1. Executive Summary

1.1 Whelan Children's Center
1.2 Description of unit and its mission

Whelan Children’s Center is a high quality childcare program for the children of the faculty, staff, students and alumni of Loyola University New Orleans which operates according to the standards established by the Quality Start Model. The Center has a developmental program appropriate for all areas of development. The environment is richly organized with activities that enhance the growth and development of young children.

1.3 Assessment of the unit

The primary purpose of the Whelan Children's Center Program Review is to provide an assessment of the current program based on the criteria set forth by the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. The Program Review provides an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum, staff qualifications and professional development, interactions among teachers and children, relationships among teachers and families, administration, physical environment, health and safety, nutrition and food service and relationship with the University. The center conducts a comparative study of selected peer facilities in the New Orleans Metro Area. This study compares what the centers have to offer, including ratios, educational level of teachers, number of snacks/meals provided daily, whether the facility is subsidized by the company and hours of operation as well as tuition per month. The State of Louisiana Department of Social Services Bureau of Licensing also conducts an annual review of licensing requirements.

1.4 Goals of the unit

Incorporate various departments to share their talents with the children; Continue to have students of Loyola University New Orleans use the Center as a learning environment for credit bearing courses; Complete the Foundations Up Program, a one time statewide project designed to inform and support child care programs as they plan for program improvement and assessment by the Louisiana Quality Rating System; Continue to maintain quality within an affordable price range; Arrange an Annual Open House for parents and the Loyola University Community; Begin the process of the Quality Rating System (QRS); Initiate exterior improvements by replacing the sand as well as sandbox and replace some of the smaller structures on the blacktop area; Initiate interior improvements to enhance the classrooms as well as preparing the rooms for the QRS.

1.5 Review of the past and current budgets

With the budget, it can be difficult to determine an exact revenue amount. When one child leaves the center, the new child may have a different age and/or affiliation which affect the tuition rate charged. The budget for salaries needs to be reviewed each year. Operating budget was adequate.

1.6 Resource needs/wants/reallocation

The center has requested need for some exterior improvements.

1.7 Summary of achievements

The Quality Improvement Grant was awarded.
2. Whelan Children's Center

2.1 Whelan Children's Center is a high quality childcare program for the children of the faculty, staff, students and alumni of Loyola University New Orleans which operates according to the standards established by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The primary teaching goals are to help young children use the classroom environment productively, interact with other children and adults, and see themselves as capable learners - as individuals who are developing the skills and understandings that will enable them to make sense of the world and to succeed in it.

2.2 The Whelan Children's Center, located in the Mercy Building, provides a safe, stimulating, educational environment with a highly qualified, experienced, nurturing staff. The process considers all aspects of a program, including: Interactions among teachers and children, curriculum; relationships among teachers and families; staff qualifications, professional development, administration, staffing, physical environment, health and safety, nutrition and food service, and evaluation. Children are grouped by ages - infants, toddlers, one-year-olds, two-year-olds, three-year-olds, and preschoolers. The center has a developmental program appropriate for all areas of development. The environment is richly organized with activities that enhance the growth and development of young children.

Teachers are selected for their sense of commitment, an ability to nurture children, and knowledge of child development. Teachers of three - five year old children have a Bachelor’s degree in Education with certification in Early Childhood Education. Teachers of Ones and Two have an Associate’s degree in Early Childhood Education. Teachers of infant and toddlers have experience in working with young children. All teachers are certified in Infant and Child CPR and Pediatric First Aid. The teachers are also required to complete all continuing education hours required by State of Louisiana Department of Social Services Bureau of Licensing.

Teaching children is a creative process which facilitates children's development and learning by fostering independence. Children's creativity is supported through an environment that encourages them to try out ideas and risk making mistakes. Teachers' creativity is supported by a curriculum framework that encourages them to be innovative and responsive to children. The center provides many activities that involve art, music, and creative expression.

The curriculum is based on the belief that children are individual, intelligent beings with strengths and interests of their own. Children learn by doing - by interacting with objects, people, and events in the environment. Children participate in a rich variety of meaningful experiences including a mix of individual, small group and large group, and indoor and outdoor activities. Throughout each day there are many opportunities for each child to make choices based on his/her unique desires, experiences, approaches, and needs. We nurture independence by allowing children to make choices, to recognize results, and to learn to be responsible for their own needs. The program promotes the development of the whole child, taking into account the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social level of each child while responding to the needs of the family.
Faculty of Loyola has utilized the center in the past for observations, practicum, and research projects whether it is business, communications, music, philosophy, psychology, visual arts, etc. The Whelan Children's Center accommodates any student who wishes to utilize the center for educational needs.

2.2.1 Headcounts of full-time and part-time staff (as of 7/31/06 and 7/31/07) 
There are fifteen full-time employees staffing the Center.

2.2.2 Headcounts of faculty (if appropriate) (as of 7/31/06 and 7/31/07): tenured, tenure track, full-time extraordinary, and part-time extraordinary. *Not Applicable
2.2.3 Headcounts of fulltime and part-time undergraduate students
Approximately 18 work-study students were assigned to the Center. The Center hires six Student Assistants during the holiday break and seven student assistants during the summer months. Both the work-study students and student assistants aid in maintaining the high degree of quality care for the children that parents expect from the Center.
2.2.4 Headcounts of fulltime and part-time graduate students * Not Applicable

3. Assessment
3.1 General statement on how assessment is conducted within the unit
The primary purpose of the Whelan Children's Center Program Review is to provide an assessment of the current program based on the criteria set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The Program Review provides an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum, staff qualifications and professional development, interactions among teachers and children, relationships among teachers and families, administration, physical environment, health and safety, nutrition and food service and relationship with the University. The center collects information about the program from various sources including: Administrator Report, Center Profile, Classroom Observation, Open-Ended Family Survey and Family Questionnaire, and Open-Ended Teaching-Staff Survey and Teaching-Staff Questionnaire.
This self-study process will uncover both strengths and weaknesses of the program. Administrators and staff will identify aspects of the program where change is needed. Two different kinds of change may be needed: Physical or Technical Changes – developing new procedures or rearranging classrooms Social or Behavioral Changes – implementing a more developmentally appropriate curriculum or developing better communication with families or university, more cooperative staff relations or more positive and supportive relations with children.

The center conducts an annual study of selected peer facilities in the New Orleans Metro Area which compares what the centers have to offer, including ratios, educational level of teachers, number of snacks/meals provided daily, whether the facility is subsidized by the company and hours of operation as well as tuition per month.

The State of Louisiana Department of Social Services Bureau of Licensing conducts an annual review of licensing requirements.
Assessment is provided for each child beginning in the Infant Program and continuing through the Preschool Program. Assessments are done throughout the year. Evaluation forms are completed in September and then again in April. These evaluations are conducted to show how the child has grown in all areas of development during the year. The evaluations take into account the physical (gross and fine motor), emotional, cognitive and social level of the child. This is also a good assessment for the teachers to review their curriculum and determine if their activities are actually benefiting the whole child.

3.2 Year 07-08 goals/objectives

1. Complete Foundations Up – a one time statewide project designed to inform and support child care programs as they plan for program improvement and assessment by the Louisiana Quality Rating System.
2. Begin the process of the Quality Rating System (QRS).
3. Enhance quality support for teachers and children by having a Mental Health Consultant come to the center bimonthly. Mental health consultation to child care programs is an innovative approach to supporting the healthy development of young children and is an essential quality support component for child care centers working to maximize the quality of their services. The consultation is designed to be a resource for child care centers to support teachers in developing and sustaining classroom environments that promote optimal social emotional development. Furthermore, child care centers that have incorporated mental health consultants into their programs have found a decrease in staff turnover rates, a decrease in reports of staff stress and feelings of burnout, and an increase in job satisfaction.
4. Develop an Exit Assessment Form for parents of children leaving the Center.
5. Initiate exterior improvements by replacing the sand as well as sandbox and replace some of the smaller structures on the blacktop area.
6. Initiate interior improvements to enhance the classrooms as well as preparing the rooms for the QRS.
7. Continue to research grant and fundraising opportunities.

3.3 Description of assessment activities and their results for year 06-07 goals

Every year the center completes an annual report by NAEYC to inform the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs of any program improvements, major changes that have occurred in the program and to report the program’s compliance with criteria that require action on an annual basis.

The Center is a benefit to current students of Loyola University who use the Center to complete their Music Therapy practicum, observations and studies for the academic departments at the University including the Education, Sociology, Visual Arts and Psychology Departments. One way the center was able to assess this goal was to determine how many times the center was utilized for credit bearing courses. Since September 2006 through July 200736, the Center was visited 36 different times for research and class assignments. This number was determined by having the students sign in at the office before going into the classrooms. Another way the center assesses the success of this goal is by the letters sent to us by faculty members. The center will need to formulate a way to assess whether visiting the center aided in the students’ observation or research.

The advisory board created a mission statement which states: Whelan Children's Center is a high quality childcare program for the children of the faculty, staff, students and alumni of
Loyola University New Orleans which operates according to the standards established by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The primary teaching goals are to help young children use the classroom environment productively, interact with other children and adults, and see themselves as capable learners - as individuals who are developing the skills and understanding that will enable them to make sense of the world and to succeed in it. The Whelan Children's Center Advisory Board Mission is to: (a) maintain affordable campus childcare for faculty, staff and student parents, (b) review and revise Center policies and procedures as needed and (c) increase Center collaboration with various departments on campus. Loyola’s vision of service to the university community as well as the larger community was taken into account when developing the mission statement.

3.4 Assessment of internal (within the university) and external (outside Loyola) environments affecting the unit
Internal: One of the center’s goals is to give an opportunity for students of Loyola University New Orleans to use the Center as a learning environment by the use of teaching, research, creative activities and service for credit bearing courses which according to Loyola’s mission will enhance the whole student’s education. Students of Loyola University New Orleans used the Center to complete their Music Therapy practicum, observations and studies for the academic departments at the University including the Music, Sociology, Visual Arts and Psychology Departments. One way the center was able to assess this goal was to determine how many times the center was utilized for credit bearing courses. Another way the center assesses the success of this goal is by the letters sent to us by faculty members. The center will continue to find a way to formulate an assessment as to whether visiting the center aided in the students’ observation or research.
External: The center conducts an annual study of selected peer facilities in the New Orleans Metro Area which compares what the centers have to offer, including ratios, educational level of teachers, and number of snacks/meals provided daily, whether the facility is subsidized by the company and hours of operation as well as tuition per month. This affects the center in terms of determining tuition rates.

4. Planning
4.1 General statement describing strategic planning in the unit
The center does strategic planning for the year every August with staff at our annual meeting. The staff assesses their classrooms and plans for the upcoming year taking into account the strengths and weakness in curriculum. Implementing Improvement Plan may require:
Arrange staff and advisory meetings
Discuss and/or create policies.
Organize documentation.
Network with other accredited programs.

4.2 Top 3-4 strategic goals/objectives for 07-08 year
1. To maintain tuition rates comparable to area child care centers in the area. The advisory board established a mission which in part wants the center to be able to maintain affordable
campus child care. The annual comparative cost survey will aid the center in determining tuition rates.
2. To research additional grant funding for subsidization of child care tuition for low-income students. The Center will search for ways to aid students in having quality childcare at an affordable rate.
3. Begin the process of the Quality Rating System (QRS).

4.3 Description of resources supporting the 07-08 goals
Operating budget will be used to support the 07-08 goals. The center will be able to utilize the Child and Adult Federal Food Program to cover additional food costs. The center will also utilize fundraiser funds to cover cost of educational materials.

4.4 Evaluation criteria and evaluation plan for these goals
The Center will evaluate these goals at the end of the fiscal year. The annual report for NAEYC will be utilized to evaluate the goals set forth by the director and/or advisory board. The director will utilize the list serve from the National Coalition for Campus Children’s Center to develop future plans for evaluations.

5. Budget
5.1 FY04-05 “original budgeted to revised budgeted to actual” totals for both salary and operating budgets

Original Budget:

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5.1.1 Budget discussion
For 2006-07 fiscal year the center was able to transfer money into the different sub-codes of the budget where needed. The center was able to reallocate money into the different sub-codes to cover the additional aid.

Operating budget was adequate because the center was able to utilize the CCAMPIS grant as well as the Child and Adult Federal Food Program to cover additional food or supplies.

5.2 FY07-08 “budgeted” totals for both salary and operating budgets

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<tr>
<td>Total Salary/Operating Budget:</td>
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Revenue: $ 454,000

5.2.1 Budget discussion

When looking at our salaries for our Preschool and Three Year Old Program, one needs to look at public and private school teacher's salaries for comparison because many elementary schools now have preschools and those teachers are paid closer to an elementary teacher's salary than to a child care teacher's salary. The position requires a degree in Elementary education with certification in Early Childhood. With this type of degree, the applicants could go to another school (private and/or public) and make more money while working less hours.

Low staff turnover is an indicator of quality in early childhood centers. Because of our low turnover rate the center has more teachers with vacation/sick time. Some of the funds used for Temporary Child Caregiver were transferred to salary for the University and Administrative staff because they were not at their grade level. Because of the transfer there is a decrease in the budget for Temporary Child Caregivers. The center needs to keep our staff/child ratios for licensing. The center will need to take precautions to make sure we do not deplete this fund too early in the fiscal year. The director would like to work with the Provost Office every year to review staff salaries.

In response to revenue, the Center has calculated that the revenue will be below the $454,000 estimate for this fiscal year. The reason is that we have more faculty, staff and students utilizing the center then alumni and community who pay more in tuition.
There are six tuition categories. The tuition depends on the child's age and parent’s affiliation (faculty/staff, student, alumni or community) to determine the tuition rate. A change in affiliation and age of child can also affect the tuition. If a community member leaves and the spot is given to a faculty member the tuition amount is decreased for that spot. That is why it is very difficult to determine an exact revenue amount each year. In years past the center would always calculate the revenue by using an enrollment number of 60.5 children. Three years ago the administration changed that number to 62 children. There is no cushion with the revenue in case the center is not at full enrollment.

Operating budget should be adequate this year because the center is able to utilize the Child and Adult Federal Food Program to cover part of the cost of food. The center does not anticipate having to replace any major equipment.

6.1 Personnel
6.1.1 General statement on adequacy of staffing to meet present and future strategic goals
Present staffing is adequate.
6.1.2 Priority listing of additional/revised faculty/staff positions
6.2 Facility improvements
The interior improvement would be to replace the children’s shelving in all the classrooms, add new stepping stools, increase manipulatives according to the recommendations of QRS. Exterior improvements would be replacing the sandbox, which is the original sandbox from when the center open 18 years ago, adding a mesh fence along the cement drop off by the Physical Plant building, and replacing some of the smaller structures on the blacktop area.
6.2.1 General statement on facilities including classrooms, office space, meeting spaces, etc. to meet present and future strategic goals.
The center may use classrooms in the Mercy Building as a meeting place.

6.2.2 Priority listing of facility improvements
1.  Sandbox  $1200
2.  Mesh Fence  $800
3.  Exterior Structure  $700
4.  Cabinets  $1500

6.3 Technology/professional development support
6.3.1 General statement on technology/professional development needed to meet present and future strategic goals
In order for teachers to meet the goals of the center as well as keep up with the latest trends in early childhood education it is important the teachers be given the opportunity to attend national conferences. The local conference does not give adequate sessions on professional development. When students from the university come to the center they should be observing and working with a staff that is current on the new trends of educations. Books and educational magazines are not enough.
6.3.2 Priority listing of technology needs, including media, professional development
1.  Three staff members a year to attend NAEYC annual conference.
2. Computer for teachers to utilize in the Teacher Work Room.

7. Summary of Achievements

7.1 Unit as a whole

Students of Loyola University New Orleans were able to use the Center as a learning environment by the use of teaching, research, creative activities and service for credit bearing courses which according to Loyola’s mission will enhance the whole student’s education. The center was eligible to receive a Quality Incentive check every three months for being accredited by NAEYC and for having children at our center who participate in the Child Care Assistance Program. Completed interior floor improvement by replacing the carpet.

7.2 Faculty achievements/service

Not Applicable.

7.3 Staff achievements/service

As Director, achievements made were: Participated in CACFP which reimbursed the Center $7,799 for food expenses, increased interaction with the departments from the university, and obtained a $6000 grant from the Department of Social Services (Quality Improvement Grant), revised the Staff Handbook and Work Study Handbook for distribution in August 2006, completed Foundations Up with Preschool Teacher – a one time statewide project designed to inform and support child care programs as they plan for program improvement and assessment by the Louisiana Quality Rating System, Enhanced quality support for teachers and children by having a Mental Health Consultant come to the center bimonthly. Preschool teacher attended NEAYC Annual National Conference in Atlanta, GA. The staff partnered with the Music Therapy program in providing field study placements for students as well as offering a music therapy program for children of the Center.