

University Director of Child Care and Disability Services

The City University of New York

New York City Council Higher Education Committee

April 21, 2010

Examining Child Care Services at CUNY

Good afternoon Chairperson Rodriguez and members of the Higher Education Committee. My name is Betty Pearsall and I am the University Director of Child Care and Disability Services for CUNY and the President of the National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the programs offered at the 19 on-campus child care centers at CUNY.

History

In the early 1980's the Chancellor of CUNY at the time, Joseph Murphy, commissioned a University study on child care services at CUNY. The number of women enrolling in CUNY was increasing, a trend that began in the 1960's, and many of the women were parents who needed affordable child care. The study revealed the threatened status of existing campus child care centers and documented the continuing need for child care. As a result, the Chancellor issued a mandate for the development of on-campus

child care centers serving student parents on every CUNY campus.

Chancellor Murphy's mandate was the foundation for the development of the campus child care system in existence at the City University today.

CUNY currently provides child care on 19 campuses enrolling over 2000 children and families in centers offering quality child care in a variety of programs designed to meet the unique needs of student parents throughout the University.

All CUNY child care centers enroll preschool children ages 2.5 to 5 years; in addition seven centers also offer infant/toddler programs for children 6 months through 2.5 years; and eleven centers also offer school age programs for children ages 5 to 12 years.

Every CUNY child care center is licensed by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in compliance with the NYC Health Code which provides regulations for staff qualifications, staff/child ratios, program safety, emergency procedures and facility maintenance.

Five of the centers have achieved national accreditation, meeting the professional standards of high quality early care and education programs developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children;

and other centers have either entered or are preparing to enter in the self-study process for accreditation.

CUNY child care centers provide support for student success by maintaining priority in enrollment for fulltime undergraduate student parents; providing subsidies for low-income student parents through funding from the NY State Child Care and Development Fund administered by the state Office of Children and Families; and contracting with the NYC Department of Education at 8 sites for the provision of Universal PreK programs. 9 of the centers have been recipients of a Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS) grant, a federal grant that supports the participation of low income parents in postsecondary education through the provision of campus-based child care.

Quality child care is an important factor in the achievement of the educational goals of many CUNY student parents. The University's child-care programs provide a broad spectrum of developmental experiences for children with a strong emphasis on parental involvement. The programs aim to improve the quality of life both for children and their families by providing an array of services that include parenting workshops, parent/teacher conferences, early intervention and prevention services, as well as health resource referrals.

Children at CUNY child care centers are engaged in educational programs offering curriculum reflective of the essential elements of a quality program as recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children: one that is thoughtfully planned; challenging; engaging; developmentally appropriate; culturally and linguistically responsive; comprehensive and likely to promote positive outcomes for all children.

Experienced and dedicated professional early childhood educators plan experiences and activities based on curriculum goals and develop appropriate multicultural classroom environments that promote the strength and value of human diversity.

All staff members in each center, administrative and teaching, also understand that support for student success is an integral part of their role in the center. Staff members develop relationships with student parents and are often the first to know if an individual parent is experiencing academic or personal difficulties. They are able to provide referrals to appropriate campus or community resources to student parents facing difficulties, plan parenting skills workshops to address specific concerns or create opportunities for parents to interact.

CUNY child care centers also serve as resources to the CUNY community through various collaborations with academic departments and the broader New York City community. The centers serve as fieldwork sites for interns from various disciplines and as college work study sites for students receiving financial aid. Several of the centers work with the New York City Department of Education to provide opportunities for junior high and high school students to engage in community service learning projects in the child care centers and to serve as models of high quality programs engaged in best practices of the early childhood education field.

As CUNY experiences a record growth in enrollment, the need for affordable, quality child care continues to grow. The University remains committed to the expansion of child care services to address unmet needs however support from State, City and Federal funding has remained at the same level for over ten years. Limited funding prevents the child care centers from offering competitive salaries to attract and retain quality teaching staff and inhibits expansion. A reduction in State funding for CUNY child care was proposed in the 2011 New York State Executive Budget. The proposed \$1.4 million cut in TANF funds would drastically affect our centers, forcing closures of school age and infant /toddler programs, and eliminating evening and weekend care.

Chairman Rodriguez and members of the Council Higher Education Committee, we ask you to support the proposed State Senate budget which includes full restoration of our funds. I thank you for your continuing support and the opportunity to address the Committee.

Testimony of Peter Grant Jordan, Ed.D.
Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
The City University of New York
New York City Council Higher Education Committee
April 21, 2010

Hearing on Child-Care Services at CUNY

Good afternoon, Chairman Rodriguez and members of the Higher Education Committee. I am Peter Grant Jordan, Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at The City University of New York. I am pleased to testify before your committee again. Today, I am joined by Dr. Tomas Morales, President of the College of Staten Island, Ms. Betty Pearsall, University Director of Child Care and Disability Services at CUNY, Ms. Joan Williams, a CUNY alumna, class of 1997 at New York City College of Technology and a student-parent, and her daughter, Ms. Cheyenne Williams, a freshman at City Tech, and a product of the CUNY campus child-care program.

We thank you for the opportunity to talk to you about CUNY's child-care centers; to share information and stories about the value of our child-care centers to student retention and graduation; and to impress on you the impact proposed state

parents when campus child-care is provided. These student-parents are more likely to remain in school, graduate in fewer years, and earn higher grades.”³ The data are clear: campus child-care promotes success for student-parents.

Changing demographics in higher education also support the need for CUNY to invest in campus child-care programs. We know that there is a demographic shift in higher education toward students who are more likely to need campus child-care.

Nationally these trends suggest that:

- Female students over age 25 are fastest growing population in higher education,⁴
- 35% of all female students are low-income:⁵ and
- 59% of low-income female students are parents⁶

At CUNY the trends are similar:

- Female students account for almost 60% of all undergraduates;⁷ and

³ Kappner, A.S. Across the Educational Continuum: Child Care on the College Campus, Cedar Falls, IA, National Coalition for Campus Children’s Centers, 2002, p. 1. As cited Boswell, T. Campus Child Care Centers, ERIC Digest, ERIC Clearinghouse on Education, ERIC Identifier ED480466. 2003 at <http://www.ericdigests.org/2005-2/child-care.html> <Retrieved April 20, 2010>

⁴ Op. cit., Thorman.

⁵ Op. cit., Thorman.

⁶ Op. cit., Thorman.

⁷ CUNY Office of Institutional Research, April 20, 2010.

parenting behaviors appear to foster higher test scores and college enrollment rates among their children.”¹⁰

In closing, I want to provide you with the current budget picture as it relates to CUNY’s child-care programs. For fiscal year 2010, the City University of New York received state appropriations of \$2.2 million for its child-care centers. From the city's annual budget, the University allocates \$500,000 for the community college child-care centers. In addition to these state and city appropriations, the CUNY child-care centers receive approximately \$3.5 million in federal grants through the New York Office of Children and Family Services. It is important to point out that this level of state, city and federal funding has been flat for the past decade.

In addition to these appropriations, our colleges have enhanced funding to their child-care centers by \$350,000 through CUNY's Compact Financing Initiative. One of the University's goals is to increase the number of children served in its child-care centers. Therefore, the University has included an additional \$450,000 in its FY2011 Budget Request to address this goal and the growing need. However, neither the State Executive nor City Preliminary Budget included these funds.

¹⁰ Paul Attewell and David Lavin, *Passing the Torch: Does Higher Education for the Disadvantaged Pay Off Across the Generations?* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2007)

Hello everyone,

My name is Joan Williams, a graduate of New York City College of Technology. My daughter Cheyenne Williams, currently a CUNY student, was enrolled in CUNY childcare. Today I am here to give thanks to the Higher Education Committee and Councilman Rodriguez for their interest and support of CUNY childcare. I am most appreciative that some of our proposed budget cuts were restored; however, additional funds are still needed, in order to provide many more low income families with high quality early childhood educational programming which is crucial for the development of their children.

Today I can testify that the excellent on-site childcare my daughter received was essential to my graduation from New York City College of Technology. The availability of on site childcare contributed to a better future for us. I was delighted that a student introduced me to Our Children's Center located at New York City College of Technology.

The day I arrived to register my daughter at Our Children's Center was a special day for my daughter and me. The atmosphere at the center was one in which I felt comfortable and secure that my child would be with children her age, together with teachers who were able to let her be herself. The Center's environment allowed her to enjoy her present stage, while preparing for her future. We both cherish the time she spent in the familiar classroom environment which helped her develop intellectually, socially, physically, emotionally and enrich her language development. Last, but not least, Our Children's Center provided guidance which contributed to her positive self image.

As a human service student I was fortunate that I was given the opportunity to do my student internship at Our Children's Center and was still able to attend class on campus. Today, it gives me great joy as I look at my daughter, who graduated from high school from the honors program, and is presently a nursing student at New York City College of Technology. CUNY childcare assisted me in achieving my goal of obtaining a degree. Today, with sincere thanks and gratitude I thank Councilman Rodriguez and the Higher Education Committee for all they continue to do for CUNY childcare.

I urge full support for the restoration of full funding.

Thank You

Testimony of Tomás D. Morales, PhD.

President, College of Staten Island

The City University of New York

New York City Council Higher Education Committee

April 21, 2010

Hearing on Child Care Services at CUNY

Good afternoon, Chairman Rodriguez and members of the Higher Education Committee. I am Tomás D. Morales, President of the College of Staten Island. I am pleased to have the opportunity to testify before the New York City Council Higher Education Committee today regarding the importance of child care service in higher education and specifically at The City University of New York.

I want to first share with you my own story. I married my high school sweetheart and we became parents at the end of our freshman year in college. It is not an overstatement to say that child care services served as a life line to our own ability to complete a college degree. We were provided access to higher education via the Educational Opportunity Program coming from a lower middle-class household, and frankly we would not have been able to afford child care on the open market. A campus child care service was as important to us as financial aid, and academic support services. Simply put my wife and I both persisted and we were able to graduate because we had access to child care services. In fact, all three of my children enjoyed their experiences in a campus child care center and they are now taxpaying college-educated employees.

As president of the College of Staten Island I want to expand child care services. While students will always have priority, I want to find a way to create opportunities to provide child care to faculty and staff by creating an appropriate payment schedule for employees. Children are a common denominator in a campus community. It is wonderful to have the child of a student playing in the sandbox with the child of that student's faculty member. Of course the employee would pay an appropriate fee for the service. Campus child care centers contribute to a sense of community, a sense of belonging, a safe place for the children of our students to learn and develop early childhood skills, and are essential to academic success of our students.

I am pleased to share with you that our Master Plan calls for doubling the size of the child care center on the College of Staten Island. We hope to increase our services to assure that students would have access to services not only when they are in class but also when they have opportunities to participate in internships, serve on student government and participate in other college activities. Learning takes place both in and outside the classroom and students who have

children should not be denied the opportunity to have the same collegiate experiences as their peers who do not have children.

The student success and persistence literature is clear. Students who have access to campus child care services have higher graduation rates than those students who do not have access to campus child care services.

I want to again thank you Chairman Rodriguez and the members of this Higher Education Committee for the opportunity to speak with you today. I also want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to you for your support of campus childcare programs at The City University of New York.

Tomás D. Morales, Ph.D

For Immediate Release

Judge Orders New Court Date on Hunter Childcare Case: June 17, 2010

Press Contacts: Angela Molfetas (646) 331-1041 Luz Schreiber (917) 628-9751

<http://defendhunterchildcare.org>

April 12, 2010 – On April 8, 2010, the New York State Supreme Court directed that it would hear oral arguments in a case challenging Hunter College's proposed plans to reduce childcare space and services to students with children. Judge Emily Jane Goodman adjourned the case to give Plaintiffs time to respond to Defendants' motion to dismiss the case. The next court hearing will be June 17, 2010 at 2:15 p.m. in room 422 at 60 Centre Street.

CUNY's childcare centers are run by separate not-for-profit corporations governed by boards of directors, often controlled almost entirely by CUNY administrators. This corporate structure enables CUNY to be free from many liabilities and at the same time grants it control over the governance of the childcare centers. Documents obtained through the Freedom Of Information Law since the lawsuit was filed reveal that the current version of the Board of Directors of Hunter's Children's Learning Center (the Center) is made up entirely of CUNY administrators and administrative employees who answer to President Jennifer Raab and have to regulate the Center for the benefit of CUNY and Hunter College, not the student parents and their children. Plaintiffs' attorneys called the structure of the Center an illegal conflict of interest.

Plaintiffs intend to file an amended complaint before the next court date incorporating challenges to the Children's Learning Center's recent governance, calling it conflicted, irresponsible, and marred by breaches of corporate and contractual duties. The entire board of directors of the Children's Learning Center is composed of Hunter College administrators or administrative employees, in violation of New York State's conflict of interest law (Public Officers' Law § 74).

Hunter College, a historically women's school, first proposed to close the fourth classroom of the Children's Learning Center (room 209) last year in May when the chair of the Center's board, Vice President and Dean of Students Eija Ayravainen, announced that classroom 209, the current home of the center's school-age program, would be permanently removed from the Center. After student-parents protested, she explained to them that "childcare is a luxury" in June of 2009. The Board has been operating without an outside representative from the Department of Education, in violation of its own By-Laws. The minutes of the Board of Directors' meetings, plaintiffs say, show a pattern of irresponsibility and lack of care for the Center's operations and future.

Two student-parents sued in December of 2009 on their behalf, on behalf of their children, and on behalf of a student-parent advocacy organization at Hunter to stop construction that was announced in November of 2009, arguing that the loss of the classroom would cause irreparable harm to the Center's quality, affordable, on-site childcare, early education, and related services, including by reducing the Center's capacity.

The plaintiffs say that Hunter administrators muzzled the Center's Director, who has run the Center for its 26 years, by retaliating against her in 2009 for sharing a memo with student-parents outlining the adverse impacts the loss of classroom 209 would cause to the Center. Among the "Issues/Concerns" identified in the document were the loss of staff members and student-parents who would be denied childcare in the future. Every teacher and employee of the Center, except the director, signed a statement opposing the loss of room 209.

The parents' lawyers, Ronald B. McGuire and Gideon Orion Oliver, have argued that the decision to close the classroom was arbitrary, capricious, and illegal, based in part on provisions of Hunter's contract with the CLC requiring that the Center provide winter intersession classes and that CUNY maintain the physical integrity of the Center's space. They also say that CUNY has violated a Memorandum of Understanding it maintains with New York State regulating the conditions under which CUNY can receive and spend public welfare money. The Memorandum of Understanding requires that CUNY establish grievance procedures and advise those who apply for or receive subsidized childcare services of, among other things, their rights to fair hearings before state administrative law judges before childcare services are substantially reduced.

CUNY has argued that the student-parents have not been, and will not be, actually injured unless and until a student-parent applies for a childcare slot and is denied for lack of space, that Hunter has the right to decide what to do with its physical property, and that student-parents have no contractual or any other right to childcare at Hunter.

Oral arguments will be heard on June 17, 2010 at 2:15 p.m. in Room 422 at 60 Centre Street.

Last March, CUNY's Film Festival featured a documentary on the campaign to defend the physical integrity of Hunter's Childcare Center. "A Light for Childcare" was made by Hunter film student and parent Andres Otero and is available for public viewing here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdkTqpdAaxs>

The City University of New York
New York City Council Higher Education Committee
April 21, 2010

Higher Education Oversight, Examining Child Care Services at CUNY

Good Morning. My name is Heather Brown and I am the Public Policy Chair of the Child Care Council at CUNY and the Director of Kingsborough Community College's Child Development Center. On behalf of the CUNY Child Care Council I would like to thank Councilman Rodriguez and Members of the City Council for their support of quality early care and education and for holding this hearing focusing on Higher Education Oversight, Examining Child Care Services @ CUNY.

Each year approximately 2000 children are enrolled in a CUNY Child Care Center. Without the subsidized rates that CUNY Childcare Centers charge to students, the majority of our Student Parents would not be able to afford to enroll their child in a high quality child care center while pursuing a college education. Childcare is expensive and according to the research that we have conducted on local childcare centers, would be unaffordable to these student parents. Even if our student parents could find childcare at the current market rate they would not be able to afford the cost of childcare while attending college. Study after study shows that families cannot afford the cost of high-quality early education, just as they cannot afford the full cost of college tuition. The average cost of day care for a four-year-old in New York State is \$9,000 a year, which, as the Children's Defense Fund points out, is more than college tuition at a public university.

High quality early care and education programs are crucial to CUNY at a time when CUNY's enrollment is at an all time high. Women comprise 60% of CUNY's enrollment and 15% of CUNY students indicate that they provide support for a child or children under the age of twelve. Quality child care is essential to their retention and success.

Since the City's funding of CUNY Childcare Centers has remained level since 1985, it has become more and more difficult to maintain high quality programs when centers are essentially receiving a decrease in funding each year. Hiring and retaining qualified and certified teachers has also become a hardship as many centers cannot afford to compete with DOE salary scales and benefits. Our Child Care Centers need support from the City and the State if we are to provide high quality childcare and retain high quality teachers.

Despite the importance of the early learning years to a child's development, public investments in education and development are more than seven times greater during school-age years than during the early learning years. This leaves parents to bear the bulk of child care costs. These costs present a particular challenge for families with young children, since these parents are often just starting their careers or are still in college and have less financial resources.

The child care needs for parents attending college are unique. Their schedules vary from semester to semester as well as day to day, and they often need to take early morning or late day classes to meet their degree requirements. CUNY's on-campus child care centers provide flexible hours to accommodate and support student parents so that their child care needs are met during the day, evening and on weekends.

All of our teachers and staff work hard to support our student parents, so that they can fully participate in college life and fulfill their educational goals. This is accomplished by working hand-in-hand with families to build positive relationships and offer support by providing workshops and advice on topics such as challenging behaviors and developmental milestones as children grow and develop.

CUNY Child Care Centers also take an active role in providing hands-on experience to many CUNY students. Our Centers and professional staff serve as role models and mentors. We contribute to the education of CUNY's adult students by serving as college work study sites,

observation and internship sites; we accept student aid workers and some centers are also lab schools. On campus child care centers provide students the opportunity to work directly with children and families, under the guidance of our professional educators.

The Child Care Council at CUNY looks forward to continuing to meet the needs of children, student parents, our college communities and the University. Thank you for time. I appreciate the opportunity to share this information with you.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Heather Brown
Director, Kingsborough Community College
Public Policy Chair of the Child Care Council @CUNY
2001 Oriental Blvd. Room V-105
Brooklyn, New York 11235
Tel. (718) 368 - 5439

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: LV2 Schrepper (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 98-25 41 ST

I represent: Hunter Parent Union / Mend

Address: hunter childcare

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: April 21st 2019

Name: Laura Waldman (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 41-31 51st ST #4F WOODSIDE NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: April 21, 2010

Name: Rafael Del Toro (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 1208 Clay Ave. Bronx, NY 10456

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

University Panel

Date: 4/21/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Betty Pearsall, Univ. Director - Child Care

Address: _____

I represent: CUNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

University Panel

Date: 4/21/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Interim Vice Chancellor Peter Jordan

Address: 8 CUNY - 535 E. 80th St.

I represent: CUNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

University Panel

Date: 4/21/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chayenne Williams

Address: _____

I represent: CUNY - Student (NYCTT)

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

University Panel

Date: 4/21/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tomas Morales, President

Address: _____

I represent: College of Staten Island / CUNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

University Panel

Date: 4/21/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joan Williams - CUNY graduate

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dionne Avery

Address: 1616 Beverly Rd. #3D BK

I represent: CUNY Graduate Center

Address: 360T 5th Ave. NY NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Heather Brown

Address: 72-10 112 St Forest Hills NY 11375

I represent: KBCC Child Development Center, CUNY

Address: Child Care Council

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 4/21/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cheyenne Williams

Address: 128-03 142 Street South Ozone Park

I represent: CUNY Childcare

Address: 300 Jay Street

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joan Williams

Address: 128-03 142 Street

I represent: CUNY Child Care

Address: 300 Jay Street Bklyn, NY 11201

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Linda A Samperio (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 766 BRADY AVE #540

I represent: Bmcc

Address: 199 Chambers St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: April 21, 2010

Name: MELINDA CORNWELL (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 1715 LEXINGTON AVENUE

I represent: CRAN CRYDCARE, SELF

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Korima Yusuf (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 104-15 197th Street J. Albans NY 11412

I represent: Defend Hunter ~~Dele~~ childcare

Address: _____