

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTERS

STUDENT FEES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SFAC)
FY2026 PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms: your unit's mission, goals that support your mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of benefits for students.

The Children's Learning Centers (CLC) presents this request to the Student Fees Advisory Committee (SFAC) to assist University of Houston (UH) student parents, with children enrolled at CLC, in paying for the cost of child care tuition and to provide income for UH student employees working at CLC. In the early 1970's, UH students voiced a need for campus child care that provided a quality program in a nurturing environment. In keeping with the spirit and ideas of those forward thinking students and incorporating today's research on early childhood development, the CLC mission is to facilitate an inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity as well as promotes a professional commitment to impacting our community and supporting student success, through the provision of a nationally accredited early childhood educational program for the children of University of Houston (UH) students, faculty, and staff.

The accomplishment of this mission is met through established strategic initiatives aligned with DSA values. First, CLC creates a culture of care by supporting student parents with resources from UH Women and Gender Resource Center (WGRC), CLC tuition assistance opportunities, and UH student parent priority registration processes. Second, CLC collaborates with others to provide/share resources within the division and across the university by partnering with the UH Communication Sciences and Disorders department to conduct language screenings for CLC children, the UH Moores School of Music for weekly preschool classes, and the UH Police department which hosts fall/spring CLC family events. Third, CLC ensures a sense of belonging and responsibility for the well-being of fellow community members by offering free family outings every semester, supporting the UH Coog Student Parents Org, participating in the Dean of Students' Student Parent Lunch and Learn, and collecting clothing donations for the Little Cougar Closet event. Fourth, CLC embraces improvement and adaptability through the review/revision of the classroom lesson plans to better align with Texas Rising Star (TRS) standards which includes a focus on social emotional development and intentional transitions between activities. Lastly, CLC illustrates accountability and transparency about processes/outcomes by participating in Cognia accreditation self-study and facility improvement projects.

Justification of CLC's student fee allocation, in terms of benefits to students, is multifaceted. To begin with, the allocation of SFAC sponsored child care tuition assistance funds allow many student parents to gain access to affordable, quality child care which supports CLC/UH student retention and graduation. To fulfill our obligation to NAEYC and Cognia accreditation criteria, there are special and additional costs involved. A portion of funding is also utilized to cover Student Employee salaries needed to maintain developmentally appropriate teacher: child ratios. The Student Employee positions help UH students by providing a source of income for those who choose to work at the Center. Finally, by maintaining a high-quality early childhood program, as defined by accreditation, the Children's Learning Centers provide parents with reassurance of their child's well-being and educational foundation which allows them to concentrate on their studies.

2. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the DSA strategic initiatives and/or action steps and their importance as compared to others that you might pursue. Where data exists, discuss any assessment measures and/or learning outcomes used to evaluate program success. Please provide the method for collecting this data.

CLC utilizes a variety of formal and informal means to evaluate our success in achieving our objectives. CLC is licensed by **Texas Health and Human Services**; a department inspector completes, at minimum, an annual inspection of CLC with a written report of all findings. Through national accreditation program standards for both the National Association for the Education of Young Children (**NAEYC**) and **Cognia**, CLC collects data for annual reports and documents evidence of compliance with individual standards to prepare for future accreditation validation visits. In FY24, maintained its status as a **Texas Rising Star 4-star** program.

CLC develops measurable goals and objectives that are based on analysis of collective data to reflect the achievement of learning expectations for children. CLC assesses the gaps in LAP B-K scores and address areas needing improvement. Each enrolled child receives a developmental assessment 3 times a year (Beginning, Midyear, End of the Year) using LAP B-K. Teachers develop and implement lesson plans to help children work towards their next level of mastery.

CLC completed children's Beginning of the Year assessments in October 2023 and End of the Year in May 2024. The Head Start Outcomes Reports were pulled for 0-60 months for each classroom. All infant/toddler classroom groups (6) reported an increase from the beginning of the year to the end of the year scores across all domains (Approaches to learning; Social/emotional development; Language and communication; Cognition; Perceptual, motor, physical development). All preschool classrooms (5) reported an increase from the beginning of the year to the end of the year scores across all domains (Approaches to learning; Social/emotional development; Language and communication; Literacy; Mathematics development; Scientific reasoning; Perceptual, motor, physical development).

CLC has also collected departmental assessment data for the UH Division of Student Affairs:

The Center serves children of UH students, faculty, staff and alumni. UH student parents were the highest percentage of CLC users.

CLC Utilization				
2023-2024	Student	Faculty	Staff	Alumni
Spring 2023 (Mar. 15)	40%	21%	20%	19%
Infant	50%	19%	12%	19%
Toddler	42%	25%	13%	20%
Preschool	36%	19%	28%	17%
Fall 2022 (Oct. 15)	39%	21%	21%	19%
Infant	60%	10%	10%	20%
Toddler	44%	24%	16%	16%
Preschool	32%	21%	28%	19%

Activity 1- The CLC student employee will reflect on and assess the impact of CLC employment in skill acquisition and competencies.

An overview of the Fall 2023 Survey Results is provided in the table below.

Fall CLC Student Employee Survey		
Scarlet Seals Standards: CLC employment has increased-	Strongly/Moderately Agree (R 10)	Sample of Open-Ended Responses for each Scarlet Seals Competency
Cultural Knowledge & Competence	90%	Students commented they better understand how to effectively communicate within cultures and feel more connected with the community of Houston. The way CLC celebrates children’s cultures and learn about their holidays is such an amazing aspect of the classrooms. (Diversity)
Ethics, Values & Integrity	100%	Students commented that employment at the CLC has taught them the importance of being an honest and dependable person when interacting with educators and families, and they’ve grown to fully appreciate utilizing these traits everyday for the betterment of the community they are around. (Personal Development)
Thinking (Critical, Reflective, & Systems)	100%	Students commented that before employment, they had limited interactions with varying groups of people, so they have gained a lot of experience communicating with individuals of different ages and backgrounds through working with the CLC. They also commented that as an introverted person, it is often difficult for them to communicate concerns or struggles, but the staff at CLC have made it a comfortable space for them to effectively bring concerns to light. They accomplished this level of communication by being able to work openly with teachers and staff while working. (Thinking and Communication)
Problem Solving and Reasoning	90%	
Creativity & Innovation	100%	
Communication-Verbal & Written	100%	
Meaningful Relationships	100%	
Collaboration	100%	Students commented that CLC has given them important knowledge and awareness of how to maintain organization and keep everything on schedule, no matter the circumstances, to ensure that the environment is always at the best that it can be for the children. (Leadership)
Navigation of Organizational Culture	90%	

An overview of the Spring 2024 Survey Results is provided in the table below.

Spring CLC Student Employee Survey		
Scarlet Seals Standards: CLC employment has increased-	Strongly/Moderately Agree (R 9)	Sample of Open-Ended Responses for each Scarlet Seals Competency
Cultural Knowledge & Competence	100%	Students commented that interacting with people from many different backgrounds helped them understand how teachers, students, parents, and children approach situations differently (Diversity)
Ethics, Values & Integrity	89%	Students commented that employment at the CLC requires them to have an immense amount of integrity. There are countless people who depend on them to do their job and there are many others who watch and observe the way they uphold themselves in any given situation. (Personal Development)
Thinking (Critical, Reflective, & Systems)	100%	Students commented that working with children has increased their ability to communicate with other teachers about what goes on in the classroom as well as increased their ability to analyze and discern what the children are trying to communicate with them. They understand that people like to communicate differently, so it is imperative that they adapt and make sure any information is relayed effectively. Interacting everyday with the teachers, parents, and children allowed them to improve their technical vocabulary in the educational environment. (Thinking and Communication)
Problem Solving and Reasoning	100%	
Creativity & Innovation	100%	
Communication-Verbal & Written	100%	
Meaningful Relationships	100%	Students commented that as they further navigate the professional realm concerning college and a work setting, they have learned to conduct themselves in a manner that allows them to confidently navigate professional settings. They have noticed how the CLC conducts its business and the values that hold the organization together. (Leadership)
Collaboration	100%	
Navigation of Organizational Culture	89%	

Activity 2- In an effort to remove the barrier of high cost associated with quality child care and increase access for low-income student parents, CLC will utilize child care tuition assistance programs to serve a majority (over 60%) of low-income CLC student parents.

The Center will target CLC recruitment and retention efforts towards those student parents with the most financial need. CLC will collect data using CLC semester enrollment numbers and CLC student parent participation in child care tuition assistance programs. The FY24 average number of UH student parent’s children receiving tuition assistance was 65%. Below is a breakdown by semester.

CLC Semester Enrollment Numbers				
2023-2024	Fall	Spring	Summer	Average
Number of UH student parent’s children enrolled	48	53	46	49
Number of UH student parent’s children receiving tuition assistance	30 (63%)	35 (66%)	30 (65%)	32 (65%)
CLC new semester enrollment (students, staff, faculty, alumni)-	31	18	10	-
CLC new semester enrollment (UH student parents receiving tuition assistance)	13 (42%)	2 (25%)	1 (10%)	-

3. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2025) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them. SFAC recognizes that some programs did not receive the funds that they requested, that some programs were impacted by additional expenses after the conclusion of the budget cycle, and that some programs may be ahead of or behind their self-generated income projections.

In FY2024, CLC received Child Care Relief Funds (CCRF) from the Texas Workforce Commission. Funds could be used towards Payroll and personnel costs; Rent or mortgage, insurance, and utilities; Facilities maintenance; Personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies and services; Equipment and supplies; and Other goods and services. Funds had to be spent by November 30, 2023. CLC used a portion of the CCRF funds to support areas such as UH Student Parent Tuition Assistance in the amount of \$29,809 and Student Employee Salaries in the amount of \$28,089. Unfortunately, these funds are no longer available. CLC now utilizes funding solely from SFAC to support these initiatives.

In FY2024, CLC received One-Time funding from SFAC for the Wheeler building wall patching and repair project. The project scope has been finalized and in the contract phase. These funds have been carried forward to FY2025 in the amount of \$217,300.

In FY2025, 11 fulltime CLC employees received salary increase adjustments based on the UH Human Resources compensation analysis.

In FY2025, CLC's UH Service Level Agreements (SLA) increased \$2,003.70 from \$74,903 in FY2024 to \$77,140 in FY2025. The SLA's include costs associated with Custodial, Solid Waste and Recycle, Grounds, Annual Contracted Fire Protection Inspections, and Pest Control. Preventative maintenance and billable work orders are additional costs. In FY2025, there was a billing rate increase of 16.2% across Facilities Services shops that provide billable services.

4. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2025 base funding is extremely limited and recognizing that it is likely that some units will not be allocated the new base budget and/or one-time funds requested. Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 5.0% in your total FY2025 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.

CLC utilizes SFAC funding to provide child care tuition assistance to CLC Student Parents as well as salaries for CLC Student Employees needed to maintain developmentally appropriate teacher: child ratios. With these two options, CLC would accommodate a reduction of 5.0%, in our total approved FY2026 base Student Service Fee budget with a budgetary decrease in CLC Student Employment.

Reduction of FY2025 Base Budget	
Precent Reduction	5%
Base Total	\$107,633
Reduction in Student Employees Wages/Benefits	-5,382
Reduced Total	\$102,251

5. What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made to access them (e.g. grants, donations, etc.)? **If you receive funds from other sources, please briefly describe the source, purpose, and duration of the funding and report the amounts received in the appropriate rows/columns on the SFAC Spreadsheet.**

The Children's Learning Centers (CLC) is supported primarily through child care fees charged for the early childhood services provided to UH families. These fee payments include: weekly tuition, annual fees for registration, supplies, and building maintenance, and waitlist fees.

CLC also receives support of \$100,000 (annually) from the University to assist with facility and grounds maintenance and administrative charges.

CLC participates annually in the UH Faculty/Staff campaign, utilizes Text To Give, and hosts fundraisers such as school pictures and book fairs to support the funding of classroom supplies and/or special events.

CLC also participates in special early childhood partnership projects in the Houston community that provide the Center with scholarships, supplies and grants, such as Collaborative for Children, Texas Workforce Solutions, and Texas Rising Star. In FY2024, CLC received a \$900 grant for accreditation fee reimbursement, \$2,000 grant to fund a Teacher appreciation celebration, \$550 incentive grant for being a 4 star Texas Rising Star school, \$6,200 Equipment and Materials grant for the classrooms, and 67 family kits as well as social emotional classroom kits.

CLC also worked with UH Advancement to apply for a grant of \$25,000 to assist student parents with tuition assistance and/or re-enrollment fee waivers. This application is still pending.

The other avenue for CLC support is through collaborations on campus. The UH College of Optometry provided pediatric vision screenings for children enrolled at CLC at no additional charge to CLC or parents. The UH Moores School of Music provides weekly music classes to preschool children. UH Health Center, UH Campus Recreation Center and UH College of Education also facilitate ongoing professional development workshops and support for our staff. All those working with CLC are interested in seeing the Center be financially healthy and sustain a balanced budget.

CLC also looks for other funding opportunities as they become available. The CCAMPIS (Child Care Access Means Parent In School) grant supports the participation of low-income parents in postsecondary education by providing campus-based child care services; however, it was not open for competition in 2024. Another program CLC will apply for is the Harris County SHINE Initiative, a program dedicated to enhancing and preserving high-quality child care spaces in Harris County. The fund provides grants for renovations and repairs to home and center-based child care facilities, ensuring that every child has access to a safe and nurturing learning environment.

Appendix:

Excerpts from SFAC Tuition Assistance Applications

“With the SFAC tuition assistance, I can focus on my studies without the constant worry of my son’s well-being. I know that he is receiving quality care from trained professionals who provide a safe and stimulating space for his development. This peace of mind allows me to fully engage in my coursework, participate actively in class discussions, and complete assignments on time. Furthermore, daycare assistance provides much-needed flexibility in my schedule. This eliminates the stress of having to rush between daycare and school, ensuring that I am always present and focused during both academic and parenting moments.” -B.W.

“Receiving the SFAC assistance will significantly help me reach my educational goals. By alleviating the financial burden that comes with being a commuter, a student, and a Single Parent. With this financial support, I will be able to focus more on my studies rather than worrying about how to cover childcare costs. Beyond just easing financial pressures, this assistance would also allow me to take full advantage of the opportunities available to me at school. It would enable me to participate in extracurricular activities, attend study groups, and engage in campus events that are crucial for my academic and personal growth. With SFAC support, I could become more involved in the campus community, build valuable connections, and gain experiences that will be essential for my future career.” - A.S.

“Gaining financial assistance through the school to help afford my daughter’s childcare costs would mean that she can attend preschool on campus with me. This would help alleviate many of the additional challenges such as added commuting time, and additional costs that we would no doubt incur should she need to attend off campus. It would mean that I would have more time to focus on my studies. I am an honors student, but I would love to be more involved in student life. My daughter being able to attend the Children’s Learning Center would open many more doors for my own educational enrichment. I am so grateful for the opportunity to attend a school such as the University of Houston, and with this assistance my dreams will be that much more attainable.”-C.P.

“The cost of higher education is substantial, and with two young children, my financial obligations extend beyond tuition and books. Childcare expenses, cost of living, and the daily necessities of family life add up quickly. SFAC assistance would relieve some of this financial pressure, allowing me to allocate more resources toward my studies and my children's well-being. This support would help me focus on my doctoral journey and excel in my academic pursuits while my children are at the CLC. It would enable me to create a better future for my family while contributing to the advancement of knowledge in my field. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to apply for this support, as it would make a significant difference in my ability to reach my educational goals and provide my children a safe, caring, inclusive and learning rich environment for them to thrive in.” - L.B.

“Your facility’s reputation for quality care and early childhood education aligns perfectly with what I wish for my child. However, finances were my major concern. As a student on F-1 Visa, the cost of living in a new country, coupled with tuition fees, posed significant financial strain on our family. It is in this context that we have come to recognize the indispensable need for financial assistance in ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities. Without such support, many families, including ours, would be forced to make difficult decisions regarding their child's education, potentially depriving them of the enriching experiences and opportunities afforded by institutions like CLC.” -A.A.