

House plays jeopardy with child care

By DAVID OLMOS
Of the Emerald

Whether student-parents come to school may depend on just one thing — the availability of child care assistance.

For many low-or middle-income student-parents, the cost of having their children looked after while they attend classes is too expensive.

"Obtaining child care is often the difference between getting a good job and being self-supporting, and going on welfare," says Becky Couch, office manager of the Child Care and Development Center.

So parents and their allied interests, EMU Child Care Center, Oregon Student Lobby and the ASUO are trying to make more funds available.

One potential source of funds is House Bill 2663, currently being considered by the Ways and Means Committee, the Legislature's money director. The bill will come to the House floor for a vote Friday.

HB 2663 would reallocate \$650,000 of Gov. Atiyeh's education budget, funds intended for part-time or "non-traditional" students. Student lobbyists for HB 2663 would like to see that money switched to a state general fund to pay child-care costs for up to 812 students during the 1979-81 biennium.

Most student-parents are women who have faced past discrimination, says Debbie Murdock, an Oregon Student Lobby intern.

"Women with children have been denied the opportunity to go to school. It's hard to dedicate your time to studies when you know your child is not being taken care of," says Murdock.

If HB 2663 is approved the Oregon State Scholarship Commission would administer the funds through the State Need Grant program.

Currently students who have child-care expenses receive a maximum Need Grant award of \$500. However, the commission has designated \$900 as the amount necessary for Need Grant eligibility.

"We believe that at this appropriation level the



Graphic by Tom Ette

students served would be the neediest students," says Jeff Lee, director of the State Scholarship Commission. "However, the total number of students qualifying would far exceed the money available."

In 1977, a \$3.6 million child-care bill was defeated in the Legislature. A House subcommittee shelved that bill.

Child care received another setback in 1977 when the Children Service Division withdrew its subsidization of student-parents. The cuts were made because CSD overspent its budget by subsidizing too many children, says Rachelle Katz, EMU Child Center director.

Currently CSD provides limited aid to some working students, such as Graduate Teaching Fellows.

If the education subcommittee of Ways and Means approves the CSD budget, after July 1979 only those persons on welfare or with income eligible for welfare will qualify for CSD child-care funding.

When a student-parent eligible for financial aid has child-care costs, additional money is available, says financial aid counselor Susan Pace. The Financial Aid office allows \$150 per month maximum for child-care aid regardless of the number of children the student has.

Portland State University allows up to \$150 for two or more children and Oregon State University gives \$100 for the first child and \$33 for each additional child, says Pace.

Child care is a costly item for a student-parent. State-certified day-care centers charge \$.98 per hour per child between the ages of three and six. Full-time day care at this rate for one child would cost \$196 per month.

Becky Couch says her office receives an average of 10-15 phone calls a week from students desiring child care.

However, Couch finds that many students do not call back after discovering the costs of day care at CCDC. Full-day rates at the center are \$15 for children under three years and \$9.80 for children over three. With a center reorganization possibly in the offing, hourly rates may be available by next fall. Hourly rates would enable more student-parents who may not need, or could not afford half- and full-day child care to use the center, says Couch.

CDCC received \$31,443 this year through the Incidental Fee Committee. That money is used for subsidizing parents in the CCDC program called the Parent Equalizing Payment (PEP).

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Funding exceeds limit, IFC to review allocations

Mixed emotions erupted during the IFC's budget hearing Thursday night over the allocation of \$62,000 in excess of IFC funding guidelines.

The excess violates the ASUO Constitution by increasing IFC funding one percent over its seven-percent limitation.

The overexpenditure is caused in part by inflation that has increased EMU operation costs by more than seven percent. Argument flared over where to make budget cuts.

"I don't see why the ASUO programs that directly affect the students should have to suck up EMU inflation pressures," IFC member Kevin Chambers said.

"We've funded nine new programs. We have been unrealistic in our budget considerations," said IFC member Dusty Rhodes.

When tempers toned down, the IFC agreed to make allocation reviews of 15 ASUO and EMU programs on Monday.

The Athletic Department presented their budget of \$263,803 and were allocated \$233,000 on the condition that the department accept a contract written by Rhodes.

The contract decreases IFC

subsidies for sports passes which will rise to \$56 each, due to the increase in games scheduled. The contract divides the sports passes into "affordable" packages of one football pass and two passes covering separate sets of basketball games.

Chambers objected to the contract. "We are overstepping our authority by making policy decisions," he said.

Athletic Department Business Manager Greg Robinson said the department may not accept the contract.

Four other budgets were also presented at the meeting. The IFC allocated \$3,839 to Action Now which runs the tool library, \$579 to Teachers Education Doctoral Students Association, \$1,638 to Muslim Student Association and \$7,659 to the IFC.



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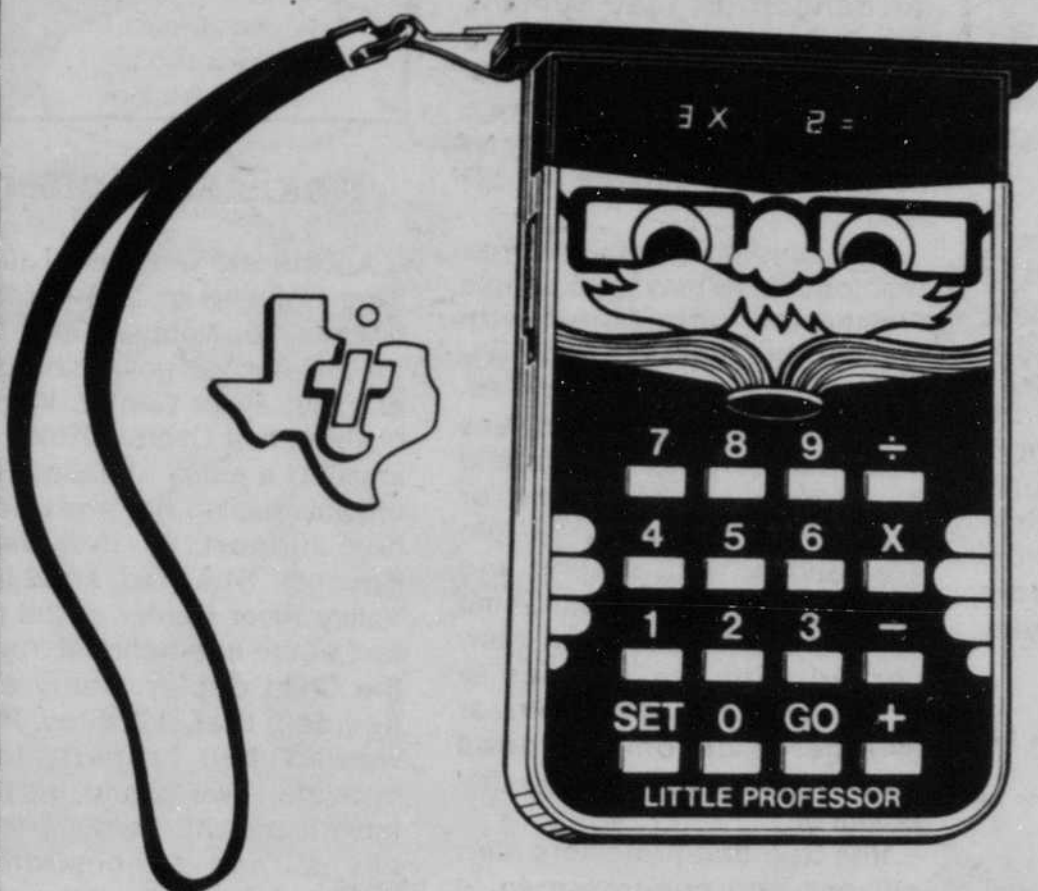
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