

## DAMON CHILDCARE COMMITTEE

Elizabeth Clifford, Chair – Law and Criminal Justice  
Audrey Abbondanzieri – Dept of Education  
Annette Agness – Brighton Campus Center  
Anthony Caiazza – Human Services  
Anne Barker – Brighton Childcare Center  
Susan Bender – Service Learning  
Kate Marhatta – Dept. of Education  
Mary Louise Musler – 292-BABY (Parent Network)  
Vilma Morrow – Student Services Center  
Kim Valentine – DCC Student

Consultants: Angel Andreu – Research  
Pat Vickers – Early Childhood Education Quality Council

### CHARGE OF THE COMMITTEE

- 1. STUDENT SUCCESS: Are childcare services An essential element of the Damon City Campus? If childcare is essential to DCC student success, what type of childcare service is needed and to what degree?**
- 2. STUDENT NEED: What is the student need for childcare at DCC? Who are the students that require childcare services at DCC? How many students will use this type of childcare service and define the likelihood that DCC students will consistently use this service? Are there local childcare systems that may serve as natural partners and have childcare available to DCC students?**
- 3. ECONOMIC RESOURCES: Define the local cost for childcare. Are there local, regional, state and national resources available that DCC can acquire to offset childcare costs? What types of resources do students have available for childcare services?**

### DAMON CHILDCARE COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Committee unanimously agrees that childcare services at the Damon Campus are a critical need for our students with children under six.
- Need for campus-based childcare is greater at Damon than at the suburban campus and, as we begin the Renaissance Square project, it is important to “Review and/or modify organizational structures and systems at the Brighton and Damon City campuses...to ensure that the delivery of services and programs is consistent with the distinctiveness of that campus setting.” (5.1.1; Strategic Plan, pg 22)
- Financial need is a predominant factor for many of our students and most cannot afford market price for childcare, especially in light of the fact that public assistance no longer pays childcare for education.
- Grants are available for on-campus subsidies of childcare that are not available for students using off-campus childcare centers.

- Flexibility, *i.e.*, the ability to discontinue childcare during school breaks and summer is a strong need and cannot be met by off-campus childcare centers to the degree that an on-campus center can.
- Retention and recruitment of students to the Damon campus would benefit from a childcare center at our urban campus.
- Recruitment and retention of students at the Damon City Campus will be enhanced by the curricular collaborations afforded ECE and EDU students through a DCC childcare center as well as potential scholarship monies.
- Recommendations: Reconfigure the Damon Childcare Committee to include members with appropriate expertise to take the next steps to make a Childcare Center at our urban campus a reality.

**The Damon Childcare Committee unanimously agrees that a childcare center at the Damon Campus is a critical need for our students with children under six.**

The Damon Childcare Committee's first charge was to determine if childcare is an essential element for students at Damon. After extensive discussion, surveying Damon students with children under six, touring the Brighton ChildCare Center (hereinafter referred to as BCCC), and exploring potential partnerships with existing childcare facilities, it is the unanimous opinion of all the members of the Damon ChildCare Committee that a childcare center at the Damon Campus is a critical need for our students with children under six who cannot afford traditional childcare. This conclusion is drawn from the success of BCCC, the results of our student survey, inquiries made into partnering with existing childcare centers, exploring funding sources, the combined years of observational data from our faculty members, and the anecdotal experiences of our students.

**The need for campus-based childcare is greater at Damon than at the suburban campus.**

The advantages of having an on-campus childcare center are strikingly exhibited in BCCC which has been in operation since 1991. BCCC is an exemplary childcare center that is safe, clean, well supervised, healthful, bright, warm, and comforting. In addition, BCCC, including statistics from the Damon campus, has been repeatedly successful in obtaining

grants that allow them to offer childcare at significantly lower than market rate. Because of such grants, at present, BCCC is able to offer childcare for as little as \$20.00 per week (approximately \$145.00 under market price) to students of limited means. To retain these grants, BCCC must maintain records and present data to support the premise that, providing childcare on campus to students increases retention in addition to being a recruitment tool. BCCC is the gold standard of childcare and the students of the Brighton campus are the beneficiaries of the excellent care and the subsidized costs and the College benefits from the increased retention and enhanced recruitment. Although services at BCCC are not exclusive to Brighton campus students, Damon students are effectively precluded from availing themselves of the service. Current transportation options for DCC students are not effective or timely for students to travel to BCCC to drop off children, return to DCC, take classes, return to BCCC to pick up children and then return home. The combination of the current busing schedule and course offerings in effect make the BCCC unavailable to DCC students. BCCC is not a practical option for the vast majority of our students. Damon has a higher percentage of students having children under six and it can therefore be predicted that Damon would also benefit from a facility that would increase retention and recruitment. Approximately 8% of Brighton students (1,202 students out of 14,539) as opposed to 16.5 % of Damon students (352 students out of 2,133\*) identified themselves as having children under six. Frequently Damon students are the least affluent of our student body. In this light, it would appear that Damon's need for childcare is greater, not less, than the students at our suburban campus. The percentage of parent-students is higher at Damon and they are less able to pay for childcare. Over a thousand students at Brighton identified themselves as having children under the age of six and BCCC can accommodate 96 children. At Damon, three hundred fifty-two students were identified as having children under six, this is out of

two thousand one hundred thirty-three, 16.5% of the student population, almost twice the percentage at Brighton. In the survey the Committee conducted in September, 2006 (copy of survey attached, marked “A”), we received back 256 (68.6% response rate). Of the returned surveys, 185 were considered “valid” and could be processed (see Survey Results, attached hereto and marked “B”). Of these 185 valid responses, almost half (48.9%), 85 students answered yes when asked if they would consider choosing a MCC child care center at the Damon City Campus over any other preference (emphasis added). The Committee deems this to be a tremendously strong plea for a childcare center on the urban campus.

\*Our survey identified “Damon” students as those students taking at least one course at Damon so “Damon” figures include students taking all their courses at Damon (1179 total students with 192 identifying themselves as being parents of children under six – 16.3%) and students taking at least one course at Damon (954 students with 160 identifying themselves as being parents of children under six – 16.7%). The percentage of student-parents for both these groups either combined or apart is within .5 of 16%.

Tables A & B demonstrate that for those who would prefer a child care center or a location closer to DCC would also consider choosing a MCC child care center at DCC, 78% and 84% respectively, as well as a total of 87 students (more than a center could serve).

Table A

6. What type of care would you prefer?		7. Would you consider choosing a MCC child care center at the Damon City Campus over any other preference?		Total
		Yes	No	
Current child care arrangement	Count	24	52	76
	Percent	31.6%	68.4%	100.0%
Child care center	Count	43	12	55
	Percent	78.2%	21.8%	100.0%
Family day care home	Count	4	5	9
	Percent	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%
Unrelated person in your home	Count	0	2	2
	Percent	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Relative	Count	6	18	24
	Percent	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Other	Count	8	5	13
	Percent	61.5%	38.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	85	94	179
	Percent	47.5%	52.5%	100.0%

Table B

8. What location would you prefer for your child care needs?		7. Would you consider choosing a MCC child care center at the Damon City Campus over any other preference?		Total
		Yes	No	
closer to home	Count	30	80	110
	Percent	27.3%	72.7%	100.0%
closer to the MCC Damon City Campus	Count	53	10	63
	Percent	84.1%	15.9%	100.0%
closer to the MCC Brighton Campus	Count	4	2	6
	Percent	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	87	92	179
	Percent	48.6%	51.4%	100.0%

**Financial need is a predominant factor for many of our students and most cannot afford market price for childcare.**

When the Committee asked how much the students could afford for childcare, the eighty-one students who would consider choosing a MCC child care center at DCC provided the following information: 29 could pay up to \$20/wk.; 32 could pay up to \$60/wk.; 10 could pay up to \$100/wk.; 8 could pay up to \$150/wk.; 2 could pay more than \$150.00/wk [these figures are mirrored by the 83 students who would not consider choosing a MCC childcare center at DCC). Only 2 said they can afford close to “market price”, .02%.

Market price at Monroe County Childcare Facilities is:

Infants:	\$165/wk non-accredited	\$190/wk accredited
Toddlers:	\$145/wk non-accredited	\$170/wk accredited
Preschool:	\$140/wk non-accredited	\$165/wk accredited

This represents a significant disconnect. Of the 81 students who would choose to bring their child(ren) to childcare at Damon, only 12% can afford to pay close to market rate. Our survey shows that, predominantly, our students cannot afford to avail themselves of local childcare facilities because of the cost. For those who can pay up to either \$20 or \$60 per week per child, more than half would consider a MCC child care center at DCC; exactly half of those in the range of \$101 - \$ 150 would consider DCC.)

5. What range are you able to pay for children per week per child?		7. Would you consider choosing a MCC child care center at the Damon City Campus over any other preference?		Total
		Yes	No	
Up to \$20	Count	29	25	54
	Percent	53.7%	46.3%	100.0%
\$21 - \$60	Count	32	31	63
	Percent	50.8%	49.2%	100.0%
\$61 - \$100	Count	10	13	23
	Percent	43.5%	56.5%	100.0%
\$101 - \$150	Count	8	8	16
	Percent	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
More then \$150	Count	2	6	8
	Percent	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	81	83	164
	Percent	49.4%	50.6%	100.0%

**Grants are available for on-campus subsidies of childcare that are *not* available for students using regular childcare centers and public assistance no longer pays childcare for education.**

BCCC, at present, can offer students weekly rates as low as \$20.00 per week, depending on income level of the student. This is possible because of a CHILDCARE ACCESS MEANS PARENTS IN SCHOOL (hereinafter referred to as CCAMPIS) federal grant along with the SUNY BLOCK GRANT as well as the SUNY OPERATING GRANT. *[Such grants are only available to educational facilities for on-campus care.]* The Committee could find no source of funding that would allow our students to be subsidized at private childcare facilities. Without subsidy, market price is what our students must pay and, as our survey shows, over 75% cannot afford it.

The Committee explored the possibility of partnering with existing childcare facilities (see attached map of available childcare facilities, “C”) and conducted a survey to find out what the parameters of such a partnership might entail (Childcare Center Survey, “D”). Two major obstacles to any such partnerships became immediately clear: financing and flexibility. Several centers expressed a willingness to “partner” with MCC but, without subsidies, they are unable to lower their fees to meet the ability of our students to pay. Childcare facilities indicated a willingness to “partner” with DCC to the extent that they might reserve or allot spaces for DCC students. They would try to accommodate our students but they could not offer the flexibility around school breaks, summer recess and class schedules. The cost would be essentially the same and, as discussed above, the market price for childcare facilities is too high for almost all of our students.

Grants presently make childcare at BCCC accessible to lower-income students. However, other campuses have developed more reliable income streams. Erie Community College subsidizes each of the three childcare centers located on each of the three campuses in the Western New York area. The Student Government Association (SGA) gives a percentage of the student activity fees to a non-profit corporation (Auxiliary Services Corp.) that manages the college services, such as food service, book stores, childcare, etc. The SGA money is used for childcare operating expenses. The percentage is determined by the Board, dependent on grants and other income. Such an arrangement would work to rectify the inequity that presently exists between our two campuses in relation to student fees. All MCC students pay the same fees but those who attend at the Brighton campus have immediate access to BCCC, an amazing athletic facility, a beautiful new student center, a state-of-the-art bookstore and much more. It is a stated goal of the college to “Ensure that student services

are accessible, effective, and efficient at all sites (emphasis added). ...[and it is important to] instill a level of respect and understanding among all constituents for the important role that each campus site performs in contributing to the mission of the College.” (MCC Strategic Plan, pg.22)

**Flexibility, *i.e.*, the ability to discontinue childcare during school breaks and summer is a strong need and cannot be met by existing childcare centers.**

The second obstacle, flexibility, also has some relation to expense. BCCC can allow a student to withdraw his/her child over school breaks (Semester break, February break, Spring break) so the student does not pay for this time. A private childcare facility does not/cannot offer such a schedule. A private childcare facility must be able to count on income fifty-two weeks a year. BCCC, partially because their workers are also students, has more flexibility in that students, both caregivers and parents, don't come in on breaks. BCCC saves on salaries this way so the students are not penalized. Further, a campus childcare facility can offer class-friendly scheduling (Tues-Thurs.; Mon-Wed; mornings, afternoons) which a private childcare is less likely to offer. Partnerships with local childcare facilities would be cost prohibitive and less than scheduling friendly for our students. “Greater flexibility in the delivery of courses, programs and services will be required to meet the needs of a variety of student populations” (MCC Strategic Plan pg.3) and flexibility is key in the delivery of childcare to the Damon student population. “Growth will require actively seeking new student populations....[and] Learners will continue to be more diverse and time-constrained, and will require a greater variety of services.” (MCC Strategic Plan, pg.9). Planning for a childcare center at Renaissance Square will do just that.

**Retention and recruitment of students to the Damon campus would benefit from a childcare center at our urban campus.**

Enrollment figures are down for Damon for Fall, 2006. The Strategic Plan recognizes that it is important to “Identify new student populations and create initiatives that focus upon the educational need of these populations.” 2.1 Strategic Plan, pg. 10. The Gateway to College program is a wonderful example of identifying “new student populations.” Gateway students will receive enriched services and it is anticipated that childcare will be a prime need for these students. We must “address the learning needs of an every-increasing mature adult population,” (2.1.1 Strategic Plan, pg. 10) and this “adult population” will undoubtedly include parents. A Childcare Center at our urban campus would be a strong selling point for these new populations.

**Recruitment and retention of students at the Damon City Campus will be enhanced by the curricular collaborations afforded ECE and EDU students through a DCC childcare center as well as potential scholarship monies.**

In addition to the obvious recruitment and retention benefits of offering exemplary childcare services for MCC students, this type of on-campus facility would also provide recruitment and retention benefits for ECE and EDU students. New York State offers an Educational Incentive Program (EIP), which provides up to \$2,000 in tuition scholarships for students working a minimum of two hours/week in the childcare field and pursuing a related degree in higher education (either Early Care and Education or Teacher Education).

An on-campus center that provided financially accessible childcare for MCC students also would provide opportunity for scholarships for ECE and EDU students while reducing center operating costs. Additionally, mutual benefits would be shared through numerous service-learning opportunities that provide hands-on learning for MCC students and greater services for the children (with no operating costs attached). Such projects may include MCC students

reading to children (weekly), literacy kits being developed and given to the childcare center, age-appropriate curricula development within ECE classes that is then shared and implemented in the childcare classrooms, professional development opportunities for staff, as well as MCC service-learning and teaching assistants in childcare classrooms. There also exists the possibility of developing interdisciplinary interactive service-based curricula for establishing and running a childcare facility.

An on-campus childcare facility is not only a critical need for Damon Campus students, it would also provide key recruitment and retention strategies. The possible collaborations listed above make a clear case for recruitment into the ECE and EDU programs and the nature of the hands-on, purposed service-learning outcomes, leads to an increase in retention rates. These ideas are only the beginning, with numerous others that could be developed and implemented (business courses, children's literature, honors coursework, psychology, human services, health and safety/wellness, to name a few).

Again, all of these potential initiatives would enhance, enrich and expand the experiences for children, staff and MCC students while providing new enrollment and retention strategies.

**Recommendations: Reconfigure the Damon Childcare Committee to include members with appropriate expertise to take the next steps to make a Childcare Center at our urban campus a reality.**

To move this project forward, the committee will need persons with expertise in the following areas: Architectural Planning – Coordination with Renaissance Square

Compliance with Building codes and regulations for childcare

Cost estimates –cost effectiveness for such a project

Fundraising – income stream analysis