

Tomorrow's Stars Today

Merced College Child Development Center



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The Merced College Child Development Center serves children ages three months to five years. For more than 20 years, the Child Development Center has served the local community, providing an environment which encourages the positive growth and development of each child, family, student, and staff member. The basis of our educational philosophy is the belief that early childhood education is crucial for the development of healthy and happy individuals.

The Child Development Center assists positive growth for children by recognizing each stage of development. Our curriculum reflects the needs of each child in an environment that is nurturing and sensitive to their backgrounds and home environments. We provide an interesting and stimulating program that challenges the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of our children. We offer opportunities for children to develop their social relationships with their peers under a curriculum that is based in best-practice research. We offer childcare and quality child developmental services for income eligible students at Merced College. We provide an important service for economically challenged families, allowing them to successfully complete their educational goals while their children receive quality child care. In addition to providing quality child care, the Child Development Center is also a learning laboratory for students studying early childhood education, nursing, liberal studies, and psychology. The laboratory setting is an important part of educational programs at Merced College.

Why We Need Your Support

Merced College Child Development Center is financially assisted by State funds but those funds do not financially support comprehensive program services beyond basic childcare. As a result, the CDC must be fiscally independent. There are no guarantees of future funding from grant sources and grant sources are limited to three to four year cycles. The CDC trains our next generation of early childhood educators. The future of quality child care in Merced County is connected to high quality teacher training at Merced College. Maintaining this link is critical. The CDC provides quality childcare to low-income parents so that they may obtain a college education and hence, become financially self-sustaining. This is a critical component in the development of Merced County's well trained and educated workforce. In addition, because parents are their child's first teacher, workshops are available for our CDC parents to learn skills to enhance their parenting skills.

Your contributions will:

- Sustain and enhance our infant-toddler childcare.
- Provide high quality childcare services.
- Provide health and developmental screenings.
- Provide early detection and intervention of developmental delays.
- Provide early detection of health issues so that children are healthy and ready for elementary school.
- Provide opportunities for parenting workshops.
- Enhance all services the CDC offers so that the CDC can continue to be an early childhood education model for our community.

To learn more about how your tax-deductible contributions can support the Merced College Child Development Center, call the Merced College Foundation at (209) 381-6470.

The Critical Role of the CDC in Merced County

In Merced County, more than 11,000 children under the age of six have both parents in the workforce, and more than 30,000 children under the age of 13 need some form of child care. In 2001, 69 percent of Merced County school-age children were classified as belonging to low-income families. Some startling statistics: within these families, more than one-third of adults over the age of 25 do not have a high school diploma and only 11 percent have a bachelor's degree. Merced County parents are in dire need of quality child care while they work to support their families and/or attend school. In addition, Merced County children need access to quality child care to prepare them for successful entry into elementary school.

Children who go to quality preschools are:

- *more likely to become good readers in elementary school.*
- *less likely to be placed in special education or held back a grade.*
- *more likely to graduate from high school and attend college.*
- *less likely to be arrested or incarcerated.*
- *less likely to need public assistance as adults.*

Research tells us that children's early brain growth presents a tremendous opportunity to lay a strong foundation before they start kindergarten. Children who go to quality preschool do better in K-12, lifting a burden off public schools that now struggle to help children catch up. In California, only 1 in 5 four-year-olds has access to quality preschool. Merced College is a key institution in Merced County that provides the foundation for the education and workforce development for our community. Expectations of Merced College child development students are high in the community. Students completing their studies in our child development program are prepared to meet those expectations in the workforce. The Child Development Center offers experiences in all areas of child development, including diversity, early literacy, full inclusion, family services, and school readiness aligning with community needs. Our highly trained staff offers expertise in training future child care professionals as well as those majoring in the fields of psychology, sociology, nursing, and nutrition.

The Child Development Center works diligently to represent the College by creating community partnerships to enhance the future success of the children and students we serve. Some of these partnerships include programs with the First 5 Children and Families Commission, the Merced County Office of Education, Merced City School District, and the Merced County Department of Public Health. The Child Development Center is fully accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. It is recognized as one of California's top ten child care centers.