

Baby Gator Child Development and Research Centers
Request for Student Government Support
August, 2016

Baby Gator is seeking financial support from Student Government in order to better support students with children who attend UF.

Quick Facts about Baby Gator:

- Baby Gator has supported UF's students with children for over 45 years.
- Baby Gator was established in 1969 by a group of student parents as a parent co-op with shared child care duties. We still abide by the vision of those innovative parents, providing high quality child care and early education in safe, inviting, engaging environments staffed by well-qualified, caring professionals.
- Baby Gator operates three on-campus centers
 - o Baby Gator at Lake Alice
 - o Baby Gator at Newell Drive
 - o Baby Gator at Diamond Village
- Baby Gator centers care for 332 children, ages 6 weeks to 5 years, from 7:00am to 6:00pm daily, Monday through Friday, year-round.
- The centers provide nutritious, USDA Child Care Food Program approved breakfasts, lunches and snacks.
- Classrooms respect and support diversity and are multi-cultural and multi-lingual.
- Children with developmental challenges are welcomed and receive the support they need to learn.

Baby Gator's mission is multifaceted. The centers strive to:

- Provide quality care and early education.
- Enable UF students with children to enroll, attend to their studies, and graduate.
- Enable the University to recruit and retain highly qualified graduate students, postdocs, and faculty.
- Support professional development in all fields related to children and families including education, pediatrics, nursing, child psychology, psychiatry, and child and family counseling.
- Support research across disciplines.
- Provide opportunities for employment, coursework completion, pre-service training, research, and volunteering for UF students.

Baby Gator Supports UF students in 3 primary ways:

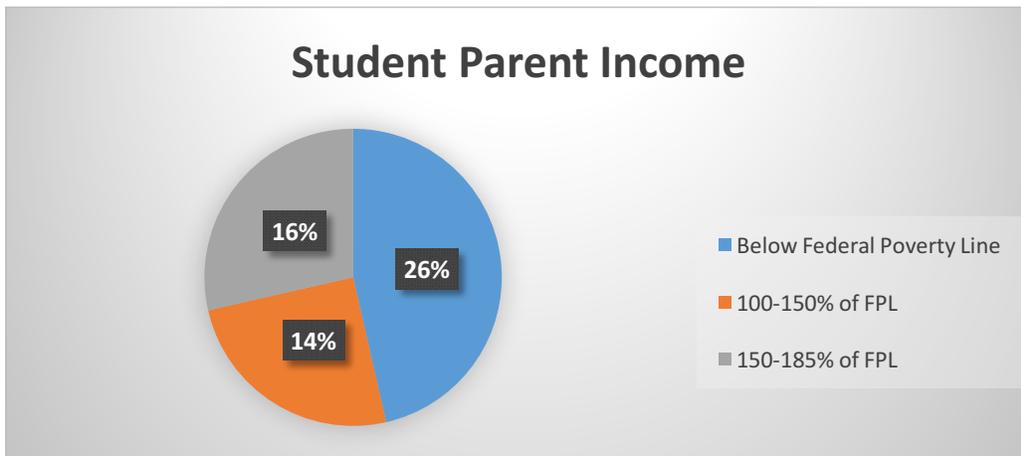
1. Child care for student families at a reduced weekly rate.
2. Quality child development sites used for the completion of coursework, volunteer hours, training, and research.
3. Employment opportunities for students interested in working with young children.

Documented Need for Subsidized Child Care:

A 2013 survey identified 293 UF undergraduate and graduate students with children. A large share of UF’s student parents are low-income and they’re making extreme sacrifices to get through school. Student parents typically spend 30 hours or more each week taking care of dependent children; 42% of single parents and 40% of married parents are likely to withdraw from college due to child responsibilities; 49% of student parents are likely to leave college, after 6 years, without a degree. (*Improving Child Care Access to Promote Postsecondary Success Among Low Income Parents* (2011). Washington, D.C.: Institute for Women’s Policy Research.)

In the July 2015-June 2016 school year, 54 student parents’ children were enrolled in Baby Gator Lake Alice. Child care is expensive. Student parents, who generally are unemployed or underemployed while engaged in coursework or research, have the least ability to pay, yet are in need of the most expensive child care, for infants and toddlers.

Over 25% of student parents responding to a recent survey reported income below the Federal Poverty Line. A family of two living at 100% of the Federal Poverty Line would be earning approximately \$15,900 annually. After housing, food, medical and school expenses there is not enough left to cover a \$7,500 to \$11,000 child care payment.



For the 2016-2017 academic year (beginning August 15th), Baby Gator Lake Alice will have 52 spaces allocated to student families.

The Impact of Inadequate Child Care Funding:

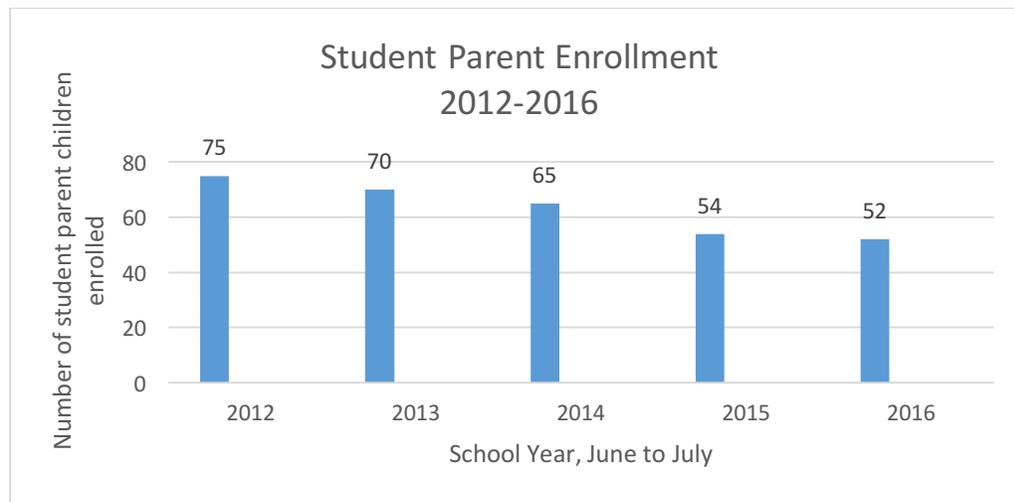
Baby Gator has traditionally enrolled student parents’ children at a reduced rate. Our original intent was to maintain a 50/50 student family ratio, but with decreases in subsidy and increases in the cost of care, the ratio has been dramatically decreased.

Average Annual Cost of Child Care projected for July 2016-June 2017

Age	Annual Cost per child	Annual Parent-Paid tuition	Annual Tuition Shortfall per Child
Infants	\$ 13,370.30	\$10,816.00	\$2,554.30
Ones	\$ 20,866.02	\$9,984.00	\$10,882.02
Twos	\$ 14,766.37	\$8,840.00	\$5,926.37
Threes	\$ 13,884.39	\$7,540.00	\$6,344.39
Fours	\$ 11,334.06	\$7,540.00	\$3,794.06
Average	\$ 14,844.23	\$8,944.00	\$5,900.23

The average cost for the 52 student spaces is \$771,899.96. The average tuition income is \$465,088.00. CITF funds, by law, are to be used to reduce student parents’ child care costs. After all CITF funds (\$288,062.55 received for 2015-2016) are allocated to student families, a shortfall of \$18,749.41 will remain.

Baby Gator’s inability to cover this shortfall has resulted in a steady decrease in the number of student parents’ children enrolled. Enrollment of student parents’ children has decreased by 28% over the past five years.



Without additional financial support Baby Gator will not be able to provide child care to the student parents who need it. Reducing the availability of on-campus child care limits student-

“I have a flexible schedule. I watch our children during the day and do school work at night while my partner sleeps.”—survey respondent

parents’ options and erodes their ability to continue with their studies and graduate. In the 2013 survey, 69% of respondents had some form of child care but 76% of those relied on a patchwork of friends, family or spouse/partners.

Options for off-campus child care are few. Within two miles of the UF campus, there are 12 licensed child care centers and 2 family child care homes. Of these, only 7 accept infants

and only 5 have earned a “Gold Seal” rating indicating quality of care.

The Impact of Student Government Support:

- Decrease the gap between student parent paid child care fees and actual child care costs.
- Increase student parents’ child enrollment by subsidizing additional spaces.
- Decrease student-parent time on the Waiting List.

With reoccurring SG funding, Baby Gator would have the ability to enroll more student-parents’ children because their limited ability to pay child care costs would not be a financial burden for Baby Gator.

Additional spaces	5 spaces	10 spaces	15 spaces
Annual gap	\$29,500.00	\$59,000.00	\$88,500.00
2016-2017 gap	\$18,750.00	\$18,750.00	\$18,750.00
Total	\$48,250.00	\$77,750.00	\$107,250.00

Fewer spaces available means a longer wait on the Baby Gator Waiting List. Typically, parents wait 6 to 18 months for one of the 156 spaces available at the Lake Alice center. Because we have limited spaces allocated to student families, students often wait a year or more for one of them.

“The long waiting list made it impossible for me to get my child enrolled by the time I wanted to start school”.-survey respondent

A recent national study of students with children indicated 60% of student parents

“I would have been able to graduate a year earlier if I had this service”— survey respondent

could not continue in college without child care; 46% of those needed on-campus child care for convenience and/or due to lack of reliable and accessible transportation. (Miller, K., Gault, B., Thorman, A. (2011) Improving Child Care Access to Promote Postsecondary Success among Low-Income Parents. Washington DC: Institute for Women’s Policy Research). The possibility that 35 or more student-parents will withdraw from UF due to lack of child care is real.

Baby Gator Support of the UF Student Body.

Baby Gator’s support of the UF student body and its impact on students’ opportunities to learn extend far beyond our child care and early education services. Baby Gator’s mission also addresses support for professional development in all fields related to children and families, support for research across disciplines, and opportunities for employment, coursework completion, pre-service training, research, and volunteering for UF students.

From January to December, 2015, students in Education, Psychology, Engineering, Family Youth and Community Sciences, Pediatrics, Public Health, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, and Speech-Language Communication completed 2,173 hours of coursework in Baby Gator centers. Student researchers spent 91.5 hours in Baby Gator classrooms collecting data for studies related

to early childhood issues and students completed 8,365 hours of volunteer work required for coursework, community service, or career advancement in Baby Gator centers. Baby Gator staff dedicate over 5,000 hours per year to the training, supervision, and assessment of students, student workers, and volunteers each year.

In addition, Baby Gator employs, on average, 80 students each semester as substitute teachers and teaching assistants. These student employees gain valuable experience under the tutelage of knowledgeable and experienced Baby Gator teachers. Baby Gator's high quality, innovative work with children and families is recognized nationally. Work at Baby Gator listed on a resume has enabled countless UF graduates to obtain positions in teaching, counseling, and law and to be accepted into prestigious graduate programs.

Baby Gator-Student Government Partnership:

By working together, Student Government would be able to recognize and lend support to the small but significant number of student-parents within the UF student body and Baby Gator would be able to provide more student parents with the child care services they need to complete their course of study at UF.

Baby Gator would welcome the opportunity to explore funding options with Student Government. Perhaps the proceeds from a Student Government sponsored event could be designated for the support of Baby Gator annually or Student Government could challenge other organizations to match SG's funding each year. The opportunities for collaboration are many. We look forward to a strong and mutually beneficial partnership this year and into the future.