DENVER WARM WELCOME COURT CHILD CARE CENTER
2016 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR GOAL

Our goal is to provide a warm welcome, a safe haven, and relaxing learning experience to each child who comes through our doors. All children deserve to be in a warm, calm environment while their parents tend to business within the Denver judicial system. Through our efforts, the Denver courts work can be conducted more efficiently and children can be shielded from experiencing adult interactions that can be confusing to them.

2016 Summary

In 2016, the Denver Warm Welcome Court Child Care Center served 2023 children with four staff members adhering to a budget of $205,709. This year reflects a decrease of 274 children fewer than 2015, or 12%.

Denver County Courts heard 147,711 cases in 2016, a 7% drop from 2015. The Denver District Courts witnessed an increase of 12.7% filings and the Denver Juvenile Courts incurred a slight drop of 3.4% in 2016 filings. The director of the center worked closely with court-related services such as probation, electronic monitoring, victims assistance, the District Attorney’s office, and the Public Defender’s office to ensure that the maximum number of families could access free child care while completing their court business. SafeHouse Denver, Rocky Mountain Victims Law Center, and the Colorado Organization for Victims Assistance have signed agreements with DWWCCCC to care for client’s children. Over time, this should also increase access and reliance on the center.

Close collaboration with a number of community agencies allows the DWWCCCC to connect parents with child care resources, both at the center and through referrals, such as: child care, rental assistance, housing, food, education, transportation, victim’s advocates and family crisis counseling. The center also maintains a clothing bank fully stocked to meet every conceivable kind of need: hand-knit hats, mittens, boots, shoes, socks, winter coats, and children’s clothing. Children also receive a book or stuffed animal as a memento of their first visit, thanks to several generous donors. We continue to seek lightly used or new clothing, books or stuffed animals for the families we serve. Much appreciation to the many donors who make these gifts possible daily.

A supplemental source of funding for the center through the years is the Family Friendly Courts grant through the State of Colorado. Over the past year, the center continued to replace broken or well-loved toys, books and games as well as fund more playground improvements for toddlers. Additionally, this grant provided professional development for staff.

Current Events

The City & County of Denver placed the building housing the center on the market, and it sold in November 2015. Since then many meetings between the Board, the city real estate office, the city architect, Mile High Early Learning Center Executives, DWWCCCC director and Terri Langham have continued to process and evaluate the design of a new space for the Center in the Lindsey-Flanigan courthouse. The DWWCCCCC will continue to operate in its current location, 270 14th Street, until the tenant finish in the new space is complete; then move to the new space, courtroom #1F, in the
Lindsey-Flanigan courthouse. Denver’s sale of the property was subject to the center’s need to maintain service without interruption and to secure and modify a new location prior. The DWWCCCC Board members have committed to this as well. The dedication from all departments speaks loudly to the value of this agency and the service provided to over 2000 children per year.

The project Architect, Meg Sheff-Atteberry, provided the following schematic (not an actual representation) of the proposed new site at The Lindsey-Flanigan courthouse:

![Schematic of the proposed new site at The Lindsey-Flanigan courthouse](image)

**HISTORY:**

The Denver Warm Welcome Court Child Care Center began as a concept in 1994 through a task force established by the Denver Bar Association and the Mayor’s Office for Education and Children. Through the dedicated efforts of numerous people from the courts, City Council, the Mayor’s Office, foundations and child care providers, the Center began operations in April of 1999 when Mayor Wellington Webb cut the ribbon to open the doors for the first time.

The Center was developed to provide free drop-in child care services to families who have business with Denver’s County and District courts and court-related services. It provides a safe and secure environment for children with qualified staff to facilitate activities; it allows children to play and enjoy themselves rather than be subjected to the business of court. The center is the first of its kind in Colorado, and its creation spurred activity around the state to investigate and provide children’s space serving the courts. Since the center first welcomed families in 1999, more than 38,000 children have benefited from having these services available to their families.

**PROGRAM**

The Denver Warm Welcome Court Child Care Center has the capacity to care for up to 25 children at any one time. It is divided into two rooms: an Infants and Toddlers room and a Pre-school & School-Aged room for children three to twelve years old. Both rooms are open and filled with natural light. The space is clean, well-organized and designed with children’s needs in mind. At any given time the Center can accommodate 5 children from 6 weeks to 3 years of age and 20 children 3 to 12 years of age. A wide variety of activities and materials are offered to the children in both classrooms. Programming is based on recent research into brain development in children and accepted developmentally appropriate practices, in which children select activities based on age and interests with guidance from the teaching staff. The facility itself is set up with safety and security as a priority; no one can enter the building unless admitted by a staff member. The classroom environment is designed to be inviting to the children, with a wide variety of educational toys and materials, soft nooks, and many books to read. The interior of the building is painted in soothing colors that enhance the calming effect of the classroom environment. Each family is greeted warmly at the door by one of the staff members, who then determines their needs and assists the parent or guardian with checking in their child or children.
The application information is available in either English or Spanish, and bilingual staff members assist Spanish-speaking patrons and their children. Parents also have access to application forms in both languages on the jury website. The director is fluent in English, Spanish and American Sign Language and hopes more deaf clients utilize our services.

Each member of our staff is a trained professional in early childhood education, and a high priority for the program is to ensure that all teachers have an individual professional development plan in place. One teaching assistant completed her GED, the Director, assistant director and other teaching assistant are continuing their education through training seminars and workshops to keep state credentials current. The director joined the city’s Emergency Preparedness planning committee to assist with management procedures for child care in the event of a city-wide disaster. Additionally, the director attended Psychological First Aid training for personnel. All staff attended a new Sleep Safe training course (through Mile High Montessori and Denver Health) for infants and toddlers. The class consists of increasing awareness of SIDS and implementing preventive measures in the infant environment. Additionally, all staff attended required First Aid, CPR, AED and Universal Precautions certification classes.

Keeping professional development opportunities available for staff ensures the high quality of care for our clients and their children. The Denver Warm Welcome Court Child Care program makes exceptional efforts to provide the highest standards for teachers who reach the children who enter the center. Parent surveys have shown a high (99%) satisfaction rate, and over 50% of our families return more than once. New families often report that they were referred by a family member or friend; we consider this the highest form of praise for our services.

Approximately 700 of the families served were attending a court hearing or trial. Over 309 parents reported working with probation services, 48 jurors utilized the center and 80 parents reported other court-related services. Families may also use more than one category of services on the same visit to the center.
Attendance at the center in 2016 (2023 count) was down by approximately 12% from 2015 (2296 count). Outreach and marketing for this community service continues, as the director networks within the non-profit community’s outreach and the probation community. The Director continuously seeks other opportunities to
present and educate the metro area about DWWCCC. Outreach efforts also include The Gathering Place, Denver Inner City Parish, Metro Caring food bank and MHCD (Mental Health Center of Denver) food banks and case workers. Additional outreach included interpreting and translating providers with local immigration and refugee centers.

**MONTHLY ATTENDANCE**

The following chart illustrates monthly attendance for 2016 compared to the previous six years. Annually, higher attendance numbers occur from May through August, and enrollment numbers drop off during the remainder of the year. –the school months. As verified by Terri Langham’s office, the number of county courts cases heard by the courts dropped last year by 7%; attendance figures at the child care reflect that trend.

![MONTHLY ATTENDANCE](image)

The center still experienced the most traffic during the morning hours.
The DWWCCCC welcomes children of all races, ethnicities, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. Of the four staff members present, two speak Spanish and one is fluent in American Sign Language. Additional and specific marketing efforts were made to agencies serving the Deaf population in metro Denver and Arapahoe county (Aurora) interpreting agencies for ASL and international languages. Our center has seen a slight increase of families who speak languages other than Spanish. Regardless of the language, this environment welcomes all children to relax and enjoy the many activities and materials available to them. During 2015 DWWCCCC served:

- 614 Hispanic families (33%)
- 512 African American families (23%)
- 289 Caucasian families (14%)
- 565 families reporting biracial or other ethnic backgrounds (27.5%)
- 43 Native American & Asian families (2.5%)

**Gender**

In 2016, the center served a slightly larger number of girls than boys. Specifically, DWWCCCC cared for 1005 boys & 1018 girls.
In 2016, we provided quality child care for **1149 preschool and school-aged children** (1326 in 2015). Additionally, we cared for **874 infants and toddlers** (970 in 2015). This was 13% fewer preschool and school-aged children than in 2015 and 10% fewer infants and toddlers.

**REFERRALS**

In 2016, we served 653 new families and 768 returning families. The referrals for new families are detailed in the chart enclosed. Court clerks and probation officers accounted for 59% of referrals, while information on the jury summons and outdoor signage and posters in courthouses brought in nearly 9% of our new families. The “other” category reflects the effort to diversify sources of clients, and includes family members, friends, electronic monitoring, Safe House Denver, police officers, pre-trial services, the Victims’ Advocate office, the District Attorney’s office, judges, and the Colorado Organization for Victims’ Assistance.
**FUNDING**

The Denver Warm Welcome Court Child Care Center received a two-year grant from the Family Friendly Program. This is the first year of a two-year application period. The next grant period will open March 2019. Childcare in or near the courthouse is the priority under C.R.S. 13-3-113 per SCAO legal review and FY11 Decision Item. The City and County of Denver leases space to the center; City employees provide property management support. By municipal ordinance, a portion of the municipal Victim Assistance Law Enforcement or VALE surcharge is dedicated to the Center for operational expenses. Grants from the state’s Family Friendly Courts grant program have enabled the center to replace much-needed equipment and books, provide indoor gross motor equipment for the infant & toddler room as well as continue to support teachers’ ongoing professional development.

Additional workshops and trainings have provided staff with professional development opportunities regularly through the city of Denver. Specifically, the Denver Council for Early Childhood Education opens free workshops for training for Administrators and child care providers weekly. The Mile High Early Learning Centers special education coordinator provided an in-house training with materials for staff. Additionally, Maureen O’Connor-McGinn provided additional teacher development and suggestions for marketing such as a video or photographs posted on the website for potential users to view. Paula Vargas, from Producing Visions, provided a proposal for video work. Ms. Vargas has worked with the City & County on a variety of video productions and was highly revered for her professionalism and quality work.

**SPECIAL DONORS & DONATIONS**

- Private donors gave books, clothing and toys to the Center. These were provided to clients and also used to supplement the classroom environment. Private donors usually drop in with their gifts.
- Once again, we received hundreds of hats and mittens for our clothing bank from Montview Presbyterian Church’s Annual Christmas Mitten Tree. These gifts are well received by parents and children alike. To witness the delight or squeal when a child picks out a favorite color of hat or mittens is such a treat. Something so simple provides so much joy.
- A Girl Scout of Colorado troop from Carson Elementary collected stuffed animals for the children.
- The Child Rescue Foundation, directed by local philanthropist Joanne Kappel, donates hundreds of stuffed animals annually to the children.
- Several anonymous donors called to inquire about donating gently used books and delivered them free of charge. Each child who leaves the center is allowed to choose a stuffed animal or book upon departure.
- Our heartfelt thanks go out to the generous members of the community and board members who have supported our program in these ways. We could not provide the kind of comprehensive, caring service that we do without their support and assistance.

As Colorado weather frequently changes, parents appreciate the gifts a hat or mittens for their child on unpredictable days. Staff also offers clothing, shoes or boots from the DWWCCCC clothing bank. DWWCCCC can now offer a written referral to a new agency partner, Clothes to Kids of Denver, who “provide new and quality used clothing to school-age students from low-income or in-crisis families in the Denver Metro Area, free of charge.”
STAFF

The teachers working at the Denver Warm Welcome Court Child Care Center are trained Early Childhood professionals. They are employed by Mile High Montessori Early Learning Centers, a non-profit organization which has been in the business of child care in the Denver area for over 40 years and partners with the city to operate the Denver Warm Welcome Court Child Care Center.

**Jenelle Martin** joined DWWCC in October 2015 as Director. Jenelle has a BA in Communication Arts from Regis University and studies Spanish and American Sign Language extensively. Experience with two Montessori programs since 1995, Jenelle is happy to work with Mile High Montessori and particularly, her co-workers at DWWCCCC.

**Dana Logan-Walker** has been a part of the program since April 1999, and was involved with the set-up and start-up of the Center. She served as the Program Director of the Center from 2008 until the middle of 2010, and has continued her able service to the Center as Assistant Program Director and Lead Teacher since that time. Dana has an A.A. in Early Childhood Education and over 20 years experience working with children and helping to operate programs. Dana celebrated her sixteenth year with Mile High Montessori in 2015, having started when DWWCC first opened.

**Mary Ann Arguello** joined the Center in the summer of 2008 as the primary teacher in the Infant/Toddler Nursery. Her bilingual skills have been a gift while working with parents of the youngest children. She has fifteen years of experience and taught in the Golden Triangle neighborhood with children who are now adults and visit her at the center. Mary Ann has worked for Mile High Montessori for ten years.

**LaTonya Sanders** has worked at Court Child Care for eleven years, assisting in both classrooms. Her energy and enthusiasm make her a favorite with the children. She has worked for Mile High Montessori for sixteen years and celebrated her Child Development Associates certificate in 2015. At DWWCCCC, she has experienced teaching the children of her previous students who often approach her with fond memories.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Denver Warm Welcome Court Child Care Board of Directors consists of committed volunteers whose vision, 17 years ago, has provided quality child care for families tending to important court business. The DWWCC Board members are:

Randy Livingston – President
    Bailey & Peterson, P.C.
Honorable Doris Burd
    Denver County Court
Eve Burton – Secretary / Treasurer
    USPS
Joe Dischinger
    Fairfield & Woods, P.C.
Mark Hoskin
    Mark Hoskin Architects
Howard Rosenberg
    Retired Professor of Law
Faye Tate
    Director of Diversity, CH2M HILL
Alicia Boyd
    Director, Denver Office of Children’s Affairs
Claire Mootz
    Retired Denver County Court magistrate

Much appreciation for the hard work of both Terrie Langham, the Denver County Court Administrator, and Kelly Boe, the District Court Administrator, for their continued support of the Denver Warm Welcome Court Child Care Center. This program would not be possible without the foresight of the board, judges and staff of the County and District Courts and related departments, the Denver City Council, Mile High Montessori Early Learning Centers, and the Denver community.