



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Santa Ana College opens new child development center  
in downtown Santa Ana on February 17  
*\$632,000 state grant opens door to educating 144 youngsters***

(Santa Ana)—As California community colleges grapple with painful budget cuts, one local community college district is celebrating an increase in one line of service to the community. On Tuesday, February 17 at 7:30 a.m., the Santa Ana College Child Development Center East Campus will open for business. The center, located at St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church at 1510 N. Parton St. in downtown Santa Ana, will serve 144 three- and four-year-olds thanks to a \$632,000 annual grant from the California Department of Education Child Development Division.

“Funds became available from the state when other agencies released their contracts,” said Dee Tucker, executive director, Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) Child Development Services. “We applied and due to the fact that we serve low-income, high-needs children and have long waiting lists of parents who attend our colleges and need child care, we were awarded the funding.”

The child development center will accept children of Santa Ana College students, as well as those of neighborhood families. For families that qualify to enroll their children in state preschools, there is no fee. The state preschool income eligibility is set at 75 per cent of the state median income--\$50,256 for a family of four. The new site has already enrolled 54 youngsters and has room for 90 more.

The program emphasizes parent education and encourages parent involvement. In addition to preschool education activities that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for the children served, the center will provide lunches or snacks to the children, and referrals to health and social services through the college district’s family services program. The center will be open Monday through Friday with a morning session from 8:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. and an afternoon session from 12:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

“At the RSCCD Child Development Centers, children come first,” said Tucker. “The goal of our program is to work with each and every child’s natural development and to support the emerging self within. Play with purpose is the primary vehicle for instruction. It leads to self-awareness,

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interactions, problem solving, acquired mastery, and ultimately learning.”

Sandra Santamaria, a Garden Grove resident, knows the quality of the program firsthand. Her daughter Denise enrolled at the Santa Ana College Child Development Center as a seven-month-old infant and continued attending until she turned five allowing her mother to attend college. The mother liked the center so much that she worked there first as a student assistant and after completing her teacher’s credential as a teacher.

“As a student, it helped me so much that I could bring her here and go study,” said Santamaria. “Today my daughter is really social and friendly. She benefited from being at the center where she got a jumpstart on kindergarten. She learned her letters, colors and numbers and I got peace of mind; it was convenient.”

Once the center is firmly established in Santa Ana’s Willard Neighborhood, college administrators hope to work with the church to offer supplementary services to the community, including parenting and ESL classes. St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church, part of the Santa Ana community for more than 100 years, is committed to the neighborhood that surrounds it. According to Pastor Jon Pedersen, as the neighborhood demographics have shifted so, too, has the church’s ministry evolved. Today, much of its ministry involves community outreach and enrichment.

“This congregation has a strong relationship with the Santa Ana schools,” said Pedersen. “We’re excited about having Santa Ana College with us. It is a benefit to the immediate community, the families, and the schools. The quality of what will happen here is a win/win for the church and the community.”

Rancho Santiago Community College District operates five child development centers to serve both Santa Ana and Santiago Canyon colleges’ students’ child care needs and to train students seeking a career in human development. With the addition of this new center, the college district will serve approximately 790 youngsters a year through Child Development Services. There are about 500 families on the waiting list for a spot for their child in one of the district’s child development centers.

For more information about the Santa Ana College Child Development Center East Campus or the district’s other four centers, call (714) 480-7546 or visit [www.rscgd.edu](http://www.rscgd.edu).

**About the Rancho Santiago Community College District**

*The mission of the Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCGD) is to respond to the educational needs of an ever-changing community and to provide programs and services that reflect academic excellence. Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College are public community colleges of RSCGD, which serve the residents of Anaheim Hills, East Garden Grove, Irvine, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin and Villa Park. Both colleges provide education for academic transfer and careers, courses for personal and professional development, customized training for business and industry, and programs to train nurses, firefighters and law enforcement personnel.*

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