

GSS Report
Fall 2019

Taking the Lead on Child Care

Meeting the Needs of Pell-Eligible Parents

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The Graduate Student Senate (GSS) is the official representative body for graduate students at Texas Christian University, providing professional and financial support as well as open forums for discussing issues, events, and other matters pertinent to graduate students. There is no membership fee. All graduate students are eligible and welcome to attend GSS events and run for GSS officer positions.

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Note on Terminology

This Paper refers to “Pell-eligible parents” throughout, by which I mean students who indicated on their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms that they have children and students whose Expected Family Contribution (EFC) are below the threshold used in a given year by the Pell Grant program. A student’s EFC is calculated based on “[their] family’s taxed and untaxed income, assets, and benefits (such as unemployment or Social Security) ... family size and the number of family members who will attend college or career school during the year,” according to the [FAFSA website](#). This federal program is only open to undergraduate students despite many graduate/professional students having similar EFCs to their undergraduate counterparts. “Pell-eligible,” then, is used throughout this Paper to mean both undergraduate and graduate/professional students with qualifying or otherwise qualifying EFCs. In addition, “on-campus child-care center” refers to a general child-care facility as opposed to a research laboratory school or specialized school for children with disabilities.

Executive Summary

College students with dependent children face enormous challenges. At TCU, Financial Aid (2011-19) data and findings from a needs-assessment survey (Fall 2018) demonstrate that access to high-quality, affordable child care is a problem for many Pell-eligible parents. While many appear to be eligible for subsidized child care through [Tarrant County Child Care Management Services](#) (CCMS) and “bridge” funding through the Dallas-based nonprofit [Educational First Steps](#) (EFS), many student-parents with low income are not eligible for such services because they exceed the income- or education-based criteria for eligibility, leaving them with too much income (or education) to qualify for assistance but not enough income to pursue postsecondary education as successfully or as speedily as they might otherwise.

TCU currently does not offer either a child-care subsidy for low-income students, nor does TCU have a general on-campus child-care center—both of which are common among many peer and aspirant universities, including those with similar numbers of Pell-eligible parents. Previous child-care initiatives at TCU, dating back to 1973, have proposed that TCU construct an on-campus child-care center; however, according to documented responses from Leadership in digitized issues of the *TCU Daily Skiff*, these proposals have been met with much resistance. These documented responses suggest agreement between advocates and Leadership about the need for some kind of child-care assistance but disagreement on how to prioritize addressing the need in a cost-effective way.

In contrast to previous child-care initiatives, the 2019-20 Graduate Student Senate (GSS) argues that a subsidy program would best meet the needs of Pell-eligible parents and that TCU should look to external funding sources to get the program started, particularly the U.S. Department of Education’s [Child Care Access Means Parents In School](#) (CCAMPIS) program. We propose that TCU prioritize the child-care needs of Pell-eligible parents by developing a CCAMPIS-funded subsidy program for qualifying parents to use high-quality off-campus child-care centers. Such a program would be an evidence-based, cost-effective solution to the problem of child-care access for these students. In the “Recommendation” section of this report, we explain how such a program would work and provide evidence of the program’s likely effectiveness in not only meeting the child-care needs of Pell-eligible parents at TCU but also, in doing so, helping TCU achieve the goals laid out in the [“Vision in Action”](#) report.

To accomplish these goals—and to even be eligible for CCAMPIS funds—the Principal Investigator (PI), an early childhood education faculty member, would need written assurance from Leadership that TCU will provide an in-kind contribution to support the grant. To have the biggest impact, this contribution should be the salary of a .5 FTE Project Manager to assist the PI administer the day-to-day logistics of running the program. The CCAMPIS funds would only address a portion of the child-care needs among students, let alone the campus community, but we believe the proposed program would, if properly supported, significantly help some of our most vulnerable graduate and undergraduate students.

Pell-Eligible Parents at TCU

College students with dependent children face enormous challenges. Across the United States, one in four college students is raising at least one dependent child.¹ More than a third of all low-income and first-generation college students are parents, and students of color are disproportionately likely to be parents.² Student-parents experience higher drop-out rates (despite having higher GPAs on average), higher levels of debt (despite higher rates of aid and loans than nonparents), longer times to degree completion, and lower momentum.³ As Wladis, et al. write, “[B]ecause the impact of parenthood is felt more acutely by women and ethnic minorities, who on average have lower incomes and accumulate larger student debt, continued high dropout rates for student parents will likely increase socioeconomic stratification across race and gender.”⁴ Institutional support for students with dependent children, then, increases diversity, equity, and inclusion across campus. University programs, offices, and centers that offer financial, logistical, mental health, and/or other similar assistance to low-income student-parents enable this particularly vulnerable student population to enroll, persist, and graduate in postsecondary education, improving retention and graduation rates overall and for students from historically marginalized populations in particular.

At TCU, there is a need for some type of child-care assistance for Pell-eligible and would-be Pell-eligible parents. During the 2018-19 academic year, the Office of Research & Graduate Studies gathered Financial Aid and survey data on TCU students with children whose Expected Family Contribution (EFC) was below the threshold used by the Pell Grant program.

According to data from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms of Pell-eligible students from 2011 to 2019, the number of Pell-eligible parents more than doubles from Year 1 to Year 2 and doubles again from Year 2 to Year 3 (perhaps because such students are transferring from community colleges), but there is a 40 percent decrease in enrollment from Year 3 to Year 4, suggesting the need for a project that increases the percentage of Pell-eligible student-parents who persist and graduate from postsecondary education from TCU.

¹ Cruse, Lindsay Reichlin, et al. “[Parents in College by the Numbers.](#)” Institute for Women’s Policy Research. April 11, 2019.

² “[College Students with Children are Common and Face Many Challenges in Completing Higher Education.](#)” Institute for Women’s Policy Research Briefing Paper, March 2013.

³ “[4.8 Million College Students Are Raising Children.](#)” Institute for Women’s Policy Research Fact Sheet. November 2014.

⁴ Wladis, Claire, et al. “No Time for College? An Investigation of Time Poverty and Parenthood.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 89.6 (2018): 807-31.

Table 1: Enrollment of Pell-eligible parents by grade level and aid year

	1 st Year UGRD	2 nd Year UGRD	3 rd Year UGRD	4 th Year UGRD	Cont. UGRD	1 st Year GRD	Cont. GRAD	Total
2011	14	49	78	34	23	37	69	304
2012	9	49	88	38	32	33	83	332
2013	8	44	85	57	17	34	74	319
2014	7	25	95	50	17	33	75	302
2015	12	30	60	54	10	39	79	284
2016	9	37	65	39	13	30	78	271
2017	10	33	69	47	12	36	69	276
2018	9	58	68	37	9	53	62	296
2019	8	30	76	47	8	31	59	259
Total	86	355	684	403	141	326	648	2,643

While FAFSA forms indicate if a student has children, they may not be dependent children (i.e., between 0 and 12 years of age).⁵ To determine how many of the 250-260 Pell-eligible student-parents TCU enrolled for 2018-19 had dependent children, an Oct. 2018 Qualtrics survey was administered by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies and distributed to these student-parents. The survey found that at least 109 (43.3 percent) student-parents were caring for dependent children.

Receiving a response rate of 48 percent, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies survey collected information about demographics and current and anticipated childcare arrangements. The results indicate that low-income student-parents approximate the campus-wide 60:40 ratio of female to male—being 65 percent female (n=71) and 35 percent male (n=38)—but are more likely to be students of Color: 56 percent of the respondents identified as White only (n=67), 35.8 percent identified as only or in part Latino/Hispanic (n=39), and 11 percent identified as only or in part Black/African American (n=13) whereas, again, the general student body at TCU is 68.1 percent White and only 13.7 percent Latino/Hispanic, and 5.7 percent Black/African American. The vast majority of respondents were full-time students (n=102, 95 percent). In addition, almost one in three respondents (n=32) identified as a veteran or on active duty.

⁵ For 2018-19, TCU enrolled 2,462 Pell-eligible students and, of these students, approximately 252 (10.2 percent) indicated on their FAFSA forms that they have children. The Graduate Financial Aid Advisor ran numerous queries on PeopleSoft in coordination with other Financial Aid staff. When different data sets were used—ranging from basic information only (e.g., children, grade level) to more detailed (sex, ethnicity, academic plan)—some discrepancies of up to 20 students emerged for different years. The 2018-19 inquiry totaling 252 was ultimately used for the survey instead of the 259 query because more demographic data was available for these student-parents, a point which was less relevant as demographics questions were added to the finalized survey before distribution.

Table 2: Respondents by ethnicity and sex. No respondents reported transgender identity.

	Female	Male	Total
White	35	21	56
Latino/a, Hispanic, or Spanish Origin	21	10	31
Black or African American	9	1	10
Latino/a, Hispanic, or Spanish Origin; White	3	3	6
Black or African American; White	2	1	3
Asian; Latino/a, Hispanic, or Spanish Origin; White	0	2	2
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0	1
Total	71	38	109

As parents of dependent children, the majority of respondents have one child (n=44, 41 percent), but about one in three have two children (n=39, 36 percent), and almost one in four have three or more children (n=26, 23 percent). The total number, then, of dependent children under the care of these Pell-eligible parents is at least 197.⁶ By age group, the most populous age-groups of dependent children are pre-school (n=45, 23 percent), between 6 and 8 years old (n=44, 22.5 percent), and toddlerhood (n=42, 21.4 percent).

Table 3: Number and age groups of dependent children of respondents.

	Total	Percent
Infant	14	7.1
Toddler	42	21.4
Preschool	45	23.0
Middle Childhood (6-8)	44	22.5
Middle Childhood (9-11)	33	17.0
Young Teen	18	9.2
Total	196	100.0

Regarding the annual household income of these student-parents, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies survey found that 21.2 percent of the students were earning between \$0 and \$15,000 (n=22) and approximately one third of the student-parents in this lowest income bracket were caring for more than one child (n=8). Unsurprisingly, the number of student-parents and annual household income appear inversely related, in that, the number of parents decreases as the amount of income increases within the specified income brackets. The highest income bracket (\$35,000 or more), which is a more inclusive bracket than the others and hence has the highest number of student-parents (n=57, 52.3 percent), is also noteworthy because the parents in this income bracket are twice as likely to be caring for more than one child; parents of two children and those of three or more children each represent

⁶ There is a minor discrepancy between total of “How many dependent children do you have?” and the total number of children based on age-group questions due to a respondent declining to answer the age-group question.

about a third of the total student-parents in that income bracket. This is significant because determinations of poverty and eligibility for governmental assistance are based on both income and household size, so while technically most of the parents of dependent children who responded to the online survey reported incomes of at least \$35,000, they are also more likely to have more children.

Table 4: Respondents by number of dependent children and annual household income.

	1 child	2 children	3 or more children	Total
\$0 - \$15,000	14	5	3	22
\$15,000 - \$20,000	3	2	4	9
\$20,000 - \$25,000	4	6	0	10
\$25,000 - \$30,000	3	0	1	4
\$30,000 - \$35,000	1	5	1	7
\$35,000 or more	19	21	17	57
Total	44	39	26	109

Based on the U.S. Census Bureau Poverty Thresholds for 2018, between 30 and 38 student-parents are possibly below the poverty threshold. (Totals in red are likely under the poverty threshold; totals in green are possibly under the threshold, depending on number of other income earners.)

Table 5: U.S. Census Bureau Poverty Thresholds, 2018

	Single Parent	Two Parents
1 child	\$17,308	\$20,212
2 children	\$20,231	\$25,465
3 children	\$25,554	\$29,967

Respondents to the survey articulated their anticipated plans for childcare and current childcare arrangements, and based on these figures we can calculate the possible child-care cost burden for these parents. There are 38 respondents (caring for 53 or more dependent children) currently using, and are planning to continue using, a licensed childcare center and/or before/after-school program. If TCU were to cover the monthly child-care costs of these 38 student-parents, the monthly expense would be between \$21,100 and \$28,500 and between \$256,200 and \$342,000 annually. The average cost burden—percentage of total income—of childcare for these respondents is 37.05 percent, far above the 10 percent threshold to be considered “cost burdened.”⁷

⁷ <https://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1287&context=carsey>

Table 6: Respondents by number of dependent children, annual household income, and current monthly cost of using a licensed child-care center and/or before/after-school program.

	1 child	2 children	3 or more children	Total
\$100 - \$250				
\$25,000 - \$30,000	1			1
\$250 - \$500				
\$0 - \$15,000	4	1		5
\$20,000 - \$25,000		1		1
\$35,000 or more	4	2	3	9
\$500 - \$750				
\$20,000 - \$25,000		1		1
\$35,000 or more	1	2	1	4
\$750 - \$1,000				
\$0 - \$15,000	1			1
\$20,000 - \$25,000		1		1
\$35,000 or more	1	2		3
\$1,000 or more				
\$0 - \$15,000	2		1	3
\$20,000 - \$25,000		1		1
\$30,000 - \$35,000		1		1
\$35,000 or more	4	3		7
Total	18	15	5	38

The survey data for this student population during the 2018-19 academic year suggest that these student-parents are uniquely cost burdened, and, while parenting responsibilities and financial difficulties may or may not be the cause for declining enrollment of Pell-eligible parents, the declining enrollment of this vulnerable student population is cause for concern.

Words like “stressed,” “exhausted,” “hard,” “expensive,” and “much needed relief” appeared repeatedly in the open-ended section of the survey. Two different respondents disclosed that they were single parents in an accelerated program of study, which “is very time consuming and requires a lot of studying and group work. As a single parent with full custody,” s/he continues, “it is hard to make it to everything required.” The other respondent says s/he “currently receive[s] CCMS but they said they will no longer be able to help after April unless I start working part time again.⁸ Unfortunately in the [name of program] it is hard to balance a job as a single parent.” Two other respondents reported that they were attending classes part-time because of child-care costs. “I am only taking 6 hours this fall semester because I couldn’t afford to go without a job while paying for after school care,” reports one. A graduate student reports “[n]ot being able to afford after school care” has resulted in him/her “taking 6 hours/semester. I would take 9 or 12 hours if I could.”

⁸ Section 2 provides an overview of Tarrant County CCMS.

Two more respondents reported being single mothers with intense financial and emotional burdens. A respondent identifying as a “single mother of two children” is “going to be going to school full time next semester but I’m taking out the max amount of loan money to cover my housing expenses and living expenses.” Another reports that “[b]oth of my parents are deceased, my children's father was shot and killed 2 years ago and his family gives us no assistance.” Some type of child-care assistance from the University would have a very positive and profound impact on her life: “if the worry of not taking my daughter to classes was taken off of me, I would be able to enroll in more classes and see an overall improvement on my grades.”

The lack of child care at TCU was a big factor in the decision of some of the respondents as they decided whether or not to attend TCU. For one respondent, TCU’s ability to “open doors” for her outweighed the cost of not having on-campus child care:

I could have easily been accepted to UTA and would have had free tuition for my son at their preschool. However, I wanted to be a part of TCU’s culture and mission. I knew that graduating from TCU would open doors to possibilities I could only dream of. But the stress of who will “watch” my son, or how I’m going to afford a sitter (which I did last year) is exhausting and my GPA has taken multiple hits due to not being able to study or pick the classes I need.

Despite on-campus child care not being a part of the TCU culture, the promise of greater social mobility outweighed the temporary “exhaust[ion] of finding child care, “multiple hits” to her GPA, and “not being able to study or pick the classes [she] needed.”

For a Dec. graduate who is set to start a master’s degree in Fall 2019, child care logistics for his/her two children have “caused me to miss many classes” or to “bring them to class which impacted my learning and grades.” In addition to the direct academic effects, this respondent reports experiencing

financial stress ... since my [spouse] died [in] March. ... I have come close to getting evicted because of child care cost but had to pay it if I wanted to continue my education and build a better life for my [children].

The decision of where to apply for a master’s was based on proximity to child care: “The universities that I chose to apply to for my master's had to have a child development center on or near campus or I was not going to apply there.”

Finally, replying to the Qualtrics survey invitation email, one student-parent explained that s/he was accepted to TCU but accepted an offer to the U of Texas at Arlington: ultimately cho[osing] UT-Arlington ... because they have a childcare center onsite. ... UTA pays a subsidy directly to the childcare center for my child if I'm a recipient of financial aid. It's made all the difference in me being able to go back to school. I would not have had the financial resources to pay full price for childcare that would be comprehensive enough to cover the shifting schedule of a college student, and therefore, would not have been able to commit to the full-time cohort program that I'm currently in.

The big and small decisions that impact whether a low-income student-parent enrolls, persists, and graduates from TCU are made with the knowledge of what services other universities offer students with children. Following the lead of these students, then, the next section will examine the TCU Financial Aid and survey data in the context of how peer and aspirant universities are addressing their child-care needs, given their respective level and type of need.

Off-Campus Child Care (Assistance) in DFW

This section explores the geographical context and forms of financial assistance available to low-income parents in the DFW Metroplex through the Texas workforce development boards and nonprofit organizations. While definitions of “quality,” “high quality,” and “affordable” vary based on a number of factors, we generally regard “high quality” child care as that which is provided by centers maintaining both state licensure and national accreditation. These centers both satisfy health/safety requirements and offer developmentally appropriate instruction.

Unlike many universities which find themselves located in “child-care deserts,”⁹ TCU is, Chancellor Boschini reminds us, “lucky because we are in a major metropolitan area, and there are tons of other options located in the DFW metroplex.”¹⁰ While it is true that TCU is situated within a major metropolitan area where there is available childcare, the key challenge for student-parents is finding childcare that is both *high-quality* and *affordable*. For some area private childcare centers, it is not uncommon for rates to be \$18,000/year, similar to area PK-12 private schools.

Geographical Context

During the Spring and Summer of 2019, a group of graduate students voluntarily collaborated to gather information about DFW child-care providers. A list of 210 child-care providers was compiled using the [Texas Rising Star website](#), an organization that rates state-licensed providers on a 4-tier system. We compiled basic information, such as phone number, website, address, city, county, etc. (We did not systematically record hours of operation—and in hindsight we would have—but generally we found that most, but not all, childcare providers are open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Many of the higher quality programs are only open half the day, or a few hours.) A script and personalized spreadsheet were assigned to researchers. Through online research and cold calls to the providers, the researchers investigated age-group services, weekly rates, total capacities, average wait lists, curriculum, and accreditation status (if applicable). A part-time graduate assistant in the Office of Graduate Studies initiated this research in the spring and, during the summer, an additional ten volunteers conducted research on the remaining centers.

Collectively, researchers made attempts to gather information about 170 (81 percent) of the 210 child-care providers. Substantive data (e.g., weekly rates by age group) were successfully gathered for approximately 80 (38 percent) of the 210 centers.¹¹ Incomplete data notwithstanding, this information has been made available as a [Google Map](#) on the Graduate

⁹ The Center for American Progress defines a “child care desert” as “a ZIP code with at least 30 children under the age of 5 and either no child care centers or so few centers that there are more than three times as many children under age 5 as there are spaces in centers” (Malik et al., “Child Care Deserts: An Analysis of Child Care Centers by ZIP Code in 8 States,” [Center for American Progress, 2016](#)). In 2018, a follow-up study examined all 50 states, finding that “more than half of Americans—51 percent—live in neighborhoods classified as child care deserts” (Malik et al., “[America’s Child Care Deserts in 2018](#),” Center for American Progress, 2018).

¹⁰ Ashley Moore. “Child care plans unclear,” *TCU Daily Skiff*, Wednesday, December 1, 2004.

¹¹ Reasons for incomplete data included: incorrect listed phone numbers, some providers being closed during the summer, center personnel terminating phone calls prematurely, center personnel not knowing or being authorized to provide information, and so on.

Studies website for any faculty, staff, or student looking for information on DFW child-care providers.

Based on this crowd-sourced research, two tentative observations may be made about child-care providers in DFW. First, the vast majority of state-licensed providers surpass the minimum requirements for state licensure. Second, a considerable though not abundant number of providers maintain or seek accreditation with a national accrediting agency.

Table 7: Licensed child-care providers by location.

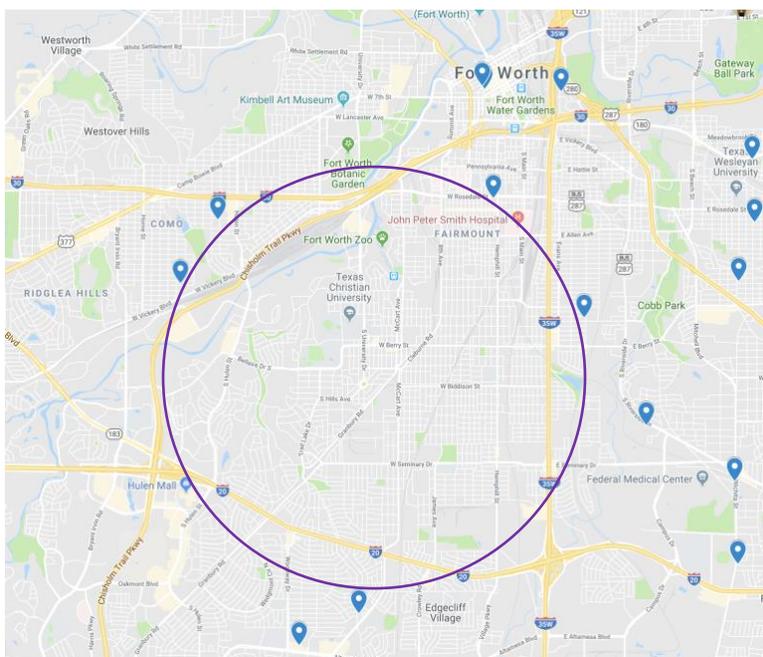
TRS Star Rating	DFW	Tarrant County	Fort Worth
4 star	151	66	33
3 star	44	36	20
2 star	15	15	154

Table 8: Accreditation status by location.

Accreditation Status	DFW	Tarrant County	Fort Worth
Accredited	55	26	13
Accreditation Seeking	11	9	7

Recording the number of accredited and accreditation-seeking providers are located in Fort Worth and Tarrant County, according to our findings, is important because many low-income student-parents have identified Fort Worth as their city of residence on their FAFSA forms. Recalling the FAFSA data from Section 1 of this Report, we found that, from 2011-2019, 95 percent of low-income student parents have reported residing permanently in Texas. Of these Texas residents, 93 percent reportedly resided permanently in one of the 85 municipalities comprising the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Finally, of these DFW residents, 52 percent reportedly lived in Fort Worth alone with the other 48 percent residing all over the Metroplex. Given that half the low-income student-parents over the past decade have lived outside Fort Worth and that parents choose child-care providers either close to work/school or home, we thought it was important to research DFW providers, not just Fort Worth. Indeed, none of the low-income student-parents since 2011 are likely to have used a child-care center close to campus because there really isn't one.

Table 9: Map of licensed child-care centers in proximity to TCU.



A third possible observation is that trends in age-group services appear to correlate with the highest-demand age groups of dependent children of low-income student-parents at TCU. Researchers found that the most common age-specific child care was for pre-k children and toddlers. Recalling the survey data from Section 1, we found that the most populous age-groups of dependent children are pre-school (n=45, 23 percent), between 6 and 8 years old (n=44, 22.5 percent), and toddlerhood (n=42, 21.4 percent).

Table 10: Number of centers offering age-specific child care and average weekly rates for age group.

Age Group	Total	Average Weekly Rate
Infants	118	\$199
Toddler	125	\$178
Pre-K	128	\$160
Before/After School	119	\$ 94

On the topic of cost and affordability, our fourth observation is that the providers more likely to maintain a wait list, have longer wait lists, have higher capacities generally correlate with the three- and especially four-star ratings from Texas Rising Star. In addition, weekly rates appear to be determined as much by accreditation status as by age group, currently accredited providers consistently costing more than providers not seeking or planning to seek accreditation.

Financial Assistance

For low-income parents in Tarrant County, the main forms of financial assistance for child-care costs are [Tarrant County Child Care Management Services](#) (CCMS) and the Dallas-based nonprofit [Educational First Steps](#) (EFS). Tarrant County CCMS provides subsidized child

care to qualifying low-income families. This program is managed by Child Care Associates, a child-development nonprofit organization contracted by the local workforce development board, Texas Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County. The local workforce development board sets policies for and manages various workforce programs/services as authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) passed in 2014. There are 28 workforce development boards in Texas. While child care is just one service that falls under the purview of workforce development boards, it is an important one. Because the goal of these boards is to *develop the workforce*, subsidized child care is contingent on parents' employment/education status.

Tarrant County CCMS is the program with whom Tarrant County parents interact directly. To qualify for subsidized child care, parents must be considered low-income, meaning they have a gross income below 85 percent of the State Median Income (SMI) for a family of a given size; they must also be working, attending school, or otherwise completing educational/professional training for a minimum of 25 hours per week. Eligible parents who are attending school full-time will only remain eligible for 48 months of postsecondary education: After 48 months of postsecondary education have been completed, regardless of when the parent has been onboarded for CCMS and regardless of whether or not the student has graduated, s/he can only remain eligible for CCMS by performing at least 25 hours of work per week.

Table 11: Tarrant County CCMS income eligibility for child-care services

Family Size	Gross Monthly Income Income Level 85% SMI	Gross Yearly Income Income Level 85% SMI
1	\$2,759	\$33,104
2	\$3,607	\$43,290
3	\$4,456	\$53,476
4	\$5,305	\$63,662
5	\$6,154	\$73,847
6	\$7,003	\$84,033
7	\$7,162	\$85,943
8	\$7,321	\$87,853
9	\$7,480	\$89,763
10	\$7,639	\$91,673
11	\$7,799	\$93,583
12	\$7,958	\$95,492
13	\$8,117	\$97,402
14	\$8,276	\$99,312
15	\$8,435	\$101,222

Once determined to be eligible, parents are either onboarded immediately if they meet criteria for priority (e.g., homelessness) or waitlisted. The waitlist for subsidized child care has improved in recent months due to increased federal funds, but people in the child-care world caution against thinking the increased funds are completely sufficient for the need or that the increased funds will available year after year.¹² Wait lists have a tendency to fluctuate.

Once parents are onboarded for CCMS, they are responsible for finding a child-care center with an open spot for their child. A sliding fee scale is used to determine a subsidy

¹² Waller, Allyson R. "[Over a million Texas children could qualify for subsidized child care—but less than 10 percent of them receive it.](#)" *Texas Tribune*, Oct. 31, 2018.

amount based on the provider rating, age-group of the child, and whether the provider will be used full-time or part-time. The [Texas Workforce Commission](#) (TWC), a state agency that coordinates with local workforce development boards, issues rates for child-care provider reimbursement.

Table 12: TCW/CCMS Daily Reimbursement Rates for Child-Care Providers. (What CCMS pays the providers.)

Provider Type	Provider Rating	Infant FT	Infant PT	Toddler FT	Toddler PT	Preschool FT	Preschool PT	School-age FT	School-age PT	Infant Blended	Toddler Blended	Preschool Blended	School-age Blended
LCCC	Reg	\$30.09	\$22.44	\$29.07	\$18.36	\$25.50	\$16.83	\$23.46	\$16.83	\$23.56	\$19.93	\$18.10	\$17.80
LCCC	TRS 2	\$31.60	\$25.73	\$30.53	\$24.61	\$27.75	\$20.09	\$26.68	\$19.27	\$26.59	\$25.48	\$21.21	\$20.35
LCCC	TRS 3	\$34.50	\$28.59	\$32.31	\$27.34	\$30.83	\$22.32	\$29.64	\$21.41	\$29.45	\$28.07	\$23.57	\$22.61
LCCC	TRS 4	\$38.33	\$31.77	\$35.90	\$30.38	\$34.25	\$24.80	\$32.93	\$23.79	\$32.73	\$31.19	\$26.18	\$25.13

The parent is responsible for a fee and a share of the monthly cost, both determined on a scale using Federal Poverty Guidelines up to the 85 percent SMI limit.

Table 13: Monthly Parent Share of Cost, based on number of children and federal poverty guidelines

Number of Children	0 – 50%	51 – 75%	76 – 100%	101 – 125%	126 – 150%	151 – 175%	176 – 200%	201 – 85% of SMI
1	\$30	\$80	\$120	\$150	\$185	\$220	\$255	\$300
2	\$50	\$115	\$170	\$210	\$255	\$305	\$365	\$425
3	\$70	\$150	\$220	\$270	\$325	\$390	\$475	\$550
4	\$90	\$185	\$270	\$330	\$395	\$475	\$585	\$675
5	\$110	\$220	\$320	\$390	\$465	\$560	\$695	\$800
6	\$130	\$255	\$370	\$450	\$535	\$645	\$805	\$925
7	\$150	\$290	\$420	\$510	\$605	\$730	\$915	\$1,050
8	\$170	\$325	\$470	\$570	\$675	\$815	\$1,025	\$1,175

When parents qualify for CCMS but are waitlisted, they can apply for “bridge” funding through Educational First Steps (EFS). EFS is a child-development nonprofit organization in Dallas that works with child-care centers in low-income neighborhoods to begin seeking accreditation with a national agency. EFS also subsidizes child care for qualifying parents until they are onboarded by CCMS. To qualify for EFS bridge funding, a parent must fulfill the following requirements:

- Resident of Dallas County or Tarrant County;
- A single parent working or attending school at least 25 hours per week or a two-parent household with both parents working or attending school at least 25 hours per week;
- Parent of at least one child between 0 and 5 years of age;
- Eligible but waitlisted recipient of CCMS funds

The subsidy amount “bridge” recipients receive is equal to the subsidy they would receive through CCMS. EFS uses the same sliding fee scale. Parents must, however, use one of the 40 centers EFS partners with across DFW.

While none of the low-income TCU student-parents surveyed in Fall 2018 indicated they were receiving bridge funds from EFS, one indicated s/he was falling into a gap in CCMS funding. One respondent explained that s/he “currently receive[s] CCMS but they said they will no longer be able to help after April unless I start working part time again.” This respondent did not explain his/her educational progress prior to this point, but it is possible that his/her situation is the result of the Tarrant County workforce development board’s policy that parents can remain eligible while attending school full-time (i.e., not working) for 48 months of school.

If part of the reason there is a need for child-care at TCU is that student-parents are just unaware of the available financial resources, the University can certainly work to publicize these resources. While working on this initiative, we have forwarded flyers for EFS bridge funding to various student services offices around campus to be displayed in common areas and in offices. Even if every qualifying student-parent knew about CCMS and EFS though, there are still gaps that need to be addressed, including but not limited to, the following:

- All graduate students already have more than 48 months (or 4 years) of postsecondary education because they have already completed a bachelor’s degree, making them automatically ineligible for full-time student status. Many assistantships, which would count as work, however, are only 20 hours per week (on paper at least). Therefore, single-parents enrolled in graduate programs and employed as a graduate assistant, instructor, or teaching assistant would not qualify for CCMS or EFS.
- A student-parent may qualify for CCMS but not have at least one child under the age of five, making them ineligible for EFS bridge funding.
- A student-parent may be eligible for a Pell Grant but, due to family size or gross income, exceed the 85 percent SMI limit for CCMS eligibility.

One can certainly make the case that a subsidy program (for on- or off-campus child care) available to low-income student-parents who fall through the cracks of the existing network of child-care assistance (i.e., CCMS and EFS) would increase access and affordability for high-quality child care to low-income TCU student-parents.

###

Child care in DFW and Fort Worth is far from ideal but nor is it a child-care desert. DFW generally and Fort Worth specifically have many child-care options with cost and availability depending on TRS rating and accreditation status. Higher quality child-care centers tend to be larger, cost more, maintain national accreditation, and maintain longer waiting lists, while lower quality child-care centers tend to be smaller, cost less, maintain licensure only, and maintain shorter waiting lists (if any).

We believe TCU does have a responsibility to assist the student-parents who are ineligible for funding through CCMS and/or EFS. For low-income student-parents who would prefer or need to use a provider close to school/work because of factors such as hours of operation, an on-campus child-care center would be beneficial. Alternatively, a subsidy program would be sustainable if it partnered with many high-quality, relatively affordable child-

care centers across Fort Worth and DFW to assist student-parents with off-campus child-care costs. Additionally, publicizing existing financial resources to meet the needs of parents who are eligible for such services but are unaware of them would address the perception that few child-care services are available. At the same time, a subsidy program specifically targeting parents who do not meet the eligibility requirements of CCMS and EFS would actually extend access and affordability for TCU students-parents.

Peer and Aspirant Universities

This section compares TCU data to the type of child care offered at peer and aspirant universities, given their aggregate number of undergraduate and graduate/professional students whose EFCs were below \$5,486 (putting them in the Pell-eligibility range for 2018-19) and who indicated on their FAFSA forms that they had children. Again, while the FAFSA form does not specify if the children are dependent, it provides the best, however rough, point of comparison between universities, barring the distribution of surveys at each of the universities.

The Office of Research and Graduate Studies solicited Financial Aid and related offices at 62 universities, hearing back with concrete numbers from 22 universities, and performed basic Google searches for “University of X” and “child care” to determine the type of child-care assistance available to students.¹³ In total, 25 private universities and 37 public universities were solicited. Universities that met at least one of the following criteria were included: geographical and regional proximity, inclusion in the Big 12, similarity in terms of total enrollment, similarity in terms of Carnegie classification, or proximity on the *US News & World Report* College Rankings (TCU is 80, so institutions ranked between 50 and 79 were solicited). Totals for overall enrollment and Pell-receipt were found on [CollegeNavigator](#). Primarily using web searches, the researcher coded for whether or not there appeared to be a general on-campus child-care center, whether or not there appeared to be a subsidy of some kind for qualifying parents (often, but not exclusively, for said on-campus center), and other noteworthy details (e.g., CCAMPIS-funded, third-party owned and operated). Assessments of off-campus child care in the towns and cities in which these universities are located were not performed.

Based on this comparative analysis of 22 peer and aspirant universities, the following observations can be made:

1. TCU is the only school in the BIG 12 that does not have a general on-campus childcare facility nor even subsidy program;
2. TCU has a higher raw number of Pell-eligible parents than Baylor and SMU, both of whom have on-campus facilities; and
3. Pell-eligible student-parents make up a higher percentage of TCU’s total enrollment than Pell-eligible parents at Texas A&M, U of Georgia, Iowa State U, and the U of Texas at Austin—all of whom have both on-campus facilities and subsidy programs.

Table 14: Institutions arranged by number of low-income student-parents (LISPs).

Institution	Total Enrollment	Total Pell-Receiving	Pell % of Total	Total of LISPs	LISPs % of Total	On-Campus Center	Tuition Subsidy/Reduction
U of Houston	46,324	13,478	29.10%	2,704	5.84%	✓	✓
U of Oklahoma	31,702	4,693	14.80%	1,429	4.51%	✓	✓
Texas Tech U	36,996	13,285	35.91%	1295	3.50%	✓	✓
Texas A&M U	69,367	10,516	15.16%	1001	1.44%	✓	✓
Florida State U	41,717	10,036	24.06%	829	1.99%	✓	✓

¹³ In cases where the classification of an on-campus facility was ambiguous, the researcher called or emailed the appropriate contact person at that university.

Oklahoma State U	24,649	5,862	23.78%	807	3.27%	✓	✗
U of Dayton	11,241	892	7.94%	788	7.01%	✓	✗
U of Minnesota, Twin Cities	51,848	6,591	12.71%	786	4.52%	✓	✓
U of Kansas	24,815	4,270	17.21%	612	2.47%	✓	✓
West Virginia U	26864	5648	21.02%	611	2.27%	✓	✓
U of Georgia	38,246	6,019	15.74%	518	1.35%	✓	✓
U of Connecticut	27,578	4,029	14.61%	442	5.06%	✓	✓
Iowa State U	36,158	6,299	17.42%	405	1.12%	✓	✓
U of Texas at Austin	51,832	9,464	18.26%	384	0.74%	✓	✓
Emory U	15,252	1,234	8.09%	375	2.46%	✓	✓
Clemson U	24387	3231	3.37%	305	1.25%	✓	✓
Texas Christian U	10,918	1,123	10.29%	252	2.31%	✗	✗
Baylor U	17,217	2,618	15.21%	223	1.30%	✓	✗
Vanderbilt U	12824	938	7.31%	170	1.33%	✓	✗
Wake Forest U	8116	455	5.61%	155	1.91%	✗	✗
Southern Methodist U	11,649	827	7.10%	59	0.51%	✓	✗
Rice U	6,989	527	7.54%	40	0.57%	✓	✗
Trinity U	2,480	366	14.76%	39	1.57%	✗	✗

Table 15: Institutions arranged by LISPs as a percentage of total enrollment.

Institution	Total Enrollment	Total Pell-Receiving	Pell % of Total	Total of LISPs	LISPs % of Total	On-Campus Center	Tuition Subsidy/Reduction
U of Dayton	11,241	892	7.94%	788	7.01%	✓	✗
U of Houston	46,324	13,478	29.10%	2,704	5.84%	✓	✓
U of Connecticut	27,578	4,029	14.61%	442	5.06%	✓	✓
U of Minnesota, Twin Cities	51,848	6,591	12.71%	786	4.52%	✓	✓
U of Oklahoma	31,702	4,693	14.80%	1,429	4.51%	✓	✓
Texas Tech U	36,996	13,285	35.91%	1295	3.50%	✓	✓
Oklahoma State U	24,649	5,862	23.78%	807	3.27%	✓	✗
U of Kansas	24,815	4,270	17.21%	612	2.47%	✓	✓
Emory U	15,252	1,234	8.09%	375	2.46%	✓	✓
Texas Christian U	10,918	1,123	10.29%	252	2.31%	✗	✗
West Virginia U	26864	5648	21.02%	611	2.27%	✓	✓
Florida State U	41,717	10,036	24.06%	829	1.99%	✓	✓

Wake Forest U	8116	455	5.61%	155	1.91%	X	X
Trinity U	2,480	366	14.76%	39	1.57%	X	X
Texas A&M U	69,367	10,516	15.16%	1001	1.44%	✓	✓
U of Georgia	38,246	6,019	15.74%	518	1.35%	✓	✓
Vanderbilt U	12824	938	7.31%	170	1.33%	✓	X
Baylor U	17,217	2,618	15.21%	223	1.30%	✓	X
Clemson U	24387	3231	3.37%	305	1.25%	✓	✓
Iowa State U	36,158	6,299	17.42%	405	1.12%	✓	✓
U of Texas at Austin	51,832	9,464	18.26%	384	0.74%	✓	✓
Rice U	6,989	527	7.54%	40	0.57%	✓	X
Southern Methodist U	11,649	827	7.10%	59	0.51%	✓	X

These data show that when we go beyond simply looking at total enrollment and whether or not peer and aspirant universities have some form of child care (assistance), we see that TCU is largely in the middle of the pack, having more Pell-eligible parents than other private universities that still largely have child care (assistance) but fewer than larger public institutions that offer really robust child care (assistance). TCU is failing to match the child-care services offered not only at aspirant universities but peer institutions as well.

TCU is missing an opportunity to take the lead on child care. We believe TCU should start thinking about offering child-care (assistance) especially to the Pell-eligible parents ineligible for assistance through CCMS or EFS. As we will discuss further in the sections below, we recommend, at a minimum, meeting the child-care needs of Pell-eligible parents through a subsidy program to assist those parents with getting child care off campus. While the vast majority of universities sampled by our research team offer either an on-campus childcare, a childcare subsidy, or both, a *subsidy-only option* at TCU would at least be a first step in meeting the needs of TCU's low income student-parents. This option, as the next section will demonstrate, has been underexplored in the history of child-care initiatives at TCU.

Previous Child-Care Initiatives

Since 1973, committees, task forces, and groups of highly motivated individuals at TCU—faculty, staff, and students among them—have gathered data on cross-campus opinion about child care, brainstormed alternative models to address child-care needs, and advocated for an on-campus facility. The following timeline is based on archived *TCU Daily Skiff* and *TCU 360* articles and one personal interview with a representative from Human Resources:

- 1971 During a forum discussion on women’s lib in the Student Center ballroom, Gloria Steinem “urged [members of the audience to advocate for the University] to ... establish child care facilities on-campus not just for students and faculty, but ‘for everybody’s kids.’”¹⁴
- 1973 The Home Economics Department submits guidelines for a proposal of a day care center.¹⁵
- 1978 The issue of child care is discussed by the AddRan Committee on Women’s Programs.
- 1982 A day-care subcommittee (under the AddRan Committee on Women’s Programs) is formed and conducts a survey about need for day care: “The results showed an overwhelming support for a campus day care center and an actual need for a center for 140 children.”¹⁶
- 1987 A child-care needs-assessment survey of faculty, staff, and students is conducted by students in social work professor Linda Moore’s Community Organization Practice course.
- 1994 Students in a Community Intervention course in the social work department conduct a survey of all TCU faculty and staff, finding that “151 families said they would use [an on-campus child-care] facility.”¹⁷
- 2001 Students in David Jenkins’ Generalist Practice with Communities course conduct a child-care needs-assessment survey of faculty and staff, “receiv[ing] over 100 responses of people who would be affected by a day care.”¹⁸

¹⁴ “Femme Lib Session Re-set.” *The Skiff*, Tuesday, March 2, 1971; Shirley Farrell, “Steinem Hits Myths, Policies,” *The Skiff*, Friday, March 19, 1971. The Oct. 1974 issue of *Image*, a campus student publication, includes an extended quote from the forum: “It’s child care facilities on campus for everybody, not just the kids of faculty and students. I’m sure that this campus is like everywhere with the terribly underpaid people who work in the cafeteria and on the grounds. It has to be for everybody’s kids. It’s better for the kids. Not only that but you get it sooner because if you can call a strike in the cafeteria and in the English department it works better.” “Steinem Retrospect: Gloria’s Goals Bite the Dust in Stockyard City.” *Image* (1974), p. 18-20.

¹⁵ Tita French. “Day care center plans still struggling.” *The Daily Skiff*, Friday, January 24, 1975.

¹⁶ Kristin Deem, “Course to find answers.” *TCU Daily Skiff*, Tuesday, March 3, 1987.

¹⁷ Jody Wetuski, “Survey: Students want on-campus day care,” *TCU Daily Skiff*, Thursday, April 14, 1994.

¹⁸ Reagan Duplisea, “Class studies possible day care,” *TCU Daily Skiff*, Thursday, April 26, 2001.

- 2002 An ad hoc task force starts developing a proposal for an on-campus child-care facility, which is postponed by Chancellor Michael Ferrari's departure announcement. A joint meeting of the governing bodies is held, and a survey is conducted by Assistant Provost Bonnie Melhart.¹⁹
- 2003 Fifty women faculty present concerns and recommendations regarding women on campus to Chancellor Victor Boschini. One recommendation includes making the campus more family-friendly with the addition of a child-care center.²⁰
- 2007 Cara Jacocks presents benefits of campus child care to a joint assembly of faculty and staff, followed by small-group brainstorming of feasible child-care models.²¹
- 2010 An ad hoc committee on child care conducts a survey of faculty and staff.
- 2011 Human Resources begins a pilot program with Camp Fire, which provides a referral/reference service and in-network discount to TCU employees in exchange for \$10,000/year from TCU.²²
- 2014 Camp Fire program is expanded to include graduate students.
- 2017 Camp Fire discontinues referral/reference services.²³

A number of observations can be made about these documented efforts. There appears to have been a TCU child-care initiative every 4 years or so since 1973. The majority of these initiatives—from 1981 to 2010—started with or featured a survey of faculty and staff (and students) about their likely use of an on-campus facility, consistently showing that well over 100 dependent children would start attending such a facility if one were built. Proposals since the 1980s have consistently pointed to SMUs child-care center, which was established in 1978, as evidence of TCU's failure to stay competitive.²⁴ While other models have been discussed, an on-campus facility is the dominant model for which faculty and staff have advocated. Opposition to an on-campus facility, when articulated, has cited concerns about space; liability; construction, maintenance, and staffing costs (paid for by tuition increases); lack of support from the general undergraduate student body; and other competing needs of faculty, staff, and students.

¹⁹ Amy Johnson, "Lack of daycare a concern for university personnel," *TCU Daily Skiff*, Friday, Sept. 27, 2002; Ashley Moore, "Child care plans unclear."

²⁰ Ashley Moore, "Child care plans unclear."

²¹ TCU 360 Staff, "Joint assembly discusses issue of child care," *TCU 360*, February 16, 2007; Andrew Chavez, "Child care for employees, students best option," *TCU 360*, February 23, 2007.

²² TCU 360 Staff, "Child care options increasing for faculty and staff," *TCU 360*, February 18, 2010; TCU 360 Staff, "Child care options and online evaluations subjects of Faculty Senate meeting," *TCU 360*, March 5, 2010.

²³ Personal interview with Matthew Millns, Assistant Director of Benefits, TCU Human Resources.

²⁴ Harriette Hauske, "Kids on campus: SMU's growing daycare center moving to new digs," *SMU Campus Weekly*, November 9, 2017.

One likely explanation for the lack of movement in establishing on-campus childcare at TCU is that the numbers of students, faculty, and staff who would use it are far outshadowed by the numbers of students, faculty, and staff who would not. The approximate number of Pell-eligible student-parents of dependent children in 2018-19 (n=109) was one percent of the total student body (10,918). The cost of building, maintaining, and staffing a child-care center on TCU's campus—along with the other concerns mentioned above—would be high. The situation was articulated concisely in 1990 by then-Chancellor Bill Tucker:

At this point, I do not see it as a priority. I see it as a need. ... A day-care center could certainly be helpful to students and to staff and faculty. But there are other needs, and this has to compete with them. ... It's just a matter of taking the resources we have and using them as effectively as possible.²⁵

The goal, then, of any successful child-care initiative at TCU is showing that a proposed solution not only meets a need but should be a University priority, given its costs and benefits in terms of institutional resources.

In contrast to the apparent nonstarter of proposing an on-campus facility, a concrete result of the child-care initiative in 2010 was an institutional partnership with the non-profit organization, Camp Fire, which provided child-care referrals/reference services to TCU employees and a 10 percent discount for child-care centers in the Camp Fire network; child care centers that met specific standards were eligible to be in this network. Camp Fire was also partnered with BNSF Railway, Pier 1 Imports, and the University of North Texas to provide the same services. Employees would fill out an online request form via the TCU HR website, and they would receive a child-care referral packet, the 10 percent discount for in-network providers, and priority on waiting lists.

The program's goal was to assist approximately 25 percent of the TCU employees with dependent children (approx. 100 employees), based on the survey results in 2010. Once up and running, the pilot program's usage was quite low, however: for 2012, they received 24 child-care inquiries; for 2013, they received 28 inquiries; for 2014, 34 inquiries; and for 2015, 21 inquiries. The "spike" in inquiries in 2014 is likely due to the fact that graduate students were added to the program with no additional cost to TCU, which was paying \$10,000 per year to make the program available to employees (and graduate students). According to an HR PowerPoint presentation to the TCU University Compensation Advisory Committee in Sept. 2015, several possible actions were being recommended including to "Increase the Marketing, Online Presence, and Scope of Camp Fire." The program was being promoted through quarterly Lunch and Learns organized by HR and by emails to faculty and staff; nonetheless, either employees and graduate students with dependent children were not aware of the program's existence despite the marketing, or they were declining to use it for reasons that were not identified at the time. The cost of the program clearly did not seem commensurate with the usage: Alternative recommendations in the Sept. 2015 PowerPoint included discontinuing the partnership with Camp Fire. In 2017, Camp Fire discontinued their referral/reference services.

The underuse of the Camp Fire referral/reference service and discount would seem to suggest that similar child-care initiatives—perhaps even any child-care initiative—would be similarly underused; that the nearly routine calls for an on-campus facility over the decades

²⁵ Brenda Welchlin, "Faculty cite campus need for child care," *TCU Daily Skiff*, Thursday, March 8, 1990.

have somehow been based on faulty assumptions about parental behavior; or that with more and better marketing a similar referral/refence service and discount would work in the future.

We argue that the underuse of the Camp Fire program was the result, not of lackluster or inconsistent marketing, but rather the fact that its goal was to raise awareness about childcare options in specific zip codes of DFW, not to increase access to childcare. According to the Sept. 2015 PowerPoint referenced above, over 300 people had attended Lunch and Learns in the three years preceding: three times the number of people the program sought to help. Employees (and graduate students) were in fact aware of the program. They just did not use it. We cannot know with certainty the reason employees did not use the program, but we hypothesize that graduate students did not use the program because they actually needed more access to affordable, high-quality childcare, not more awareness of what providers are near them geographically. Even if these students were aware of the 10 percent discount, a discount is not financial assistance. For example, a low-income, CCMS-eligible student-parent with a toddler in a TRS 4-star provider would be eligible for \$179.50 a week in assistance. Based on our research of childcare costs in DFW, \$179 would go quite far to cover the childcare costs for this parent—covering it completely in some cases. Financial assistance is \$179 a week. A discount is \$17 a week. In short, the underused Camp Fire program does not have much of any bearing on the likely usage of a subsidy program. Referral services raise awareness about childcare, whereas subsidies increase access and affordability.

External Funding Sources for Child-Care Initiatives

In addition to a subsidy program being an underexplored model, a similarly underexplored funding option for TCU child care is the use of external seed money. An endowment fund would be the ideal, long-term funding stream that should be explored, but an endowment fund does not offer an immediate solution to the current needs of TCU student-parents. Therefore, we contend that the speediest and most direct funding option for a subsidy program is through external grant funding. Private grants from foundations, such as [Lena Pope](#), and public grants from, for example, the U.S. Department of Education's [Child Care Access Means Parents In School](#) (CCAMPIS) program, are among the most viable funding streams. The Office of Research and Graduate Studies has gained support from the Office of Development but, so far, no development funding sources have been identified. In lieu of private funding, proposing a project to the CCAMPIS program presents itself as perhaps the best option.

Table 16: CCAMPIS page of the Dept. of Education's website.

The screenshot shows the U.S. Department of Education website page for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program. The page layout includes a top navigation bar with links for 'Skip to main content', 'About Us', 'Contact Us', 'FAQs', and 'Language Assistance'. Below this is the U.S. Department of Education logo and a search bar. A secondary navigation bar contains links for 'Student Loans', 'Grants', 'Laws', and 'Data'. The main content area is titled 'ABOUT ED / OFFICES' and 'Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program'. A blue sidebar menu lists various categories: Purpose, Eligibility, Applicant Info, Awards, Performance, Funding Status, Laws, Regs, & Guidance, Resources, FAQs, and Contacts. The 'Purpose' section is highlighted, with sub-sections for 'Program Office: Student Service', 'CFDA Number: 84.335', and 'Program Type: Discretionary/Competitive Grants'. The 'Program Description' section explains that the program supports low-income parents in postsecondary education through campus-based child care services. The 'Types of Projects' section states that funds are used to support or establish campus-based child care programs primarily serving low-income students. A 'What's New' sidebar contains a recent announcement about a technical assistance workshop for the CCAMPIS program. A 'How Do I Find...' sidebar lists resources like student loans, college accreditation, and FERPA. A 'Related Topics' sidebar lists 'Higher Education Policy'.

The CCAMPIS program offers grants on a four-year cycle to institutions of higher education to fund the provision of campus-based child-care services to low-income students. For fiscal year 2018, the CCAMPIS program awarded \$33,323,408 to 196 institutions.²⁶ The average award amount was \$170,000 and most (n=118, 60.2 percent) were community or technical colleges. Many four-year institutions also received CCAMPIS funds, including Texas A&M U-Commerce, the U of Houston, the U of Texas at Rio Grande Valley.

For institutions to be eligible for CCAMPIS funding, the total amount of Federal Pell grant funds awarded to students enrolled at the institution for the preceding fiscal year must

²⁶ <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/campisp/awards.html>

equal or exceed \$350,000. For 2018-19, \$6,390,000 was awarded to 1,788 undergraduates at TCU, making TCU eligible to apply. The maximum award would be 1 percent of the total amount of Pell Grant funds awarded. In TCU's case, the maximum award would be \$63,900 each year for a four-year period. While many CCAMPIS recipients can fund the start-up of new on-campus child-care centers, these recipients' awards usually have six digits, not five.

As of 2019, the program has, among other requirements, two absolute priorities which funded projects must address:

- Absolute Priority 1 states that the project must "Leverage significant local or institutional resources, including in-kind contributions, to support the activities assisted."
- Absolute Priority 2 states the project must "Utilize a sliding fee scale for child care services provided in order to support a high number of low-income parents pursuing postsecondary education at the institution."

In other words, additional funding streams, whether institutional or local, are required for applying to this grant, and the cost for student-parents must be relative to income, family size, and other variables. Additionally, for projects involving subsidies for off-campus child care, applicants need to "describe a plan for any child care facility assisted under this program to become accredited within three years of the date the institution first receives assistance." Providers partnering with an institution would need to have a plan in place to gain national accreditation within three years, if they are not already accredited or seeking accreditation. Finally, funded programs must "coordinate with the institution's early childhood education curriculum, to the extent the curriculum is available." The Principal Investigator (PI) for the grant and administrator of a subsidy program, then, would need to be an early childhood education specialist.

While a grant of \$63,900 per year for four years, pending re-application, would go some of the way toward helping low-income student-parents, we know it would not cover the total need. Recall that survey respondents in aggregate were spending between \$22,100 and \$28,500 per month, which, over the course of the calendar year, amounts to between \$256,200 and \$342,000. Thus, only between 21 and 24 percent of the true need would be addressed with CCAMPIS funds alone. A grant this size could function as a downpayment on the child-care needs at TCU, giving the program enough funds to get started but not enough for it to grow and become an integral part of TCU's student services. Once the program is active, the administrators of the program would begin collecting data on the program's positive impact, data they can show to potential donors (e.g., alumni, entities on campus, etc.).

Recommendation

This Report has made the case that meeting the child-care needs of Pell-eligible parents at TCU should be a priority. We have documented the demographics, retention rates, child-care plans, and cost burden of Pell-eligible parents to provide current and reliable qualitative and quantitative data about this student group. Our findings demonstrate that this student group appears more ethnically diverse than the student body overall and more likely to be veterans transfers; they also appear to be declining in number overall and experiencing a retention problem from junior to senior year.

To address the degree to which the onus is on TCU to do something to address this problem, we surveyed the child-care centers across DFW and researched the publicly available forms of financial assistance for low-income parents. We found that some low-income student-parents may be unaware that they qualify for subsidized child care through Tarrant County CCMS or EFS, meaning that simply raising awareness about these resources would go some of the way to solving the problem; however, a portion of Pell-eligible parents are ineligible for CCMS and EFS funds due to family size, income, or education level, leaving them with too much income to qualify for assistance but not enough to be as successful or as speedy in their pursuit of postsecondary education as they would be with some kind of financial assistance.

We compared our data to peer and aspirant universities, finding that TCU is largely in the middle of the pack, having more Pell-eligible parents than other private universities that still largely have child care (assistance) but fewer than larger public institutions that offer really robust child care (assistance). Because TCU's raw number and percentage of Pell-eligible parents makes it comparable to other universities that have different forms of child care (assistance), we think TCU is missing an opportunity to take the lead on child care, especially considering the assistance gaps into which some Pell-eligible parents may fall.

Historically, subsidy programs have been underexplored as a childcare service at TCU, and alternative funding sources, such as external grants, have similarly been underexplored. Building on the legacy of almost 50 years of committees, task forces, and groups of highly motivated individuals working for child care at TCU—and learning from the equally long history of obstacles, roadblocks, and resistance to their efforts—we are *not* arguing that child care should be prioritized because a survey shows that it would be beneficial. We *are* arguing that it should be prioritized in a way that makes sense from a cost-benefit perspective, given the University's responsibility to allocate its available resources as effectively as possible.

We propose that TCU prioritize the child-care needs of Pell-eligible parents by developing a CCAMPIS-funded subsidy program for qualifying parents to use off-campus child-care centers with whom TCU has partnered. Such a program would be an evidence-based, cost-effective effort that begins to address the problem of child-care access for Pell-eligible students. After explaining how such a program would work, this Report concludes by providing evidence of the program's likely effectiveness in not only helping to meet the child-care needs of Pell-eligible parents at TCU but also, in so doing, helping TCU achieve the goals laid out in the "Vision in Action" report.

Program Overview

In the eyes of the U.S. Dept. of Education, TCU Leadership, and the student-parents themselves, the overall success of a subsidy program would depend on the quality of its organization, administration, delivery of services, and cost-effectiveness. Some specifics outlined below could certainly be modified, but generally we propose a subsidy program that uses a sliding fee scale to serve primarily low-income parents—including undergraduate and graduate/professional students—who are either waitlisted for assistance through CCMS Tarrant County or “bridge” funding through EFS, or do not qualify for this assistance due to family size, income, or education level.

To ensure that this program is complementing and not duplicating existing services, the application process itself should require proof of CCMS ineligibility (or CCMS waitlist status and EFS ineligibility). To ensure that we are not overcomplicating the subsidy amounts themselves, the reimbursement rates and fees would follow those of Tarrant County CCMS.

The program would be administered by an early childhood education specialist and Project Manager (PM). The PI/administrator (.10 FTE) would lend his or her expertise in the area of early childhood education as well as his or her skills in data collection and grant writing. The PM (.5 FTE) would manage logistics, processing of applications, and communication between parties. Together they would be responsible for promotion and publicizing of the program, among other duties.

During the grant proposal stage, the PI would coordinate with already-accredited and accreditation-seeking providers to have them sign memoranda of understanding (MOUs) so that the subsidy money from TCU could go directly to the provider, as per the CCAMPIS requirements. MOUs with other providers who are not currently progressing toward accreditation but plan to begin the process in the next three years can also be added on a rolling basis. Learning from the failed Camp Fire discount initiative, we would partner with as many providers as possible and would publish and maintain a list of eligible providers on the program’s webpage, which would be hosted on the PI’s department or college website. The general timeline for development of the program can be seen below in Table 18.

The program would refrain from reinventing the wheel as much as possible. The program would use the sliding fee scales issued by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the same guidelines that CCMS uses. For parents who are Pell eligible but do not qualify for CCMS, Table 14 would be appropriately extended to the right until the parents’ gross income level is reached, thus determining the subsidy amount for which s/he is eligible. Priority would be based on a combination of need, order of applications’ receipt, and the availability of funds.

Continual assessment would be a significant part of administering the program. The PI and PM would track progress toward degree, graduation rates, GPA, etc. using annual, mandatory questionnaires for awardees. They would conduct comprehensive data collection and issue reports to all relevant bodies: U.S. Dept. of Education, respective TCU Colleges and Departments, and TCU donors, etc.

Table 17: Timeline for development of subsidy program.

Fall 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PI receives assurance that TCU will hire .5 FTE Project Manager • PI conducts needs assessment of 2019-20 students • PI recruits DFW providers
Spring 2020	PI drafts CCAMPIS grant proposal
Summer 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July: PI submit grant proposal • August: PI receives notice of award
Fall 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PI conducts job search and hires Project Manager • October: CCAMPIS funds are dispersed via State of Texas to TCU • Program begins accepting applications
Spring 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify recipients of January – July approval • Begin dispersing reimbursements to providers • Begin promotion and fundraising efforts
Summer 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and submit assessment data to Dept. of Education • Review renewal applications and new applications for August 2021 – July 2022 approval period

Program Effectiveness

A TCU child-care subsidy program would go some of the way to meeting the child-care needs of the most vulnerable parents we have on campus, particularly those who are ineligible for assistance through the existing financial resources in the DFW community.

A subsidy program with built-in promotion of CCMS/EFS funds (i.e., proof of CCMS or EFS ineligibility required to apply) would help connect students with existing resources as well as providing a resource for students who are ineligible to use those resources. According to the reported annual incomes of Pell-eligible parents in the Fall 2018 survey, just under half of the respondents appear to qualify for CCMS assistance while just over half may or may not. Specifically, based on household annual income and family size alone, 52 respondents (47.7 percent) appear to be CCMS-eligible while 57 respondents (52.3 percent) may or may not be eligible; the “\$35,000 or more” category could include those making between \$35,000 and 85 percent SMI for a given family size as well as those making more than 85 percent SMI.²⁷

²⁷ Fewer than 52 respondents are likely to be CCMS-eligible when the level of postsecondary education is considered. Parents who are full-time students with more than 48 months of college are ineligible for CCMS funds. Graduate students, for example, would need to meet the work requirements of at least 25 hours per week in

The potential for this program to help students who are CCMS/EFS ineligible is not hypothetical. While we did not collect all the necessary information that CCMS would, our Fall 2018 survey found that 12 respondents appear eligible for CCMS assistance but ineligible for EFS bridge funding. Almost one in four of the CCMS-eligible respondents, then, were they to apply today for CCMS but get waitlisted, would be without assistance in the interim. A TCU child-care subsidy program could serve as bridge funding for these 12 Pell-eligible parents and others in their situation while they wait to be onboarded by CCMS, and it could directly subsidize child care for Pell-eligible parents who are making more than 85 percent SMI given their family size.

CCMS-eligible, EFS-*ineligible* parents are quite likely to avail themselves of a program like this: Of the 12 respondents who, on income alone, appear to be CCMS-eligible but EFS-*ineligible*, two are currently planning to use a licensed provider and they are likely (1), if not very likely (1), to use such a provider *more* if part of the cost were subsidized by the university. The other 10 respondents are not planning to use a licensed provider—regarding child-care plans, one commented “I’ll figure it out”—but 8 indicated they would be likely, if not very likely, to use such a provider with a subsidy. This suggests that a subsidy program would impact the choices and outcomes for student-parents already using child-care providers but also those who are not. The latter students are perhaps the ones for whom this program would make the biggest difference in their lives.

The impact for these Pell-eligible parents would be academic as well as financial. When asked about how a subsidy would impact “the likelihood that [they] would enroll in more classes in a given semester or otherwise progress toward graduation more quickly,” 7 of these 12 indicated they would be likely, if not very likely, to take more classes and graduate sooner. And 10 of the 12 reportedly believe the “impact ... [of] this ... on [their] learning, course grades, and/or overall GPA” would be positive, if not very positive.

The likely positive impacts, both financial and academic, notwithstanding, it is important to remember the limitations with CCAMPIS funding alone. The limited number of student-parents TCU would be able to assist with CCAMPIS funds alone underscores the importance of having a supported administrative team who can fundraise for the program so that more student-parents can be helped. With CCAMPIS funds alone we would be able to assist about 9 students, assuming they were using TRS 3 and 4 providers full-time. According to the Fall 2018 survey, the most populous age-groups of dependent children are pre-school (n=45, 23 percent), between 6 and 8 years old (n=44, 22.5 percent), and toddlerhood (n=42, 21.4 percent). If we use the reimbursement rates for CCMS, we can estimate the number of students assisted with a CCAMPIS grant of \$63,900. Table 19 shows the maximum number of students we would be able to assist if all recipients fit a given category. For example, a grant of \$63,900 would be able to assist 8 students with toddlers going to TRS 4-star providers full-time.

addition to their academic work. The survey did not ask if respondents were undergraduate or graduate students because the CCMS education requirement was not known at the time.

Table 18: Maximum number of students assisted by a \$63,900 grant if all recipients were in a given category.

Provider Type	Provider Rating	Infant FT	Infant PT	Toddler FT	Toddler PT	Preschool FT	Preschool PT	School-age FT	School-age PT	Infant Blended	Toddler Blended	Preschool Blended	School-age Blended
LCCC	Reg	10	14	10	17	12	18	13	18	13	15	17	17
LCCC	TRS 2	10	12	10	12	11	15	11	16	11	12	14	15
LCCC	TRS 3	9	11	9	11	10	14	10	14	10	11	13	13
LCCC	TRS 4	8	10	8	10	9	12	9	13	9	10	12	12

Nine students assisted is certainly greater than 0, but it is less than the total number of Pell-eligible parents in need and who would use the program.

A subsidy program would likely be used by more than just those student-parents it would be able to assist with CCAMPIS funds alone. Bearing in mind what we do not know regarding education level and the like, we can observe widespread likelihood of use of the proposed program. Recalling the Fall 2018 survey data from Section 1, Pell-eligible parents currently using a child-care provider as well as those who are not would experience financial and academic impacts.

Currently using a provider

- 35 of the 38 survey respondents currently, and planning to continue, using a licensed provider reported that they would be likely, if not very likely, to use such a service *more* “[i]f a significant portion of the cost ... were subsidized by the university.”
- When asked about how a subsidy would impact “the likelihood that [they] would enroll in more classes in a given semester or otherwise progress toward graduation more quickly,” 33 of the 35 parents planning to continue using a provider indicated they would be likely, if not very likely, to take more classes and graduate sooner.

Not currently using a provider

- Among the respondents who are not currently planning to use a licensed provider at all (n=65), 81.5 percent (n=53) reported that they would be likely, if not very likely, to use such a service with a subsidy.
- And 42 of the 53 parents (79.2 percent) who would only use a provider with a subsidy also indicated they would be likely, if not very likely, to take more classes and graduate sooner.

Virtually all of these respondents reported that they believed the “impact ... [of] this ... on [their] learning, course grades, and/or overall GPA” would be positive, if not very positive. It is safe to say, then, that CCAMPIS funds would be a good start, but they would not go all the way to meeting the child-care needs of Pell-eligible parents at TCU.

By way of conclusion, we want to underscore the multiple ways in which the proposed TCU child-care subsidy program would contribute to meeting the goals outlined in the Vision in Action report. The subsidy program would increase the amount of external grant money coming in, contribute to the development of a student-success model, and provide a cost-effective solution to address the problem. These results would also increase the academic profile and reputation of the University, lay the groundwork for increasing the endowment, strengthen inclusion across campus for a vulnerable student group, and add a new TCU “front door” to the Fort Worth and DFW community.

Strengthening the Academic Profile and Reputation of TCU

Child care, for many veterans and transfer students is a key component of their overall student success. One in four respondents to our needs assessment survey is on active duty or a veteran, and we suspect that the enrollment and retention trends we identified are the result of Pell-eligible parents transferring from other colleges/universities and experiencing difficulties getting from junior to senior year perhaps because of their child-care needs. As the University works to “Identify and implement best practices for meeting the academic and co-curricular needs of transfer students and veterans,” we encourage the University to recognize child care as one of those needs. Moreover, this proposed program is an evidence-based, cost-effective way of institutionally prioritizing those needs.

Laying the Groundwork for Strengthening the Endowment

A CCAMPIS grant would make a big difference in a relatively small number of students’ lives, but it is important to remember that the CCAMPIS grant could constitute the base funding source, leaving open the possibility of securing supplementary grants from foundations and other private donors once the program is up and running. Given these low numbers in Table 19 and that we would be in the minority of CCAMPIS-funded programs with these numbers, it would be crucial that we maximize the eligibility of our CCAMPIS grant proposal by arranging for 100 percent of the grant money to go toward subsidies.²⁸

To compensate the administrators, the PI should be offered perhaps a course release, stipend, and written assurance that TCU will hire a .5 FTE staff member to work as a Project Manager (PM). These in-kind contributions would meet the criteria for CCAMPIS’s first “absolute priority.” Compensating the PI and a PM would not only make us eligible grant applicants, but would also ensure that quality administration of the program is continually incentivized. Incentivized administrators are more likely to hit the ground running: Raising awareness about the program, fundraising from private donors, securing early investment in an endowment fund are critical to growing the program year after year. Helping more Pell-eligible parents but also offering different programming and facilitating on-site internship and volunteer opportunities for early childhood education students at TCU. While we were unsuccessful in securing buy-in from Alumni Relations on conducting a survey of alumni’s thoughts about and likelihood to support various child-care projects, we suspect that alumni may be motivated to donate to an endowment fund sustaining the subsidy program once it is

²⁸ According to a 2018 Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) survey of CCAMPIS recipients, only about four percent of recipients benefited fewer than 20 students.

up and running. For example, one respondent to the needs assessment survey (discussed in Section 1) reported that “while I likely won’t be here to take advantage of something like this, it IS somewhere I would (and will if given the opportunity) want to donate money in the future to.” We suspect many student-parents within the TCU alumni community would be similarly motivated to donate to this cause.

Strengthening the TCU Experience and Campus Culture

Pell-eligible parents at TCU embody a precarious intersectional position on campus: as student-parents, as low-income, as more ethnically diverse than the general student body, as more likely to be veterans or transfer students, and so on. A subsidy program would enact the Four Pillars of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Because students of Color, transfer students, and students who are veterans are more likely to be parents, TCU can “enhance recruiting and retention of under-represented students” to the extent that child care is one of the factors these students have in mind when evaluating which university to attend. Because student-parents have different life experiences from their childless classmates, they can often use those life experiences to help “bolster [the] curriculum”—a process made more effective when they are enrolled in more classes per semester and less encumbered by costs and logistics of child care. A child-care subsidy program would possibly increase the effectiveness of “outreach and engagement with external communities and schools with large proportions of under-represented groups” because such a program would align TCU’s values with the values and concerns of many of the recipients of that outreach and engagement. Finally, a subsidy program would contribute to an effort to embrace and “promote a campus environment that is welcoming for all and free of bias,” including whatever misconceptions individuals may have about student-parents who are low-income.

As TCU works to “[b]etter serve the needs of under-represented populations in the community by identifying additional program resources,” we encourage the university to recognize student-parenthood as a component of diversity on campus, child-care access as a component of equity on campus, and support for child-care programs as a component of inclusion on campus.

Strengthening the TCU Workforce

As TCU works to “Improve communication on diversity with the campus community and increase opportunities for both formal and informal mentoring,” we think this program, if well supported, could expand in several ways, particularly in relation to mentoring, to strengthen the TCU workforce. As noted above, we were unable to survey alumni in time for publishing this Report, but we suspect that alumni would be motivated to participate in various efforts to grow the program beyond just subsidies. Assuming this program does get off the ground, we hope that Alumni Relations would be instrumental in efforts to involve alumni in more ways than just financially. For example, many alumni may themselves have been parents while attending TCU. Perhaps a mentorship program between then-parent alumni and current student-parents could be developed, with alumni mentoring current students who are participating in the CCAMPIS-funded subsidy program. This mentorship add-on would help improve the visibility of student-parents overall, establish “inter-generational” student-parent solidarity and inclusion, and

provide a vulnerable but highly motivated group of current students with connections they would not otherwise have had for them to thrive professionally post-graduation.

Enhancing Town and Gown Relations

In addition to TCU student-parents benefiting from an abundance of local high-quality child-care providers, a CCAMPIS-funded subsidy program would provide these providers with new customers. In my conversations with directors of child-care centers in Fort Worth, this proposed program is viewed as a win-win for this reason. Additionally, if supported, this program could establish an add-on internship/volunteer program for students in early childhood education. Interns would receive credit for early childhood education experience, which would be coordinated by the PI, an early childhood education specialist. In all, providers gain both customers and interns/volunteers, parents gain child-care access, and interns/volunteers gain experience. The potential for growth beyond the provision of subsidies would clearly benefit multiple parties.

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We look forward to speaking with many of the readers of this Report over the course of the Fall semester, answering your questions, following up on your suggestions, and addressing your concerns. If you support the recommendations as outlined above, please email the following to your respective governing body:

I am writing to ask you to pass a resolution in support of the Graduate Student Senate's child-care initiative.

Undergraduate Students: Student Government Association
 Josh Witkop, President
Joshua.witkop@tcu.edu
 Jack Leonhard (Speaker of the House)
j.leonhard@tcu.edu

Faculty: Faculty Senate
 Student Relations Committee
 Chair: Phil Esposito
p.esposito@tcu.edu

Staff: Staff Assembly
 Policy and Advocacy Committee
 Chair: Jennifer Pearson
j.pearson@tcu.edu



The Graduate Student Senate (GSS) is the official representative body for graduate students at Texas Christian University, providing professional and financial support as well as open forums for discussing issues, events, and other matters pertinent to graduate students. There is no membership fee. All graduate students are eligible and welcome to attend GSS events and run for GSS officer positions.