

## ***Introduction***

In August 2001, Charlene Moore Hayes, Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, formed the Childcare Issues Task Force to respond to the University's challenge of assisting staff, faculty, and students with their child care needs. The University recognizes employer-sponsored child care programs have become an imperative factor in recruiting and retaining highly skilled employees in the field of higher education. The report is to provide the University with strategies for addressing the problems employees and students face while trying to balance work and family issues.

## ***History***

Discussion about an upcoming childcare facility has been circulating throughout campus for years. The Child Care Committee, an extension of the Group Insurance Benefits Committee, has conducted several surveys and even submitted a Request for Proposal in 1999. The first survey in 1988 helped to assess the childcare needs and investigate the feasibility of various child care related services. In September 1989, a task force charged by Chancellor Poulton submitted a comprehensive report on "Child Care Alternatives". The task force concluded that NC State's greatest needs were "to reduce the financial burden of child care, find alternative child care solutions when routine arrangements fail, as well as an on-site child care center."

The second survey, conducted in April 1995, was intended to help the Committee in further understanding the current child care arrangements, the continuing needs for childcare within the University, as well as to help the Committee form recommendations for Chancellor Monteith in response to requests from the Campus Child Care Center, Inc. In February 1996, the Committee recommended that N. C. State "establish a child care assistance program and a mechanism for providing additional child care space by contractual arrangement or other partnerships." This survey was designed and administered with the assistance of the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina. A total of 1504 faculty, staff, and students received surveys. There were 718 surveys returned a 47.7% response rate. However, only 19% of those returned indicated they needed childcare. The survey highlights indicated that the most important features were quality, accessibility, and affordability.

The third survey was conducted in mid-1998 in which 22% of the faculty and staff responded. The survey did not include students. The majority polled desired to have a child care facility on campus and the major concerns were once again quality, accessibility, and affordability. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was submitted to prospective bidders in March 1999 based on the survey data compiled. The Request stated that the "University desired a long term partner to privately finance, design, build, staff, operate, and maintain a child care development center at no expense to NC State University, on property provided by NC State under a ground lease." The one bid received was from *The Sunshine House*. However, *Sunshine's* bid did involve costs to the University, such as maintenance of the grounds and the building and start up expenses. They also requested 3 to 5 acres of land.

The 2001 Task Force charge was to provide an updated assessment of campus dependent care needs; benchmark against others in our community and our peer institutions; and make recommendations that recognize the limited resources available.