

Oregon State University  
Parent Needs Assessment  
Online Focus Group

Summary Report

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# Study Background & Objectives

Oregon State University (OSU) recently sponsored a Parent Needs Assessment on-line focus group during the week of July 16, 2007. In order to gain a better understanding of parents, the Student Parent Advisory Board asked parents to share their experiences as Beaver parents in the on-line focus group. The goal of this research is to identify programs, resources and services that OSU could offer to enhance the academic and workplace success of parents on campus as they try to balance personal and academic / work demands. Results from the research will be used to determine the best way to utilize OSU funds through effectively and flexibly meeting the child care needs, wants and expectations of parents. The purpose of the On-line Focus Group will be to gather input on critical issues such as:

- ~ Identifying and validating the size and characteristics of the parent population among faculty, staff and the student body.
- ~ Finding the best way to utilize funds through effectively and flexibly meeting the needs, wants and expectations of parents.
- ~ Discovering what childcare resources are currently available and parents' awareness of them.
- ~ Identifying barriers which prevent parents from succeeding and discovering how to remove them.
- ~ Showing relationships between school/work success and having childcare and/or family support.

A variety of parents participated in the On-line Focus Group including parents who currently use and parents who currently do not use OSU childcare services, parents who are on the waiting list for OSU childcare services, female and male parents, as well as international parents. In addition, there was an excellent representation of student, staff and faculty parents. In total, 34 people participated including fifteen students, seven staff members, eleven faculty members, and one individual who is a part time staff member and part time student.

We began this process by recruiting students, staff and faculty at OSU to participate beginning June 25. Participants were recruited through student and faculty organizations, campus and community newspapers, and childcare facilities and organizations.

This report begins with a discussion of the study's *major findings*. *Study conclusions* are then presented. The report ends with additional information about *focus group research*.

# Major Findings

The following are the key findings of the study. The report is organized to reflect the general order and flow of the questions asked the follow-up conversation, and the general subject matter.

Direct quotations from participating parents are in italics offset by a gray bar. Comments, observations, and insights not in italics are those of Northwest Research Group's analysis of the groups' comments and dynamics.

It should be noted that some statements made by parents who participated may not accurately reflect a real or true situation. These are only the views and opinions of the 34 parents who participated in the on-line focus group. This information is useful in that it indicates what a participating parent believes to be true and/or reflects their current state of awareness and knowledge.

## ***Overall Image and Perceptions of Child Care at OSU***

The first day of the Focus Group was meant to get parents involved with the process and to obtain general information about their overall image and perceptions of child care at OSU. The first day gave participating parents the opportunity to define child care and to share their views on what OSU's role of child care should be. In addition, they discussed OSU's current availability of child care as well as other child care resources on campus. Lastly, they were given the chance to compare OSU to other universities and to point out its strengths and weaknesses.

## **Definition of Child Care**

Participating parents were asked to define what child care means to them. The majority of participating parents feel that child care is having a safe, supportive, clean, warm environment where they can leave their children when they are not available to look after them. This does not mean that child care is limited to day care; it can take place in the parent's home, a caretaker's home or any other place that a child is looked after. Participating parents expect to leave their children at place that has well trained and experienced caregivers. Furthermore, this includes a place that meets the child's basic needs which include food, shelter, clothing, potty training, changing tables, diaper changes, play time, love, and encouragement. In addition, parents desire an educational atmosphere where children can learn and grow in a healthy way. This includes personal, nutritional, educational, and social growth and stimulation. They do not believe that child care can be limited to a specific age; children need to be cared for from birth to an age where they can legally stay at home. Participating parents also define child care as being flexible, convenient, and affordable. They have concerns about child care being limited to school or work hours, since schedules vary and mention a strong need for summer care, after school care, and no school day care.

*"I feel that childcare is having a safe place for my child to go when his dad or I are not able to watch him. This started as soon as he was born and I see it going until he is old enough to legally and responsibly stay home alone. At this stage in his life it includes full-time summer care as well as after school care and no-school day care."*

*"To me, childcare means the care of a child, primarily but not necessarily limited to hours during which the child's parents are at work or school."*

*“Child care means the care of a child by someone other than the primary care-giver. Child care covers all aspects of care, including the basics such as feeding, changing, sleeping and providing a safe environment, as well as nurturing physical, emotional and intellectual development. Ideally, child care should come as close as possible to the care provided by the primary care giver in the home.*

*“Care for a child when the parent(s) are working or otherwise unable to care for the child themselves. The care should include at a minimum: being provided regular meals and snacks, naps, diaper changes or potty (incl. potty training when appropriate), play time, discipline, love and encouragement, and a safe and supportive environment.”*

*“To me child care is supplying love and 100% attention. Adequate child care service requires the parents to believe and trust his/her child care provider will respect and love all children and honor parent’s wishes as to how the child will be treated. Adequate child care requires that the child will be in a safe environment while encouraged to explore their environment and themselves.”*

*“To me, child care encompasses the care and supervision of children aged birth (this may be a little young) to age 12, the legal age at which children may be left alone in Oregon State. Also, this covers the pre-teen age at which children are generally responsible and mature enough to be alone for some period of time. Child care could be a nanny, sitter, or organized program of activities, sports or games, usually educational in nature.”*

*“Childcare is a safe, fun, and interesting environment for my children. It should be the next best thing to being with their parents. Staff should be carefully screened and trained, and provide an environment that is stimulating and fun, but relaxed. I need to feel good about leaving my children there, and they need to look forward to going, or it just won't work for any of us.”*

## **OSU's Role**

Participating parents were then asked based on their experience and responsibilities, what they feel is or should be the primary role or responsibility of OSU in terms of providing child care programs and services to its staff, faculty, and students. Many participants believe that OSU's role should be to help its employees and students to be productive. Additionally, they feel that the University should value and support family life. The role of OSU as well as its responsibilities varies greatly from parent to parent. Participating parents mention a long list of responsibilities that OSU should provide concerning child care. These responsibilities range from making commuting easier to providing convenient affordable child care available to everybody without the stress of a waiting list. They also mention other protocols such as more infant, preschool, and school age child care, as well as after school programs that are flexible. They prefer these child care centers to be located on campus or within walking distance. Some suggest that OSU provide subsidized care that is flexible. Others feel that in order for OSU to remain competitive they must recognize and adapt to changing child care trends. On the other hand, a few parents who participated are satisfied with the child care services provided to them and don't feel that it is the universities responsibility to offer any other services. While participating parent's views differ, a majority of them believe that OSU could take on more responsibility.

*“I feel that OSU should provide a list of available options and recommendations from other faculty and student parents who have used the services. Childcare options on campus are a huge plus and make commuting much easier some days when we can all ride together to the same place.”*



*“It would be great if OSU had more protocols in place to deal with the needs of parents. There is a severe shortage of infant child care in Corvallis. I have talked with multiple parents who needed care to be able to attend work or school, but could not find any. Also, the academic lifestyle calls for odd hours and needs, so a facility on campus with flexible hours would be really great. I know that Growing Oaks is supposed to be better for students and allow some flexibility, but they seem to run like a normal facility, where they want very regular schedules and could not accommodate a mix of full and half days. It would also be nice if there were more subsidies to students, or at least make them easier for students to get- many students don't even know they exist.”*

*“The primary responsibility/role of OSU with regard to childcare should be to make it easier for an employee (or student) to fulfill his/her work obligations, but yet is not financially prohibitive. The objective should be to help employees/students to be productive and feel that family life is supported/valued by the University.”*

*“OSU should provide enough space for children of faculty, students and staff. It should be possible that working parents can immediately enroll their kids at OSU daycare, when offered a job. I was on the waiting list of Growing Oaks for almost 6 months before I got a spot for my two children. I had to bring my kids to a different daycare, and the daily commute cost me about an extra hour.”*

*“I think that OSU could/should provide some form of child care with an assortment of options. The one area that would be very helpful is for something in the evenings during mid-terms and finals. That is always a hard time to find someone to watch my child.”*

*“I think that to create an environment where students/faculty/staff feel they are able to do their jobs without worrying about their children, it is OSU's responsibility to facilitate preschools/child care/after school programs to be available either on campus or within walking distance. These should be of varying formats and costs to meet the needs of a diverse group of parents. OSU does not need to run these schools, just provide space near campus and/or incentives for them to exist and cater to university parents.”*

*“As a responsible employer and educator, OSU should provide organized childcare programs for students that is subsidized (by OSU) and is FLEXIBLE (can be changed to accommodate class and exam schedules). For faculty and staff, childcare centers should be close to campus, and a discount for using an affiliated daycare center would be nice. Additionally, I would like to see a recognition that working parents are often limited by the availability of childcare (either \$\$ or time), and formal support for flex-time and working from home options. I know some students have had real issues with finding babysitters on short notice for OSU events (like commencement). It would be good to provide some sort of childcare, or accommodation for parents during these important events. Breastfeeding mothers, in particular, have a very difficult time participating in commencement as it is currently structured.”*

*“Student services [in general] on campus are a major importance to all students. The typical services (such as libraries, ASOSU, academic success, computer labs, etc.) for both traditional/non-traditional students are all very important, but the reality is that more and more non-traditional students are entering the higher education environment. Therefore, the need to alternate student services (such as child care) has also increased. In order to stay competitive, in an ever changing market, it's important for OSU to recognize these trend changes and respond accordingly. OSU has been on the fore-front of many areas...research especially. Research usually means older students...older student's means families...family's means child care...and thus we have arrived.”*

*“I think it's a tremendous benefit that OSU provides anything at all as far as childcare goes. Certainly other employers do not go to such lengths to attempt to help families in this area. This is my first job after staying home with the children for 7 years - and I am amazed at what is available for me. Between the flexibility that my supervisor allows, and the opportunities (KidSpirit) for my children to do fun and interesting things, it is a perfect fit. I don't think that the University is obligated to provide any of this, so I look at it as a great bonus that my children are playing and learning literally a block away from my work.”*

## **Child Care Resources**

Participating parents were asked what child care related resources, programs and activities OSU provides to students, faculty and staff. They were also asked what services and resources they currently use. If they did not use them, they were asked what the reason was. The activities, programs, and resources participating parents mention that OSU provides include the Women's Center, Growing Oaks, Kinder Care, Kids Spirit program, library child care, child care lab, and Bates early child care program. Many participating parents have high awareness of a majority of these programs while some parents aren't aware of any.

*“I know that OSU has a childcare lab on campus as well as 2 childcare centers and the KidSpirit program.”*

*“I'm currently not using any resources here at OSU and I am not really sure what the resources are.”*

*“When I was looking for childcare I found a brief blurb on the website about childcare options in Corvallis, but I was unable to find any sort of person to talk with about which options were affiliated/recommended/sponsored by OSU. I am aware of discounts for students and Faculty at CCCC's Growing Oaks Center and preference in placement for students at KinderCare. I know about Bates early childhood program, but that is a restricted age range, and I would define it more as "school" than as childcare. Same thing with Kidspirit in the summer - falls in to the realm of programs for school-age children, not "childcare" I don't know about other resources for children under 3.”*

*“OSU provides Bates pre-school (half day), KinderCare (although I don't really consider this an OSU resource) and Kidspirit. I know there are other programs for kids, but I think they are primarily educational enrichment programs.”*

*“Since coming to OSU, the only known resources that OSU has is the facility operated near McNary Hall, which I believe is primarily for younger aged children.”*

*“KinderCare is on the OSU campus, and there is a slight discount for OSU faculty (better for students and staff). There is also Bates for older kids, as well as numerous short-term programs for older kids which I am less aware of.”*

*“I used the Women's Center website to educate myself about childcare resources after being directed there from an HR representative... I am aware of the KinderCare facility for infants. I am aware of the Bates facility for older children, Growing Oaks and KidSpirit.”*

Although most parents who participated are aware of at least some of these services, only a small amount of parents use them. However, those parents that do use them have mixed opinions. Some are extremely impressed with the child care OSU provides. On the other hand, others feel that it could be less expensive and are worried about what they will do when their children grow into an older age group.

*“When my child was younger he attended one of the childcare centers on campus and we loved the program. Now that he is school age we don't use any of the programs on campus. KidSpirit, the only one I know about that could possibly meet our needs is just too expensive when compared to other options in the community.”*

*“This summer is the first time I have used KidSpirit - and I have been nothing but impressed. I had heard that there was not enough supervision, and that it was very expensive - both from people who had used it years ago. What I have found is that there is a TON of supervision and well-qualified staff. When I did the math - the cost of a babysitter during the day plus paying for lessons like swimming, golf, etc - I'm actually SAVING money - and my kids are not sitting around watching television while I'm at work. Instead of being greeted at home with two kids full of energy - ready to go "do something" - I pick up two worn out kids from all the activities they've been doing - that's priceless.”*

*“OSU has 2 daycares on campus (one which is nice and always full, and one that smells and I would never take a child there), subsidizing and a drop off daycare in the library. I currently use the subsidizing. I plan to use the drop-off daycare next fall if needed.”*

*“My two kids are now at Growing Oaks in the baby group and toddler group.”*

*“We currently take our daughter to Growing Oaks. It is very expensive though and full time care is equivalent to my grad student income. I am going to start looking into other care options this fall, but the location of GO was very nice while my daughter was younger. I looked into KinderCare, but I did not really like their facility and had heard negative things about them. I do not know of any other activities or services OSU provides for infants. I have heard of the library childcare, but I think that would be better for an older child since infants are much more demanding of attention and have more specific needs.”*

*“We use Growing Oaks daycare and preschool and have been very happy with it. There is a slight discount for faculty, staff and students. I did not like what I saw at KinderCare when I first researched available daycare--too much turnover and the fact that they mix the infants with the toddlers is not good. My son currently attends Kidspirit. He loves it!”*

Participating parents give several reasons for not using child care at OSU. The top reasons that they give for not being able to use OSU's child care include price, long waiting list, lack of flexibility, quality, and

proximity. They describe price as being the number one issue that prevents them from using child care. They also describe long waiting list as a barrier to using child care. Some parents describe being on the waiting list for 9 months or longer with receiving child care. On the contrary, other parents don't want to use child care provided by OSU because they aren't comfortable with it. Some parents mention that they are not comfortable with the adult to child ratio while others are worried about cleanliness.

*"I believe OSU offers day care but it is not easy to qualify and makes the process difficult."*

*"Since I attend school part-time (usually during the work day...using lunch hours), my children are usually in school or summer day camps during that same time. If my course time was during the evening hours, then they would be at home with my husband. Now that the kids are old enough to help out with our business, then summer times are spent with Dad learning the real definition of 'work' (be it yard, house or shop work)."*

*"The only thing I know about is the summer kid spirit stuff. I don't use it because it would take half of my paycheck each month for my 2 children to attend. And the hours don't match my office hours."*

*"I believe that OSU provides Bates, KinderCare, and the summer camp program. My daughter is too young for these and my husband stays home with her, so we do not use these services."*

*"I would like to use KinderCare, but have been unable to get two positions. This is despite having visited and been placed on the waiting list when I was in my first trimester of pregnancy."*

*"I am only aware of the KinderCare and Growing Oaks centers associated with OSU. I have not been confident with the adult to child ratio, and we cannot really afford to pay for care at this point."*

*"When I was looking for childcare with my first child (5 years ago), there was not space available at KinderCare and I was concerned about the quality of care they provide for an infant of 6 weeks old. Growing Oaks (at that time) was the most expensive childcare center in town. I currently have both of my children at another childcare center in Corvallis. Its prices are comparative to KinderCare. Cost is a huge issue for us. On the salary of a professional faculty person at OSU, it is extremely challenging to support a family of 4 and to have 2 children in a childcare center."*

*"I do know only 2 daycare when campus; none had room for 0-9 months babies (been on waiting list for 9 months)"*

## **Availability of Child Care**

Parents who participated were asked how difficult it is for them to find child care on OSU campus and in the OSU community. Furthermore, they were asked what options are available for good child care on campus and in the community. Lastly, they were asked if they have ever felt that they had to take whatever they could get in choosing child care. A majority of participating parents mention that they have experienced difficulty finding child care on OSU campus. They are extremely discouraged by the long waiting list. Moreover, at some child care centers more specifically Growing Oaks some parents aren't even able to get into contact with the organization. Participating parents with children ranging from birth to school age are all heavily experiencing the burden of OSU's shortage of child care. Participating

parents admit that the problem goes beyond OSU's campus. They believe that the problem also exists in the Corvallis community and is not unique to OSU. Others view the lack of child care as a national problem.

*"It is a constant challenge for me to find a childcare option that meets my needs of keeping my child safe and his needs of keeping him entertained."*

*"It's hard to find a good daycare, you have to check out each place and figure out what works best for your own situation."*

*"It was VERY hard to find childcare in Corvallis for an infant. I returned to work (as a grad student) when my daughter was 6 weeks old and I spent a long time looking for child care. We were unable to find any, so I returned only part time and my husband stayed at home while I worked."*

*"My son has spent time at both Growing Oaks and KinderCare on the OSU campus. There was a waiting list of several months at both facilities. When he initially was accepted at Growing Oaks, it was on a part time basis, which was not ideal."*

*"A post-doc (who has recently left OSU) had a very difficult time finding part-time care for her infant and was very unhappy with the option she ended up with because there wasn't anything else. I believe that this is a larger (national) issue, and not unique to OSU."*

*"While child care appears to be abundantly available for the very young, both on and off campus, it is nearly impossible to find off-campus for older (6-12) children."*

*"I can't even speak to someone at Growing Oaks- they are so overbooked. KinderCare also has a very long waiting list and some strange ways of dealing with the list. It seems you need to call back frequently in order to maintain position in the list. I did not like the religious aspect of Zion. Presbyterian seems wonderful, but is expensive and also very difficult to get into. At the moment I am interviewing nannies, as I feel this is a better option and about the same price since I have twins."*

*"I found getting infant care nearly impossible on the OSU campus / in the OSU community."*

Participating parents not only have limited child care availability but find the quality of child care to be a major concern. They are quite frustrated with the child care options available and have had a challenging time finding quality care at a reasonable price. The options available on campus are inflexible and fail to provide programs for a wide age range of children. Other parents feel that they do not meet satisfactory standards and aren't highly recommendable. It appears that several parents who have school age children rely heavily upon the Boys and Girls Club. A majority of participating parents feel that they have had to take what ever they could get when they had a child care need.

*"Now that he is older it is more of a challenge to find quality care at a reasonable price during the summer and after school. There are only a few programs that provide after school care to choose from. There are more options during the summer, but many of them are too expensive for me to consider. I end up relying heavily on the Boys and Girls Club in Albany for care, but I have no solid back-up plan for when they are closed."*

*"I don't know what is available on campus. Off campus you have the Boys and Girls Club. That is the only place in Corvallis near campus that I know of. I have felt like I had to take whatever I could find for daycare. It is really hard to find a good provider and have it affordable."*

*"I did a lot of checking around before I found a suitable daycare in Corvallis. The campus day care that is good is always full and the other one is not of high quality."*

*"I have talked to other moms about this and we felt that there was not so much a choice of providers, but that we had to just take who ever had an opening when we had the need. I had been on waiting lists since I was 6 mos pregnant, but they did not help in any way. It is really depressing to have to go to work when you don't know what to do with your baby, there have been several times when I considered not returning to work (leaving with an unfinished degree)"*

*"My two kids were on the Growing Oaks waiting list for almost 6 months. A place in the baby group was available when I started working at OSU but not a place in the toddler group. So I decided to enroll my two kids at the Lancaster Center (I don't want my kids to go to a religious daycare), which had enough spots (maybe because it is at the north end of town - a 15-minute drive from OSU). I liked their center and schedules and policies a lot, and I was glad that OSU faculty gets a discount there too. The only disadvantage was the long commute every day. It took me 35 minutes by car from my house to daycare to OSU one way. And now, with my kids at Growing Oaks, I save 45 min of driving every day, and occasionally I can use the bike."*

*"To my knowledge, there are two on-campus childcare facilities. Neither comes very well recommended, and everyone I've spoken to suggests several of the off campus options if they are affordable."*

## **How Does OSU Compare**

Participating parents were asked to think about other universities that they have attended, worked for, or have knowledge about and describe how OSU compares concerning the child care services and programs that it provides. They were then asked to discuss which is best, and why they are better. A majority of participating parents have not had experience with any other university's child care programs. However, a majority of the small amount of parents that have some knowledge of other universities believe that they offer higher quality programs. However, some parents feel that the same problems are present across the board.

*"I'm not sure how OSU compares. So far, they have helped me more than my previous school. However, I have heard that some colleges provide daycare as part of your financial aid."*

*"I have attended two other universities, and the situation at each is the same; there is no care or assistance available for students with older (age 6-12) children who do not have resources for care for their children."*

*"I have not yet used child care here or elsewhere. In general, OSU is entirely unsympathetic to students regarding exorbitant fees and lack of adequate health insurance options for student researchers. I expect child care options would follow a similar disappointing trend."*

*"I do not have experience working at any other universities while being a parent, but I have heard of some amazing situations at other schools."*

*“My spouse's advisor said there was a daycare in their department when he was in grad school (in Europe). They would drop their kids off in the morning but could visit them any time during the day and knew that they were just down the hall if they needed anything.”*

*“I have very little to compare to, but I understand that other university's have childcare programs (like Bates) on campus that cater to a younger children and have longer hours. A university run/sponsored program would be my first choice if it fit my needs.”*

## **Strengths**

Participating parents were asked based on their own experience, or whatever they have seen or heard, how well they think OSU is currently doing in meeting the needs of parents at OSU. In addition they were asked to discuss what areas OSU is leading in. Participating parents were able to state a variety of strengths that are specific to their personal experiences at OSU. They feel that OSU has great services available to a limited number of parents. Participating parents mention KinderCare most often when speaking optimistically about OSU's child care programs. However, one parent mentions being very happy with Growing Oaks discount. They also acknowledge that OSU is trying to improve its child care and they appreciate it greatly. They believe that progressive education and programs for young children are also strengths. One faculty member in particular is quite pleased with the support offered by her department; however, she is unsure whether the same support is offered by other departments. Lastly, parents are grateful for the Student Parent Association and Our Little Village.

*“I think OSU is offering some great services to a limited number of student parents on campus. While we have childcare centers on campus they often have very long waiting lists and are hard for people to get in to. I think KinderCare in particular is outstanding in location, price and services offered to parents on the OSU campus.”*

*“Once I tracked down Our Little Village, I was surprised by the amount of support available.”*

*“It is good that OSU is trying to make the childcare situation better. I am glad that there is an OSU discount at growing oaks, this allows me to have my daughter closer to me when I am working and I am able to go visit her at lunch time if I want.”*

*“The interaction with and education of the kids is modern and progressive, focused on individual needs and also social interaction skills. I like that parents are encouraged to get involved in activities (it is not mandatory anymore at CCCC).”*

*“For a professional faculty person at OSU, I would say that my department is very supportive emotionally of working parents and is flexible in terms of the needs to take time off to be with a sick child, care for a child when that child can't go to childcare, or to take some family time. I'm not sure all departments are as supportive.”*

*“The programs for the very young are both excellent; further the Student Parent association is a nice resource, but I have been unable to take advantage of it; they meet during my courses, or too far for me to be able to get there easily. Many of the meetings I was aware of were in the student family housing area during the early evening, and there is no bus service in town available at this time.”*

## Weaknesses

On the contrary, participating parents were also asked what they would say OSU's key weaknesses are in terms of providing child care services and programs. In addition, they were asked what areas they need to improve to serve parents and children better. Participating parents view OSU's main weaknesses as lack of affordable child care, deficient awareness of child care programs, age limitation of assistance, and a shortage of space in current child care facilities. Moreover, they feel that child care subsidies should be available to more parents. They also point out that there is a lack of awareness of OSU programs. They believe OSU should concentrate on advertising its different types of resources and offer more support services in order to increase awareness. Concerning age limitation assistance, parents would like to see more quality care for infants, pre-school students, and school age children. Furthermore, participating parents do not feel there is enough space in the current child care centers and are extremely frustrated with the long waiting list. They would like to see the child care centers become more flexible and offer more services such as after school enrichment programs, no-school day care, and summer programs for school age children.

*"The key weaknesses are 1) having some option for infants other than KinderCare (not considered by some as the most high-quality option), 2) a full-day preschool that fits the normal work-schedule better, and 3) having some after-school enrichment programs on site."*

*"Weaknesses include lack of affordable after school, no-school day and summer programs for school-age children. Once my child completed kindergarten there wasn't much for us on campus for child care options that we could afford. Another weakness is the small size of the existing child care centers. A larger building would allow for more efficiency to be realized and more OSU parents to be served. "*

*"More information or advertising needs to be done to let student parents know that there is help. It took me almost a year to find out about the subsidizing and I had asked my advisor and others in that time. No one seemed to have any information."*

*"Need more spaces (especially for infants) and clearer policy with respect to waiting lists."*

*"I think that OSU needs to have programs which are accessible to its constituents. Cost is a big issue for me. I am professional faculty and my salary is not inline with the cost of childcare. Either childcare costs need to be subsidized by the university or salaries need to be increased to compensate for the actual cost of childcare."*

*"Lack of university subsidized care for infants"*

*Weaknesses include the age limitation of assistance available (children in preschool can attend on campus...). I understand a program was set up for childcare in the library for students studying in the library while their children play; this is a great start, but all my research is done from home.*

*Places for breastfeeding or breast pumping should be offered. When I started at OSU (in the ALS Building), I didn't have an office space where I could pump in privacy. I either had to use a room that is used for lunch breaks and has the fridge, microwave, and recycling bins in there, or I had to use a small conference room in which it is very cold and I got disturbed in twice.*



## Maternity Leave and Support

One question that the OSU moderator did not ask but a parent brought up is maternity leave and support. Participating parents feel that this is an issue that needs to be addressed. Many parents express that they had a terrible time dealing with the HR office regarding maternity leave. Some parents felt like they had nobody to go to for accurate, helpful guidance during this process.

*"I had a terrible time (and so did many of my colleagues) dealing with the HR office regarding my maternity leave in 2006. First of all, it took me months to get any information from them about how this would work for me logistically or financially or how my benefits would function. Secondly, the information I received from HR was incorrect. This information had significant financial ramifications and I did not learn of the errors until a few weeks after my baby was born. I had to cut my maternity leave short by one month (I thought that I was going to be able to take 11 weeks.)"*

*"I felt like I was completely alone and that the HR department had never dealt with someone taking leave. After several correspondences with the department via email, I went in for a personal meeting hoping they would explain my benefits, options, resources. I came out of the meeting in tears. They did not inform me of short-term disability, my need to enroll my baby into the insurance system 60 days (NOT 90) post birth, or advantages of enrolling in flexible spending."*

*"As a grad student, I was not able to have maternity leave of any kind and feared what my adviser's reaction would be when I told him I was pregnant. "Luckily" my daughter was born right before Christmas break, so I took the break to recover. However, my advisor reminded me that grad students do not really get a break so I should just feel lucky that he let me take that time off."*

*"I think it's crazy that if both the mother and father work at OSU, we have to share the 12 weeks FMLA leave available (which is really simply a guarantee that we won't lose our jobs; certainly there is no paid leave available, which I think is ridiculous)."*

*"It has been several years since my fiasco but I do remember that it was extremely difficult to get in touch and schedule a meeting with someone to talk about how the maternity leave works and what I should do to set it up. My flexible spending account got completely messed up and I had to spend hours on the phone correcting someone else's mistake over in HR."*

Several participating parents passionately shared their experiences and expressed their concerns about the uncooperative and unsupportive Human Resources department. Although, most of their experiences are negative many parents offer advice and suggestions to help OSU solve these problems. They agree that OSU needs to be proactive in solving this problem and that this issue should be addressed at a university level. They believe that there needs to be a formal set of rules across the board in order to give fair treatment to all parents. Parents propose that the administration create a handbook that includes maternity leave standards as well as guidelines.

*"I would love to see a handbook for expecting parents put together by HR (or I will volunteer myself) so that parents can be aware of the paperwork required and benefits offered. I was treated like I was attempting to take advantage of the system and felt no support whatsoever from OSU's HR department."*

*"I think the OSU needs to be proactive in this area. It is very important that all the information regarding benefits and leave are clear so the worker can make the adequate arrangements with the employer. It would be beneficial for OSU to have a program in place for employee's who are pregnant to have a one on one with HR to thoroughly review everything."*

*"I really think these needs to be addressed at a university level. There needs to be some sort of across the board rules about these issues. Many women in academia don't have a "good time" to have kids and many academic women have to make the decision between families and careers. OSU needs to be supportive to women at all levels of academia who are wanting to start families."*

*"Currently there is no maternity leave standards in place for students. Implementing a formal set of maternity leave guidelines for students would be helpful, as far as classes, research assistantships or student jobs are concerned."*

## **Perceptions of the Environment on Campus**

The second day of the Focus Group was meant to identify parent's perceptions of the environment on OSU's campus. Participating parents were also given the opportunity to discuss the administration's priorities, flexibility of child care programs on campus, and professors and supervisors consideration for parents. This feedback will allow OSU to better understand how to welcome parents and increase its child friendly environment.

## **Welcoming Environment on OSU's Campus**

Participating parents were asked how good a job is OSU currently doing in terms of welcoming students, faculty, and staff with children. In addition, they were asked what specifically OSU does that makes them feel welcome or unwelcome. A majority of participating parents don't feel that OSU as an organization is doing anything that is specifically welcoming towards parents and children. Some parents feel stigmatized when they bring their children on campus other parents feel more content. There is a consensus among participating parents, that individual departments and employees are at least somewhat supportive.

*"I don't think OSU is doing much at all to be welcoming to students, faculty or staff with children. If you have a child it is pretty much up to you to determine where the services are."*

*"My professor is very understanding and flexible. He is okay with me leaving when my kids are sick and I have to stay at home for a couple of days. On other days I work a bit longer or at home to compensate the missed time. My professor even tried to speed up the waiting process to get a spot at Growing Oaks for my two kids, but couldn't do much about the long waiting list. Due to the fact that office space is rare it was a bit more difficult for me to find a private place to breast pump. Most people supported me and respected the "please do not disturb" sign I posted at the conference or lunch break room, a few people, however, did not."*

*"Being new to this area and the OSU system, I found the staff to be very friendly and helpful in trying to help me locate child care for my son prior to moving to Corvallis. Corvallis school district was very instrumental in finding the resources I need."*

*"I think my department is very welcoming. I was hired at OSU when I was 6 months pregnant. Many people in my department have young children and are understanding of the needs of parents. They are flexible with us in terms of needed to take time off to be with a sick child, or spending a day working at home or things like that. However, to be honest, I think that these actions are not sanctioned by the administration at OSU and if they knew, we would be reprimanded. From what I understand, we have to keep a low profile about these kinds of activities. We are not doing anything "illegal." We mark down the appropriate sick or vacation leave on our timecards, but I don't get the sense that OSU as a whole supports these activities."*

*"When I am around people I know or in my department, it is ok and people are very happy to see my daughter and play with her. However, if I am out of my building people look at me like I am a bit of a freak. As a younger looking grad student, sometime I felt like people just assumed I was a "knocked up college kid" and treated me as such."*

*"The campus feels very friendly toward non-undergraduates. I feel welcome to bring my baby on campus to walk to the library, on the quad, etc. I do, however, feel very unwelcome when I need to breastfeed her or change her. Where can people who do not have offices feed their babies (or pump milk)?"*

Although, participating parents are somewhat satisfied with their supervisors and professors they have compiled a list of ideas and recommendations that will hopefully make OSU more welcoming to their families. Parents who participated on the on-line focus group urge the administration to design an orientation packet for new staff, faculty and students. They would like to see the packet include a list of child care services available at OSU and in the community, policies regarding the standardized treatment of parents, a map that designates places that are welcoming to children, and a directory of events where children are encouraged to participate. They would also like OSU to provide rooms for breastfeeding.

*"There is no real orientation packet for new staff and faculty that lists the services available at OSU or in the community if you are a parent. It would be nice if there was some sort of handout information sheet that all new staff and faculty received that lists services available or where to go to find more information."*

*"It would be great to get a packet of information with resources for new students, staff and faculty that have child care needs. This packet would need to include school districts, child care, after school care and any provider or resource that pertains to child care."*

*"It would also be wonderful to have a packet with events, functions, and other services that OSU has where children are encouraged to participate. Too often I find that something happened that I did not know about until after it was over. There is a lot going on and it needs to be in one location on a website so you are not having to search and hoping that you input the correct "search" to find it."*

*"I wish there were policies in place to standardize the treatment of grad students who are parents. There are so many "unwritten rules" in grad school and advisers tend to take advantage of this to the detriment of students."*

*"It would be nice if there were designated family rooms where we could change diapers, nurse, pump, or even sit and relax when we are on campus with our children. Just having these rooms is not enough though, we need to let people know that these rooms exist (maybe a child friendly OSU map that marks the location of such spaces) for older children, maybe play rooms or safe play areas outside."*

## Child Friendly Environment on OSU's Campus

Participating parents were asked to rate OSU as a child friendly environment. They were then asked to describe what makes or doesn't make OSU a child friendly environment. Lastly, they were asked how comfortable they are bringing their children on campus. Although, most parents admit that they are not able to bring their children to work they view OSU as having a moderately friendly environment.

*"I feel OSU is very child friendly. They have several functions throughout the year that include children. They have a lot of focus on preschool through 12th grade in educational resources."*

*"It is a generally pleasant and safe campus. Free jungle-gyms and play areas would make it a truly inviting campus for children, but there are plenty of nearby parks with such facilities."*

*"It is friendly, except for some events in the MU quad"*

*"I would not be able/allowed to bring my child to work, but when I've brought her for a visit I've never had any problems."*

*"These questions are very department dependent. I feel that OSU overall is a moderately child-friendly environment. There are activities on campus that children can participate in (bowling, tennis, swimming pool, etc.). I would be EXTREMELY pleased if Dixon had some childcare available so that I could work out!!!!"*

Participating parents have an assortment of perceptions concerning what makes OSU friendly or unfriendly. They acknowledge that some of their colleagues do not have tolerance for children. Furthermore, they believe that specified lactating rooms as well as play areas for children would make the campus more open to children. On the contrary, a few parents feel that OSU has many events for children.

*"Unfortunately not everybody has enough patience and understanding for noisy kids playing in the backyard (while working). Growing Oaks has a nice but small play area. The institution next door has a little green backyard, and the daycare used to use this area for the kids to run around and play - with the agreement of the people next door. But then some employees complained about the noise from the children, so the Growing Oaks can't use this area at the moment. As far as I know they are negotiating about the use of that backyard."*

*"I have taken them to cultural nights on campus and office events. I think OSU is fairly child friendly in that OSU offers several events per year that are open to families."*

*"I think that child friendly goes beyond being able to bring my child to campus. I really think that providing lactation rooms to nursing mothers is a high priority. I know of 4 women in my building who are lactating and need a place to pump. I also have friends who have brought their babies to seminars, but had no place to nurse them in private. One friend had to nurse her baby while sitting on a toilet!"*

Participating parents' thoughts are diverse when it comes to how comfortable they are bringing their children to OSU. Most parents are comfortable bringing their children on campus but not necessarily to work. Some parents recognize that as a result of the work they complete, it is not appropriate to bring

their children along. Furthermore, they admit that having their children in the workplace can be a disruption to themselves and others.

*"I am very comfortable bringing my children onto campus. Occasionally they visit me in my office"*

*"I wouldn't take my kids to work, but this is due to the fact that the building I work in is not safe for little ones with all the labs and chemicals."*

*"I often bring my child to campus because his school schedule doesn't always align with my work schedule and sometimes I have work to do when he is around. So, he often sits in my office and plays video games or draws or something. It is not an ideal situation, but he is used to these circumstances and now packs a bag of stuff to entertain himself. It can be a disruption to everyone though when my child is here - I'm not as efficient and don't get as much work done and I know it is distracting to others around me too. But I don't have a choice. If there was a drop off center on campus that I could use for a few hours so I could go to my office and work I think that would be more helpful."*

*"I am very comfortable bringing my child on campus, but do not feel comfortable having my child with me at work when I need to. I rarely do, but must if I have a deadline and there's no school (for example). No one I work with has children and I don't think they really understand the issues."*

## **Administration's Priorities**

After discussing environment on OSU's campus participating parents were asked what they believe the administration's top priorities are. Additionally, how good a job the administration is doing on making child care resources and programs on OSU campus a priority. Participating parents do not believe that the administration considers child care to be top priority. The administration's top priorities include athletics, education, money, and research.

*"I feel that child care resources and programs on campus are not a priority of OSU administration. The administration talks about work-life balance, but isn't helpful in offering solutions."*

*"I don't think that child care resources and programs on the OSU campus are a priority for the administration. I think that the administration's top priorities have to do with the budget and promoting top research. I don't think that taking care of the employees (faculty/staff) at OSU is a top priority. The HR office at OSU is the worst I have seen in any place I have ever worked."*

*"Making money is the administration's top priority. Increasing prestige through sports fame and trivial opinion rankings (to increase revenue) appear to be the focus of the administration. I don't see needs of parents (be they student, faculty, or staff) as even being on the radar."*

*"I believe top priorities of the administration are outside funding sources and research funding. I do not think that child care is a top priority because if it were I would have someplace on campus that could care for my infant."*

*"It is very obvious that the top priority is the athletic department then next would be education and one of the lower priorities would be childcare for faculty/staff/students."*

## Flexibility of OSU Child Care Programs

They were then asked to discuss the flexibility of OSU child care programs. They had to rate OSU child care programs' ability to accommodate student, staff, and faculty parents with busy schedules. They were also asked what OSU could do to make their child care programs more flexible. A majority of participating parents feel that this is an area that needs to be updated and improved. They would like to see child care programs evolve into something that is more accommodating to parents with busy schedules. These programs would offer drop off care, evening child care options, summer care, and no school day care. Participating parents would also like OSU to take on the responsibility of connecting parents with caregivers and other parents.

*"Timing is very important. Responding in a timely manner creates trust. I believe everyone realizes OSU has constraints with funding and employee turnover, we all do."*

*"I like the hours that KinderCare is open - it was very convenient for me as a working parent. But there wasn't a lot of flexibility there either as far as creating a schedule that was unique to my situation. I would like to see more drop in child care on campus for days when there is no school in the school districts, for students who have only one class on a given day and only need care for 2 hours instead of 8, for last minute meetings or study groups that get scheduled, etc. Additionally, I think it would be great if there was some evening child care options so students or faculty/staff could more easily attend evening lectures or other events on campus that don't happen during traditional childcare center hours."*

*"Growing Oaks is as flexible as their vacancies allow them. Once you're in the system it is easier to switch days. KinderCare gives more priority to students. When I asked there to if I could bring my kids for 3 days, they were not flexible which days that would be. Somehow it had to be certain days depending on the students' schedule (I am a faculty)."*

*"I believe that the 2 OSU daycare centers try to be flexible (may be mandated) with students, but not as much with employees, who often have just as limited resources, and less flexible schedules than students."*

*"I think that OSU's child care programs are not sufficient in accommodating the busy schedules of students, staff and faculty parents. There is not enough space to accommodate all of the children who would like to enroll. There are difficulties with waiting lists. There is not any reassurance that a staff/faculty/student who is pregnant will have childcare at the time they need it. There is a lack of options for infants and for children who are in elementary or middle school to support them during the summer, school breaks and no-school days. Even if OSU itself doesn't provide the services, I think that OSU should make sure that there are sufficient services in the community and assist its constituents in locating appropriate services for their children."*

*"I think this is an area that needs to be updated and improved. Many classes are in the evenings and parent-students need study time during the week-ends with no resource for childcare on campus."*

*The child care programs are not flexible at all. They are run like a traditional daycare that requires a regular schedule and commitment of full or half days.*

*"I wish OSU could help facilitate connecting families with caregivers. An example: I am a faculty member with a young child. I play tennis once per week on campus at 5. I would love to connect with someone to play with my son while remaining in close proximity to me. Possibly a student who is in early childhood education, maybe one who knows how to play tennis so that my son can learn while I play! OSU could have a family center where notes can be posted, we could meet other families with similar needs for trades, or find students that are interested in childcare."*

## **Consideration Shown by Professors and Supervisors**

Participating parents were asked thinking about "consideration" shown by professors and supervisors towards student, staff and faculty parents how considerate they believe their professors and supervisors to be. They were also asked how comfortable they are telling their professor or boss that they are a parent and how comfortable they are asking them for time off or other accommodations in cases of emergencies. Lastly, they were asked what Professors and Supervisors could do differently to help parents succeed. Parents view this as a case by case and departmental specific situation. Some professors and supervisors are very family oriented and supportive as long as work is made up in a timely fashion. However, there are others who only see black and white and refuse to accept any excuses.

*"The staff I have interacted with at OSU have all been pleasant, respectful and able to answer my questions quickly. At times I have difficulties getting documents back after a few requests which falls way short of their being helpful. But on a good note, that does not happen often."*

*"I am very fortunate that my supervisor is very understanding about child care related issues. I've never had a problem calling in sick to stay home with my child or arranging my vacation time around my son's days off."*

*"I guess it really depends on the professor/supervisor you get. I was lucky with my professor. He is very understanding, considerate and flexible. As long as he knows I do my job he doesn't mind if I work at home when my kids are sick."*

*"I have come across some professors that are not sensitive to parents with kids. For example, my kids got sick last spring and it was hard to justify to turn in an assignment late. My wife and baby were sick and I had to help out at home. I had to bring documentation from the doctor's office which I didn't have time to get."*

*"My supervisor is VERY considerate and understanding. I am completely comfortable telling him that I am a parent and need to take time off in cases of emergencies or even in cases that I need to spend time with my child or assist a field trip with my child."*

*"The policy and procedures need to be updated to today's times. When they were written, you had only one parent working and you had a two parent household. That is not the case now a days."*

*"As a grad student, everything is on a case by case basis since every adviser is different and some are more accommodating for parents and some are not. It would be nice if there were more formal rules in place and that grad work was so "under the table.""*

*"My supervisor says the right things to be supportive but when emergencies come up, he is not. It is as if it is unspoken that my child should not be something that interferes with work or my commitments in the office."*

*“My professors have been incredibly helpful with family issues. I feel very comfortable talking to them. I am lucky to have a department that really prioritizes children and families. I have heard from others that my department is not the norm.”*

## **Support Services**

Participating parents were asked to name locations on campus that provide support services for students, staff, and faculty who have children. They were then asked to elaborate on what makes them satisfied or dissatisfied with the place they previously described. Lastly, they were asked what types of services they would like a place like that to provide. When asked this question many parents responded by identifying child care centers such as KinderCare, Growing Oaks, Our Little Village, Kidspirit, and the Bates Center. Furthermore, some parents are also familiar and satisfied with Our Little Village, the student parent advocate and ask a nurse at the health center. On the other hand, a majority of participating parents are very dissatisfied with Human Resources. The Human Resources office fails to offer any support and often gives inaccurate information. Ideally, parents would like to see either a resource center or at the very least a website that they could go to where they would be able to view all of the child care resources that OSU provides and connect parents with caregivers as well as other families.

*“It’s helpful to talk with someone who understands the issues, is a good listener and sounding board, and is receptive to input. OSU does that well. It’s more helpful to have those conversations and inputs be taken seriously enough to result in a logical and discernible change; OSU doesn’t do that often enough.”*

*“Support services for students, staff and faculty are limited. The students now have the student parent advocate and Our Little Village as a support network and to show them resources. I would love to see a family advocate for staff and faculty on campus to offer us the same services the students can now receive.”*

*“I think this is an area that could be more simplified by having all the resources on one website location. At this time, you have to search for the right wording to find the resource. Some of the resources are easier to find and usually you can contact someone who will give a referral. Eventually in a round about way, you will find your answer but it takes time.”*

*“I’m not really sure what you mean by support services. We use growing oaks childcare, but other than its location and the discount I don’t really feel like it is a service to OSU. They were not willing to work with my schedule and are not flexible with times.”*

*“I have talked with the student parent advocate, but there was little she could really do or advise me on since most of my problems were related to grad school issues which are “unwritten rules” that are up to individual professors.*

*“Pediatric services, birth classes, or information leaflets geared toward parents at the infirmary might be useful for student parents. Other than the daycare facilities, I am not aware of any support facilities for parents.”*

*“Oh, the health center ask-a-nurse has been incredibly helpful since I am a new parent. She has been invaluable (during pregnancy too). I feel like I can call her anytime without worrying about insurance or giving my whole family history or limited office hours...etc. I love this service!”*



*“I don't know of any locations on campus that provide support services for students, staff and faculty who have children. I would greatly appreciate a place on campus to provide support services. I would like a place like this to assist parents in connecting with other families, other caregivers, and providing resources. I would love to see more connections between the early childhood education department and families - for the benefit of both??”*

*“Our little village has good programs in theory but most students have never heard of it and the application forms for all ASOSU services are ridiculously long and detailed.”*

## **Personal Challenges/ Experiences**

On the last day of the Focus Group participating parents were asked to share their experiences and personal challenges as Beaver parents. Participating parents discussed personal topics such as barriers, challenges and stress. This gave them an opportunity to share their personal stories and offer advice.

### **Barriers**

Participating parents were asked what barriers related to being a parent prevents them from succeeding in work or school. They were then asked to identify what they think would help them overcome these barriers. Participating parents acknowledge that shortage of time and inflexible and unpredictable schedules are their biggest barriers. To a lesser extent parents also view pricy child care fees, access to child care, lack of breast pumping rooms, and being compared to other students and employees that don't have children as other obstacles. Participating parents feel that flexible caregivers would help them succeed at school and work. In addition, affordable child care, lactating rooms and more child care facilities would also help.

*“Juggling care for our child has definitely been a challenge. We cannot afford daycare, and my sporadic and unpredictable hour's means the only daycare that would work for us is short-notice, drop-in part-time care. Right now, my wife has to take our baby to work with her when I have to execute grueling 24 to 52-hr experiments. This will not be an option in a couple more months when he starts to walk, and we really don't know what we will do at that point.”*

*“The most difficult thing is just finding the time to do everything, and to ensure that family remains a priority above work. Once again, flexibility in the workplace is key to juggling parenthood and careers/school.”*

*“Barriers for me include access to childcare. Sometimes it's hard to prioritize being a good parent with being a good employee because of competing needs and lack of resources.”*

*“The hardest thing is having my time broken up so much. I feel like I'm constantly going from here to there, with very few large chunks of time to really get stuff done. More affordable childcare with greater flexibility would help.”*

*“I find it very challenging to be a full time employee and a full time parent. It would be great if there were more options for working part time.”*

*“Barriers for me would be that I can't attend meetings later in the afternoon/evening when it's time to pick up my kids from daycare etc., or to go to conferences in other cities or countries. Maybe all this would work better once my kids are older and more self-efficient.”*

*“What would help? I really don't know. I wish there was a place I could take her that I felt actually cared for her that wasn't so expensive that had smaller classrooms where we would be exposed to less illnesses. I wish the academic community cared more for grad students and the work we do. I wish it wasn't so taboo to have a baby in grad school. I wish I had a private place to pump at work. I wish there was a place I could bring my baby when I just had a few hours of work to do on a day that is not a scheduled daycare day. I wish my advisor didn't make me go down to .2FTE since I was only in the lab 2 days a week. I wish my progress wasn't compared to other students who have been working full time and have no family commitments.”*

## Challenges

Participating parents were asked to describe their biggest child care challenge during an average day as well as what times of the day or year is the most challenging. Participating parents have come into contact with a multitude of challenges ranging from illness to safety. They recognize guilt as one of their core challenges. They also categorize money, flexibility, unpredictable schedules, shortage of breast feeding rooms, and caregivers inability to meet their children's needs as other hardships.

*“The largest challenge is the guilt associated with placing care in the hands of another, and struggling with the fact that my choice is a balance of economics and what I would consider ideal care.”*

*“On an average day (during the school year) the biggest challenge is making sure my son has a safe environment to go to after school while I am finishing up my workday.”*

*“The biggest childcare challenge is the part where I write the check!”*

*“My biggest challenge is something that really can't be controlled too much in a daycare setting and that is the number of illnesses we get.”*

*“It is not necessarily child care, ...but finding a place to pump/breastfeed on campus is a challenge. I live in walking distance of school and my husband often brings her to campus for me to feed her. It is very stressful, difficult, and time consuming to find a place to feed her that is quiet, private, and that won't break my back!”*

*“The biggest challenge is in my unpredictable schedule, and the long hours my wife and I both work. I provide daycare for our baby 7 days per week, from 7:30 AM to 1:00 PM, and my wife has him after that.”*

*“On an average day it is the little things....like “mommy can't you come home?” that are the hardest daily issues for me....I need to work...and want to work but still want to be with the family.”*

*“I used to cry when we picked her up and she looked like she had been hit by a truck, she just looked so bad and I felt like the worse mom in the world even though she was at one of the best facilities in town I knew her needs were not being met.”*

Participating parents believe that these key challenges exist year round. However, they are most prevalent during holidays, finals week, summer, no school days, and after school. Child care providers aren't flexible enough to help during these demanding times.

*"Holidays are always the most difficult, and the fact that I retain full time daycare during summer months, due to the fact that I have research commitments as a grad student."*

*"The summer is the most challenging time of the year for me because we need full-time child care in the summer and that expense is huge! It's a huge challenge to find a safe place to send my son and to have it be a place that he loves to go to and is stimulated while balancing the cost of the program."*

*"The worst time of year is around finals, when things are extra busy."*

*"Holidays are the most challenge for me. You have either people gone within the department or not enough vacation to take time to be home with the kids when school is out for the holidays."*

*"Now that my child is going to enter kindergarten, I am worried about how I am going to deal with no-school days and vacation periods and summer vacation."*

*"My biggest challenge during an average day would be seeing that my child has care during the times of year when 1) my husband is doing spring/summer field work, 2) there is no school, and 3) after school until I finish work."*

## **Stress**

Participating parents were asked to define what "stress" means to them as well as how much stress is caused as a result of having a child and trying to excel in work or school. Furthermore, they were asked what they could do to deal with this stress. Lastly, they were asked what would make the process of coping with a child and school or work easier. Participating parents recognize that work and school create a significant amount of stress and having children usually causes an even bigger strain. They define stress as physical and emotional side affects that they deal with which is usually caused by having more responsibility than they can deal with and a shortage of time. Participating parents point out that stress is also caused by fear of failing and not meeting commitments, concern for their children's safety, and financial hardships.

*"As a graduate student school/work are stressful regardless of being a parent. However, a child of course adds additional "stress". My life (by my choice) is dedicated to family and school, with little time for socializing or other activities."*

*"There is a lot of stress involved in being a parent in general - always worrying about the child's safety and happiness."*

*"Stress means worrying that everything will fall apart and the sky will come crashing down, I'll end up homeless with my kids in tow."*

*"I feel that I have a lot of stress. I am often fatigued, tired, and feeling that I am not excelling in work or parenthood because I don't have enough time or energy to do everything well. I think a lot of stress is caused as a result of having children and trying to excel at work."*

*"Before I had children I could always tell myself I would stay up all night, or work all weekend, during a particularly busy time. Now that I have children this is not an option, since they need my energy."*

*"Stress is to me when I don't have enough time to do all the things (I think) that need to be done. Also, stress is not having enough money for your bills including daycare."*

*"Gosh, I guess I think of my stress as making me feel like I am unable to meet my personal or professional commitments. I have never felt as much stress as I have since having my daughter."*

*"I think it would help me out a lot if my husband could find a decent job in the Corvallis/Albany area so that I wouldn't be the primary breadwinner of the family. We have lived here for 5 years and he is working through a temp agency at a warehouse. He is qualified to do several positions at OSU, but OSU won't hire him because he is not fluent in English. I know we talk a lot about diversity here, but OSU has a long way to go to really embrace the rhetoric."*

*"When I'm stressed at work and have deadlines, I feel my family suffers. Sure, I may be home over the weekend, but my body and mind may not always be in the best place."*

*"Stress in our family is generally linked to worries about finances and exacerbated by the lack of sleep and 7-day-per week schedule my wife and I must both maintain."*

Participating parents usually try to exercise in order to reduce stress. Unfortunately, as a result of inflexible and expensive caregivers and child care centers they do not get the opportunity to exercise regularly. Some also view children as a stress reliever because they put things and perspective and are often a distraction to other worries.

*"As far as stress relief?... I used to do yoga, and we used to go out to dinner and get a hike in... Pretty much no time (or money) for any of that right now. My wife and I recently starting making the effort to get out for short hikes once or twice a month."*

*"My husband takes care of our daughter all day while I work, and it is not fair to him for me to ask him to watch her while I am at the gym. Some babysitting hours at the gym would be incredibly good for my mental and physical health."*

*"My kids are a good distraction from stress at work, and work is a good distraction from stress with my kids."*

*"The one thing I try to do is workout during my lunch hour."*

*"I also feel that having children can reduce stress- they really put everything in perspective and remind me not to stress over small things at work."*

*"Spending time to be better prepared and organized, and leisure activities are how I deal with stress."*

*"My favorite way to deal with stress is to exercise. However, with a child that is very difficult sometimes. I would love to have access to a place to exercise that either offered drop-in child care services for me to use or since my child is school-age a place where we can exercise together - for example take a swim class together, or a karate class or bicycle together (preferably indoors since it rains much of the year in Corvallis) or where we can both get on a treadmill and "take a walk" together - each going our own pace so we could talk about our day and have quality family time while getting in some exercise that is oh so important for all of us."*

## **Flexibility of Work/School Schedule**

Participating parents were asked how they would rate the amount of flexibility they have in their work or school schedule in order to meet their family's needs. They were then asked to describe what types of

help they have concerning home and child care responsibilities as well as how flexible their care giver is concerning child care hours. Most participating parents feel that they have some flexibility in their jobs but very little when it comes to their child care provider. Concerning work, the amount of flexibility usually depends on the advisor, supervisor or professor. Although, they feel that they have some flexibility in their work they are often hesitant to use it because of demanding work and they feel that taking time off could reflect poorly in their performance evaluations.

*"I have flexibility in that I feel that I can call in sick or take vacation around my son's schedule pretty easily. But at the same time my work schedule (traditional 8-5) doesn't allow for my son to be able to be involved in after school activities that many other kids can participate in because we have no way to get him there or pick him up afterwards."*

*"In my work schedule I have a lot of flexibility because I have an understanding advisor. On the other hand, my biology experiments can be a very harsh mistress and there is no changing the demands of the organisms I work with. I know it isn't easy, but I wish my childcare provider was more flexible and that there was more financial assistance for childcare."*

*"My children are at a child care center, so their hours are fixed (mon-fri 7am to 6pm). For the most part, this works out alright for my needs. Sometimes they have no-school days that do not correspond to no work days at OSU. Sometimes, I have appointments out of town and it is difficult for me to leave Corvallis early or arrive back late."*

*"I am very lucky to have a supervisor who supports a flexible work schedule. My husband is very supportive and a full partner in home and child care responsibility."*

*"I used to think I had a fair amount of flexibility, but I realized that because my use of this flexibility was reflected negatively on a performance evaluation (which was otherwise great), I realized this wasn't really true."*

*"We utilize KidSpirit during the summer and will start public school with Stars (after care) in the fall. My husband and I juggle other times (when he's in town) between us. There is usually a small amount of flexibility with caregivers, but financially we can't afford to pay additional \$\$ to add onto a regular schedule frequently."*

*"My work schedule is very flexible. Fortunately, if my kids are sick and I have to stay at home, there are other people in my lab who could go into the field for me."*

*"My work is only as flexible as the amount of time off we have available. Childcare has set hours....and it is hard to find other caregivers when I can't take time off....family helps but they can't always do it."*

*"My work schedule is fairly flexible since I am just doing research at this point of my degree program. However, I feel like there is not flexibility or understanding that my program is going to take longer since I am working only a few days a week. My advisor seems to be fine paying me less \$, but not ok with the fact that I am making slower progress it seems that he wants to pay me less now that I'm a mom but have the same research output."*

*"My husband takes care of our daughter full time. We intentionally created our lives this way so that we would have a lot of flexibility. I am extremely fortunate!"*

## Relationship between Support and Success at School/Work

Participating parents were asked to elaborate on what other types of support they have that help them overcome their challenges. They were also asked how a decrease or increase in support would influence how they perform at school or work. Most participating parents feel that OSU provides absolutely no child care foundation. On the other hand, most parents have found a great deal of support from other people such as supervisors, professors, families, friends, and other parents. Unfortunately, not all parents are fortunate enough to have this type of support and are dependent on only them selves.

*"I have a boss who tries to be accommodating, but that isn't always enough. If he wasn't so supportive I wouldn't be able to be a parent and work here."*

*"Well... there are people in my life, like my mother, who are very supportive and help to care for my kids. There is financial aid in the form of loans that I can take out but I know that will come back to haunt me."*

*"My director is VERY supportive, but his boss, the Vice Provost is not very supportive."*

*"I have had some support from my in-laws, but they don't live in the country. I am also able to afford house cleaning every other week."*

*"The other support I've used: asking for a graduate student for an hour or two of help during an emergency and swapping with friends. Generally childcare swapping is wonderful, but in my experience is a once-in-a-while option."*

*"I don't have any other support than the help of my husband and the daycare."*

*"My support is my family....husband, parents, sister"*

*"It has been really good for me to know other parents on campus and just talk with them about their challenges and how they overcame them. Even if they have the same problems as us, it is just nice to know we are not alone."*

*"The staff seems very supportive for the most part on trying to give information on resources. Not much support within the OSU administration."*

Participating parents believe that an increase in support would increase productivity and performance at work and school tremendously. They would like to see more affordable, flexible, quality child care. In addition, they are interested in creating a resource that would link parents together.

*"Some affordable, quality part-time day-care would likely allow me to get more sleep and hence increase my productivity at work and energy at home."*

*"Maybe OSU could organize a list of undergrads that have taken a class (maybe in HDFS) on child care/safety and would be willing to baby-sit for a set price. Then I could get to the library/gym/or my husband and I could go to an occasional beavs basketball game. I think undergrads would appreciate this service as well as a way to earn money. This would be incredibly helpful."*

*"If they were not there I would not be able to succeed at work."*

*"I would love to see OSU facilitate childcare swaps between parents."*

*“An increase in support, from in-laws for example, would give me more time in the evenings to do work, as opposed to meal prep and other home duties.”*

*“Having more support for childcare financially would help my performance at work.”*

## **Child Care Emergency Situations**

Participating parents were asked how they typically handle an unexpected emergency situation and what OSU could do to make handling these situations easier. Typically, participating parents have the flexibility to take the day off from work and if they are not able to they generally leave their child with a spouse or other relative. However, some parents are often left with no choice but to bring their child to work or school with them. Most participating parents understand the health and safety reasons for OSU not providing sick care but they would like them to offer drop off care in the case of other emergencies.

*“Currently, my son is laying down in my office watching movies on a laptop, since he was to sick to attend school today. I was able to stay home with him the two previous days, but today I needed to come to the office. Typically my office is shared with two other researchers. Fortunately, they are both out of town. My adviser is flexible and understanding with such issues. But I imagine everyone's patience is tested in such a situation.”*

*“Provide "sick days" for students too.”*

*“If my child is ill my husband and I go through our week and determine which days we each are required to be at work and then divide up the responsibility and conquer. In cases where it's not my child being ill, but rather the school district is closed for the day due to bad weather while the university is still open (for example) it would be nice to have drop-in or emergency child care options on campus so I can still have a productive day.”*

*“I usually let everyone in my department know that I need to leave early to attend to an ill child. I usually contact any of my student appointments and ask them to reschedule. Then, I check email from home and am available via phone or email if there are any urgent matters at work.”*

*“Since I have a nanny, she could stay with my children if they are ill.”*

*“In an emergency....if it is something that grandma can deal with I call her....she is closer to the kids. If it is a mommy issue then I just let my work know that I need to go and why and they are cool.....”*

*“It's understandable that there are rules that need to be followed but I really think that if each person's emergency situation was looked at individually it would allow the situation to be more applicable for all parties involved. When someone is dealing with a death or injury of a family member, they usually are not mentally on task of thinking about the correct process to take with HR or the administration. There needs to be more support in this area.”*

## **Make Your Recommendations**

Lastly, participating parents were asked what one thing OSU could do to exceed their child care expectations that would enhance their ability to do their job or school work more effectively. Participating parents offer an assortment of extremely clever recommendations ranging from standards on meals to resource information packets. The recommendation parents made most frequently is flexible child care that is available to children of all ages.

*“Offering more financial assistance and continuing to work to improve the child care offered through campus...”*

*“I really wish that OSU imposed a standard on the meals served at the facilities here on campus, maybe above and beyond the national standard.”*

*“Open a larger, student and staff only childcare facility with drop in hours and discounted prices.”*

*“There are two things OSU could do:*

- 1. Provide cost effective child care options on campus - especially for school-age children.*
- 2. Provide drop-in child care for students and employees for emergency situations or to allow for more flexible work/school schedules.”*

*“OSU could guarantee quality and affordable childcare for all children up to 12 years of age for year round care up to age 5, before/after school care for kids in school, care for kids in school on no school days and vacation periods. The costs could be related to the person's income and OSU would provide subsidies. Information would be available to all staff, faculty and students.”*

*“I know this is wishful thinking but I would love it if OSU had a drop-in style daycare where I would be able to take my child in on a non-work day. Some of us work part-time and spend other days at home. On those days, I am often running around doing errands and would LOVE to be able to take my exercise class through Faculty/Staff fitness or run to a doctor's appointment or whatever we find difficult to do with small children. If I could just even drop off my daughter for one hour while I take in my class, it would be wonderful.”*

*“Make a breastfeeding/pumping room (with lock on door, locker-type refrigerator, comfortable chair, changing table, outlets) available in each building. I know for a fact that these would get plenty of use. Didn't OR recently pass a law requiring these types of rooms anyway?”*

*“In a day and age where they can just scan your OSU ID to learn all about your status with the university, I think OSU can allow optional fees for students to accept or refuse, so that daycare is an option for student parents to utilize with the fees they already pay.”*

*“The most helpful thing would be to have activities (along the lines of KidSpirit) for kids after school and on no-school day (there are many of them!) on campus. Second would be childcare or activity course at Dixon either in the morning before work or just after work for my child so that I could workout.”*

*“I would really like OSU to have a better policy for grad students who need maternity leave or have children.”*

*“It seems that OSU with staff, faculty and students have the need, numbers and desire to have a facility within the campus or within walking distance of the campus for child care for ages up to 13 years old. A building designed just for child care running from hours of 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. You have out grown the one and only child care available at this time.”*



*“A packet to give all the resources in the area for child care, schooling, etc should be available upon new employee's or employee's who are taking maternity leave. A website with one location for all the resource information for child care, child activities or functions, and place for parents to make comments on resources used or needed within the campus.”*

*“In the future (if I'm still at OSU), when my kids are in school, it would help a lot to have programs or child care for after school or in school breaks when I have to work.”*

# Study Conclusions

Overall participating parents feel that OSU's primary responsibility is to help its employees and students be productive by valuing and being supportive of family life. For the most part, there is a consensus among participating parents that OSU should take on more responsibility and concentrate on providing affordable, convenient, quality, flexible child care and useful resources without long waiting lists. They do not believe that the administration currently considers child care to be a top priority. Although, participating parents recognize a variety of strengths that are specific to their personal experiences at OSU most participating parents are either unaware or are frustrated with OSU's current child care system. They view OSU's main weaknesses as lack of affordable child care, deficient awareness of child care programs, age limitation of assistance, and a shortage of space in current child care facilities. However, participating parents acknowledge that the problem goes beyond OSU's campus.

There are several barriers and challenge that affect a parent's ability to succeed in work or school. Participating parents acknowledge that a shortage of time and inflexible and unpredictable schedules are their biggest obstacles. To a lesser extent participating parents also view pricy child care fees, access to child care, lack of breast pumping rooms, and being compared to other students and employees that don't have children as other barriers. Furthermore, participating parents have come into contact with a multitude of challenges ranging from safety issues to guilt. Participating parents realize that work and school create a significant amount of stress and having children usually causes significantly more strain.

Most participating parents feel that they have some flexibility in their jobs but very little when it comes to their child care provider. Although, they feel that they have some flexibility in their work they are often hesitant to use it because taking time off could reflect poorly in their performance evaluations. A majority of participating parents feel flexibility in child care centers is an area that needs to be updated and improved. They would like to see child care programs evolve into something that is more accommodating to parents with busy schedules. These programs would offer drop off care, evening child care options, summer care, and no school day care without long waiting list.

Furthermore, in order to increase awareness and make parents feel more welcome on OSU campus participating parents ideally would like to see either a resource center or at the very least a resource website where they could view all of OSU's child care resources as well as meet other parents and caregivers. Moreover, participating parents urge the administration to design an orientation packet for staff, faculty and students. They would like to see the packet include a list of child care services available at OSU and in the community, policies regarding the standardized treatment of parents, a map that designates places that are welcoming to children, and a directory of events where children are encouraged to join. Lastly, participating parents would like OSU to provide rooms for breastfeeding.

# Focus Group Research

## ***Strengths and Limitations***

Focus groups are used to develop in-depth insights into key issues, rather than quantitatively precise measures. Groups are guided by an outline of open-ended, unstructured questions, designed to probe parents' knowledge of and attitudes toward specific topics of interest.

The user of this research is reminded that focus groups are qualitative research and these findings should not be extrapolated to the general population as a whole without further quantitative research, using a probability sample. The results of focus groups should not be considered reliable in the "statistical sense." It is not possible to exactly replicate the recruiting of the respondents, nor can the OSU moderator ask the same specific questions of each respondent, or probe in the exact same manner from group to group.

Focus group research is intended to provide an initial, exploratory step in determining in-depth feelings, awareness, attitudes, and opinions. The following biases are generally inherent to qualitative research, and are listed to remind the user that the data presented cannot be projected to the entire universe of individuals in the study area.

- ~ Focus group parents tend to be more outgoing and more assertive than individuals who decline to participate.
- ~ Respondents "self-select" themselves. That is, they are people who are not only willing to participate in a group discussion, but are also available on the night the group is scheduled.
- ~ Individuals who attend focus groups are usually more willing to express their opinions and may have more strongly held opinions than those who decline to participate.
- ~ People in groups may respond differently to a question than if asked the same question individually. For example, a participant may follow the lead of a stronger personality or someone they consider to be more knowledgeable about a topic.

# Appendix

## **OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY OSU-07-122 RECRUITING INVITE FOR ON-LINE FOCUS GROUP**

July 9, 2008

Dear «Name»:

Are your child care needs being met? Would you like OSU to provide a program that makes juggling family life and work or school easier? Do you feel that OSU provides a child friendly atmosphere? Would you like to see OSU provide more child care support? Here is your opportunity to confidentially voice your opinions and share your experiences as a Beaver parent in an on-line focus group.

### **Who is sponsoring the on-line focus group?**

The Student Parent Advisory Board at Oregon State University (OSU) is sponsoring a Parent Needs Assessment on-line focus group. OSU has contracted with Northwest Research Group Inc (NWRG) ([www.nwrg.com](http://www.nwrg.com)) to assist in this effort.

### **What is the purpose of the on-line focus group?**

The purpose of this assessment is to bring about discussion concerning parents' needs concerning child care and resources related to child care provided by OSU as well as to give parents an opportunity to share their experiences as a Beaver parent. Results from the research will be used to determine the best way to utilize OSU funds through effectively and flexibly meeting the needs, wants and expectations of parents.

### **When will the on-line focus group be held?**

The on-line focus group will be held during the week of July 16, 2007 – July 20, 2007.

### **Who can participate?**

Participation will involve only students, staff, and faculty who currently work or attend OSU and have kids.

### **How can I sign up?**

If you are interested in helping with this important effort please contact Oscar at Northwest Research Group, Inc at (866)461-0700 or e-mail [osurecruit@nwrg.com](mailto:osurecruit@nwrg.com).

### **I am interested but would like more information?**

If you would like more information please contact Jessica Espinoza Northwest Research Group, Inc at (800)364-0171 or e-mail [jespinoza@nwrg.com](mailto:jespinoza@nwrg.com). If you would prefer to speak to someone at Oregon State University, you may contact Stephanie Duckett at (541) 737-4906 or email [studentparentadvocate@oregonstate.edu](mailto:studentparentadvocate@oregonstate.edu).

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Jessica Espinoza & Stephanie Duckett

**OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**OSU-07-122**  
**RECRUITING ADVERTISEMENT FOR ON-LINE FOCUS GROUP**

## **Tell us about Your Experience as a Beaver Parent**

The Student Parent Advisory Board along with Northwest Research Group, Inc invites you to participate in a Parent Needs Assessment on-line focus group July 16, 2007 – July 20, 2007 to determine the best way to utilize OSU funds through effectively and flexibly meeting the needs, wants and expectations of student, staff, and faculty parents.

**This is your opportunity to voice your opinions and share your experiences as a parent!**

To sign up, please contact Oscar at Northwest Research Group, Inc at (866)461-0700 or [osurecruit@nwrq.com](mailto:osurecruit@nwrq.com)



For more info please contact Stephanie Duckett at (541) 737– 4906 or [studentparentadvocate@oregonstate.edu](mailto:studentparentadvocate@oregonstate.edu)

*All comments in the on-line focus group will remain strictly confidential*

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## **Tell us about Your Experience as a Beaver Parent**

The Student Parent Advisory Board along with Northwest Research Group, Inc invites you to participate in a Parent Needs Assessment on-line focus group July 16, 2007 – July 20, 2007 to determine the best way to utilize OSU funds through effectively and flexibly meeting the needs, wants and expectations of student, staff, and faculty parents.

**This is your opportunity to voice your opinions and share your experiences as a parent!**

To sign up, please contact Oscar at Northwest Research Group, Inc at (866)461-0700 or [osurecruit@nwrq.com](mailto:osurecruit@nwrq.com)



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*All comments in the on-line focus group will remain strictly confidential*

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**OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**OSU-07-122**  
**RECRUITING ADVERTISEMENT INFORMATION LETTER FOR ON-LINE FOCUS**  
**GROUP**

July 9, 2008

Dear «Name»:

The Student Parent Advisory Board at Oregon State University (OSU) is conducting a Parent Needs Assessment on-line focus group and needs your help. The purpose of this assessment is to identify key criteria and bring about discussion concerning parents' needs concerning child care and resources related to child care provided by OSU. The on-line focus group will be held during the week of July 16, 2007 – July 20, 2007. Results from the research will be used to determine the best way to utilize OSU funds through effectively and flexibly meeting the needs, wants and expectations of parents. To increase its child friendly environment and provide student, staff, and faculty parents the programs and services they need, OSU is asking parents for their input into the design of a parent needs survey. OSU has contracted with Northwest Research Group Inc (NWRG) ([www.nwrg.com](http://www.nwrg.com)) to assist in this effort.

As part of this research we are inviting a sample of OSU student, staff and faculty parents to participate. The Student Parent Advisory Board would like to involve a variety of parents in this process including parents who currently use and parents who currently do not use OSU childcare services, parents who are on the waiting list for available OSU childcare services, female and male parents, as well as international parents. It is crucial that students, staff, and faculty are all involved. Interviews will be conducted as an on-line focus group and the results will be kept completely confidential.

At this time we would like to invite individuals to participate in this initial phase of research. Participation will involve only students, staff, and faculty who currently work/ attend OSU and have children. In order to recruit a diverse group of parents and to have a representative sample we need your help advertising the recruitment process. All it will involve is posting the advertisement that I have attached in your facility. In addition, it would be wonderful if you could please forward the attached recruitment letter to members of your organization and anyone else that may be interested. Your help and support will only increase the availability and quality of child care on OSU's campus.

If you are interested in participating in this important effort or need more information please contact Jessica Espinoza at Northwest Research Group (800) 859-2132 or [jespinoza@nwrg.com](mailto:jespinoza@nwrg.com). If you would like more information and would prefer to speak to someone at Oregon State University, you may contact Stephanie Duckett at (541) 737-4906 or [studentparentadvocate@oregonstate.edu](mailto:studentparentadvocate@oregonstate.edu).

Thanks in advance for your help,

Sincerely,

Jessica Espinoza & Stephanie Duckett

**OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**OSU-07-122**  
**PRESS RELEASE FOR ON-LINE FOCUS GROUP**

Contact: [Jessica Espinoza](#)  
Northwest Research Group, Inc  
Phone (800) 859-2132  
Fax (208) 364-0171

225 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Ste. 200  
Boise, Idaho  
Phone (800) 859-2132  
Fax (208) 364-0171



## Press Release

### OSU Child Care Advisory Board Sponsors

### Parent Needs Assessment On-line Focus group

**An on-line focus group including student, staff, and faculty parents will be conducted between July 16, 2007 and July 20, 2007**

Corvallis, Oregon, July, 2007: The Oregon State University (OSU) Student Parent Advisory Board is sponsoring a Parent Needs Assessment on-line focus group during the week of July 16, 2007 and July 20, 2007. Results from the research will be used to determine the best way to utilize OSU funds through effectively and flexibly meeting the needs, wants and expectations of parents. To increase its child friendly environment and provide student, staff, and faculty parents the programs and services they need, the Student Parent Advisory Board is asking parents for their participation in the on-line focus group. OSU has contracted with Northwest Research Group (NWRG) ([www.nwrg.com](http://www.nwrg.com)) to assist in this effort.

The Student Parent Advisory Board would like to involve a variety of parents in this process including parents who currently use and parents who currently do not use OSU childcare services, parents who are on the waiting list for OSU childcare services, female and male parents, as well as international parents. It is crucial that students, staff, and faculty are all involved. NWRG will be posting advertisements and contacting OSU students, staff, and faculty via email in order to recruit parents for this important study. The recruitment process will take place between June 25, 2007 and July 13, 2007. The email will consist of a recruitment letter further explaining the study, as well as directions for signing up for the focus group. Additional emails will be sent to organizations as well as child care facilities containing a recruitment letter as well as an advertisement to post.

The highest standards of survey research, set by the federal government and major research universities, have been used to design this on-line focus group. Since individuals who participate are vital to the Student Parent Advisory Boards' research, NWRG assumes full responsibility for protecting from disclosure to third parties. Comments made on the focus group will be kept strictly confidential and will not be tied with your name in any way. It is important to answer the questions truthfully to make sure the information collected is accurate. Participation in the on-line focus group is voluntary, but the more people who participate in the focus group the more representative the information collected will be.

If you receive an email, have any questions or concerns, or are interested in participating in the on-line focus group please contact:

- Northwest Research Group Inc, you may call Oscar at the research company, toll-free at (866)461-0700 or email [osurecruit@nwrg.com](mailto:osurecruit@nwrg.com)
- Oregon State University, you may call Stephanie Duckett during normal business hours at (541) 737-4906 or email her at [studentparentadvocate@oregonstate.edu](mailto:studentparentadvocate@oregonstate.edu)