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# Federal grant helps parents attending community college with child care costs

 Graham Bosch  June 12, 2019  4 min read  Add comment

Two Maricopa County community colleges received a federal grant to help parents of preschool-aged children access child care while attending college.

The Children’s Center at Mesa Community College (MCC) and the Children’s Learning Center at GateWay Community College (GWCC) are recipients of the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) grant, which provides \$58,368 a year for four years to support student parents attending college at each location, according to a [press release](#).

“This grant is highly competitive as there are not many grant opportunities providing for this kind of help for early childhood,” said Kris Bliss, director of student services at MCC. “MCC has had this grant for 12 years prior — we missed out on the last funding cycle and are excited to get it back.”

CCAMPIS is a federal grant fully funded by the United States Department of Education from Oct. 1, 2019, to Sept. 30, 2023.

The grant also supports students at [Arizona State University](#) — the only four-year institution in Arizona to receive it — and Central Arizona College, Bliss said.

“The MCC Children’s Center has been the recipient of this grant in the past, and we are happy we

were again successful,” said Kenichi Maruyama, grant coordinator at MCC. “Research shows on-campus preschool programs improve student retention and persistence. The bulk of the grant will provide child care tuition subsidies for our Pell-receiving student parents.”

The CCAMPIS grant helps students succeed by providing a safe, high-quality preschool environment at an extremely low cost, Bliss said. It also helps with student retention, she said.

“Also, the convenience of having the preschool on campus makes it easier for student parents in terms of transportation — they only have to go to one place rather than multiple for dropping children off at preschool, and then to school for themselves,” Bliss said. “Student parents can build study time into their schedule, giving them more time to ensure they are successful in classes.”

Student parents transferring from a community college to ASU’s Tempe campus will have priority enrollment in one of the university’s preschool programs, creating a seamless path for student parents who require child care while attending classes.

“GateWay Community College has a minority-majority student body and is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution/Title V school,” said Leia Wilson, director for the Children’s Learning Center at GWCC. “If you look at the research, underrepresented college students are disproportionately likely to be parents.”

There is a “great” need for assistance with child care services for student parents at GWCC, Wilson said.

“Research shows that parents, especially single mothers, who have access to affordable, high-quality child care are more likely to complete their degree program and graduate on time,” she said. “With the help of this grant, our student parents are able to persist in reaching their educational goals. The CCAMPIS grant has allowed GateWay to serve up to ten families recently, many of whom are single mothers and first-generation college students.”

The CCAMPIS grant also supports students’ children attending summer camps at the child care centers on campus. There is not usually a waitlist in the summer, but MCC typically has a waitlist of 10 students during the fall and spring semesters, Bliss said.

“We serve approximately 80 families each year,” she said. “Our capacity is limited due to state licensing, size of the space, and how we enroll. Children can only attend while their parents are in classes and/or on campus to allow as many students to use the services as possible.”

Both colleges offer four-star programs — as ranked by the state’s [Quality First](#) program — licensed by the state Department of Health Services and authorized by the state Department of Economic Security, according to the press release. The Children’s Center preschool program at MCC is also

accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

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**Graham Bosch**

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
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