



a california community college
student challenge

**WINNING
SUBMISSION**

**2nd
Place**

Challenge #3: Transformed Support
Resources for Students



**Maryelese
Valencia**

My name is Maryelese Valencia. At the age of 45, I decided to enroll at Riverside City College (RCC). I was forced to change my career path from being a Welder after being diagnosed with cataracts in both eyes. My major is Sociology; I always had a passion for social work since I was 13. After graduating with my A.A. from RCC, I plan to transfer to the University of California Riverside and then continue to obtain my master's. I am in my fourth semester. I am enrolled part-time because I am a student-parent.

PROPOSAL

Finding childcare on campus is a major challenge for parenting students, dealing with unstable childcare prevents student-parents from registering as full-time students. We are not able to take late afternoon or evening classes. We have limited time to complete homework, labs, research at the library, and student activities, or seek one-on-one help from our peers and professors.

Riverside City College (RCC) has a Childhood Development Center for children five years old and under. What about children five years old and over? My proposal for Student Visions for Change is to transform support resources for student-parents of RCC by providing childcare on the RCC campus, similar to an after-school program. While a student-parent is in class or on campus for school-related activities there will be a program "Tomorrow's Tigers". This will support the student-parents whose children have aged out of the Childhood Development Center.

To elaborate on my vision for childcare and parenting students of RCC, the ideal perspective would be having a specific area available for our parenting students and their children 5 years old and older to occupy on campus. A sustainable area would be near the cafeteria or the library where the children can utilize the facilities on campus as well. The location would also include a donation center for children and family members that will include clothing, toiletries, and household items. Incorporating a shared area and workspace with computers and printers to complete assignments for both child and student-parent. I would also like to include a lactation area with a sink and refrigerator for our student parents who are breastfeeding. Implementing these resources to Tomorrow's Tigers program will expand the education of the child and student parent by having these resources readily available.

Academic departments (i.e. American Sign Language, Child Adolescent Development, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Teacher Education, Mathematics, Psychology, Social and Behavioral Studies, and Sociology) can get involved by completing their requisite hours towards their major that involve childcare, observation, and tutoring. Having nursing students on site would be ideal in case of an emergency. Collaborating with other departments will benefit everyone involved and create more jobs for students or the community. Having access to childcare for children five years old and over on campus will not only benefit the student-parent, the students in other educational departments but also the children that will be in the program by setting a positive example for our children by showing them the importance of education.

Funding for the program can go towards story and educational books for the age groups, group activities such as board games, arts and crafts, homework supplies, physical education equipment for outside activities, and access to the gym on campus. Another learning skill that can be implemented in the program is STEM which gives the child hands-on activities, being able to collaborate, think critically, engage in creativity, and communicate with other peers. There are many ways and options that funding can be used to benefit our student-parents, RCC, and the community, but the main focus here is to get the ball rolling. Our institution needs to support its student-parent population with more effective and comprehensive initiatives. The option for supplemental parenting support and education can alter a student-parent's career trajectory, altogether. Thus, breaking generational cycles of poverty, substance use/abuse, and the lack of diversity in white-collar professions. An institution that equitably invests in its student population by developing truly supportive initiatives invests in its community and our future generations. I genuinely believe that this institution can and will be RCC.