

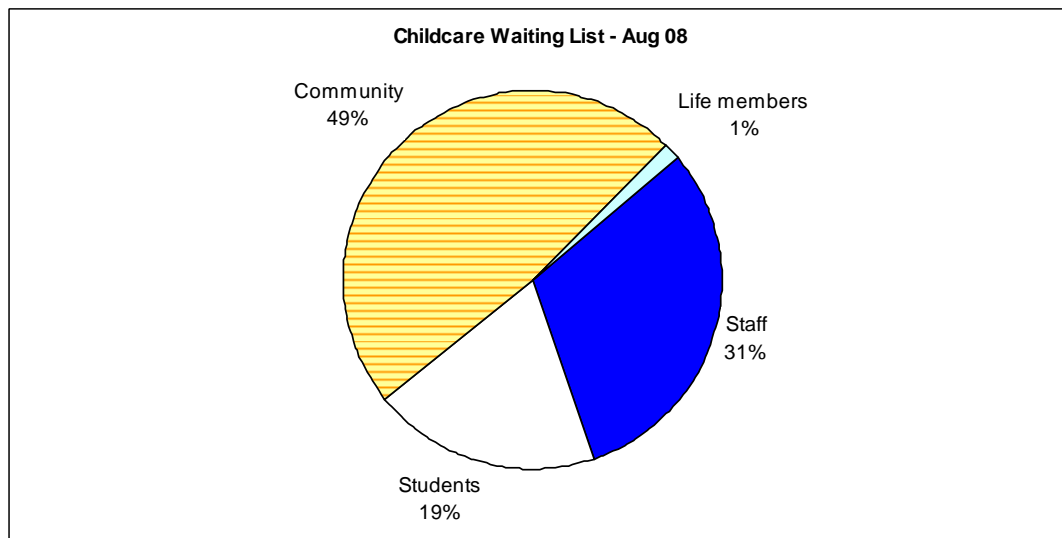
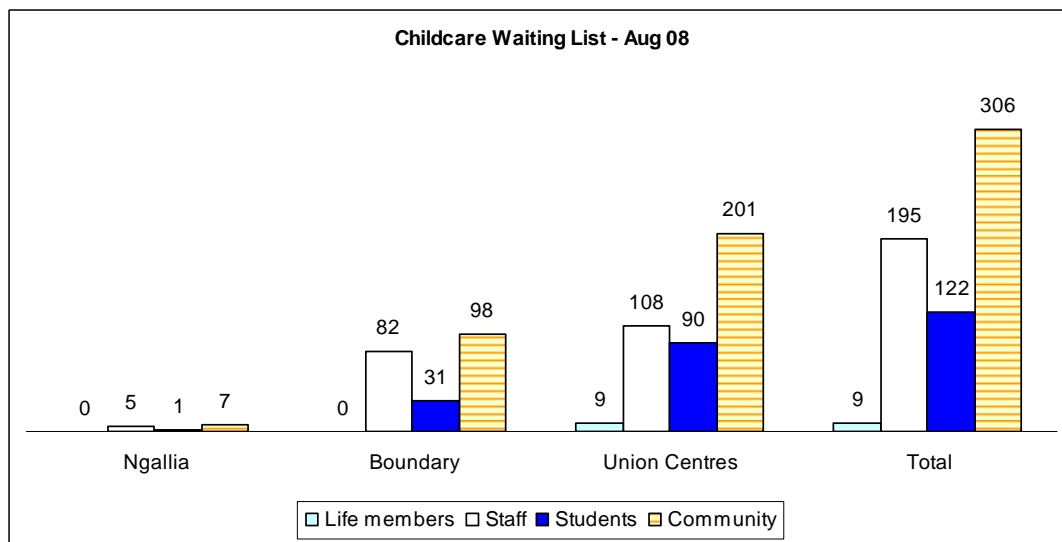
Enrolment Policy University of Sydney Child Care Centres September 2008

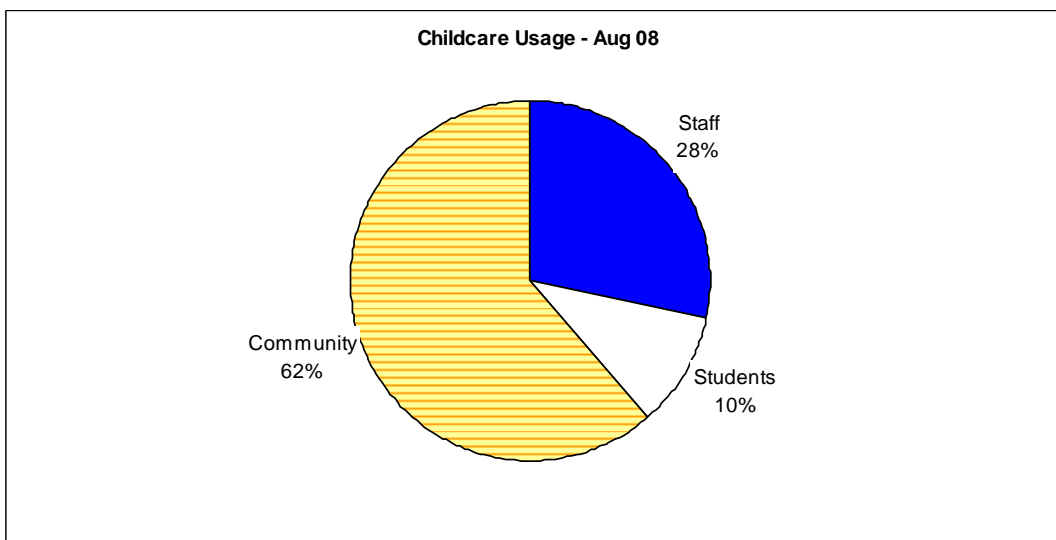
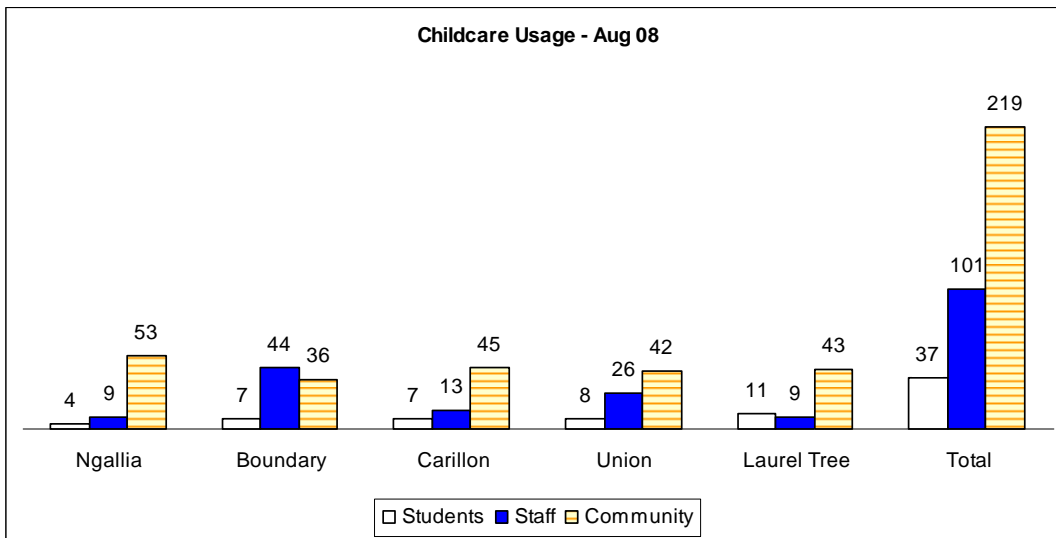
Preamble

The University's childcare centres serve its students, staff and the local community.

Two centres (Laurel Tree House and the Union centre) receive financial subsidies from the Department of Community Services (DOCS) in return for the right to place disadvantaged children in those centres. In addition, accreditation to run any childcare centre depends on the centre agreeing to give priority to a child at risk of abuse or neglect.

Currently, USU prefers places at its three childcare centres to be allocated one third to students, one third to staff and one third to the general community. However, as at August 2008, actual allocations and waiting lists by group were as per charts below:





The above figures show that the University's staff and students combined take up a minority of places in the University's childcare centres.

Policy Aims

This policy aims to balance a range of objectives:

- The University's need to provide services to its core constituencies: staff and students.
- The University's need to maintain good relations with the local community.
- The need for the enrolments process to comply with accreditation requirements and commercial agreements.
- The needs to have an enrolments system that is administratively practical to implement.
- Children already enrolled in childcare centres need to be treated equitably.
- Change should be implemented gradually to allow stakeholders to adjust.

Enrolments Policy

With effect 1 November 2008 (TBC), enrolments will be biased in favour of staff and students, who will have the first right of refusal over any vacancy at a childcare centre, except in cases where a vacancies need to be filled by children for social welfare reasons.

As a result, the following priorities will be applied to new applications for positions at the University's Childcare Centres:

Priority	Description	Comments
One	Children Services must give priority of access to children and families who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are at risk of harm • are if Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent • are from diverse cultural backgrounds • have a disability • are on a low income • are living in isolated circumstances 	Reason for priority is to comply with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accreditation requirements • agreement with DOCS
Two	First right of refusal alternating between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students • staff 	Union staff have priority, then A staff member is anyone with a staff identity card. A students is anyone with a student identity card.
Three	Members of the local community	

Applicants who fit priorities two and three will be allocated points weighting according to the following:

30 Points	Applicant has a child currently attending one of the centres. Thirty points are granted per sibling.
20 Points	Applicant holds a current Access Card and is a student
20 Points	Applicant returning from maternity/paternity leave

Notes:

- Places will be offered based on priorities and then maximum points achieved. For example, a member of the local community might start with say, 30 points because the applicant has a child already attending a centre. However, a student applicant will still have priority, even if he or she starts with less than 30 points.
- Placements will also reflect vacancies available across age groups and days.
- Applicants can accrue points across a number of categories. For example, a student applicant might have an Access Card and two siblings attending one of the centres. In this case, the applicant would start with 80 points.

Effect of Policy

Implementation of this policy means there will be two waiting lists, one for students and staff and the other for community members. Application of the policy will mean that, regardless of how many points a community member accrues, any childcare vacancy will first be offered to University students and staff before being offered to a community member.

Affected Children

The policy does not apply to children already enrolled at the University's childcare centres.

Review

In consultation with the operator of the childcare centres, the University's Childcare Coordination Committee and USU are to review the operation of this policy in September of each year and, as necessary recommend changes.

Administrative Issues

We recognise that the decision to return to work can be a challenging one as parents try to balance their employment and family needs.

If parents are able to be flexible in the days of attendance they may be able to be offered a place in a shorter period of time.

It is also helpful if parents recognise that it is difficult for the childcare centre staff to guarantee a place several months into the future.

The centres operate on a break-even budget and it is necessary to keep full utilisation at all times. Once a child has a place at the centre it is easier to move to the desired days of attendance as vacancies arise.

We recommend that parents keep in touch with the centre of their choice, update their expected date of return to work regularly and visit the centre with their child prior to an offer of a place so that a quick decision can be made once the offer of a place has been made.

Places will not be held open and families must accept and commence the enrolment process within a week of the offer.

There is a \$10 deposit for putting a child's name on the waiting list.

Childcare centres will not be responsible for lack of contact is taken if parent contact details are altered without written or email notice.

Students are eligible for a discount if they have a current Access Card. This discount does not apply to staff.