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Hopes for Permanent Child Development Center at Cerritos College on the Horizon; College Offers Quality Childcare and Training for Future Childhood Educators

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NORWALK, Calif. – March 22, 2023 – For 50 years, the Cerritos College Child Development Center (CDC) has provided quality childcare to the community, student-parents, and employees while training future early childhood education teachers as a laboratory school. While the CDC's programs have remained steady and strong, it has been housed in a temporary modular building for several years. As the District rebuilds its aging facilities, the College is aiming to secure grant dollars to give its beloved CDC a permanent structure.

The CDC began as off-site location at the Niemes Child Development Center in 1973 and moved to campus in 1976. In 2015, Cerritos College completed the first phase of the CDC construction project with a \$6.1 million-dollar Measure CC fund that largely focused on the Outdoor Classroom Demonstration Site with learning features based on the California landscape. Two classrooms and support facilities were moved to temporary, modular buildings until the second phase of construction can be completed. Inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, the Center prescribes child-centered social constructivism, which offers children the opportunity to construct knowledge through daily experiences with parents, teachers, peers, events, and objects in the world. The Center is designated as an Outdoor Classroom Demonstration site for the County of Los Angeles, and the playground area features a certified wildlife habitat.

Inadequate access to affordable and quality childcare is one of the barriers to education cited most often by student parents. "I used to worry if my children were hungry or crying while I'm in class," said Brenda Majano. Once her children started at the CDC, which provided instant updates on her children through a mobile app, she was able to focus on her education. Providing childcare has been linked to student success and faster time to completion according to a [report](#) by the Institute for Women's Policy Research. At Cerritos College, on-campus childcare provides an additional benefit to its students. Every semester, 60 students serve the CDC children for laboratory fieldwork. In this high-demand field, there is consistently a waitlist of motivated students hoping to participate in the guided, hands-on learning experience.

Despite high demand, the existing facility only serves about 19 percent of the existing need. The CDC currently serves 96 children aged 2 to 4 years old, yet the current waitlist as of September 2022 includes more than 500 families with children ranging from 0-4 years old. With a new, permanent

building, the College will be able to close the supply-demand and expand the CDC's offerings to children ages 0 to 12 years with more flexible formats.

"Our Child Development Center needs its permanent classroom facilities to meet the community's demands for affordable, quality early childhood education and child care," said Dr. Jose Fierro, president/superintendent of Cerritos College. "We must expand our acclaimed childcare services, hands-on student training, and access to education to better serve our community, students, and student-parents."

About Cerritos College: *Cerritos College serves as a comprehensive community college for southeastern Los Angeles County. Communities within the college's district include Artesia, Bellflower, Cerritos, Downey, Hawaiian Gardens, La Mirada, Norwalk, and portions of Bell Gardens, Lakewood, Long Beach, Santa Fe Springs, and South Gate. Cerritos College offers degrees and certificates in more than 180 areas of study in nine divisions. Annually, more than 1,200 students successfully complete their course of studies. Enrollment currently averages 21,000 students. Visit Cerritos College online at <http://www.cerritos.edu/>.*

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