today, parents look to Fisher to be a day-care option, but that is a misconception that mostly causes frustration in the end.

## Surveys and Data Analysis

A key element in understanding the current relationship between DU parents and the Fisher Early Learning Center was to collect and analyze the opinions and experiences of the facility. In a series of interviews conducted in 2017 by the Cultural Anthropology class, it became apparent that there was a disconnect between the perceptions of the parents at DU and Fisher. The interview questions were constructed around six themes: 1) family dynamics, 2) work/life balance, 3) child care, 4) support, 5) flexibility, and 6) DU policies and resources (Beck et al 2017). There were no specific questions pertaining the Fisher Early Learning Center, but twelve out of the sixty-five responses addressed Fisher. After analyzing the 12 interview transcripts, our research team has determined that parents at the University of Denver see Fisher as a resource for them. They believe that Fisher is the University's child care program. This belief provides an explanation as to why a majority of people who mentioned Fisher have strong, negative opinions of it. Fisher is very exclusive, and when a parent at the University of Denver is not accepted, they feel that they are being deprived of a much needed resource.

The Fisher Early Learning Center was most frequently mentioned upon questions about child care and support, but it was also discussed around work/life balance and additional remarks. Among the responses the difficulty of acceptance and expensive tuition were frequently cited as reasons behind the frustration. When asked about child care support, one participant responded that "there's no child care here. Fisher, I tried for maybe four years to get into Fisher and at the time it was a lottery system and we just never, our names was never picked, so we just didn't go to Fisher." The uncertainty of admission causes stress and frustration to the parents that need a child care option in the area. Another respondent, who was successful in admitting their child, said "DU has a daycare which is called Fisher which is fabulous and my kids are there now, but it took us three years to get in there." It seems that there is consensus that after the children are admitted, Fisher is a great educational program, however, the long wait times and the lottery system do not make the process easy.

To better understand the issues of limited space at Fisher and the public perception of the child care on DU's campus in general, the Fisher research team added questions to the survey being distributed by the team focusing on general child care needs. We are still in the preliminary stages of conducting the survey, and, so far, only fourteen DU affiliated parents have responded. However, based on the information provided, 77% of the respondents have submitted at least one application to the Fisher Early Learning Center, and of those respondents, 80% were never accepted. The data also shows that most frequently, parents submitted applications two or three years in a row before being admitted or abandoning the effort. When asked the question "Which resources do you find the least beneficial?" 50% of respondents replied with Fisher. One elaborated with "the discount at Fisher is helpful, but it took me four years to get in." The long waits and instability do not make Fisher a viable resources to all DU parents.

While Fisher offers quality education to its students, the uncertainty of the application process does not allow the stabilities that a parent needs during the years before schooling age. It appears that Fisher is being recommended to offer services beyond its capacity, and it needs to be recognized for the realities of its size and what it offers. In an interview at teacher at Fisher made it clear that “we are an early learning center, we are not a daycare.” The goals of Fisher, the representation of the center by DU administration, and the needs of the DU parent community do not align.

## **The Differences in Perceptions**

The mission behind the Fisher Early Learning Center is to offer innovative and creative teaching methods based on proven and researcher techniques. Their goal is not to provide daycare for all DU parents. The parents see Fisher as a child care service designed to service the DU community, but how the university perceives Fisher is hard to pinpoint. The University does not have one shared view of Fisher, in fact, perceptions of Fisher at the University of Denver are split. Some see Fisher for what is really is, a community resource devoted to providing a continuum of child care and education. While others see Fisher as a resource reserved to University of Denver parents only. In one interview, the interviewee highlights a personal experience where they were deceived by a University of Denver representative when presented with Fisher as a child care resource. The following quote was the interviewee's response to the question of “What resource should DU provide?”

“Daycare, absolutely. I don’t know if this is something you’d write about or care about, but um, when we’re hired here, there’s the Fisher Early Learning Center right down here, and so when we’re hired here, a lot of times people dangle that in front of you, especially if you’re kind of like parenting age, you know, like I was. They dangle that in front of you and they say that we’ve got this award winning, world class daycare, it’s 50 yards from your building, you know it’s great, and then when we tried to get in, there wasn’t even a lottery, like literally every class was full, and so our daughter, she didn’t even have a chance to get in, so they actually returned our deposit, um and that is the experience that many faculty have here, and I think that has to do with the way the daycare licensure works, and they have to offer community spots, they can’t just offer it to the university, so they’re caught on the spot too. At the same time, that is dangled in front of us as something that will be kind of like a quasi-benefit when we work here, and then most of us find that’s not even, you can’t even get it, it’s not possible. So we pay two grand a month for our kid to go to this school, you now, a mile away,

um, so, I would say that is frustrating to faculty who feel that is somewhat of an empty promise. And so yes, daycare, if the school could provide that, with some kind of consistent system, daycare for staff and faculty, I think a lot of us are clamoring for that.”

This personal account brings emphasizes the differences in perceptions among Fisher, the University, and the University parents. To this interviewee, Fisher was presented as a resource of child care which could be used to their disposal. As previously mentioned this is not the current purpose of Fisher. This experience was not unique to that individual, in a response to the survey conducted this year, another respondent was upset that her hiring committee presented Fisher as a child care option, even though the individual did not even have children. The Fisher Early Learning Center is an excellent resource, but it should not be marketed as something beyond its capacity.

## **Conclusions**

The issue of child care and on campus support for students, staff, and faculty with young children has origins in the women’s movements in academia in the 1970s. While the initial focus was equal opportunity, the attention turned to child care in the 1990s. To make the university and academics more inclusive to women and parents, accessible child care is needed. Current and past research has shown that the Fisher Early Learning Center is not the solution the university and the parents need. The focus needs to turn away from the idea of molding Fisher until it fits, but rather on alternative solutions. Fisher has its own missions and goals for the future, and it should not be assumed that it can answer for the current problems. However, the proposal and implementation process of Fisher can help to inform current and future efforts to ensure that these oversights do not reoccur.

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## 3. INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

by Aimee Spencer, Brooke Connelly, Alya Garrison-Ahmed and Funmilayo Olukemi

This report aims to address applicable policy and law regarding parental rights and work-life balance at the University of Denver (DU). After about two months of research, it has been determined that while the institution does provide more support than legally required, much can still be done to assist DU staff, faculty, and students with children under ten years of age. The university meets all state and federal regulations and additionally offers up to ten weeks paid parental leave to benefited employees. While many find this policy to be very generous, it was determined that other areas of support are lacking. Parents of young children that are themselves employed by or enrolled at the University of Denver have shown great interest in receiving additional support to assist with work-life balance. The following findings are not as thorough as we would have hoped, but we feel this emphasizes concerns regarding the lack of policy accessibility, as well as a lack of policy in general.

Our research was conducted to address policy concerns regarding the University of Denver's faculty, staff, and students with children under the age of ten. The majority of our research was done online referencing university and government websites to understand current policies at the institutional, state, and federal levels. We engaged in policy conversation both in person and via email but did not conduct any substantial interviews. The interviews conducted by last year's class were recent enough to provide adequate and efficient insight to the opinions of DU parents with children under ten. By reading through the transcripts of 65 interviews and finding common themes, we attempted to deduce perceptions regarding policy at the University of Denver.

### General Policy Findings

Federal and state regulations protect pregnant mothers and parents from discrimination; however, that does not ensure the parents have any formal support from the government or university. Nondiscrimination laws are in place to ensure there is no unjust or prejudicial treatment of a particular group or individual, though defining and proving specific discriminatory acts can be very complicated. The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission defines the following types of discrimination: age, disability, equal pay/compensation, genetic information, harassment, national origin, pregnancy, race/color, religion, retaliation, sex, and sexual harassment. ("Types of" 2018) These should also be considered relevant for our purposes, given the nondiscrimination regulations set for

universities. The University of Denver provides the following institutional statement regarding discrimination policy in their Employee Handbook:

“The University is committed to affirmative action and equal opportunity. University policy prohibits discrimination or harassment against students, applicants, employees, or participants in University activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age 40 and older, religion, disability, genetic background, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, or veteran status. Additionally, the University complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws prohibiting discrimination and harassment. Discrimination or harassment in violation of University policy or law will lead to severe sanctions against the actor up to and including termination.”

The state of Colorado has not enacted laws in the private sector to enforce paid maternity or paternity leave. Referencing state regulations, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment directs readers to the employer and the US Department of Labor. (“Leave” 2018) According to the US Department of Labor, eligible employees who work for a covered employer can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period. Request for leave must be submitted 30 days prior to leave, and can be taken in separate blocks of time. (“Leave Benefits” 2018) Employers may require the use of accrued paid leave during this time. In order to be eligible under federal regulation, employees must have been employed for at least 12 months, having accrued a minimum of 1,250 hours of service. (“Federal and State” 2018) Under federal regulation, in accordance with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), the University of Denver provides family care and medical leave to all eligible employees.

The following information is directly from DU’s Employee Handbook:

“The University of Denver will grant up to 12 weeks of family &/ medical leave during any 12 month period to eligible employees. The leave may be paid, unpaid, or a combination of paid and unpaid, depending on the circumstances, as specified in the following guidelines and procedures.”

“An employee who takes leave under the FMLA will be able to return to the same job or a job with equivalent status, pay, benefits and other employment terms. The position will be the same or one, which entails substantially equivalent skill, effort, responsibility, and authority. The University may choose to exempt certain highly compensated employees from this requirement and not return them to the same or similar position.”

While FMLA guarantees the right to family and medical leave, including time away for new parents, this is only for eligible employees. When addressing faculty specifically, this includes “all academic units and all faculty members in all benefitted faculty series. Those

include: tenure line Professorial Series, Professorial Series in University Libraries, Teaching Professorial Series, Clinical Professorial Series, Professors of the Practice Series, and Research Professorial Series.” (“Policies and Procedures” 2017) Adjunct faculty members are non-benefited, non-appointed roles. Eligible faculty members are guaranteed their regular salary, assuming they have worked at the university for at least a full academic year. “Faculty members who have not been employed in a benefited faculty position at the University for one full academic year prior to a parental leave must complete a full academic year of employment following the leave or reimburse the university for the salary dollars received during the leave period. In cases where the birth mother is taking Parental Leave, the paid leave will be in conjunction with the University’s Core Short Term Disability Benefit, when applicable.” (“Leaves” 2018)

A staff member gets ten weeks paid leave, and should they choose to use the full twelve weeks guaranteed by federal regulations, DU requires the use of all accrued time (such as vacation and sick days) before switching to unpaid leave. Staff will receive a percentage of pay based on the length of their employment, as well as a few other factors. To determine the exact rate the university offers a “parental leave flowchart” that is provided in the report annex. (“Parental Leave” 2018)

Should a student need to take medical or family leave, they are not given financial support, but are granted the option of medical or family leave for up to five years. Assuming a student follows proper procedure for a medical or family leave, they can be readmitted to DU pending submission of necessary paperwork at least six weeks before the start of the intended enrollment term. We have not determined how this would influence scholarships or financial aid, as it will vary with each case. (“Leaves” 2018)

The Academic Leave Act was in place in Colorado from 2009 until September of 2015, requiring employers with 50 or more employees to provide those working full-time unpaid leave to attend a school-aged (K-12) child’s academic activities. This type of leave would include parent-teacher conferences, as well as meetings for special education needs, truancy, dropout prevention and disciplinary concerns. Eligible employees would receive up to 6 hours of unpaid leave any given month, or up to 18 hours per academic year. Part-time employees were eligible for pro-rated leave, dependent on hours worked. Since the repeal of the Academic Leave Act in 2015, employers with more than 50 employees are no longer required to provide leave to parents for academic activities but are encouraged to create institutional policies in place of the repeal. (Hobbes-Wright 2015) There has been no indication that any formal policies have been implemented at DU to replace the Academic Leave Act.

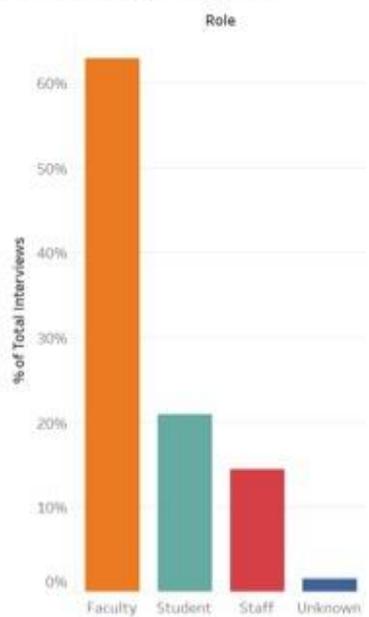
The University of Denver is required to comply with state and federal law, regardless of the fact that it is a private institution. When the Affordable Care Act was signed into law in March of 2010, it addressed regulations regarding breastfeeding mothers in the workplace. Under Section 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), employers are required

to provide reasonable break time and private accommodations (not just restrooms) for women to express breastmilk. (“Break Time” 2018) DU meets these regulations as it has five lactation rooms throughout its campus (Their locations: Anderson Academic Commons, Sie International Relations Complex, Ricketson Law Building, Sturm Hall, and the Chambers Center). (“Employee Wellness” 2018)

## **Awareness and Accessibility**

To ascertain the level of awareness of DU’s policies regarding childcare the 65 interviews conducted during the exploratory study executed in 2017 were reviewed. Participants responses to questions were coded and categorized according to common themes. While the participants had much to say about DU’s policies we decided to assess them based on the level of helpfulness the participants felt they received from programs & childcare solutions offered by DU. The main categories we arrived at were none, not aware, not helpful, somewhat helpful, adequate, very helpful and a mixed group - doesn’t use/hasn’t looked into it. The none category included applicants that felt DU offered no resources &/ provided no help to find childcare solutions. The not aware category included participants that were unsure about whether DU had childcare resources that could help them and for the most part were equally uncertain about where to find such information. The not helpful category included participants who were aware of DUs policies but felt that the systems were inaccessible, inadequate, hard to use, or did not meet their needs. The somewhat helpful category included participants that had used some of DUs childcare resources but felt as though their needs weren’t entirely addressed. The adequate category included participants who felt that DUs policies were sufficient enough to meet their needs, some could identify places for improvement but didn’t feel strongly about them. The very helpful category included participants who felt that DU provided plenty of support in the way of childcare resources when they needed it and would change little or nothing about DUs current policies. The doesn’t use/hasn’t looked into it category included those that never felt the need to seek out information about DUs childcare resources/policies because they had figured out childcare on their own. Participants in this category had varying levels of awareness concerning the DU policies available to them, and the vast majority were unsure of where to find such information.

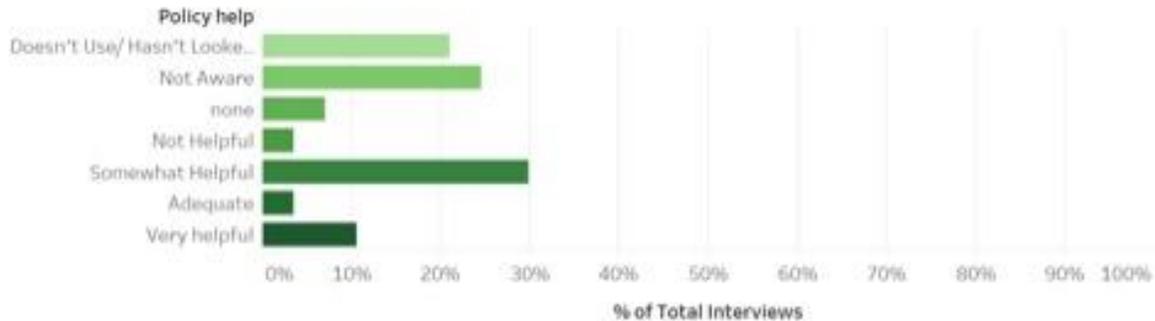
Participants Roles at DU



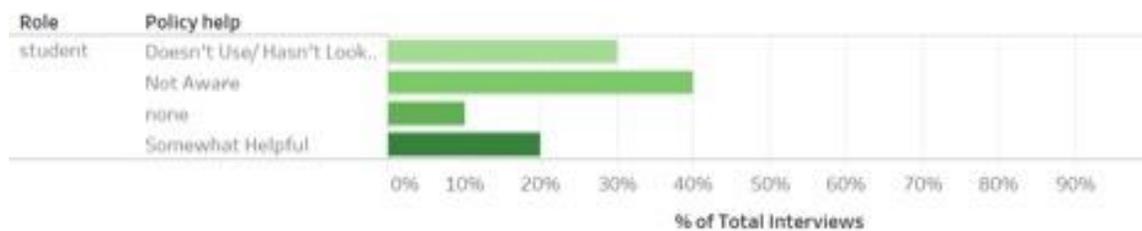
Of the 65 interviews that were conducted 63% of them were faculty, 21% were students, & 14% were staff. A third of participants were either unaware of DUs policies, graded DUs policies as not helpful, or felt that DU offered no solutions regarding childcare. Only 14% of participants felt that policies were very helpful or adequate and did not feel strongly about improving DUs current childcare offerings. From this assessment, it appears that DU could do a lot to improve their existing policies concerning childcare, by providing more resources, improving current resources or by ensuring that people know where to turn to when they require assistance finding childcare.

When the responses were analyzed further, two huge disparities became apparent. The first of these disparities arose when student perceptions were separated out. 40% of students were not aware of childcare resources offered by DU compared to the average of 25%. This finding is concerning and suggests that more needs to be done to notify students of the resources available to them if they are currently parents or when they become parents. None of the students interviewed indicated that they found the resources offered by DU to be adequate or above. This discovery exposes a gap in communication between DU and students about resources that could help alleviate the stress of attending school while trying to raise a child. Many of the students interviewed expressed that they relied on their network of family and friends to arrange childcare.

## Perceptions on the Helpfulness of DU's Childcare Policies

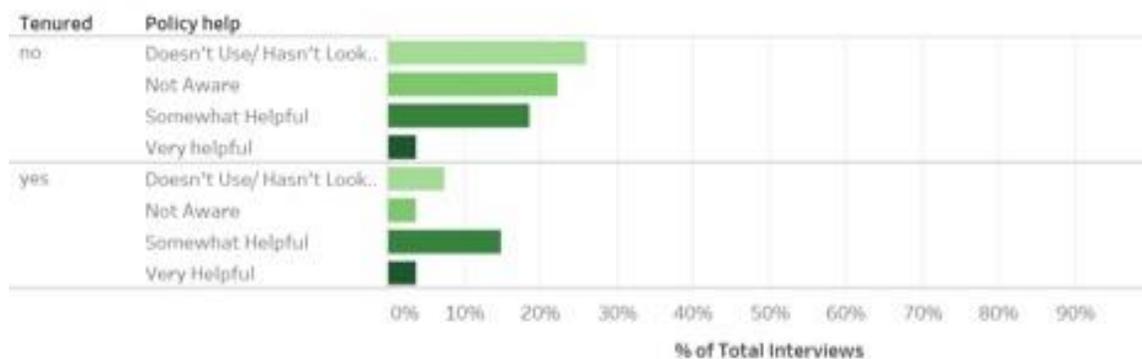


## Student Perceptions on the Helpfulness of DU's Childcare Policies



Similarly, a substantial difference in perceptions was noted between tenured and untenured Faculty members. The percent of tenured faculty who were not aware of DU policies was around 4% while the percent of untenured faculty who were not aware was six times as high coming in at approximately 24%.

## Perceptions on the Helpfulness of DU's Childcare Policies (Tenured Faculty vs. Untenured)



On a more detailed level, it appears that the policy that received the most glowing reviews was DU's family leave policy. Many stated that they felt this policy was beyond exceptional because it offered ten weeks of paid leave for moms and dads, which is not something they saw provided at other schools. However, a few participants who had a spouse that was also employed at DU expressed that they felt unfairly penalized by the university's family leave policy. According to DUs faculty parental leave policy, in the section entitled Simultaneous leave they state: "If both parents are employed by the University of Denver, either may utilize the paid Parental Leave, but not both."

This information seems to contradict a parents experience utilizing DUs simultaneous leave. In an interview with a student this parent stated:

"If it was only me working at DU I think I would have gotten an automatic 10 weeks off. But because my wife works here too we have to share 12 weeks of paid parental leave. And that doesn't end up working out very well as like a faculty member I can take all of the 12 weeks or none of the 12 weeks of parental leave because DU is on Quarters."

The parents' response seems to suggest that when both spouses are employed at DU, they are allotted two additional weeks of leave on top of the ten that are usually provided and are supposed to share these weeks among themselves. However due to the work commitments and the quarter schedule, if one parent chooses to take leave, they must do it for the whole quarter, which leaves little to no option for their spouse to use the remaining weeks. This parent ended up using the standard ten weeks of paid paternity leave while his wife got six unpaid weeks off through disability leave since she had just given birth.

Two things are troubling about the parents' experience.

*1. It suggests that DUs simultaneous leave policy is not accurately described on the website.*

The brief statement made about DUs simultaneous leave policy does not communicate to people that parents who both work at DU are allowed more weeks of paid family leave than the original parental policy. Nor does it suggest that these weeks could be shared among the parents.

*2. The policy is unusable &/ is not being communicated clearly to the parents.*

If more weeks of parental leave are indeed available to parents that are both employed by DU, it seems as though the structure of DU makes it nearly impossible for both spouses to take advantage of the benefit. If this is the case, the policy should either be restructured or removed altogether. However, it is also possible that this parent simply misunderstood the terms of the simultaneous leave policy, in which case the university needs to improve communication about such benefits to avoid confusion.

DUs parental leave policy is the only one that received consistent and raving reviews from faculty and staff, however, every other policy or resource DU offered received decidedly mixed reviews. The most contentious of these being the Fisher Learning Center that is located on DU's campus and is often advertised as a childcare solution to parents at DU. In an interview one parent expresses his exacerbation at DUs promotion of Fisher commenting

“there’s the Fisher Early Learning Center right down here, and so when we’re hired here... [it] is dangled in front of us as something that will be kind of like a quasi-benefit when we work here, and then most of us find that’s not even[an option]... I would say that is frustrating to faculty who feel that is somewhat of an empty promise.”

Many of the participants mirrored this parent's frustration complaining that Fisher was too expensive, did not have enough space and charged parents to enter a lottery for entrance without posting a waiting list. Most of the frustration seems to stem from how Fisher is inaccurately portrayed as a wonderful childcare solution for DU parents. The history of the inaccurate portrayal of Fisher goes back many years. Dick Gartrell who used to be the director of human resources expressed in a 2006 article in the DU Clarion that

"he believes many parents have a mistaken impression of the role of the center. Fisher is an early childhood education facility and that makes it more expensive than many childcare centers... While Fisher does provide discounted rates for DU faculty, staff and students, the center is not meant to be a daycare facility for the campus."

Though the inaccessibility of Fisher for the majority of DU parents has been noted time and time again, nothing has been done to communicate this effectively to DU parents. Many of the parents interviewed referred to Fisher as a daycare and thought it was a place they could drop their kids off. Since many are still turning to Fisher as a solution to their childcare problems the Human Resources website for childcare options should strive to manage parents' expectations or accurately convey the cost or difficulty of getting into Fisher. Put simply as one of DUs premier child-care resources Fisher over-promises and under-delivers.

While the thoughts expressed on DUs offering of the Fisher learning center as a childcare option were very negative, there was an equally loud outcry over what people perceived as a great but discontinued program that offered emergency childcare. Many parents expressed that they ran into issues obtaining child care when plans fell through or when their children were sick and not allowed to go to day-care centers. A few of the parents referred to an old program the University used to offer that they felt was helpful, though none of the participants could identify the program by name our research revealed that it was likely the Workplace Options program instituted by Dick Gartrell in July 2007.

One parent describes the old service:

"...used to be that DU had like a number where you'd call and say "my kid has a fever of 104 and I need you to watch my child for two hours or I need babysitting care while I'm teaching" and DU would provide that service and it was a reasonable price."

Another parent continued:

"It was so helpful... and they took that benefit away and I needed it several times, and never had a bad experience with it."

Under the Workplace Options plan, emergency childcare is a shared cost "Parents pay \$2 per hour if they take their child to the daycare facility and \$4 an hour if someone comes to their home. The university pays the rest" Gartrell estimated the cost of the program to be around \$80,000 a year.

While many expressed that they used the hotline to schedule a babysitter none referred to using the option to take their child into "the daycare facility."

We are unclear as to what this daycare facility was. However, documentation of a Staff Advisory Council Meeting that took place at DU in May 2011 mentions a facility called Bright Horizons which offers daycare and backup care programs through employers. It's possible that this was the daycare facility spoken of in the article. In the meeting they note

Bright Horizons has been an option for three years and in that time has not been widely used. HR looked at the backup care plan and decided the amount of money spent on it and the lack of use was not worth it. That money was put toward the healthcare plan instead to help keep costs lower for the next year.

This discovery raised several questions for us:

1. *Was Bright Horizons part of the workplace options program that so many parents said was helpful?*
2. *Was this policy canceled at the same time the hotline was canceled?*
3. *What happened to workplace options?*

The history of DU's policy changes to the workplace options program is very unclear and it's possible that Bright Horizons is a plan that was different from the Workplace Options program instituted in 2007. In the same meeting, a member notes "HR is looking at a drop-in option that would be run by faculty and students who have cleared a background check, etc."

It seems as though the University is rehashing a road that has already been traveled. It's troubling that no concise information can be found about the successes and failures of previous DU policies. Information on these past plans would help refine the University's future approaches toward developing beneficial childcare policies and resources. More telling is that the cancellation of the Bright Horizons program was justified solely by its lack of use. A more in-depth approach toward determining whether or not to cancel Bright Horizons may have revealed that people were unaware of its existence.

While DU appears to be severely lacking in their offering of childcare resources, many of the parents interviewed who expressed satisfaction placed the majority of the credit on community support. Many revealed that the flexibility of bosses, department heads, and co-workers allowed them to feel comfortable taking time off, or asking for assistance when childcare issues arose.

## **Policies at Other Universities**

As DU continues to strive for inclusivity, current policies in place at the university are addressed. However, if one should search for policies regarding childcare at DU, you won't come across much. What can be found is a summary of the federal law; what schools should have and need to have in regards to people with children on college campuses. Looking at a provided list of the top fifty institutions, the top five were Purdue University, University of Michigan, University of Florida, Middle Tennessee State University, and University of Washington. (Snider et al. 2018) These universities are some of the many recommended universities to attend if you have a child whether you are a student, staff or faculty.

Our report highlights research done at Purdue University by their appointed Child Care Task Force, which is dedicated to the understanding that child care is essential to the quality of life. The task force included nine members from varying disciplines and departments, representative of parents, grandparents, family, friends, and colleagues of those with children. The university is attentive to the needs of parents based on their efficiency and updates with their task force reports. In 2013, the task force released a report entitled *Improving Child Care at Purdue University*, from which we pull the majority of our data. (Paulet et al. 2013) First, the university focuses on establishing how many student parents are at the university, and who they are.

“Population data was assessed through an evaluation of Purdue health benefits data with covered dependents at the West Lafayette campus. Employees who opt out or do not cover their dependents were not captured in these data. Information on students was provided by the Division of Financial Aid and retrieved from FAFSA applications. These data did not capture international students, who are ineligible for the FAFSA program, nor did it directly capture students who did not apply for assistance, and so these data will underreport unmet needs.” (Paulet et al. 2013)

Though the approach of the task force may underreport unmet needs, they were still able to establish that more than 4,700 Purdue families had children aged 12 and under. This data was more than enough for the Child Care Task Force to determine further action should be taken.

After review of related existing data, the task force conducted both peer analyses and local surveys. A campus-wide survey gauged the perceptions of Purdue in regards to child care, while community-wide surveys were conducted to assess the perceived usefulness of parent resources at Purdue. Results from the surveys highlighted four critical needs for child care: affordability, on-campus availability, flexibility, and quality. It also created a foundation for the Child Care Task Force to build their overall goals upon.

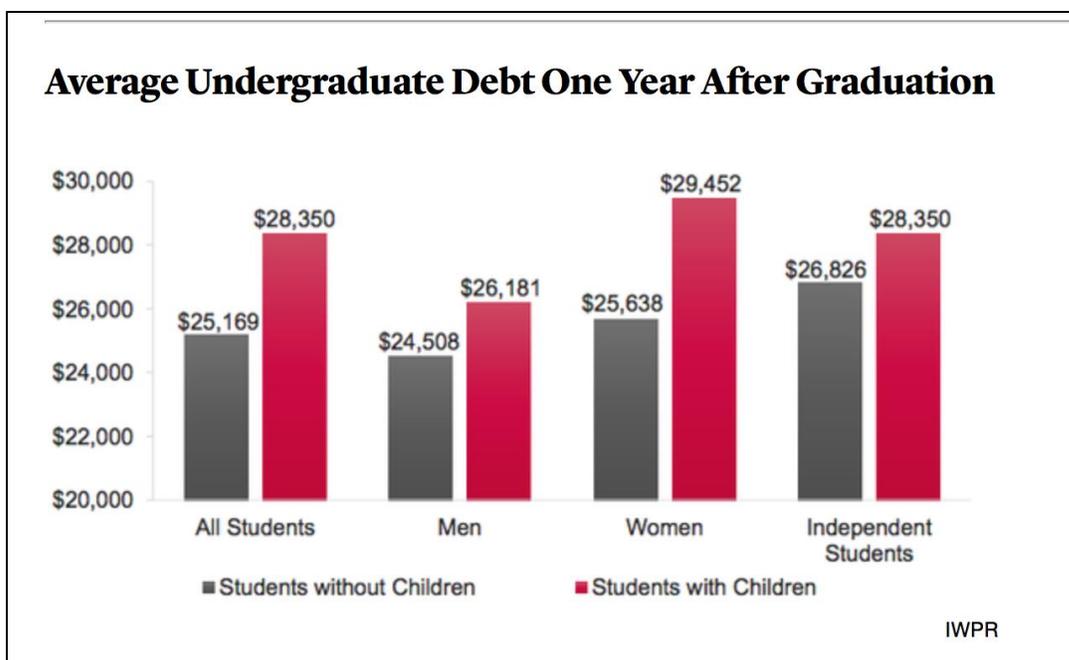
To more adequately support parents on campus, Purdue has implemented many useful policies and programs. For example, the university has three child care facilities, each with varying levels of support and engagement. Policies include flexible work arrangements that can be made with a supervisor, paid parental leave for new parents, and tenure clock extensions for faculty. They also provide flexible class scheduling for the parent and give them priority registration to help accommodate their schedules. The university offers an office that is dedicated to parent needs, even if it is just a friendly study space where a child may be present. In consideration of budget constraints, the school offers financial help for child care, provides small grants and helps refer parents to services and resources that may help them out.

One notable program was Purdue's Dependent Care Reimbursement Account. This is a dependent care FSA that employees may enroll in to save money on childcare. According to the report, employees may "elect to have salary deducted from their paycheck and directed to their dependent care flexible spending account before it is taxed. These untaxed funds are then available to reimburse eligible dependent day care services received during the calendar year." The school even helps facilitate family activities on campus with the children to keep them more involved. (Human Resources, 2018) Just by looking at the rules and resources provided by the university really helps parents on campus in all aspects, whether it's financial reasons, child care, or parental resources. This school takes into consideration many, if not all possibilities that might be faced as a parent on campus. Their responsibilities and aspirations are continually evolving as they strive to implement immediate, short-term, and long-term goals. Examples include fundraising, creating a dedicated HR position to address parental needs, and building additional child care locations on campus, respectively. Additional recommendations can be referenced in the "Child Care Task Force Report" listed in the annex.

Looking at additional universities that are part of the top ten out of fifty have one or two things the institution does or provides for parents on campus but doesn't have options like Purdue. Even schools that are labeled at the top in the nation have been criticized by many that solutions have not been working. For example, the University of Washington is number

five on the list yet many critics claim that it isn't good enough. These critiques make us ask, what are we doing wrong? What can we do to fix these problems with parents on campus? Will we ever find a solution? "But the portion of colleges offering on-campus childcare hasn't increased to keep pace with the demand, the institute found. It has declined." (Krupnick, 2017) That statement alone allows us to believe it isn't the policy. It's the institution. "The reasons behind the declining availability in childcare are varied, potentially a mix of both budget constraints and academic culture, says Barbara Gault." (Gilian, 2014) The University of Purdue's Child Care Task Force is up to date and actively works to improve policies. In fact, Purdue's Task Force report is the more recently updated one out of other universities; the University of California Santa Cruz was last updated in February 2011 (Barnes et al. 2011) and University of Michigan last updated their report of October 2004 (Yeo et al. 2004).

Even though continually updating policies would be beneficial to keep up with the ever-changing landscape of childcare needs, it's important to keep in mind the monetary ramifications. According to the Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2017 Report conducted by ChildCare Aware of America, child care is "one of the most significant expenses in a family budget, exceeding the annual cost of transportation and food combined in every region in the United States." (ChildCare Aware 2017) These parents are also likely to have a lower income with a high undergraduate debt. "That makes subsidies, like the federal funds that support childcare at colleges, particularly important. But some of those services have also been reduced." (White, 2014) The chart below shows the debt discrepancy between students who are parents and student who are not. In the Atlantic post written by Gillian White, he claims not only will on-campus childcare be critical but it will help parents graduate and have a better job under their belt. Giving on-campus child care allows a parent to spend less time and money commuting from home to a daycare/school but also makes their daily routine simpler than before. The policies that need to be taken into consideration here is being able to help parents on college campuses but also to consider why child care on-campus is beneficial in the first place.



**Source: Gault et al 2014.**

## Concerns

Based on current findings, it is evident that the university has little in the way of support for DU parents. While DU’s policy of up to ten weeks paid medical leave is generous, it seems to be the only one that goes beyond federal regulations. Overall, support services for faculty, staff, and students are either incredibly limited or not readily accessible. The University Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential resource for all faculty, administrators, staff, and their dependents. While it is marketed as a support program that offers counseling for stress (which often relates to work-life balance), it is only free to those eligible, and eligibility requirements are not listed. (“Employee Assistance,” 2018) Again, finding support services for parents at DU proves to be much more difficult than one might expect.

## Suggested Solutions

Based on interviews with students, staff, and faculty, as well as our difficulties tracking down information, it appears that the visibility of resources and decentralized information keeping are obstacles to securing a favorable environment for parents on campus. To remedy the concerns that the University’s policies are not accessible enough to staff, faculty, and students, parent and family resources should be compiled into a webpage or brochure. Information collected should include federal, state, local, and University policies that affect parents. Wellness and support services should also be included. The Center for Multicultural Excellence, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the Health and Counseling Center may be places that should consider putting forth resources for childcare and parenting. From

research and interviews, lack of support from the University is felt by all. Addressing the accessibility issue would make a difference in the care culture that the University can develop.

Developing a toolkit to support parents and assess future needs of parents is critical (Cruse 2017). A profile of existing resources and policies should be created, containing on and off-campus services and facilities, financial resources, and parent-centered communities. Moving forward, the institution should collect data about students, staff, and faculty who are parents to assess the need for future policies. Other programs that may be effective, as utilized by many other universities, include financial aid packages and priority registration.

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## **Annex**

### **1. University of Denver Parental Leave Flow Chart**

[https://www.du.edu/human-resources/media/documents/parental\\_leave.pdf](https://www.du.edu/human-resources/media/documents/parental_leave.pdf)

### **2. Recommendations from Purdue University's Child Care Task Force Report- Oct 16, 2013 "Improving Child Care at Purdue University"**

#### **K. Recommendations**

The task force survey responses follow four key themes: affordability, on-campus availability, flexibility and quality. To address these critical issues we recommend the following:

#### **K.1. Long-term actions (greater than one year)**

7. Build an additional child care center on campus or near campus with an emphasis on infant care needs and expand the existing Patty Jischke Center by two classrooms. The task force proposes an additional center be built on or near campus that can accommodate a minimum of 116 children with close to 16 slots being dedicated to infants. Additionally, expanding the Patty Jischke Center will add up to 20 slots.

8. Evaluate what Purdue can do to support special needs care The task force recommends a committee be assigned to not only look at what the needs are for this community, but what services already exist at Purdue that can be integrated into a program to assist parents. A preliminary assessment and recommendations should be completed by the end of the 2014-2015 academic year.

9. Evaluate summer care for school age children in trimester system. If Purdue moves to a trimester based system, we recommend a committee be assigned to evaluate the child care needs of impacted faculty, staff, and students on summer care for school age children as well as what options can be made available.

#### **K.2. Short-term actions (greater than six months but less than one year)**

10. Create a child care coordinator position within Human Resources that is dedicated to finding and maintaining solutions for the following recommendations.

Contract with a provider who can offer flexible backup care services to employees/students including sick, emergency, short-term, nanny, or non-traditional hourly care.

Implement a childcare center in addition to a faculty recruitment and retention program.

Develop a program to assist with subsidizing dependent care travel grant during official Purdue University travel.

Seek accreditation for Purdue Village.

Create a database program where all Centers on campus could be integrated for registration and maintenance of waiting lists.

Develop marketing/reference materials to reflect family-friendly policies and services available to the Purdue community while enhancing the website as well.

Collaborate with the Child Care Resource Network by establishing a process for the CCRN to connect and reach out to Purdue faculty/staff who interview at the University and/or become new hires with children.

Apply for CCAMPIS grant from the Department of Education, when it becomes available, to support or establish campus-based child care programs primarily serving the needs of low-income students enrolled in IHEs.

Evaluate ability to coordinate Purdue break schedules with greater Lafayette schools.

Collaborate with the Recreational Sports Center to provide drop-in care/activities during exam weeks.

Expand lactation support resources on campus and increase the number of rooms available across campus.

Create a central site where information on summer and spring break camps can be collected.

### K.3. Immediate actions (less than six months)

11. Develop and initiate a campaign to raise funds to support the affordability of childcare for employees and students in lower pay tiers, while incentivizing child care centers to maintain or increase the quality of care on the Paths to Quality scale

12. Secure a variety of slots in accredited or PTQ4 community facilities to aide in direct recruitment or retention needs.

## 4. FAMILY-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS IN DU CLASSROOMS

by [Kassandra Neiss](#), [Kirsten Fetrow](#), [Rebecca Kelley](#), and [Sophie Van Den Handel](#)

### Introduction & Background

Last year (2017), a cultural anthropology class taught by Dr. Alejandro Cerón was tasked with unpacking the perceptions of work/life balance held by members of the University of Denver community who are parents to children under the age of ten. The findings from this study showed that those within this community at DU had a lot to say about a number of aspects regarding their work/life balance, one of which being a lack of family-friendly environments on campus.

Because of this study that was done last year, our applied anthropology class was tasked with finding practical solutions to address some of the concerns that were brought up by this community. Of the concerns that were presented to us, only a few seemed to be feasible as far as finding practical solutions within the time constraint of ten weeks. With this in mind, the class divided into research groups tasked with separate goals aimed at finding practical solutions to these concerns. This section is the report generated by the research group tasked with exploring how to remedy the lack of family-friendly environments on campus. The group members are Kirsten Fetrow, Rebecca Kelley, Kassandra Neiss, and Sophie Van Den Handel.

When approaching the topic of family-friendly environments on DU's campus, we defined it as a space where people within DU who have parental obligations feel respected. Upon reading and reviewing the interviews from the 2017 study, we found that the lack of respect and the unwelcoming atmosphere for community members with young children was in large perpetuated by negative attitudes from community members who did not understand the struggle of raising a kid in a University. One such example of this comes from a student interview discussing the difficulty of meeting up with peers: "And you know, it's like these horrible awkward times and I think some of that stuff you're just kind a like 'Really?' And you can never say, 'You know that's pick-up time. Would it be okay if we met earlier?'...I could maybe say 'I'm unavailable at that time, could we meet, noon would be better for me. I could meet for 2 hours at noon!' But you don't feel like you can say it's because of my kid" (ANTH 2010, 2017).

We also looked at a report drawn up by the Institute for Women's Policy Research that discussed the Student Parent Success Initiative, an initiative that sets out to support students with dependent children. According to this report, about "26 percent of undergraduate

college students have children” (Institute for Women’s Policy Research 2018). After this initial research period, we decided the best way to approach the concern about family-friendly environments was to learn what solutions pose the least resistance from nonparent community members and finding out what objections to these solutions exist. With respect to our previous definition of family-friendly environments and our knowledge of who stands counter to the creation of such environments, we felt it vital to sample a population where the majority of individuals do not have children. With such demographics, we were able to specifically examine how well or ill-received our solutions would be and better understand the origins of the negativity felt by students with children. To this end, we sought to answer this question: What communication strategies support family-friendly classroom environments for both faculty and students?

## Methods

In order to have the most constructive impact on the DU community, we approached our research goal specifically in the classroom environment. Although we are aware that administrative offices and certain departments on campus do not strive for family-friendly environments, we felt that the classrooms would provide a valuable insight to our goal. In attempting to sample a population where the majority do not have kids of their own, students seemed the obvious choice. However, we believed that finding constructive solutions for the betterment of respect within the classroom environment can be a great stepping-stone to informing other solutions that can be implemented campus-wide.

We approached our research using both quantitative and qualitative methodology. We collected our data via electronic surveys consisting of seven Likert-like questions, seven binary questions, one multiple choice, and nine open-ended questions, to which participants were allowed to respond anonymously and skip when desired. In order to detect direct trends in our data and take full advantage of limited time, we implemented a survey method in which we used an online platform (Google Forms) to distribute our questions with maximum utility among non-probabilistic samples of students (graduate and undergraduate) and faculty members within the school of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) at the University of Denver (DU), with special focus on Anthropology, History, Psychology, Religious studies, and Communication studies classrooms. We also distributed paper copies in classrooms to increase the number of responses and manually entered the responses into the digital database generated by Google Forms. Certain demographics were collected on the sample including gender, age, role in DU community, and whether the respondent had kids and if so, the age ranges.

The survey questions were informed by internet research and analysis of existing data. We conducted prior research on pre-existing child care programs, policies and work spaces within other universities (such as the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor) (Best Colleges 2018), and read through chat room threads (Yahoo as of 2018) to better understand how others maintain, or reject, a family friendly classroom environment in university settings. We

also reviewed the report and transcripts from the 2017 study (ANTH 2010, 2017) to better understand the specific concerns that were present in the DU community. In doing so, we eventually decided that we needed a better understanding of current climates and attitudes at DU as well as the need to test opinions on certain programs/methods that were the most effective in other higher education institutions. Our survey questions were designed to gain opinions of students without parenting duties regarding our possible solutions, such as skyping to class, flexibility with tardiness, and a Bring Your Kid to DU day. After completing the first draft of our questionnaire, we had 16 of our classmates in the Applied Anthropology course test run our survey to validate questions and look for areas of improvements. The students provided useful feedback, and we adjusted the phrasing and ordering of our questions based on both the feedback we received and the data results.

Our recruitment process involved both sending email and distributing in person. Surveys distributed via email were sent to an undergraduate Psychology class and two professors in the Religious studies department, one of which responded and disseminated the information in their class. In person distribution occurred in two undergraduate anthropology classes, one undergraduate history class, and one graduate communications class. Receiving responses from digital recruitment efforts proved difficult because we were unable to ensure the recipients checked their email or would take the time to respond.

## **Data Analysis**

The majority of respondents did not have children, so our results will be weighted by the opinions of these students. As mentioned previously in this report, community members who are unfamiliar with raising children in a University setting are frequently the ones who perpetuate the un-friendly atmosphere. When attempting to cultivate respect between individuals of different domestic realities suggested solutions should be acceptable to all parties. In other words, we hoped that we would be able to identify solutions that posed the least resistance from non-parent DU community members and learn what possible objections exist to these solutions.

Our survey included both qualitative and quantitative data. As such, we used a mixed method analysis. The Likert-like and the binary questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics, which are presented in tandem with the themes found in the qualitative data. The Likert-like questions were ranked on a scale of 1-7 with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 7 meaning strongly agree. Due to the survey platform used (Google Forms) we were unable to give each number a specific label (i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, neither disagree nor agree, etc...). As such, throughout this report we will refer to numbers chosen by the respondents. For the purposes of analysis, we at time say that a certain number of respondents to some extent agreed/disagreed. When we claim that respondents disagreed with the statement provided, we are referring to the lower numbers on the Likert-like scale (1,2, and 3). When we claim that respondents agreed with the statement, we are

referring to the higher numbers on the Likert-like scale (5, 6, and 7). All binary questions posed were yes/no, and respondents were provided with an alternative option such as “maybe” or “I don’t know.” Certain questions received a high percentage of alternative options indicating that the question possibly could have been reworded to be clearer or get a more direct answer.

In the analysis of the qualitative, or open-ended, questions we identified emerging themes and coded the responses accordingly. The following themes were found: Communication, Disruption and Distraction, Empathy Towards DU Parents, and Fairness.

### Sample and Demographics

Our total sample was 78 participants (N=78), although survey questions were voluntary and some participants chose not to respond to every question. The majority (44) of the respondents came from one undergraduate anthropology class while the rest came from a variety of avenues in University of Denver’s School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, including in-class surveys and email recruitment in Anthropology, History, Psychology, Religious Studies, and Communication Studies departments.

We asked for respondents what their roles in the DU community was and 67 (80%) identified as undergraduates, 7 (9.1%) identified as graduate students, 2 (2.6%) identified as faculty and one respondent identified as an alumnus. One respondent declined to answer. (See Figure 1)

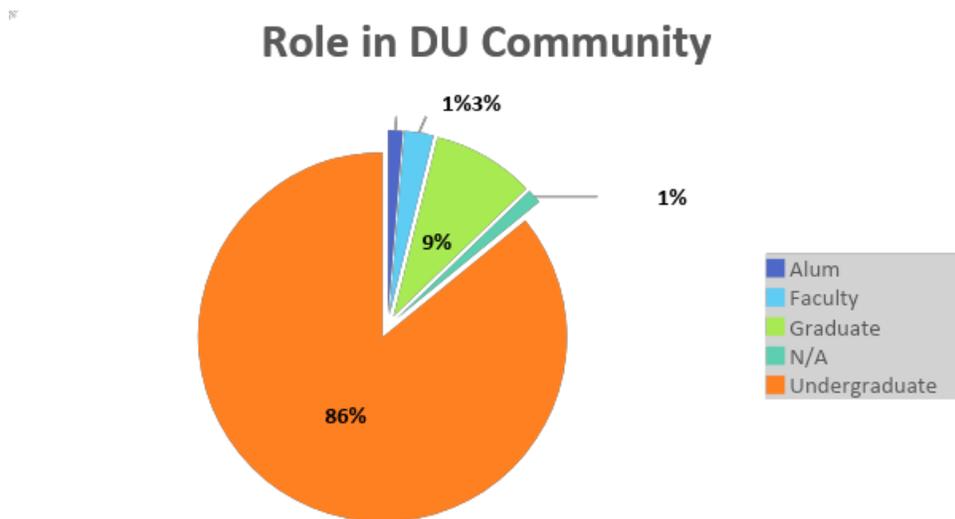


Figure 1

Respondents ranged from 17 to 52 years of age. The majority (86.7%) of respondents were between the ages of 17 to 24 years, with 29 (38%) respondents falling between ages 20 to 21. Three respondents declined to provide their age. (See Figure 2)

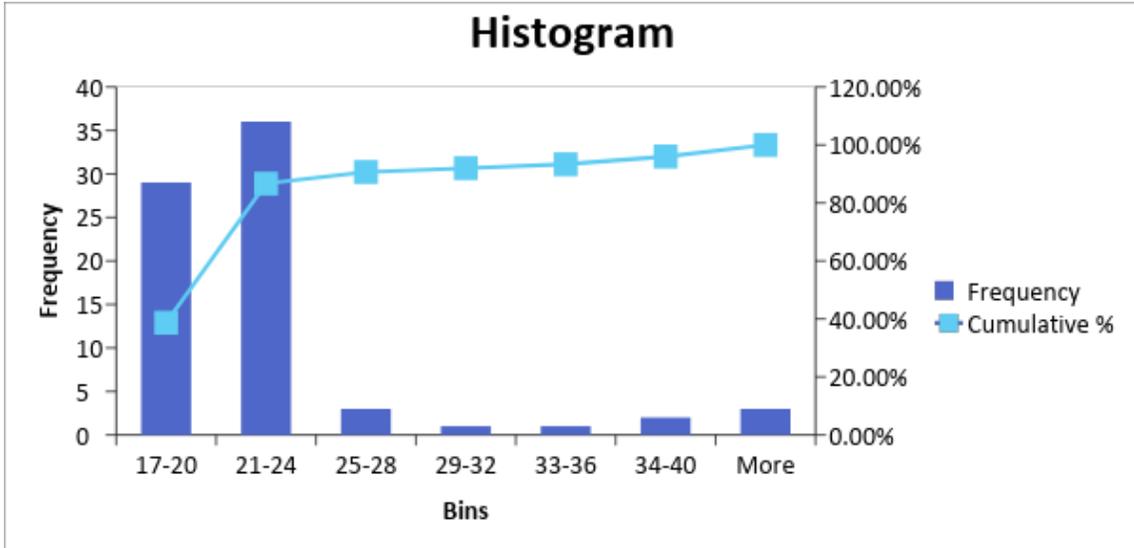


Figure 2

Our question on gender provided the following options: “Feminine/women, masculine/man, non-binary/trans/fluid/queer, prefer not to say, and other.” 64.9% or 50 respondents identified as Feminine/Woman. Masculine/Man was 35.1% or 27 respondents. One individual did not respond to the question. (See Figure 3)

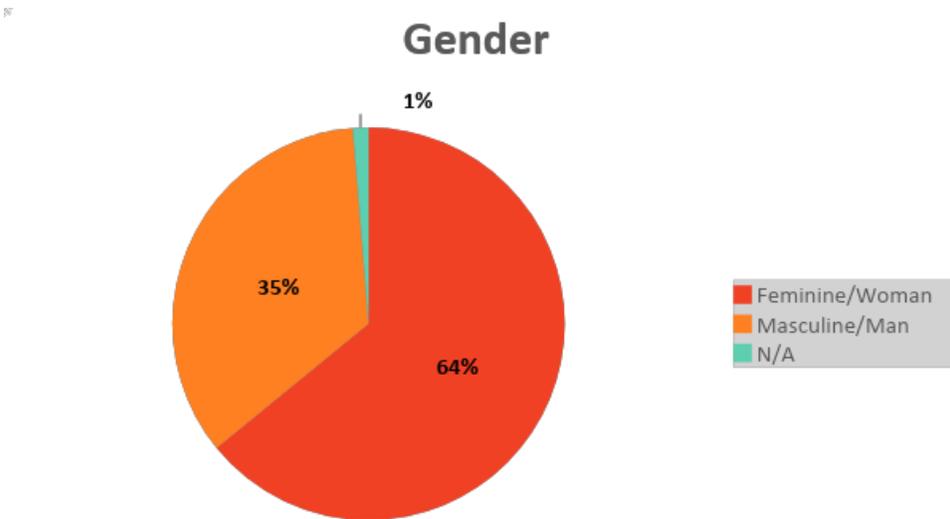


Figure 3

Our last question regarding demographics asked whether or not the respondents had children and if so what ages their children were. Of the 76 who responded to this question 70 did not have children, which made up 89.7% of the participants. Two respondents have children between the ages of 0-5, one has a child between the ages of 6-10, one has a child between the ages of 10-14, and two have kids ages 15 or older.

	<i>Frequency</i>
No Children	70
Kid(s), 0-5 years	2
Kid(s), 6-10 years	1
Kid(s), 11-14 years	1
Kid(s), 15+ years	2
N/A	2
Total	78

## **Descriptive Statistics**

We have grouped the statistics into two categories: (1) attendance policies and (2) policies about children in educational environments. Both categories were framed to test reactions to solutions that allow parents flexibility in educational environments.

### **Attendance Policies and Communication in Classrooms**

Our first Likert-like question asked participants whether they agreed with the following statement: “All professors should have a specific number of days students are allowed to be absent from class specified in the syllabus.” Of the 78 respondents 47 (60%) marked 5, 6 or 7, agreeing to various degrees that specificity of attendance policies on the class syllabus would be preferred. More than a third, 37%, strongly agreed with this sentiment. However, 15 respondents (19.2%) neither agreed or disagreed. (See Figure 4)

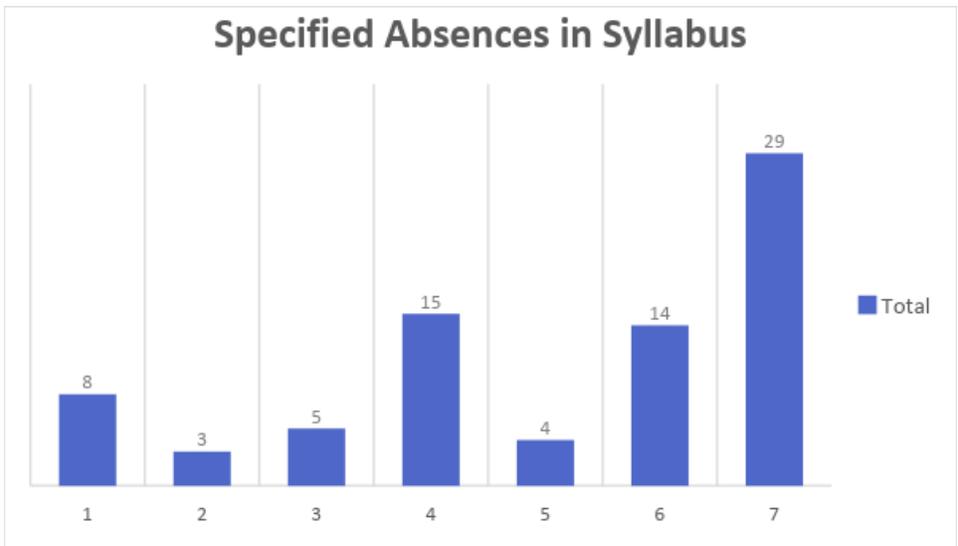


Figure 4

Our survey included one question specifically targeting student respondents, asking whether or not they agreed with the following statement: *“I think that my professor in this class has been clear about their policies regarding students with parental duties.”* Only 11 (14%) of student respondents marked 5, 6 or 7, indicating they felt that their professor had been clear about policies regarding students with parental duties. Although a quarter of participants landed in the middle of this scale, and 39 or 50% or respondents disagreed with this statement to some extent. (See Figure 5)

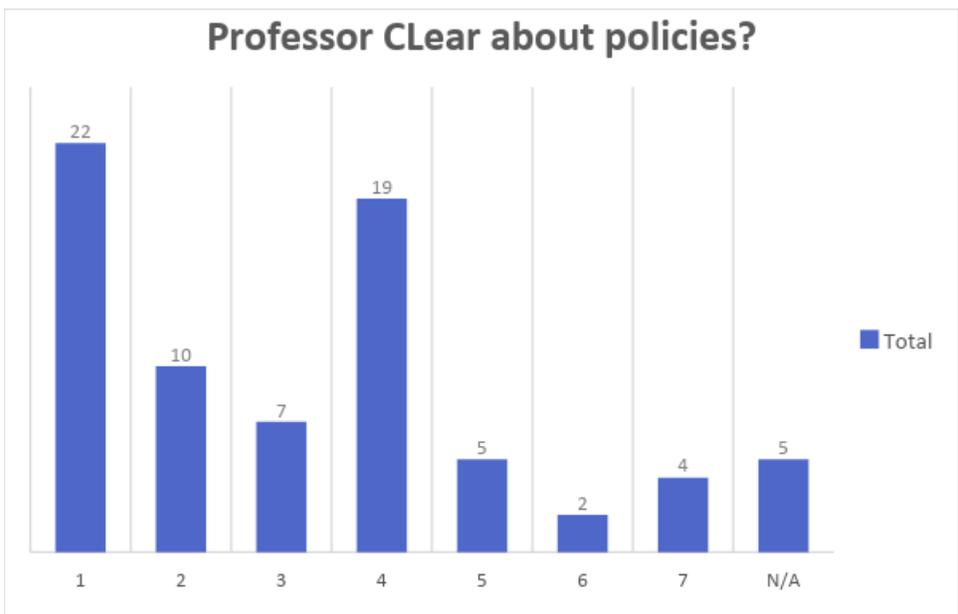


Figure 5

When asking respondents to rank how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statement, *“I would prefer it if students with kids came to class late (or left early) rather than*

bringing their kid to class” the responses were varied and inconclusive. Of the 75 participants who responded to the question, 41% marked 3, 4 or 5 indicating no strong feelings one way or another. 25 or 32% of the participants marked 1 or 2 on the disagree end of the spectrum and 18 or 23% marked 6 or 7 indicating their agreement.

Similarly, with the following Likert-like question, “It is reasonable for a student with children or other family obligations to skype into class” the responses varied. 46 (59%) of the student agreeing to some extent, but 41% marked 3, 4 or 5 and one respondent declined to answer. Although there is a general trend toward agreeing with this, many participants did not feel strongly one way or another.

### Policies on Children in Educational Environments

The questions on policies regarding children in classrooms and on campus were also designed to test possible solutions that would be acceptable to non-parents. To the question regarding opinions on “I have no problem with a student or teacher bringing their child to class as long as the child is not disruptive”, 68 (87%) of the respondents agree to some extent (marking 5, 6 or 7) that there was no problem bringing a non-disruptive kid to class. Furthermore, 5 of the 6 respondents with children rated their position to this question as highly agree (7). When organized by gender, women frequently agreed with this statement with 46 of the 50 women responding with 5, 6, or 7. Although 21 of the 27 men also fell on the scale of agreement, it was only respondents that identified as masculine who marked strongly disagree (1). (See Figure 6)

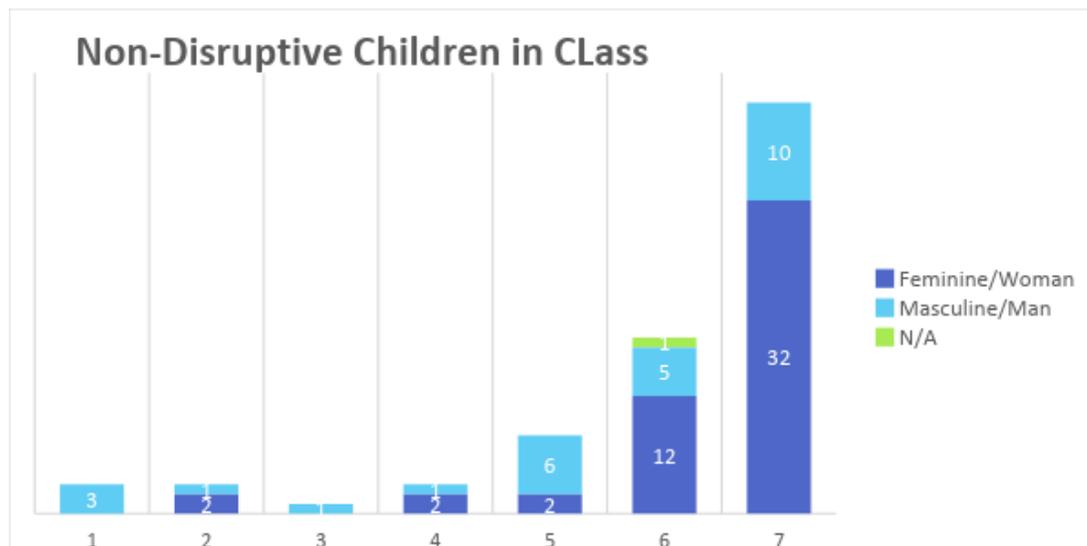


Figure 6

Participants were then asked if they agreed with the following statement: “I think that children should never be allowed in classrooms.” This question was met with much disagreement, 60 (77%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement but

gendered responses varied. One participant declined to respond to the question. (See Figure 7)

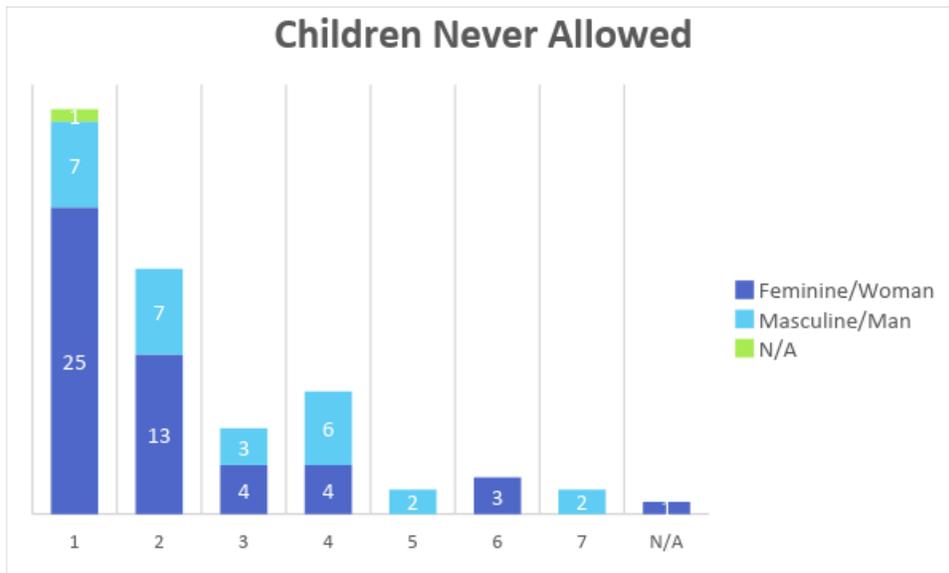


Figure 7

Attempting to gauge the awareness of child-friendly spaces on campus, we asked “Are you aware of child friendly study spaces on campus?” To which the majority (82%) of respondents indicated they were unaware of any such spaces, an additional 12% indicated they were unsure of their answer. Only 4 respondents stated “Yes” they were aware of these spaces. All 4 Yes responses were undergraduates. Three identified as masculine, one as feminine. And only one respondent had used the space.

We also asked about willingness to work with peers on classwork or a class project if their child is present. (Question: Are you willing to work with peers on classwork or a class project if their child is present?) To which 68% responded “Yes” and an additional 24% “Maybe”. Only 5 respondents marked “No” and one declined to answer the question. Of the 5 “No” answers, 4 identified as feminine and all were undergraduates. (See Figure 8). Of these 5, three included comments on their survey about the importance of providing childcare on campus, but requested it be separate from classrooms and educational environments, indicating the need to support community members who have young children, but an aversion to having children in their educational settings.

## School work with child present

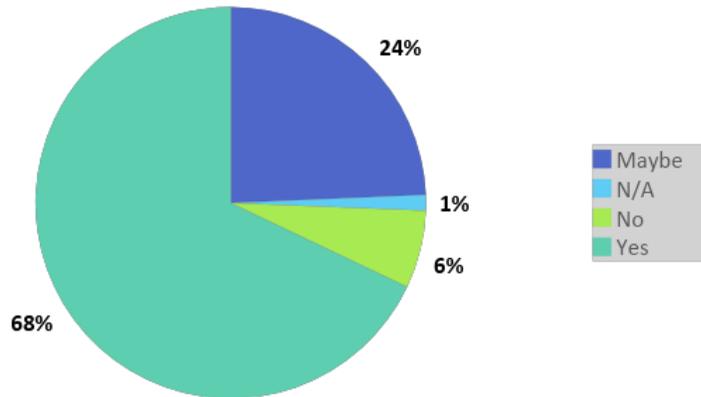


Figure 8

In order to identify knowledge of peers' home life on campus we asked, "Do you know which of your peers have children?" With 59% responding "No" and 10% as "I don't Know" only 23 of the 78 respondents, 30%, indicated they were aware which of their peers had children. (See Figure 9)

## Knowledge of Peers with Kids

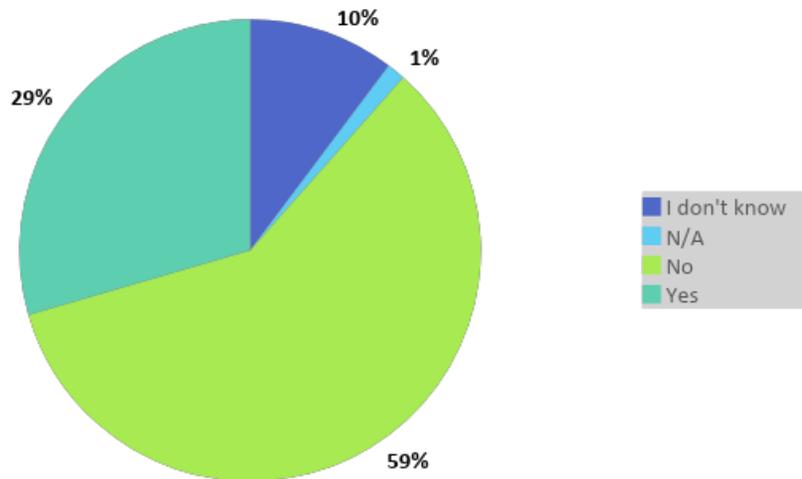


Figure 9

Interested in the overlapping of lack of knowledge of peers' home life and willingness to work with peers with kids, we pulled all responses for "No" indicating they did not know which of their peers had children and examined their willingness to work with peers with children present. We found that on the 46 participants who did not know which of their peers had children, 36 (76%) would be willing to work with children present. (See Figure 10)

No, I Don't know who has Kids: Would you work with kids present?

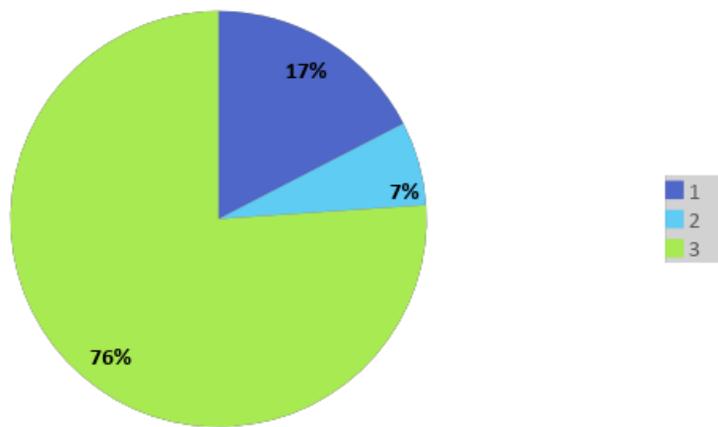


Figure 10

Lastly, we asked two specific questions about visibility of children on campus, the first was “Have you seen children in university buildings?” and then we asked respondents to tell us where they have seen children on campus. To the first question 81% of participants said they had seen children in University buildings. The second question was multiple choice with seven choices and respondents were allowed to choose more than one. We also included a “other” write-in. The choices were “With their parents/guardians, in daycare/childcare, at an event between 9am-5pm, at an event after 5pm, in a classroom, in an administrative office, and in a faculty office.” Most respondents, 84.6% had seen children with their parent or guardian, interestingly a large amount (46%) had also seen children at an event on campus between 9am-5pm. Three respondents added Anderson Academic Commons/Library to the other category. (See Figure 11)

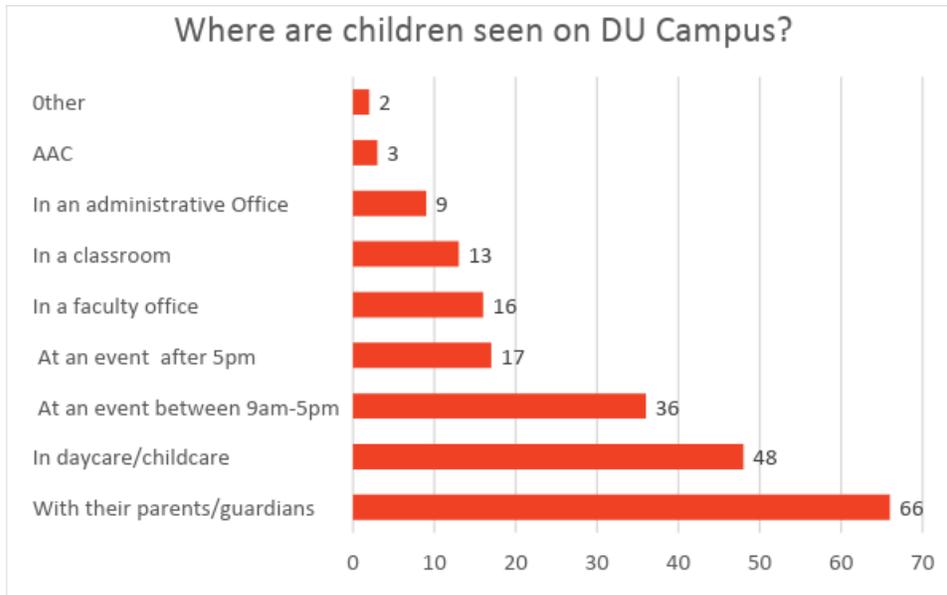


Figure 11

## Themes

For the open-ended questions, themes were identified by finding commonalities within the responses through words and meanings. A codebook was created using excel. The themes that were identified include Communication, Disruption/Distracted, Empathy Towards Parents, and Fairness.

### Communication

We define communication as conveying meaning to one individual or group from another. The survey responses illuminated two forms of communication: (1) A professor conveying class expectations and policies clearly and (2) communication between peers with children and peers without children. The importance of communication from the professor was demonstrated with our first Likert-like question when we asked participants whether they agreed with the following statement: *“All professors should have a specific number of days students are allowed to be absent from class specified in the syllabus.”* We provided the option for further explanation of their chosen response and a number of respondents expressed a want for specificity and clarity:

Quote 1: This allows for flexibility and clarity on absences.

Quote 2: Some professors don't explicitly state absence policies-I think that 2 excused

Absences is really reasonable as many people get sick or need mental health

Days to take care of themselves.

Quote 3: Some classes and students don't require attendance-this varies from student to student and class to class.

Quote 4: The "typical number" is 2 days, but some teachers don't specify.

Quote 5: It helps to develop a plan for an emergency case and lessens the stress level related to absences.

Quote 6: Helps understand how participation will be affected.

The responses to this question are examples of the first form of communication, that professors should convey class expectation to students. The responses to this question reveal that professors vary on how clear they are with the attendance policy. For instance, one participant said that "some professors don't explicitly state absence policies" (see quote 2). Several participants said that they felt it is essential for professors to clarify this. For example, one participant said: "it lessens the stress level related to absences" (quote 5) and another participant said it "helps [students] understand how participation will be affected" (quote 6).

Regarding the second type of communication, many participants indicated their comfort level with peers with children relied on the communication between them. The participants were asked: "What would make you more comfortable when working with a peer who has kids?" The following quotes are responses to this question:

Quote 1: Knowing beforehand if the other student was bringing their kids, also I hope the kid would have activities to focus on while we were working.

Quote 2: I can be flexible with scheduling a group but the peer's focus has to remain on the schoolwork.

Quote 3: Knowing that children would be present before the time we are scheduled to work together.

Quote 4: I think I would feel comfortable if the student knew his or her responsibilities so that the child does not cause problems.

Quote 5: Letting us know in advance.

Quote 6: Introducing the child.

Quote 7: That they would feel comfortable in talking about their needs and working together to figure out a best way to make work time productive and still supportive.

The responses that were elicited from this question demonstrate the second form of communication, that there should be open communication between peers with kids and those without kids. The majority of responses expressed a tolerance with working while their peers' children are present, but they would like to be made aware of this situation prior to working together. For instance, one participant said they'd be more comfortable working together "knowing that children would be present before the time we are scheduled to work together" (quote 3). Another respondent also said that they would want their peers with children to sustain open communication. The participant said they would want their peers

with children to talk “about their needs” to “make work time productive and still supportive” (quote 7).

## **Disruption and Distraction**

We defined disruption and distraction as some sort of interruption in the classroom that hinders the education of the students and/or the work of the professors. We asked participants whether they agreed with the following statement and to explain why they agreed or disagreed: *“I think DU students and faculty with children under 5 should be allowed to bring the kids to class if they have no childcare available (excluding laboratory settings).”* The majority of our respondents (55%) agreed to some extent that if there was no child care available it would be ok to bring a kid, 5 years or younger, to a non-laboratory classroom. However, the six respondents with children had mixed responses across the board and many people who could not agree, or not agree fully, with this statement provided further explanation for their position:

Quote 1: Although I understand the difficulties of the situation, many times children get bored about become a distraction of students focused on classwork/lecture. If class is okay with children present, then they should be allowed occasionally. There has to be a stress on the service (education) that people are paying a lot of money to receive.

Quote 2: Depends on the age. Can be too disruptive.

Quote 3: I am for this, but I would rather have childcare at the school available so the child isn't a distraction to everyone.

Quote 4: Not too fond of children in the classroom. A lot of the time children under are loud and distracting.

Quote 6: I disagree because often those children provide a distraction not only for the parent but for the entire class and that can disrupt any learning.

Among some of the participants that disagreed with this statement, they felt that children in the classroom would be disruptive to their education.

The participants were then asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *“I have no problem with a student or teacher bringing their child to class as long as the child is not disruptive.”* The following quotes were obtained when the respondents were asked to expand on their answers to this statement:

Quote 1: If the class is ok with a child attending with the parent, and the child is not disruptive. I see no problem with the situation.

Quote 2: My only issue with kids is their disruption. If they are silent and not distracting then I see no issue with them being in the room.

Participants were then asked if they agreed with the following statement: *“I think that children should never be allowed in classrooms.”* The following quotes regarding participants' choices indicate disruption as the factor of agreement/disagreement:

Quote 1: There are always exceptions providing they are not distracting.

Quote 2: Pay should be high enough that teachers don't have to disrupt the classroom.

Quote 3: Life happens and people might not have childcare. But they should try to not be disruptive.

Even though the majority of the participants disagreed with this statement, children being disruptive was still a prevalent concern.

Next, the participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *"I would prefer it if students with kids came to class late (or left early) rather than bringing their kid to class."* The following quote is a response to that question:

Quote 1: Just as distracting.

The next question that the participants were asked: *"Are you willing to work with peers on classwork or a class project if their child is present?"* The students were given the following answer choices: "Yes," "No" or "Maybe." The participants could also expand on their response. The following quotes demonstrate the Disruption/Distraction theme:

Quote 1: It depends on the level of distraction.

Quote 2: If the child is well-behaved I think it's fine.

Quote 3: It really comes down to the distraction they provide. When I get together to work on a project I like to be focused and get down to business. A child distracts from that work ethic then I'd prefer if they weren't there.

Quote 4: As long as the child is well-behaved and the parent is making sure that the child is well-behaved.

We then asked participants: *"What would make you more comfortable when working with a peer who has kids?"* The respondents said:

Quote 1: I'm comfortable with it as long as they aren't disruptive. Kids are great!

Quote 2: Just if the kids are well-behaved.

Quote 3: I wouldn't really be uncomfortable as long as the kid wasn't disruptive.

Quote 4: If they behave decently, not disruptive.

Quote 5: I am comfortable with my peers having kids, as long as it doesn't cause a huge distraction in class.

Quote 6: If they are calm and collected.

Quote 7: The kid not being annoying.

Quote 8: As long as their child is not disruptive to the learning process, I don't care.

Many participants expressed a concern that the child would be disruptive while working on a project with a peer who is a parent. For instance, one participant said they'd be willing

to work with this individual while the child is present “as long as the kid wasn’t disruptive” (See quote 3).

### **Empathy Towards Parents**

The next theme that was identified within the data is Empathy Towards Parents. This theme is defined as supportive comments that acknowledge the perspective of DU parents and the challenges these individuals may face in their work and/or school life. We asked participants whether they agreed with the following statement and to explain why they agreed or disagreed: “*I think DU students and faculty with children under 5 should be allowed to bring the kids to class if they have no childcare available (excluding laboratory settings).*” The following quotes are responses to this statement:

Quote 1: There is no harm in doing this! Our professors deserve it!

Quote 2: Why not! Children aren’t very distracting and many teachers have to juggle dropping their kids off/picking them up, plus childcare is expensive.

Quote 3: Like any other job this should be an option. They are a parent and professor and sometimes life happens and if they are still trying to make one job work they can bring the other.

Quote 4: If parents are not allowed to bring them into the classroom, then the school should be able to provide a daycare service for students.

About half (55%) of the participants agreed with the statement that children should be allowed in the classroom. Participants were asked if they agreed with the following statement: “*I think that children should never be allowed in classrooms.*” The following quotes are responses to this statement:

Quote 1: Sometimes we parents have no choice.

Quote 2: There is no harm in doing this.

Quote 3: Life happens and people might not have childcare. But they should try to not be disruptive.

Quote 4: Childcare is sometimes unavailable and having a child in the classroom really isn’t a big deal.

About 77% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that children should never be allowed in the classroom. The participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: “*I would prefer it if students with kids came to class late (or left early) rather than bringing their kid to class.*” The following quotes are expanded responses to this question:

Quote 1: It is a hard situation but, this may be a good compromise to attending as much of the class as possible and providing childcare.

Quote 2: Students deserve this flexibility!

Quote 3: As long as that is more convenient for them.

Quote 4: Depends on what works for them. We all have other obligations.

The next question that the participants were asked: *“Are you willing to work with peers on classwork or a class project if their child is present?”* The students were given the following answer choices: “Yes,” “No” or “Maybe.” The following quotes are responses that support the Empathy Towards Parents theme:

Quote 1: Understand that people have other obligations.

Quote 2: I’m not sure why this would be an issue!

The next question was: *“Would you support a Bring Your Kid to DU Day?”* The following are quotes from the responses we received for this section:

Quote 1: Parenting in the academy is hard. We need to understand that people have families and need support.

Quote 2: We work too.

## **Fairness**

We defined fairness as impartial and just treatment. There were two types of responses that addressed fairness: (1) responses that talked about what was fair to students who do not have children and (2) responses that discussed what was fair to DU parents. We asked participants whether they agreed with the following statement and to explain why they agreed or disagreed: *“I think DU students and faculty with children under 5 should be allowed to bring the kids to class if they have no childcare available (excluding laboratory settings).”* The following quotes are responses to this statement:

Quote 1: Unless the kid is crying the whole time I think having a child wouldn’t impact my experience.

This quote is a good example of the first type of response, that having children in class may not be fair to students without children and may “impact [their] experience.” The participants were then asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *“I think that children should never be allowed in classrooms.”* Here are some responses to this question:

Quote 1: Pay should be high enough that teachers don’t have to disrupt the classroom.

This quote falls into the Fairness theme and demonstrates what fairness should look like for both professors and students. For instance, the participant says that “pay should be high enough.” This has implications for the challenges that professors with children may face when trying to find childcare. This quote also alludes to fairness to students by saying that

professors shouldn't have to bring their children to school and "disrupt the classroom." The next statement asked participants whether they agreed with it: *"I would prefer it if students with kid came to class late (or left early) rather than bringing their kid to class."* Here are some responses to this question:

Quote 1: You risk losing too much information.

Quote 2: Students deserve this flexibility!

Quote 3: That is their personal responsibility, it should not impact other students or professors.

Quote 4: It was your choice to have a child, that child should only affect your education not mine.

Quote 5: Seems extremely unfair to ask someone to do so.

Quote 6: I think it is much more fair if they brought their kids and got to stay for the whole class that they paid for.

This question was pretty controversial. Some participants felt that it would be unfair to the student parents because "you risk losing too much information" (Quote 1). Further, one student thought it was unfair to ask student parents to come late or leave early because these individuals are paying to take courses (See quote 6). Other participants disagreed with the statement that students with kids should come late or leave early because they thought that it was unfair to the students who did not have any children. For instance, one participant said that he/she did not have a child and felt that his/her education should not be impacted (See quote 4).

Some other responses to question on our survey elicited responses such as "This is a university, not a daycare", "it was your choice to have a child, that child should only affect your education, not mine," and "That is their personal responsibility it should not impact other students/prof." All these allude to fairness in sharing an educational environment. When expanding on a response about allowing parents to be tardy or leave early, one comment got touched on both fairness to the education process, "I think it is much more fair if they brought their kids and got to stay for the whole class that they payed for."

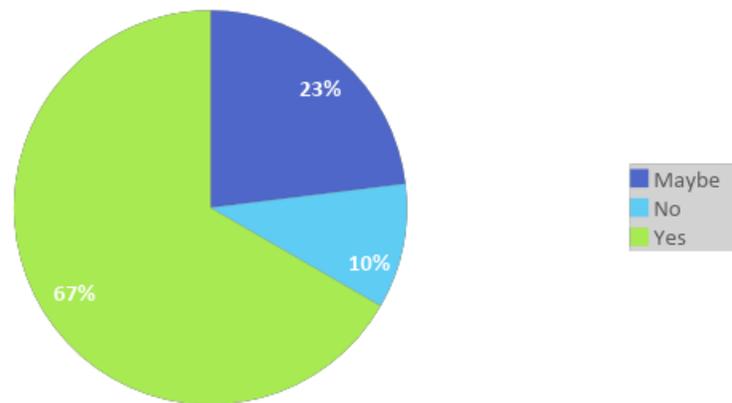
Another version of fairness was the flexibility with emergencies. For example, when asked if children under five should be allowed in classrooms if no childcare was available one participant commented "It is only fair." Another expanded on this sentiment in a response to the question about never allowing children in classrooms stating, "never is too harsh of a measure, I'd prefer no children in the classroom, but I'd be understanding if there's an emergency case." Other comments indicated that flexibility should be allow and there are always instances of exception from the rule.

## Bring your Kids to DU Day

Through our previous research we found that publicizing a ‘Bring your Kid’ day can benefit the community. We asked two questions on our questionnaire regarding such an event. The first “*Would you support a “Bring your Kid to DU” day?*” received support from 67% of the respondents with an additional 23% choosing “maybe”. One respondent was strongly in support and commented, “I attended an event with my parent at his college and it was highly influential.” On the opposite side, a participant who responded “No” commented, “Unlike a work environment, the focus has to be on learning for the majority of the class. Exception should be possible, but a full day may cause some student who find children to be distracting to not attend.”

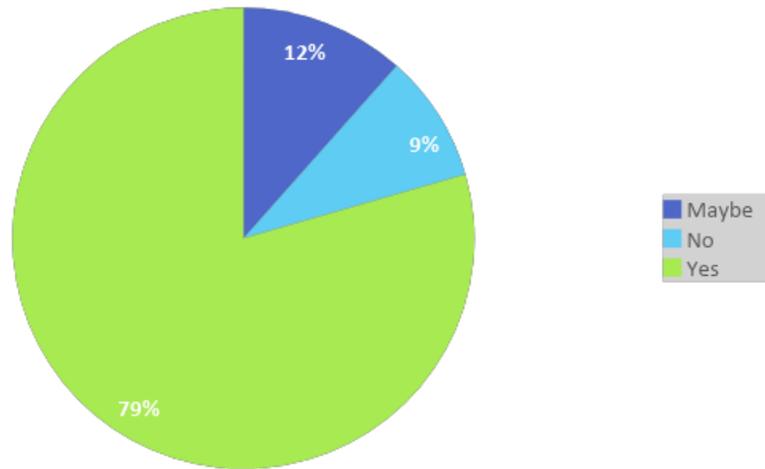
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### Support For "Bring your Kid to DU"



The second question specifically targeted the experiences of non-parents during this type of event, asking “*If DU had a “Bring your Kid to DU” day, would you feel comfortable interacting with the children?*” This question received a higher “Yes” rate at 79%. We noticed that while there are mixed levels of support for this event, more people said they would interact with the kids than support the event.

## Interactions with Children



In taking a closer look at these numbers we took all “No” and “Maybe” responses to the first question and examined their responses to the second question.

Would you support a Bring Kid To DU Event?	Would you interact with the children?	Total
<b>Maybe</b>	Maybe	3
	No	3
	Yes	12
<b>Maybe Total</b>		<b>18</b>
<b>No</b>	Maybe	1
	No	3
	Yes	4
<b>No Total</b>		<b>8</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>26</b>

Four of the eight respondents who are not supportive of a “Bring your Kid to DU” day would feel comfortable interacting with the kids, and 12 of the 18 “maybe” responses would also feel comfortable. This could indicate that although their preference may be contrary to the reality of the environment, they would still be part of an activity that was supported by the university.

## Discussion

The findings in this survey indicate a variety of positions on family-friendly environments. What seems to come to the forefront is the importance of promoting fairness and reducing possible disruptions in classrooms. Additionally, while there is already a good amount of support for community members with children there are individuals who feel the opposite.

The sampling used for this project does not allow us to draw generalizable conclusions from our data, but we are able to point to some pervasive themes and discuss the implications of our findings.

The objective for this project was to identify solutions that would be well received by non-parent community members and learn what objections exist. We found that there were some areas of overall agreement, for example Bring your Kid to DU Day was met with 67% approval, having specified absence days in the syllabus had 60% in support, and 87% agreed that it would be acceptable to have non-disruptive children in classrooms if no child care was available. Furthermore, 77% of respondents disagreed with the statement that kids should never be allowed in classrooms.

However, we found that while there are areas of agreement, there will always be individuals who run counter to the solutions proposed. Solutions such as leaving class early, tardiness, and skyping to class did not show conclusive statistics. Many respondents indicated the disruption in classrooms was highly undesirable because it disrupted the focus on education for both parents and non-parents alike. As such, creating a fair environment for all participants and limiting distractions to education were common overarching themes and should be used as guiding principles when creating solutions.

Although the majority of respondents, 81%, had seen children in university buildings, and 68% of respondents were willing to work with children present, only 30% of respondents knew which of their peers had kids. Of the 59% who did not know which peers had kids 76% were willing to do work with a child present. Some students even suggested that the topic of parenting in a university setting was not in their purview, commenting “I haven't thought about it or have children” and “I think this applies more to grad students because most undergrads don't have children”.

After viewing the trends in our data, albeit not generalizable, we see a need for clear communication and guidelines for each classroom. Although students with children are not a large population on campus they are inherently part of the population. DU's Impact 2025 Strategic plan on the Imagine DU website states that one of the four “transformative directions” for the strategic plan is “One DU: A diverse, inclusive, engaged and sustainable community that works independently and together toward this common vision.” Therefore, parents in the DU community need to be included in the conversation and to be included in the common vision we are all working towards. As such we pose two suggestions for addressing the issue of family-friendly classroom environments.

First, all professors should clearly state and set out at the beginning of each quarter their expectations regarding the presence of children in classrooms, attendance policies, discrimination and respect policies, and policies regarding students with parenting duties. These policies should be reflected in the syllabus regardless of, for example, whether or not the professor is tolerant of children in classrooms. We pose here that increased discussion

on behalf of professors, who are catalysts in our environment, will increase awareness of parents on campus and provide a framework of expectations rather than allowing uninformed students to define their own expectations. If professors were to make clear statements in class and on their syllabi about their policies regarding students with children, as well as other marginalized groups, this would alleviate the anxiety felt by the student body about how to react to a peer with children. Our data shows that only 14% of respondents felt that their professor had been clear about policies regarding students with children. We would like to see that number increase to 60%.

We argue that by making clear statements about policies regarding people with parenting duties, even if those policies vary from class to class, students with and without kids can make well informed decisions about their schedule, attitudes toward others, and expectations for their educational environment. This will also encourage non-parents to consider the possibility that they may be required to collaborate with someone who has children and the professor's policies will structure the classroom environment and expectations for how to approach such a situation. In order to ensure professors are upholding their part of this solutions we propose a question be added to the end of course evaluations similar to the one we asked on this survey, "Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: *'I think that my professor in this class has been clear about their policies regarding students with parental duties.'*" This is not only a method of evaluation of the professor's clarity on the subject, but also an incentive for professors to include such language in their syllabi to receive high marks on the evaluation.

Second, we suggest a highly publicized "Bring your Kids to DU" day that coincides with a day where Denver Public School is not in session. This would encourage students to get to know their peer's kids, making the kid and the parental obligations a reality for individuals who have not been confronted with such a situation. Although we will not provide a full logistical plan for such an event in this report, we suggest that having activities and daycare for this specific day would not only influence other students but also the children. One participant in our survey commented "I attended an event with my parent at his college and it was highly influential." And as represented in our theme "Empathy Towards Parents" many community members think that such an event would be "fun" and would "help lighten the mood on campus". Such a onetime event would take much less resources than attempting to provide daily childcare for the myriad age groups of children but would still convey the message that the University understands that members in our community are parents and they deserve visibility, respect and support.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, we found that individual agendas and opinions heavily influence the reactions to possible solutions to the issue of family-friendly environments and respect between peers. Whether a solution is well or ill-received and the reasons it may be accepted or rejected often relate to disruption and fairness in the classroom environment. After analyzing this

data, we believe that the best course of action is to provide structure and policies which will in turn direct attention to the issue and to decrease ignorance around the subject. This can be done through clearly addressing policies in the classroom and bringing awareness and voice to the DU parents in our community through an event such as “Bring your Kid to DU” day.

We aim to make DU a brave space, a space where discomfort is okay because it is a teaching tool. DU’s 2025 Strategic Plan’s Transformative Direction Four, One DU, contains four strategic initiatives. The first, Advance and Celebrate One DU, aims to “Strengthen engagement and celebrate life together”, “Be exemplary employer,” Promote flexibility and efficiency,” and “Identify and use best practices.” The second strategic initiative in One DU is A Community of Diversity, Equity and Inclusive Excellence which aims to “Create diversity, inclusive excellence plans for DU and units,” “Create a diversity dashboard,” “Expand searches and improve procedures to promote diversity,” and “Cultivate leaders committed to inclusivity”. We believe that the solutions presented in this report neatly align with these two initiatives. By creating environments that are directed and designed by the leaders in our community, but informed by the needs of the whole, we can create a healthy and resilient “One DU” that is both a safe space and a brave space for all members of the community.

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## 5. CHILDCARE OPTIONS

by Grace Going, Elizabeth Gouin, Blaise Van Brunt and Margaret Wolf

Childcare is one of the growing concerns for many parents, especially when there are so few resources and options. Today in the United States, childcare has boiled down to mean daycare options. However, this isn't what parents always want or what is always provided. The University of Denver requested the class to find solutions to the lack of child care raising options at the school. We started by finding out what options were currently available at the University of Denver and what options were available in the area. After that we conducted a survey to find the thoughts and response of parents to those childcare options. Following the survey, we looked at other schools and what they are providing for child care that could possibly be implemented into the University of Denver's program. The following report is the findings for each of these sections.

### Current Options at the University of Denver

In order to determine potential future childcare options it was essential to acknowledge the current ones that the University of Denver offers. The University of Denver provides a variety of information for parents who are part of the DU community. The table below describes what information DU currently offers regarding childcare, which can be accessed on their website.

Resource	Description
Fisher Early Learning Center	Enrolls children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. Families need to apply for enrollment. Link to Fisher's official page on website.
Student Nanny	Parents can post a babysitter/nanny job description on the student employment page. Link to employment website provided.
Ricks Center for Gifted Children	Enrolls preschool through 8 <sup>th</sup> grade. Need to apply for enrollment. Provides some summer camps. Link to Ricks official website provided.
After School/Holiday Childcare	DU athletic and recreation provides "school days off program" for children ages 6-12 years. This is available from 8:15am to 5:30pm.
Mommy Mixer	One hour long mixer. Moms and potential babysitters meet, discuss, and connect. Free for potential babysitters and \$100 for first time families. Link provided on website.
Online Discussion	For DU community parents. Allows for discussion about resources, childcare, etc.

Group	Link to discussion provided on website.
Qualistar	Childcare resource and referral network. Link to official Qualistar website online.
Kidstown Drop-in	A drop-in childcare center, accepting children ages 12 months to 12 years. Locations available in Parker, Highlands Ranch, Aurora, Broomfield, Castle Rock, Fort Collins. Link is available on website.
Other resources	Provides different links to babysitter websites such as care.com, sittercity.com, etc. Books, articles, videos, and data information provided through online resource library.

In 2006 the child care task force had made recommendations of ways to improve the options for parents who are members of the DU community. These recommendations included contracting with Qualistar, creating a ‘Work Options Group Benefit Package’ to provide backup child and senior care, and lastly collaborating with Fisher Early Learning Center to keep parents informed about available classroom positions. However, not all of these recommendations have been completely implemented. The three resources that are actually provided by the University of Denver are Fisher Early Learning Center, employment of a student nanny, and the Ricks Center for Gifted Children. The rest of the resources listed on the website are links for childcare options provided outside of the University of Denver.

Overall, what the University of Denver is currently providing has potential to be successful for the community. However, reconstruction of the University of Denver’s childcare website to make it more accessible to users as well as an increase in advertising for the options available could impact the use of these resources.

### **Local Childcares and Early Learning Facilities**

One important need that DU parents with children have is access to affordable child care near DU, or near where they live. If there isn’t care available near these locations then the parents may have to spend a lot of time managing the drop off and pick up.

We decided to contact childcare facilities to get a better understanding of the average cost of childcare, and to understand if there is convenient location of child care near campus. Even though most DU parents have probably already tried to find childcare places near campus for their kids it is possible they have not found certain places, and maybe our research can give them a good list of options for a place to put their children.

We found these childcare facilities by google searching childcare options near DU. We only contacted places within a 5 mile radius because those that are far from school would make it a hassle and time-consuming for the parents to commute each day. Young parents are

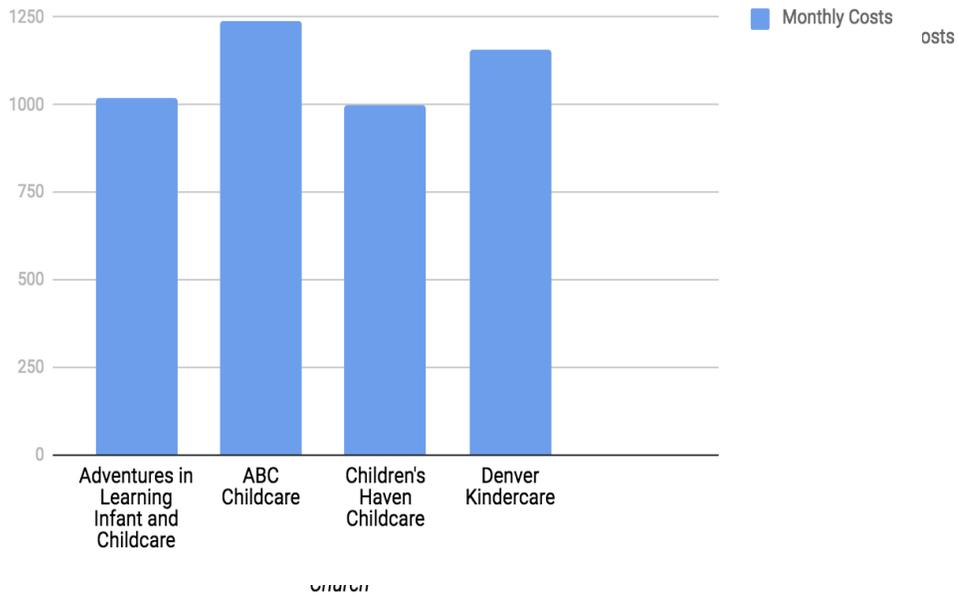
busy. We also decided not to call childcare facilities that had a bad Yelp rating because we don't want to point parents in the direction of a facility that is not good for your child.

We contacted 11 childcare facilities (some are considered early learning facilities and some are only child care, some are combined). Our findings are:

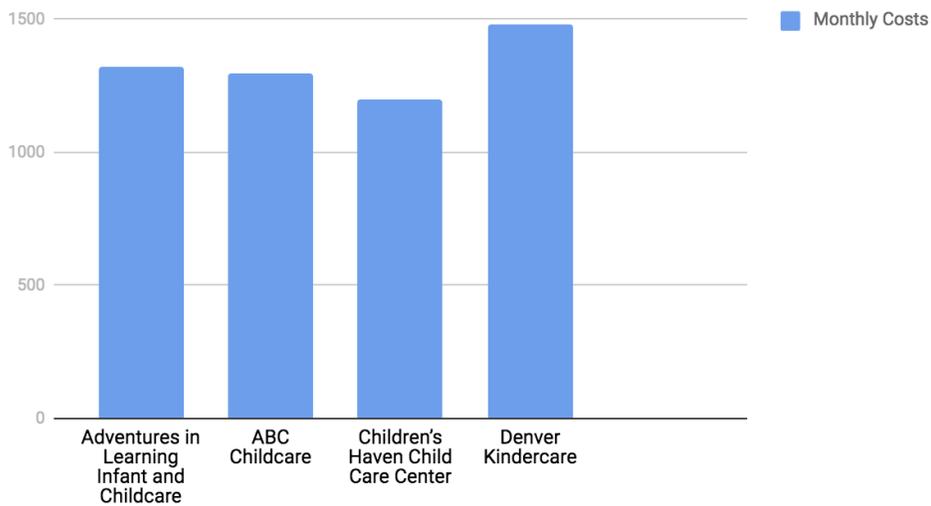
- The average price for monthly childcare was \$1,085 7 child care only facilities
- The average cost for infant care (of 4 facilities that offer infant care) was \$331 a week, or \$1,224 a month.
- For toddler care the average out of the 4 facilities is \$267 a week, or \$1,068 a month
- The least expensive early learning facility is Auraria Early Learning Center and it charges \$763 dollars a month
- The least expensive childcare is Daddy Mom Care and it is \$840 dollars a month
- Children Havens Childcare has the least expensive infant care and it would cost \$300 dollars a week, or \$1,200 per month
- The least expensive toddler care is also Children Havens Childcare and it is \$250 a week, or \$1,000 per month
- The largest childcare facility in the area is Seawall Childcare. There are over 9 locations in Denver and their average monthly cost is \$1,015 a month.

In conclusion, there are 3 childcare facilities within 2 miles of DU and the average price is approximately \$1,085 per month. While these facilities are not that far from DU the costs are likely to be a significant burden for most DU parent students. (For a better understanding of the local childcares I have a table that explains the costs, facility hours, address, average age, and availability of all the childcares, and early learning facilities that I contacted.)

### Toddler Average Cost



### Infant Childcare Costs



## What Parents at University of Denver are Saying

Based on the results from the survey conducted by a previous class it was obvious to us that parents who are affiliated with the University of Denver are not happy with the lack of reliable childcare options available to them. We wanted to gather our own data to see

what specifically parents are discontent with and what, if anything, they are pleased with. Gathering this data would give us the opportunity to compile a list of services to present to the administration as options that faculty, staff, and students who have children would find most beneficial.

We designed a survey and posted it to Qualtrics Survey Software online and then proceeded to distribute the survey to various student organizations and Facebook pages such as: DU Law Facebook Page, DU Natural Sciences and Mathematics Facebook Page, and the director of student organizations on campus, and I emailed Meghan Goddard, the AHSS student coordinator, so as to obtain as wide of a sample size as we could. We also asked students in the class to distribute the survey to anyone they knew who has a child.

The survey questions were as follows:

1. What is your affiliation with the University of Denver?
  - a. Student
  - b. Faculty
  - c. Staff
  - d. Other
2. What childcare options do you know that the University of Denver offers?
3. What University of Denver child care resources do you use?
4. What childcare resources do you use outside of the University of Denver?
5. Which resources do you find most beneficial?
6. Which resources do you find least beneficial?
7. What resources do you wish the University of Denver would offer in regards to childcare options?
8. What is your biggest challenge when it comes to raising children, overall?
9. How old is/are your child/children? (Select all that apply)
  - a. Infant
  - b. Toddler
  - c. Preschooler
  - d. Elementary
  - e. Middle school
  - f. High school
10. Have you completed an application for your child to Fisher Early Learning Center?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
11. How many times have you submitted an application to Fisher Early Learning Center?
  - a. 1

- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 5+

12. Was your child admitted to Fisher Early Learning Center?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Following the survey is a flier advertising the meeting on May 30<sup>th</sup>. The last three questions on our survey were geared towards the Fisher Early Learning Center group, with questions 11 and 12 being skipped if the respondent answered “no” to question 10 since they would be irrelevant.

When analyzing the data, there were obvious trends in that many of the parents who completed the survey were unhappy with the limited services offered by the University of Denver. We had a small sample size, consisting of nineteen respondents; however, even with our small sample size it was clear to see the dissatisfaction with how the university aids its affiliates who have children.

Some quotes from the survey are as follows:

Supervisors are supposed to be flexible if your child's school is cancelled due to inclement weather, etc. They used to offer back-up care, but I think that's no longer an option. They say that Fisher Early Learning Center is a day care option, but there really is no way for faculty to count on getting in there due to the high demand (it took my family 4 years before we gained admission).

Childcare is extremely expensive, so any kind of financial assistance or incentive is useful. Currently I don't receive any government assistance for childcare. I am grateful for my scholarship donor who specifically chose to support me because I have a child. I wish that there were more scholarships for students with children, to offset the cost of putting our children in daycare.

Family support and full-time preschool. I could not do my job without these forms of support.

I feel pressure to hide or minimize that I am a mother of young kids. From early morning meetings to lack of childcare at DU, I think our institution still operates as if we all have a partner

at home who doesn't work and can do the caretaking. This just isn't true for most of us.

These are only some of the concerns students, faculty, and staff at the University of Denver voiced. The majority of the responses we received were parents being frustrated with lack of after-hours childcare, because most of the people who completed the survey use Denver Public Schools or daycares while they are at work, but then if they have a late class or meeting, they are unable to find childcare. Most of the respondents voiced wanting to have some sort of childcare option specifically for students, faculty, and staff at the University of Denver, whether that is babysitters that are paid through a work study program or a daycare on campus that is reserved for parents who are part of the community on campus.

While our sample was small, with only nineteen responses, a survey was conducted in 2015 with over 1400 responses and the results were shared with our group. 97% of the people surveyed three years ago agreed that the University of Denver should be concerned with childcare for both faculty and staff of the university; 92% agreed that the university should also be concerned with the childcare needs of its students. When asked why, respondents gave answers such as:

Because it often affects an individual's ability to do their job.

It shows that you support and value your employees and their commitments to their families

That's a common stressor with parents it's important for us to feel that our children are safe, well cared for and if we're constantly stressing about it at work are we going to be putting forth our best efforts? Plus, if we can improve job performance and have the funding what's the harm?

Being a full time student and a parent is exceptionally difficult. Especially at a college as expensive as DU. In order to have inclusive excellence, DU needs to actively support ALL its students' needs, childcare is a big one of those needs.

Overall, the parents surveyed are not happy with the current services offered, they were not happy in 2015 and they are not happy now. The resources that are currently advertised to parents are not satisfactory for any of the people surveyed.

## **Solutions Supported at Other Schools**

One way to find solutions for childcare is to look at what other schools are doing to provide childcare services to their parents. After a google search on the top schools for parents to attend, I accessed the websites of some of the schools listed and found a variety of services

offered. One of the top schools for parents was Purdue University. They did their own research project and produced a brochure on how schools can improve service to parents as an institution. However, it is important to keep in mind that while these schools offer these services and have been ranked for having them, it does not mean that the parents are actually using them or that these services are the most beneficial for parents. Yet, these services do align with many of the solutions parents are asking for when it comes to childcare and these options are a good starting point to serving this demographic. As all programs go, it is important to implement and evolve the solutions as more research is found and better solutions are created.

The top school ranked for providing services to childcare was Purdue University (Best Collges.com 2018). While they had implemented a variety of programs and services in their school, the most significant production by the institution was the brochure on ways universities can assist parents. In the brochure “Remarkable Boilers”, they list their findings of what parents are struggling with most and identified ten ways the university can help (2018). The first one on the list is providing flexible class schedule which also ties in to the second option which is giving parents priority registration. These two solutions are trying to address the issue of parents juggling work, school, and time raising their child. By creating a flexible schedule of classes and letting the parents sign up for them first allows parents to manage their time and schedule better. The next two that go together are providing an office dedicated parents and refer them to services and resources. While an institution may be offering services to parents, if the parents aren’t aware of the resources, then the services aren’t being used to the fullest extent and the parents are still struggling. Implementation of programs are important but awareness of these programs and helping parents find which program and services best fit their needs is also important and a step that is often forgotten.

Another concern of parents is finances and there are three different solutions offered up by the Purdue brochure. One is offer small emergency grants for parents when money becomes tight. Another is helping facilitate emergency child care and the other is providing financial help for child care (Remarkable Boilers 2018). It is well known that raising a child is expensive and so is going to college at the same time. Providing some financial help will allow parents to worry less about money and more about classes. The last solutions they offered for parents are areas on campus that are child friendly and more family friendly campus activities. This addresses the issue of parents feeling unwelcome and isolated by the campus community. (See bibliography for Brochure link).

Other schools have implemented similar programs such as University of Michigan- Ann Arbor offers a “Sick or Backup Child Care” service that allows parents to have a baby sitter show up at their house to take care of the child in case of an emergency such as school being canceled or the child is sick (University of Michigan- Ann Arbor 2018). The school funds the baby sitters and keeps them on staff. The parent just has to sign up at the beginning of the year to have access to this service. By doing this, the school knows how many babysitters to keep on hand and which parents need this service. They also have financial assistance for

parents and have a link to a database of child care options in the vicinity with ratings. All of these services are common among the top-rated schools for parents to attend.

Some schools take a step further such as University of Minnesota- Twin Cities, has four different on campus child care facilities for their students, staff, and faculty. They also offer lactation rooms for mothers needing to breastfeed or pump (University of Minnesota 2018). University of Florida has on campus family housing to make living affordable and access to school and home easier (University of Florida 2018). All these options involve building and constructing spaces that are family friendly and address accessibility for parents.

All these different solutions can be broken down into four different categories; Policy Change, Program Implementation, Financial Assistance, and Building Facilities. The chart below is the summary what other university are offering that were outlined in this report. However, it is important to note again that these are just options that certain school thought to be best fitted to serve their demographic. In reports published through Institution for Women’s Policy Research, on campus childcare is the more important and successful route for parents. In one study they found that “the effects of campus child care access on student parents’ academic outcomes illustrates the important role it can play in parents’ postsecondary success” (Eckerson et al. 2016). It pointed to the conclusion that while other options are available, on campus child care has been the most beneficial to the success of students. Another study looked at single mothers and how their time is spent versus how female students without children spent their time. They found that “single mothers students spend less time on sleep, homework, exercise, socializing, and class” but spend a great deal more time taking care and providing for their child (Reichlin Cruse 2018). A solution posed to this is providing child care assistance to parents. Both articles point to having accessible, affordable on campus childcare as the best options for parents.

Policy Change	Program implementation	Financial Assistance	Building Facilities
Flexible Scheduling	Facilitating Childcare options	Emergency Grants	Lactation Rooms
Office for Parents	Family Friendly School Activities	Stipend Childcare	Family Housing
Priority Registration	Family Friendly Study Areas	Emergency Child Care	On Campus Childcare

## Conclusion

The University of Denver offers minimal child care options for parents. The options they offer are not viable or affordable for many of the parents. Even the child care in the area is a bit expensive and not always available for parents trying to stay in the area of University of Denver. What we found from the survey is that many people are unhappy with the child care options offered at the University of Denver and often do not know of the child care options that are offered. For these problems we found that many schools have implemented unique programs, which can be implemented in to the University of Denver's programs as well. However, it will be the responsibility of the school to choose which programs will meet the needs of their students from the information provided in this section.

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## 6. STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

by Alejandro Cerón

On Wednesday May 30<sup>th</sup>, from 12 to 2 in the afternoon, we held a meeting we called “Stakeholder Discussion: Finding Solutions for DU Community Members with Children,” which was conceived by the group of students and was organized by Elinor Brereton, anthropology graduate student. The goal of the meeting was to facilitate an initial dialogue around the main issues identified in our study. We advertised electronically and in person using all the means we could think of (e.g. email, social media, newsletters, physical flyers, word of mouth and more), and we were glad to have a very engaged conversation with seven participants—three staff, management or administration (with current roles at DU relevant to the issues); three faculty; and one undergraduate student— all of whom have experience with parenting. We keep their names confidential.

The meeting started with a short presentation of our findings, followed by break-out group discussions, and time to share discussion highlights as a larger group. We organized the break-out groups as follows: faculty group, administration group, and staff/student group. Each group, which had a note taker and a facilitator, discussed the topics of child care, family-friendly environment, institutional policies, and ideas for effectively find solutions.

A general summary of the outcomes of this discussion shows that all the participants showed interest in finding institutional solutions and were inclined to favor the creation of on-campus child care services. They also shared the positive experiences they have had in terms of family-friendly environments and attitudes at DU, but made it clear that they often felt like they did not know what to expect in different buildings or offices. Similarly, participants coincided in the need of having clearer policies that promote equity. Finally, it seemed clear that solutions to these issues cannot rely on volunteer parents but they should be institutionalized. These are some unedited notes taken during the large group discussion:

*The first topic was childcare and one group said that child care on campus is crucial. A drop in and out care was not a solution because many parents work full time jobs and need full time care. They wanted to make sure that DU was running the child care and it wasn't outsourced. Another group however, thought that in and out childcare was important because students only needed care for classes sometimes. This then brought up emergency childcare for when “grandma couldn't take care of the kids for that one day”. Several people nodded to this concept. It was brought up that DU had this care*

*previously but it went away and that perhaps looking into why that care option went away and why might be a good idea.*

*Another group talked about how there needs to be consistency with child care and the people who provide it so that parents can build up trust and connections with the people they are giving their child too. Several people nodded in agreement. The student talked about having children in classroom and how the anthropology department has been really good about her having to raise a child. However, she wouldn't want her younger child in the classroom because they will take away from the learning but allowing older child in the classroom might not be a bad idea.*

*There was an idea proposed about having childcare after 5pm so parents can attend seminars but then someone from the administration spoke up and said that Brown's vice chancellor sent out a letter asking all the colleges to stop making lectures and programs after 5 and do them during the day. And she added that it is more important to not fit the child in to the work day but the work in to the day. Parents should have down time with their children at home and not having a 12-hour work day.*

*Then the conversation changed to policy. Apparently, the policy is very unclear and one faculty member showed concern with the current policy for faculty because even though apparently a parent gets 12 weeks off for a new born, it could be less depending on when the child is born in the school year. The school only allows one quarter off for new parents. Since she had her child in the middle of the quarter she lost that quarter of time and had to come back the very next quarter to teach, giving her less time off. She asked if she could take the next quarter off unpaid but HR said it was not allowed.*

It is hard to do justice to the richness of the discussion in this brief summary, so we offer here the unedited notes taken during the discussion in the student/staff and faculty groups, organized by topic:

### **Child care**

#### Student/staff group

- *Drop in option would be good, living far from DU so having onsite doesn't make much sense for me*
- *There have been times where she need to pick her son up in an emergency*
- *Don't need long term commitment*
- *Need after hour childcare, after 5pm for lectures or program*
- *Seconded on emergency care*

- *If day care falls through of a family member is the caretaker and something comes up we need the emergency assistance*
- *Place needs to be consistent, not a pop-up*
- *Need to have consideration about consistency for caretakers at a childcare option*
- *Facility needs to be well equipped to care for children, resources, games, nap places*
- *Don't know if it should be a DU program or outsourced*
- *There is a waiting line everywhere so it would be difficult either internally or externally*
- *How would it be funded? Would we be hiring students?*
- *If it was part of the education department to provide hands on experience?*
- *Logistics are complicated*

#### Faculty group

- *Drop-in day care is not a solution. While it might be beneficial at times or to some, many parents will still need full-time day care as well.*
- *Make Fischer 4 times as big*
- *Suggested "sliding scale, especially for students." Recommended that on-site child care cost be based on income.*
- *Faculty member suggested they were more than willing to pay more for child care if it meant helping to fund child care for students as well. (donations available, fundraising opportunities)*
- *"They told me about the parental leave policy when I interviewed, but I could care less [at the time]." Talked openly about how easy it is to not worry about policies regarding parental support when you don't have a child yourself.*

If there were on-site child care, should it be run by DU or outsourced?

- *Each respondent seemed to prefer it were run by DU, but were open to the possibility of non-profits running the program.*
- *Suggested that students have the opportunity to work at the on-site day care (grad students from the education program, undergrads as work study options)*

#### **Family-friendly environments**

##### Student/staff group

- *Anthro is very family friendly, seen a faculty members son on campus before*
- *It would be tough with a baby in class*
- *Could be disruptive, older child than 3?*

- *Have been invited to bring kid but didn't because he is disruptive*
- *Differs from department to department, totally different*
- *Can't imagine an engineering class would be happy. No lab setting either*
- *Differs between staff and between departments*
- *Chancellor's office many not be interested in having kids, but admin offices had kids often*
- *Disruption because they are worried about the other people in the space*
- *Feeling guilty about disruption in the space*

#### Faculty group

- *Respondents seemed in agreement that "on a personal level, it's great... at an institutional level, not really."*
- *One mom explained that the individuals within her department are great with her baby, but that she doesn't necessarily think it is that way across all departments. Some departments have "children playing in the halls" whereas others feel much less welcoming.*
- *Have been told, "People who choose to have kids choose to have kids." This made the parent feel unsupported.*

How can DU become more family-friendly?

- *Make the issue a cornerstone of Inclusive Excellence*
- *Have an office dedicated to parental needs*
- *Subsidized child care (sliding scale suggested)*
- *Normalize the issue. Have the conversation more often.*
- *Add child-in-class policies to course syllabi*
- *Add changing tables to all restrooms. Moms explained that they need to walk down four flights of stairs with their baby to get to a restroom with changing tables.*

#### **Institutional Policies**

##### Student/staff group

- *Priority registration should be offered to parents, because of flexible schedule because of work schedule, childcare schedule, and all of the different needs*
- *Selfishly I like the idea*
- *Also need flexibility with class time, a lot of graduate classes are only offered after 4pm, timing of classes is just as important as priority reg.*
- *Don't know what the policies are*

- *Million other things to do as a student and the last thing you want to do is dig through paperwork to try to find something that only might exist to help you*
- *Policies are not easy to find*
- *Applying and registering there should be an option to identify yourself as a parent*
- *Link on website, dedicated parenting page*
- *No idea what the policies are or how they differ for faculty/staff/students*
- *It should be different per your role in DU, student needs are not the same needs as a staff person.*
- *Medical leave is different that maternity leave*
- *Don't know if there is a solution for maternity leave for students? Access to work off campus, being allowed to miss classes, but can't miss a month of classes and still be successful in school.*

#### Faculty group

- *(Not discussed.)*

#### **Follow-up**

#### Student/staff group

- *Follow DU's Facebook page and then Anthropology Facebook page, but is there an HR Facebook page?*
- *Only read some the emails, but I get some many email I can't read all of them. Saturated with Emails, only read the ones from professors*
- *Email is hard*
- *Don't read fliers*
- *Registering for classes should ask if you have children to help identify and have specific out reach*
- *Advisors are a good place to have knowledge hubs*
- *Advising staff, open emails from advisors*
- *Pioneer web would be the place I would look first,*
- *If there was a central office or person*

#### Faculty group

- *(Not discussed.)*