

# Lobbyists ask for increased child care grant

Block grants currently serve 250 students with children, leaving 900 on the waiting list

By Michael Hines  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Some people call it a higher level of welfare.

But it's really a way to lessen the financial burden on college students with children.

The Student Child Care Block Grant gives many student-parents the financial backing to get an education and become skilled workers, and students and administrators around the state are asking for more.

Dennis Reynolds, EMU Child Care Coordinator, asks if welfare provides the money for the public to get trained to work, "how about a little more training?"

The grant partially subsidizes child care for students with children. This way, students can stay

focused on school, not on the stress of keeping their children supervised.

"It's vital to two generations," Reynolds said. "I call it a two-for-one."

Easing a student's financial burden makes the child's growth less stressful and the parent's education more potent, he said.

But he said the state could start kicking in some money.

"The funds are inadequate to meet anything more than a small fraction of the need," Reynolds said.

According to the Oregon Student Association, the block grants currently serve about 250 students, leaving 900 on the waiting list that can take more than a year to wade through.

"A lot of people when they hear that don't even sign up," said OSA Legislative Director Kellie Shoemaker.

Shoemaker said she is currently working with a few legislators

and hopes to have legislation crafted next week for consideration.

The legislation will either ask for \$3.9 or \$7.5 million for the next two years, she said. The higher figure would cover the number of students on the waiting list, and the lower figure, which is the more likely request, would cut the waiting list in half.

Legislative Rep. Floyd Prozanski, who represents an area of Eugene that includes the campus area, said he is in favor of allocating money for child care.

"We have to make sure that we have access for students to get an education," he said. "We need to make our public education system as accessible as possible."

Prozanski said he is also in favor of keeping child care close to students' homes, but he said the funding increases may need to be incremental over the years.

University students currently chip in \$216,000 for 200 child

care slots exclusively for University of Oregon students. But with the number of student parents at the University estimated at about 2,000, that leaves many without needed subsidies, Reynolds said.

And if the Legislature allocates new money, it could save students' money, he said. Students would have the choice to save money and eliminate the 200 University slots or keep them on top of the added state slots.

But the programs are not cheap.

"Quality care costs a lot of money," Reynolds said. "You get what you pay for."

The ASUO is involved in the push for child care funding as well. It will be one issue covered at the Campaign Kickoff today at 5 p.m. in 207 Chapman Hall.

Mike Hines covers the Eugene police and the Oregon Legislature for the Emerald. He can be reached via e-mail at [mbines@gladstone.uoregon.edu](mailto:mbines@gladstone.uoregon.edu).

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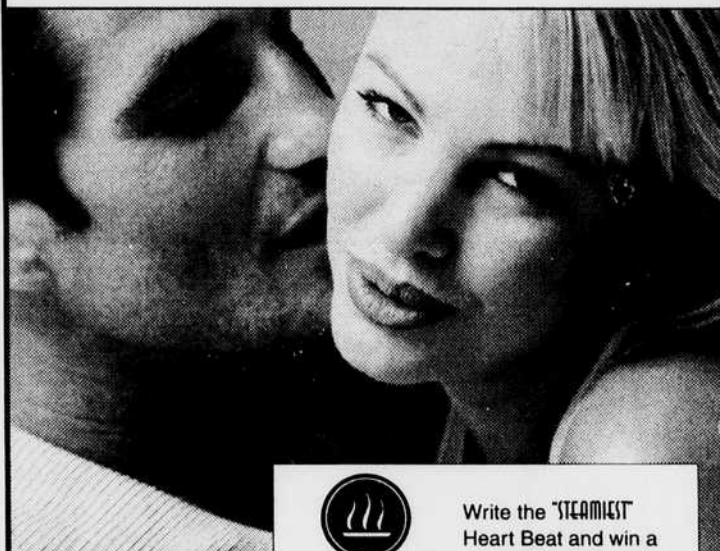
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