



# NEWS RELEASE

**Contact:** Judy Iannaccone  
Director, Communications  
**Phone:** (714) 480-7503  
**e-mail:** iannaccone\_judy@rsccd.edu

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Rancho Santiago Community College District Celebrates Grand Opening of Santa Ana College Early Childhood Education Center on October 26**

(Santa Ana)—Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) will celebrate the grand opening of the new Santa Ana College Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) on Tuesday, October 26 from noon to 1:00 p.m. The new center is situated on the southeast side of the Santa Ana College (SAC) campus near Washington Avenue and Bristol Street in Santa Ana. Light refreshments will be served and tours provided.

“For the first time in the 37-year history of providing quality early childhood education services for our students’ children, we will offer those services in a facility constructed with the needs of young children in mind,” said Erlinda J. Martinez, Ed.D., SAC president. “The college community is enthusiastic about pairing those services in the same facility with instruction in human development to prepare the next generation of infant, toddler and preschool teachers.”

The festivities will feature presentations by SAC President Erlinda J. Martinez, Ed.D.; RSCCD Trustees’ President Lawrence “Larry” Labrado; RSCCD Chancellor Raúl Rodríguez, Ph.D.; Veronica MacKenney, director, SAC ECEC; Gwen Morgan-Beazell, chair, SAC Human Development Department; and Verna Niño, a SAC student who benefits from the new center’s services.

Niño, a 28-year-old Santa Ana resident who holds an associate degree from SAC, transferred to California State University, Long Beach, where she obtained a bachelor’s degree in community health. She first discovered the SAC Child Development Services when she was a 19-year-old single mother with no means to attend college and care for her then six-month-old son Joseph.

“I was so glad to hear that I could enroll my son in the Child Development Center,” said Niño. “It helped me go to college and it helped him because he loved learning. He’s now in second grade and reads at a fifth grade level. The center really helped him achieve that.”

Now, she has returned to SAC to study fashion design and her two-year-old son Alexander has followed in his brother’s footsteps. She proudly says, “He already knows his ABC’s!” The mother of two has set her sights on starting a home-based fashion design business.

The new 18,200-square-foot Early Childhood Education Center will accommodate 178 infants, toddlers, and preschool children, as well as some 100 students enrolled in the college’s

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Human Development program. The \$8.78 million project was funded by Measure E, the general obligation bond approved by voters in November 2002. Measure E provided \$337 million for renovation and new construction at both Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College.

The center, designed by Harley Ellis Devereaux, includes a cluster of four cottage-inspired buildings with a total of 12 classrooms for different age groups. Each building has its own kitchen and bathrooms, private patios and age-specific play yards. The project also includes two college classrooms and faculty offices on the second floor of a central administration building.

RSCCD now operates five child development centers serving Santa Ana and Santiago Canyon colleges' students' child care needs. Each center supports and promotes the district's commitment to student success by providing access to vital, comprehensive, and quality early childhood education programs and services, which reflect and address the needs of a diverse community. The four long-standing centers hold national accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children and Five Star Quality Ratings through the Orange County Quality Improvement System.

The centers provide:

- Lab schools for college students studying human development.
- Care, education, and nurturing for more than 900 children from six months to five-years-old.
- Free and low-cost services for families that qualify.
- Counseling services, parenting education, and one-on-one referrals to health and social services through the district's family services program.
- Support to families living in Anaheim Hills, Garden Grove, Irvine, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin and Villa Park.
- Play with purpose as the primary vehicle for instruction.

The grand opening event is sponsored by Bernards, Harley Ellis Devereaux, Nursery Maid, and the Santa Ana College Foundation.

For more information about Rancho Santiago Community College District's Child Development Services, call (714) 480-7546.

**About the Rancho Santiago Community College District**

*The mission of the Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) 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 RSCCD, 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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