

Executive Summary

A university-wide survey soliciting information about child care needs completed in the fall of 2003 obtained 167 responses from DU faculty, staff and graduate students. A large majority of respondents were under 30, female, NS married; they had a total of 115 children with 36 on the way. Eighty percent had family incomes under \$100,000 while 20% had incomes over \$100,000. The survey found the following:

- All respondents reported using some type of child care service(s), the most popular being child care centers (44.4%), especially for toddlers and pre-schoolers.
- Almost 50% are not currently paying for child care, while 40% are paying up to \$200 per week and 10% are paying between \$250 and \$400 per week.
- When asked about their level of satisfaction with their child care arrangements, about two-thirds of respondents indicated satisfaction with location, quality, and availability; however, only one-third said their child care service was affordable.
- Two-thirds said more satisfactory child care arrangements would have a positive impact on their ability to perform successfully at work.
- Child care needs will remain steady or increase in the future; respondents estimated they would require child care for 374 children over the next five years.

The survey provides evidence that resources at the Fisher Center will be increasingly strained in the future and that no one program of childcare services will meet all or even a majority of needs. Given the diversity of work roles and work times within the university, DU faculty, staff and graduate students need increased flexibility and a variety of child care options.

Data from the study supports the need for expanding childcare options for DU faculty and staff beyond those available at the Fisher Early Learning Center. In an effort to respond to the needs of DU families, the staff at the Fisher Center has compiled a list of other state licensed childcare providers located near the University, including contact information. This list is intended to help DU families explore nearby options that might meet their childcare needs, **but does not imply a recommendation in any way** by the University or the staff of the Fisher Early Learning Center of these other childcare providers. All DU families placed on the waiting list at Fisher will receive this list, along with a pamphlet describing how parents can identify and assess the quality of childcare providers. The list is also posted on the SAC website (www.du.edu/staff).

The full text of this report can also be found on the website.

This report was forwarded to Chancellor Ritchie and Provost Coombe. The survey committee met with the Chancellor and Provost and have agreed to continue to explore ways to hopefully improve the childcare services issues presented by the report.

Survey of Childcare Needs

University of Denver
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Introduction

During the spring of 2003, a discussion about childcare needs at DU took place during a meeting of the Women's Leadership Council (WLC). This conversation focused on the childcare services needed by DU faculty, staff, and graduate students, as well as the types of care currently being used. Of particular concern to WLC members was anecdotal information questioning the current ability of the Fisher Center to provide sufficient childcare for the DU community and whether Fisher's capacity was going to be greatly strained in the future.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Deans Catherine Alter and Ginger Maloney volunteered to form a committee to explore childcare needs at DU. They met with the Staff Advisory Council (SAC) to seek their input and assistance, as well as with Dick Gartrell and Sheila Summers-Thompson to seek their help. As a result of these meetings, Beth Bean, Office of Assessment, and Anne Enderby and Sarah Willford, SAC, joined the committee. All parties agreed such a survey was a good idea and that it would be helpful to Fisher staff as well as DU administration in forward planning.

Methods

During the spring and summer of 2003, a survey instrument was created to assess the level and kinds of unmet childcare needed, current costs for childcare assumed by DU employees, satisfaction with current childcare arrangements, and future needs. This survey was put into electronic format by Tinka Crosby, Assessment Office, and was ready for delivery at the beginning of the 2003-2004 academic year. Faculty, staff, and graduate students were notified by paper mail to complete the instrument that was posted on the DU web by the end of October. The survey took approximately 15 minutes and was submitted anonymously. The Assessment Office converted the individual responses to an Excel file, the data were then read into SPSS, and analysis was performed using descriptive statistics.

Respondents

A total of 167 DU employees completed the survey by November 15, 2003. Of these, 51 (31%) were full or part-time faculty, 70 (42%) were full or part time-staff, and 46 (27%) were graduate student assistants. Table 1 gives a profile of these respondents.

Table 1. Respondent Profile (N=167)*

	Number	Percent
Age		
<20	30	18.9
20 – 29	96	60.4
30 – 39	30	18.9
40 – 49	3	1.9
Gender		
Male	36	22.8
Female	122	77.2
Marital Status		
Married/Living with Partner	145	91.2
Separated/Divorced	5	3.1
Widowed	9	5.7
Number of Children		
Expecting	(36)	
Infants	56	37.1
Toddlers	21	13.9
Preschoolers	35	23.2

School Age	39	25.8
Total Number of Children	151	100.0
Family Income		
\$20,000 – \$39,000	24	16.1
\$40,000 – \$59,000	22	14.7
\$60,000 – \$79,000	37	24.9
\$80,000 – \$99,000	35	23.5
\$100,000 +	31	20.8
Mileage to Work		
0 – 10 miles	79	48.8
11 – 20 miles	56	34.6
21 – 30 miles	11	6.8
31 – or more miles	16	9.9

* Numbers may not sum to 167 due to missing values.

As expected, DU employees who answered the survey are relatively young; almost 80% are between the ages of 20 and 39. Over 90% are married or living with a partner and altogether they have 151 children with 36 on the way. Interestingly, among these children, the largest age group are infants (37%). Finally, 70% of these families have incomes of between \$40,000 and \$99,000 and almost 50% live within 10 miles of the campus.

Use of Childcare Services by Respondents

Below we show the information received about childcare used by DU parents, including type of childcare services reported by age of child, the hours children are in care, the costs that parents are paying for their childcare, and their satisfaction with their current arrangements. The type of care they are using is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Types of Childcare Used

	Number	Percent
Full-day care	58	37.2
Before and/or after school care	29	18.6
Half-day care	19	12.2
Summers only, full-day care	19	12.2
Drop-In care	15	9.6
Back-up or emergency care	8	5.1
Night or weekend care	6	3.8
Summers only, half-day care	2	1.3
Total	156	100.0

First, note that the total number of children in Table 1 (151) and 2 (156) are not the same. This is because some of the 151 children identified by the survey are receiving more than one type of care. Thus, Table 2 shows that the most frequent type of care is full-day (37.2%), followed by before and/or after school care (18.6%), half-day care (12.2%), full-day care in the summers

(12.2%), drop-in care (9.6%), night or weekend care (3.8%), and half-day care in the summer (1.3%). The finding here is that no one type of childcare meets all family needs and that a wide range of childcare services are utilized by DU parents.

Understanding the types of care used, however, does not explain *who* is providing these services. Table 3 breaks the different kinds of childcare providers by age group of the children in care.

Table 3. Childcare Providers by Age Group of Child

	Infant	Toddler	Pre-School	School Age	Total	Percent
Childcare center/ Pre-School	24 (35.8%)	17 (65.5%)	17 (60.7%)	13 (33.3%)	71	44.4
Spouse/domestic partner	19 (28.4%)	5 (19.2%)	6 (21.5%)	5 (12.9%)	35	21.9
Relative or older sibling	13 (19.5%)	3 (11.5%)	1 (3.6%)	13 (33.3%)	30	18.7
Non-relative in their home	8 (11.9%)		2 (7.1%)	3 (7.7%)	13	8.1
Non-relative in your home	3 (4.4%)	1 (3.8%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (2.5%)	7	4.4
Child cares for self				4 (10.3%)	4	2.5
Totals	67 (100%)	26 (100%)	28 (100%)	39 (100%)	160	100.0

Again, note that the total does not match totals in Tables 1 and 2 because Table 3 is reporting the number of providers, and children can have more than one provider in the course of a week. Table 3 shows clearly that twice as many children are cared for in childcare centers or preschools (44.4%) than by any other type of provider. Second in frequency of use are spouses or domestic partners (21.9%), followed by relatives or older siblings (18.7%), someone other than a relative in their home (8.1%), someone other than a relative in the child’s home (4.4%), followed by child cares for self (2.5%). Note also that 41% are cared for by family members, whether for pay or not we do not know.

Further, Table 3 indicates that childcare centers are more often the source of childcare for toddlers and pre-schoolers than for infants, although 36% of all infant care is being provided by centers/preschools. Likewise, spouses and domestic partners or other relatives care for infants proportionately in greater numbers than for the other age groups. The use of non-relatives as childcare providers is roughly the same across all age groups. Lastly, 4 school age children in this sample are caring for themselves after school.

The questionnaire also asked respondents to enter the exact hours “each day you need childcare services.” For analytic convenience, responses were rounded and combined to create five categories as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Hours Childcare is Used by Respondents

	Number	Percent
6:00, 7:00, or 8:00am to 5:30 or 6:00pm	63	61.7%
Before and/or after school	19	18.6%
Half days either morning or afternoon	10	9.8%
7:00 or 8:00am to 4:00pm	8	7.9%
Other: evenings/nights or flexible	2	2.0%
Total **	102	100.0%

** Total not equal to Table 1 due to missing data.

By far, the most frequent time period needed for childcare runs from the early hours (6:00 to 8:00 am) to late afternoon (5:30 or 6:00pm). Almost 62% of these children are in care from 10 to 12 hours each day. Much less demand exists for before/after school care (18.6%) and other configurations of half day care (9.8%). Very few of these parents use evening or other flexible arrangements.

Costs of Child Care

Costs of childcare are a major item in working parents' household budget. Below we show how much DU parents report they are paying for childcare, then compare their costs with tuition at the Fisher Center and other Denver childcare facilities.

Table 5. Current Childcare Costs Per Week Paid by DU Parents

	Infant	Toddler	Pre-School	School Age	Total	Percent
\$0	25	22	22	24	93	47.9%
Under \$100	7	4	4	16	31	16.0%
\$101 - \$150	11	3	8	4	26	13.4%
\$151 - \$200	7	6	8	3	24	12.4%
\$201 - \$250	7	1	0	1	9	4.6%
\$251 - \$300	0	0	1	0	1	.5%
\$301 - \$400	2	0	0	0	2	1.0%
Over \$400	4	1	3	0	8	4.1%
Total	63	37	46	48	194	100.0%

** This table reports childcare costs for 194 children whereas Table 1 shows a total of 151 children in the sample. This discrepancy exists because some parents are paying for two different kinds of care each having a different cost.

*** Note that these reported childcare costs are not broken down by hours of service; thus, for example those paying under \$100 may be purchasing less than full-day care.

Table 5 gives cost categories ranging from zero dollars to over \$400 per week. As can be seen in this table, almost fifty percent (47.6%) of DU parents who completed the survey report they are not paying for childcare; we presume that partners, spouses, and extended family are providing this care or the respondents simply did not answer the question. For the majority of those who report costs (46.5%), they are paying from \$100 to \$200 per week. This translates to a range of from \$433 to \$866 per month, or \$5,200 to \$10,400 per year. Only a very few families (10.2%) are paying more than \$200 per week. For them, childcare costs range from \$900 to \$1,700 per month or \$10,600 to \$20,800 per year.

In an effort to compare what DU parents are paying against what other Denver parents are paying, this study obtained current tuition costs from a cross section of Denver child care facilities, including DU's own Fisher Center. This comparison is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Average and Range of Costs of Childcare Per Month at 16 Denver Area Centers and Fisher Center by Age Group of Children

	Infant	Young Toddler	Older Toddler	Preschool
Average Childcare Cost per Month at 16 Denver Area Centers	\$1,052 Range = \$860 - \$1,379	\$941 Range = \$720 - 1,300	\$830 Range = \$660 - 1,147	\$762 Range = \$500 - 1,100
Fisher Center (community rates)	\$1,029	\$882	\$820	\$753
Fisher Center (DU employee rates)	\$875	\$750	\$697	\$640

Table 6 shows the averages and range of childcare tuition at 16 Denver area childcare centers and compares these costs with those at the Fisher Center for both community families and DU families. These differences are broken down for infants (six weeks to 18 months), young toddlers (19 months to 2.5 years), older toddlers (two to three years), and preschool (three to five years).

Of all the 16 childcare facilities included in Table 6, Crème de la Crème has the highest tuition rate for infants (\$1,379) and older toddlers (\$1,147), while Boulder Journey School has the highest costs for young toddlers (\$1,300) and preschoolers (\$1,100). Front Range is the least expensive for infants (\$860), while Children's World is the least expensive for young toddlers (\$720) and older toddlers (\$660), and Metro State College has the lowest tuition for preschoolers (\$500).

We found that direct comparisons between DU employees' out-of-pocket childcare costs reported on the survey and those currently being charged by area childcare facilities are very difficult to make because of the "apples and oranges nature" of the comparison. An accurate comparison of costs would require that the total annual cost for providing a child's care be computed, holding total days and hours constant across providers. Since the days and hours that centers are open differ substantially, direct comparison are not possible. If the DU

community believes such a comparison would be useful, this study could be extended to consider this question.

Satisfaction with Current Childcare Arrangements

Because the purpose of this survey was to generally assess DU parents' experiences with childcare, we asked respondents directly how satisfied they are with their current childcare arrangement. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Satisfaction with Childcare Arrangements (N=167)

	Very Satisfied %	Somewhat Satisfied %	Somewhat Dissatisfied %	Very Dissatisfied %
Location of my childcare is convenient to home/work	66.6	16.4	8.2	8.8
The quality of my childcare is excellent	63.9	27.9	5.5	2.7
My childcare is available when I need it	58.2	18.5	18.5	4.8
Cost of my childcare is affordable	31.7	40.0	20.0	8.3
Overall, I have been satisfied with my childcare	57.1	32.5	6.5	3.9

The responses to this question show that over one-half of respondents are “very satisfied” with their current arrangements. When asked about specific aspects of their childcare, the “very satisfied” responses ranged from two-thirds (“location is convenient”) to just over half (“childcare is available when needed”). The one aspect that did not engender this level of satisfaction was “cost,” where less than one-third replied they were “very satisfied.” We assume that these are the parents who are not paying for their child(ren)’s care. It should be noted that in every category there are one-third or more of parents who are less than “very satisfied”; for example, almost one-quarter are “somewhat” or “very dissatisfied” with the availability of care when they need it.

Finally, the survey design committee was curious about the relationship between respondents' childcare experiences and their attitudes toward their work at DU. Table 8 gives responses to six questions that focus on common work concerns such as stress and attentiveness. These data show that, to a large extent, these respondents believe that if they had more satisfactory childcare arrangements they would experience lower levels of work related concerns.

Table 8. Relationship Between Perceived Satisfaction with Childcare and Work Related Issues

If you had more satisfactory childcare arrangements, would you ...	Very Likely %	Somewhat Likely %	Somewhat Unlikely %	Very Unlikely %
Have a lower stress level? (N=131)	82%	14%	1%	3%
Be more likely to remain in your job/school at DU? (N=130)	77%	15%	2%	6%
Be more attentive to work/school demands? (N=129)	76%	14%	5%	5%
Be able to take off less time from work/school	70%	19%	6%	5%

because of problems with childcare? (N=129)				
Have the ability to change work/school hours when needed? (N=127)	69%	16%	8%	7%
Be late for work/school less often because of problems with childcare? (N=128)	60%	18%	13%	9%

A large majority of respondents reported a relationship between their childcare arrangements and work related concerns. For example, over 80% of respondents perceived a connection between their satisfaction with their childcare arrangements and their level of stress, while 60% saw a connection between childcare and their ability to get to work on time. These data could be explored further; for example, to ask whether one type of concern is greater for different categories of employees, or whether those paying higher costs for childcare have greater or lesser work related concerns. The committee could pursue these and similar questions if their answers would be of interest to anyone in the DU community.

Future Childcare Needs

Finally, respondents were asked about their anticipated needs in regard to childcare over the next five years. Table 9 gives their responses.

Table 9. Utilization of Childcare Options over Next Five Years

	Utilization of Childcare Options in next 5 Years	Percent
Full-day care	97	25.9%
Before and/or after school care	62	16.6%
Half-day care	58	15.5%
Drop-In care	53	14.2%
Back-up or emergency care	41	11.0%
Summers only, full-day care	33	8.8%
Night or weekend care	18	4.8%
Summers only, half-day care	12	3.2%
Total	374	100.0%

Table 9 indicates that the number of children needing childcare in the future may be on the rise, and that the range of needed options will be broad. While there were 97 (25.9%) parents who said they would need full-day care, there were also 62 (16.6%) who will need before/after school care.

For those who may be considering plans for expanded childcare services in the future, this is an important finding. In the future, this survey tells us that the resources at Fisher will be

increasingly strained. Further, the findings indicate that, given the diversity of work roles at DU—from faculty to staff to graduate assistants—and the large differences in work hours, no one plan for childcare services will meet all or even a majority of needs.