The SDCCD Child Development Learning Lab Centers

Summary

The San Diego Community College District's Child Development Learning Lab Centers at San Diego City, Mesa, and Miramar Colleges are integral components of the college community. Each month, through these three centers, the SDCCD serves approximately 125 families with 148 children. These centers are representations of San Diego's diverse community and serve as learning labs with quality learning environments for approximately 500 students annually. The centers' teaching staff and the college program faculty provide learning environments that support SDCCD student instructional laboratory experiences through observation, practical application, and directed guidance.

The centers operate as instructional programs for students while offering high-quality educational programming for low-income infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

The centers are licensed by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) - Community Care Licensing, Title 22, Division 12, and meet all the California Department of Education, Early Learning and Care Division, Title 5, guidelines. Additionally, San Diego Miramar College Child Development Center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) contracts provide the primary funding for center operations. These state contracts require families to be at or lower than 100%-CDE and 85%-CDSS of the State Median Income (see page 4). Some families qualify for services at no charge, while others qualify for services with a monthly fee (sliding scale). Contract regulations dictate the assessment of family needs and enrollment eligibility. Priority enrollment is geared towards eligible SDCCD college students who have young children. However, any qualified family who resides in the county of San Diego is eligible to receive services. The centers operate at full capacity and maintain waitlists of qualified families.

Additionally, San Diego City College and Mesa College contract with the Neighborhood House Association (NHA) to provide Head Start programming to enrolled families. This partnership includes NHA office and classroom staffing.

The following pages include details on:

- Center Funding Sources
- Priority Population(s) Served
- Enrollment Priorities
- Center Leadership and Staff
- NHA Partnership
- District Coordination
- Center Classrooms, Enrollment, and Ages Served
- Days and Hours of Operation
- The Centers' Mission Statement, Philosophy, Curriculum, and Goals

Center Funding Sources

All three centers are funded in part by:

- CA State Preschool Program (CSPP) and General Child Care & Development Programs (CCTR) funding provide reimbursements for each eligible child enrolled and attending the program. The distribution of anticipated CSPP and CCTR contract earnings is based on projected enrollments.
    - CA Department of Education (CDE), Early Learning and Care Division
        - CSPP for children 3-5 years old.
    - CA Department of Social Services (CDSS), Child Care and Development Division
        - CCTR for children 0-36 months.
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
    - This federal funding source provides reimbursement for the qualified meals and snacks served to the children. There is no maximum reimbursement limit. In 2023-2024 the SDCCD received approximately $87,026 in food reimbursement.
- San Diego Quality Preschool Initiative (SDQPI)
    - Operated by the San Diego County Office of Education, this program provides funding for Center staff professional development and supplies for the children (classroom and outdoor equipment/supplies).
    - Direct funding varies from $ 0 – 10,000 for each center.
- City and Mesa College Centers receive “usage fees” from NHA through an annual contract to provide Head Start Services. The usage fee supports Center operations.
    - NHA reimburses $150.00 for usage fees per day of operation.
    - Days of operation vary from 175 to 180 days each year.
    - In addition to this usage fee, NHA provides office staff and classroom teachers to the center.
- District Allocations - support the operation and expenses not covered by the CDSS and CDE contracts.
    - SDCCD Inter GFU $75,000 (divided evenly across the three venters)
    - SDCCD Intra In Within Special Revenue $25,000 (divided evenly across the three centers)

2026-27 Distribution of State and District Funding:

	City	Mesa	Miramar	District	Totals
CDE CSPP 2026-27	$ 298,225	$ 307,262	$ 298,225	$ 100,412	$ 1,004,124
Inter In from GFU	$ 25,000	$ 25,000	$ 25,000	$ -	$ 75,000
Intra In Within Special Revenue	$ 8,334	$ 8,333	$ 8,333	$ -	$ 25,000
Sub Total	$ 331,559	$ 340,595	$ 331,558	$ 100,412	
CDSS CCTR 2026-27	$ 469,577	$ 144,485	$ 108,364	$ 80,270	$ 802,696
Sub Total	$ 469,577	$ 144,485	$ 108,364	$ 80,270	
Grand Total	**$ 801,136**	**$ 485,080**	**$ 439,922**	**$ 180,682**	**$ 1,906,820**

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Priority Population(s) Served & Enrollment Priorities

Meals Served

FY 2026-27

	total # of parents	# of parents who are single	Children served: under 3 yrs.	Children served: 3 & 4 yrs.	Meals Served: Breakfast	Meals Served: Lunch	Meals Served: Snack
City	61	26	25	33	3,921	5,838	3,914
Mesa	50	14	10	39	5,251	5,798	2,687
Miramar	28	6	9	9	1,703	1,843	943
Totals	**139**	**46**	**44**	**81**	**10,875**	**13,479**	**7,544**

Populations Served

Districtwide, across all three centers:

- 47% of parents are working
- 30% of parents are students
- 1% are seeking housing
- 8% are actively seeking employment
- 14% qualify for free state preschool
- 42 zip codes served
- Over 34,000 meals/snacks provided to children annually
- Languages spoken by parents and children include English, Spanish, Arabic, Farsi, Mandarin, Punjabi, Pashto, Russian

Enrollment Priorities

The centers have very specific enrollment processes tied to Ed code and State contract compliance. Enrollment priority is geared towards eligible SDCCD college students who have young children. However, any qualified family who resides in the county of San Diego is eligible to receive services.

The order of enrollment priorities at the Centers are as follows:

1. General Child Care and Development (CCTR), children 0 to 36 months old
    a. FIRST PRIORITY: SDCCD College Students with children 0 to 36 months old who have need (school, work, job or housing search, etc.)
        i. a1. First: Children who are recipients of CPS/Children at Risk
        ii. a2. Second: Families with the lowest documented family income under/at 85% of SMI
    b. SECOND PRIORITY: the Public, including any employees, faculty, etc., with children 0 to 36 months old who have need (school, work, job or housing search, etc.)
        i. b1. First: Children who are recipients of CPS/Children at Risk
        ii. b2. Second: Families with the lowest documented family income under/at 85% of SMI
2. California State Preschool Program - Full-Day (CSPP), children 3 – 5 years old
    c. FIRST PRIORITY: SDCCD College Students with children 3 – 5 years old
        i. c1. First: Children who are recipients of CPS/Children at Risk
        ii. c2. Second: Families with the lowest documented income and who have a 3 or 4-year-old child with an Individualized Education Plan
        iii. c3. Third: 4-year-old children with families who have the lowest income under/at 100% of SMI

iv. c4. Fourth: 3-year-old children with families who have the lowest income under/at 100% of SMI
v. c5. Fifth: Families whose income is no more than 15% above the SMI
vi. c6. Families with 3 or 4-year children that meet eligibility criteria without having a need for services.
vii. c7. Sixth: SDCCD was approved for a waiver to include children living in Mesa and City's Free Reduced Program Meal (FRPM) boundaries

d. SECOND PRIORITY: the Public, including any employees, faculty, etc., with children 3 – 5 years old
viii. d1. First: Children who are recipients of CPS/Children at Risk
ix. d2. Second: Families with the lowest documented income & who have a child with an Individualized Education Plan
x. d3. Third: 4-year-old children with families who have the lowest income under/at 100% of SMI
xi. d4. Fourth: 3-year-old children with families who have the lowest income under/at 100% of SMI
xii. d5. Fifth: Families whose income is no more than 15% above the SMI
xiii. d6. 3 or 4-year children from families that meet eligibility criteria without having a need for services.
xiv. d7. Sixth: SDCCD was approved for a waiver to include children living in Mesa and City's Free Reduced Program Meal (FRPM) boundaries.

3. PRIVATE PAY
a. If there are any openings after completion of the enrollment as listed above, then Private Pay spaces *may* be available for children of SDCCD employees.

Note: The spots available for children are filled quickly with the two above priorities (it is rare to have an opening that is not filled by 1 and 2). In these rare instances though children of employees (regardless of employee's income) may be served utilizing private pay spaces.

FY 2026-27 - CDSS CCTR Maximum Monthly Income Limits									
	Monthly Part-time Fee	Monthly Full-time Fee	Family Size 1 or 2	Family Size 3	Family Size 4	Family Size 5	Family Size 6	Family Size 7	Family Size 8 or more
85% of State Median Income (SMI)	$ 34.30	$ 68.60	$ 6,860	$ 7,785	$ 9,020	$10,463	$ 11,906	$ 12,177	$ 12,447

Citation: *State Budget Resources*. (2025, September 19). California Department of Social Services. (n.d.) https://cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-care-and-development/fiscal-resources

Example for a family of 3 (one parent with 2 children):

- For a parent who earns less than $ 7,785/month can receive no-cost care
- For a parent who earns $ 7,785 up to $9,159/month, they are required to pay anywhere between $34.30.05 - $80.70 a month for care

Pay Schedules for State Subsidies and for Private Pay

CDE and CDSS provide reimbursement rates based on the age of the child and hours of daily enrolled care: full-time more than 4 hours and part-time care less than 4 hours. The SDCCD provides private pay rates using the same method.

FY 2026-27	Hours of Enrolled Care	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Preschool
		Birth-18 months	18-36 months	3 years old	4 years old
CDSS / CDE Reimbursement Daily Rates & Board-Approved Private Pay Daily Rates	**Part-Time**	$80.43	$59.33	$68.77	$38.21
	Less than 4 hours a day				
	Full-Time	$146.23	$107.87	$107.87	$59.93
	4 or more hours a day				

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Application and Waitlist Management

The centers maintain a waitlist. The process includes interested parents completing a one-page application and submitting proof of income and birth certificates for children.
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Center Leadership & Staffing

Center leadership falls under the Vice President of Instruction, the assigned Dean over Child Development, and the assigned Center Director.

- All colleges have assigned Child Development Center Directors to serve as the Center Director at 100% of their contracted hours
    - Assigned Center Directors oversee the daily operations, including family engagement activities, child/classroom curriculum, staffing schedules, and overall compliance including:
        - Completion of Children's Desired Results Developmental Profiles (development assessment)
        - Rating each classroom indoor and outdoor environments including activities offered and child/adult interactions using the Environment Rating Scales and CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System)
        - Parent Surveys
        - Completion and submission of an Annual Self Evaluation
- Currently, Miramar College has assigned a Child Development Faculty to serve as the Center Director at less than 100% of their contracted hours, in addition to the contracted Center Director.
- Each Center has a limited number of contracted staff. Currently, most of the staffing is maintained through part-time hourly workers (NANCEs). Part-time hourly workers serve within the classrooms and in the front office. Office staff are responsible for enrollment and family file management – critical components to State contract compliance.
- Each classroom is required to be always staffed with at least one child development permitted teacher.
    - Child Development Permits are provided by the CA Commission on Teacher Credentialing.
    - Adult Child Ratios depend on ages of children:
        - 1 Adult for every 3 Infant children
        - 1 Adult for every 4 Toddler children
        - 1 Adult for every 8 Preschool children
- City and Mesa College Centers maintain an annual contract with Neighborhood House Association (NHA) Head Start. NHA provides City and Mesa College Centers with some

onsite, full-time staff to support the classrooms and office duties. NHA is responsible for supervising and evaluating all NHA staff.

Recommended Center Staffing

College	ILT	IA	Center Director	FT Kitchen Staff	FT Enrollment Staff	FT Floater
Mesa	3	3	1	2	1	2
City	6	3	1	2	1	2
Miramar	3	3	1	2	1	2
Total Staff	12	9	3	6	3	6

City College Center:

- Tillie Chavez, Vice President of Instruction
- Manuel Velez, Dean, School of Behavioral & Social Sciences, and Consumer & Family Studies
- Angel Saldivar, Center Director

Mesa College Center:

- Isabel O'Connor, Vice President of Instruction
- Cassandra Storey, School of Health Sciences and Public Service
- Carlee Gosser, Center Director

Miramar College Center:

- Michael Odu, Vice President of Instruction
- Claudia Estrada-Howell, Acting Dean, Business, Technical Careers and Workforce Initiatives
- Veronica Dayag, Faculty Member Assigned as Center Director

NHA Partnership at City and Mesa Centers

City and Mesa College Centers have chosen to collaborate with NHA to offer additional services to families. NHA provides office staff and classroom teachers to the center. The staffing arrangements allow City and Mesa colleges to offer additional services to families including offsite field trips, mental health consultations, dental and vision services, and family outreach activities. In addition, the savings in staffing allow City and Mesa to upgrade their facilities and make equipment purchases not otherwise feasible with just state funding.

2026-27 NHA MOU & Matrix

District Coordination

District Educational Services is responsible for the Child Development Centers grants and contracts compliance. The Vice Chancellor for Educational Services is the assigned signatory of all State contracts. The SDCCD Career Education & Workforce Development Department manages Districtwide coordination across all three Centers to ensure compliance.

The SDCCD Career Education & Workforce Development Department coordinates:

- State CSPP and CCTR Contract compliance, including:
  - Alignment across center for of all required forms, handbooks, family file management, and enrollment procedures
  - Monthly reporting
  - Monthly site visits for family file audits and meal distribution observations
  - State and Federal Audit(s) preparation
  - Update state required policy and procedures
  - Board Approved Family Handbook
  - Contract renewals, amendments, and reporting
  - Development and submission of required annual districtwide Program Self Evaluation (PSE)
- Management of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) contract including annual application, audit preparation, and regular reporting
- Management of the annual contract with the San Diego County Office of Education for Centers' participation in San Diego Quality Preschool Initiative (SDQPI)
- Management of the annual Neighborhood House Association Head Start Contract and coordination and facilitation of NHA partner meetings (no less than once per semester)
- Management of the food vendor contract
- Coordination and facilitation of the Districtwide Child Development Center Deans and Directors Meetings (convened no less than once per semester)
- Coordination and facilitation of quarterly Center Directors Meetings
- Coordination and facilitation of districtwide Child Development Business Services budget meetings
- The SDCCD Career Education & Workforce Development Department works closely with SDCCD Fiscal Services on monthly and quarterly reporting.

Director Timeline and Monitoring Documentation

Additionally, district staff participate in monthly districtwide Center staff meetings, regional child development events, meetings, and initiatives, and stay abreast of all Title 5 changes and State issued Management Bulletins which guide program implementation.

District Staff

- Susan Topham, Vice Chancellor, Educational Services
- Amertah Perman, Dean, Career Education & Workforce Development
- No'elani Acosta, Program Support Technician, assigned as Program Director for State Contracts
- Noura Moamen, Project Assistant, Career Education & Workforce Development
- Lorraine Mageau, Fiscal Services, acting Special Funds Manager
- Alaa Badr, Fiscal Services
- Jamaelya Hines, Fiscal Services

Center Classrooms, Maximum Enrollments, and Ages Served

Each center is licensed by CDSS Community Care Licensing Division, which determines ages and maximum attendance. The colleges have set the maximum enrollment below the allowance. The lower enrollment better ensures an educational learning environment for the children and to balance the requirements of serving as a learning laboratory with SDCCD students participating in Center activities.

City College Early Education Center			
# of classrooms	Category	Ages	Enrollment Goal as of August 2026
2	Infants	4 months to 18 months	12
2	Toddlers	18 months – 2.11 years	32
2	Preschool	3 – 4 year olds	44

Mesa College Child Development Center			
# of classrooms	Category	Ages	Enrollment Goal as of August 2026
1	Toddlers	2 – 3 years	12
2	Preschool	3 – 4 year olds	32

Miramar College Child Development Center			
# of classrooms	Category	Ages	Enrollment Goal as of August 2026
1	Toddlers	18 months – 2.11 years	10
2	Preschool	3 – 4 year olds	20

Days & Hours of Operation

All three Centers follow the SDCCD academic calendar, with City or Mesa College Center open during the winter Intersession. State contracts require minimum total of 175 operating days (districtwide) across all three centers.

Fiscal Year 2026-27 hours of operation:

Day(s)	Hours
Monday – Thursday	7:30 am – 4:00 pm
Friday	7:30 am – 12:00 pm

The Centers' Mission Statement, Philosophy, Curriculum, and Goals

The following content is included within the Family Handbook and Center Staff Handbook.

Mission Statement

The Child Development Centers of the San Diego Community College District are committed to meeting the individual needs of children, their parents, and college students, preparing them to become contributing members in a diverse society.

Philosophy

The children's program is planned and implemented to nurture each child socially, emotionally, cognitively, linguistically, and physically through integrated practices and curriculum. Children are guided through learning experiences appropriate to their individual capabilities and readiness. The program provides children opportunities for challenge and mastery, peer

interactions, individual needs, and interests. An integrated curriculum provides opportunities for exploration of the environment through language and literacy, creative activities, science, math, sensory experiences, and motor activities.

The program provides active and quiet activities, child-directed and teacher-directed activities, and group and individual activities throughout each day. Children learn best in an environment with consistent limits where they are allowed to explore and consider choices. This approach leads to self-direction, independence, and responsibility. Children are encouraged to think, reason, recall, and experiment as they work. Meeting the needs and interests of children and their families includes the sensitivity of the diverse values and cultures of individual children. Active participation from parents in the center is encouraged.

Center Curriculum
Each Center Director determines the curriculum to use at their respective sites, which includes, but is not limited to, Emergent and Creative Curriculum. All centers use the California Preschool Learning Foundations to outline key knowledge and skills that most children can achieve when provided with the kinds of interactions, instruction, and environments that research has shown to promote early learning and development.

The centers allow children to develop their abilities by making individual choices as well as through teacher-facilitated experiences to help reach targeted goals. This includes incorporating the Desired Results Development Profile (DRDP) results for individual children. The centers provide developmentally appropriate activities through an integrated curriculum that incorporates California state-mandated guidelines, which allow for development, optimism, and growth of each child. Centers do not include or implement any religious instruction or worship.

Program Goals & Objectives
The Centers provide a collaborative learning environment for students and parents to develop skills for working with children, families, and communities. The Centers provide opportunities for children to achieve optimal growth and to progress in high-quality learning environments.

The child will have opportunities to:
- Develop a positive attitude toward school and learning and to prepare for kindergarten.
- Develop self-help skills through routines of washing, dressing, eating, resting, and toileting.
- Develop a healthy self-image.
- Develop respect and acceptance for people.
- Develop social/emotional, cognitive, language, and physical abilities.
- Develop self-discipline, self-direction, and independence.
- Develop self-expression and creativity.
- Develop an appreciation of diverse cultures, ethnic customs, and lifestyles.

The family will have opportunities to:
- Communicate to the program their child's interests, abilities, needs, and temperaments.
- Participate with the staff in the implementation of curriculum, program activities, and goals.
- Share family customs and traditions.

The college lab student will have opportunities to:
- Demonstrate and gain an understanding of the developmental stages and growth processes of young children.
- Develop an understanding of parenting styles and family relationships.

- Develop observational and documentation skills.
- Develop and demonstrate communication skills and guidance techniques for working with children and adults in the Center.
- Demonstrate skills in planning and implementing developmentally appropriate activities with young children.
- Develop an understanding of contemporary Child Development theories.
- Develop an appreciation of diverse cultures, ethnic customs, and lifestyles.

The staff will:

- Plan a program that meets the individual needs of each child.
- Encourage and support the professional growth of students.
- Maintain and update their professional skills.
- Maintain a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment.
- Create an environment that supports children’s development and respects diversity.
- Encourage the development of a healthy self-image for all individuals.
- Communicate with parents to discuss their child's assessments, progress, and individual needs.
- Provide support and guidance to parents in regard to services and the needs of families.