



Family and Consumer Studies  
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### **Why has the Department of Family and Consumer Studies (FCS) made the decision to close down the Child and Family Development Center (CFDC)?**

The CFDC's potential closure has been discussed within the FCS department for at least five years when the previous director resigned, leaving the CFDC with a significant debt. Our previous chair and administrative staff have tried everything to save the CFDC, including taking on non-personnel expenses or directly transferring department funds to subsidize the CFDC. Unfortunately, Covid-19 put the CFDC further behind. Despite the FCS Department taking on CFDC expenses in the past three years, the CFDC debt has increased. It is clear that the FCS department does not have the resources to address CFDC's debt issue.

### **What was the role of FCS in developing the CFDC?**

The CFDC is a lab school of the FCS because of its tradition as the department has its roots in Home Economics in its early days. The FCS department is an academic unit, just like any other academic department on campus. However, our faculty have not utilized the CFDC as a lab school in any research for more than two decades. Essentially, FCS department has been running the CFDC to honor our tradition and our roots and has provided a valuable service to the campus community. At this point, it is clear that it is no longer sustainable for the FCS department to continue to provide this community service.

### **Why closing this semester?**

The short answer is Covid-19, staff burnout, and labor market shortage. The labor market shortage and staff burnout make it a daily challenge for us to continue to operate the CFDC while maintaining quality care (a teacher and director have resigned with few applicants). Given our knowledge of the labor market shortage, we were very aware that not having any applicants for the director's position is a real possibility. In order to provide continuity of care, we reached out to the Center for Child and Family Resources (CCFR) to seek help. UKIDS, as a child care facility under CCFR, has agreed to expand its service to the CFDC space after we close.

### **What has the FCS done to ensure minimum disruption to the CFDC teachers and children?**

In our first meeting with the CCFR, we made sure that UKIDS will hire all our teachers at the same salary and benefits if the teachers choose to stay. All CFDC children will have guaranteed admission to UKIDS-President Circle (UKIDS-PC). The basic idea is that the CFDC parents will stay in the same rooms with the same CFDC teachers. The current UKIDS-PC coordinator will be managing the whole UKIDS-PC. The CFDC portion of the UKIDS-PC will remain a full-time facility, unlike the other part of the UKIDS-PC program.

### **Have we reached out to other colleges to see if there is interest for other colleges to take over the CFDC?**

Yes, we have reached out to the colleges and no college has expressed any interest to us in taking over the CFDC. Rumors that the College of Education or Engineering might be interested in taking over the CFDC are inaccurate. Any academic unit involved in taking over CFDC would need experience in childcare. We believe that UKIDS, which is a licensed and NAEYC accredited University of Utah child care facility with a vast amount of experiences is well positioned to provide the best transition for these children and teachers.

### **How are Covid-19 policies different between the CFDC and UKIDS?**

We are both parts of the University of Utah, and as such, follow all University of Utah Covid-19 policies and regulations. The only difference is that UKIDS is a state-licensed child facility, while the CFDC, as a lab school, is licensing exempt. The licensing requirement dictates that UKIDS need to allow parents access to their children's classroom, where at the CFDC, we have not allowed parents access to the classrooms.

**Why can the FCS not operate the CFDC for longer, such as one year, to give CFDC parents more time to make their decisions to stay with UKIDS or find alternative care?**

Multiple timeframes were discussed for the transition. It was in consideration of our CFDC parents that the FCS Department chose to transition in October with a faculty interim director trying to manage the severe staff shortage in the current labor market. We are trying our best to manage this transition period, but to be transparent, it will be a challenge with staff shortages. The FCS department simply does not have the financial and human resources to deliver such care.

**Will the FCS department and UKIDS host more parent meetings in the near future?**

Yes. We are in the process of scheduling a second open house to answer any questions our CFDC parents have. Any interested party from the campus community is also welcome to attend. We will send out the meeting information once it becomes available.

**Are FCS faculty and staff on board with the decision to close down the CFDC?**

Yes, all current FCS faculty and staff are supportive of this decision.