Helping Students with Children Graduate:
Taking Your College Services to the Next Level

CENTER FOR THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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Introduction

This resource guide is based on an extensive literature review as well as the practical experience of countless staff and faculty nationwide who have worked closely with student parents as they achieved their college degrees. It was created through the Michigan Partners Project, a Ford Foundation grant designed to increase the capacity of organizations working to improve economic security for low-income women in Michigan.

This guide reflects many of the findings from a recent study of colleges conducted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR). While not representative of all student parent programs in the United States, *Prepping Colleges for Student Parents: Strategies for Supporting Student Parent Success in Postsecondary Education* is the largest and most comprehensive study of such programs to date.[1] IWPR analyzed more than eighty survey responses from program directors, staff, community leaders, advocacy groups, foundations and students who were identified through the Student Parent Support Network, the Higher Education Alliance for Students with Children, and organizations that have participated in an annual conference hosted by the ACCESS Collaborative at Ohio State University.

The guide was developed by Beth Sullivan, Ebony Reddock, Jenny Nulty, and Melissa Stek who served as staff and student policy interns at the Center for the Education of Women (CEW), University of Michigan. Readers are encouraged to distribute this resource broadly, with proper attribution to CEW.

While more detailed resources such as the full IWPR report are referenced at the end of this document, I hope you will find this guide useful as a condensed handbook for taking student parent support structures to the next level at your institution.

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Why Improving Support Structures for Student Parents Should Matter to Your College or University

1. **Student parents are a large and growing percentage of your enrollment.**[2] In the United States, 4.8 million postsecondary education students are parents. Parents represent nearly 1/3 of community college students and more than 1/6 of four-year college students.
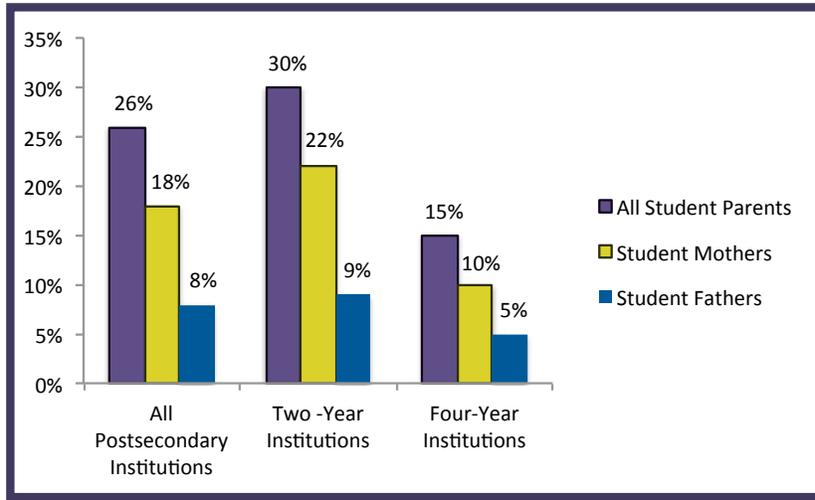
Notes: Figures for student mothers and student fathers may not sum to the total of all student parents due to rounding.
Source: Institute for Women's Policy Research analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) enrollment figures and the 2012 National Postsecondary Aid Survey.

2. **Students of color are more likely to be student parents than are White and Asian students. Therefore, when you help student parents succeed you also improve retention among students of color. By increasing student diversity on campus, you improve the educational experience for all students.**

Percent of All College Students Who Are Parents, by Race/Ethnicity	
Race/Ethnicity of Students	**Percent Who are Student Parents, 2008**[3]
Black or African American	37%
American Indian or Alaska Native	33%
Hispanic or Latino	25%
Other/More than One Race	22%
White	20%
Asian/Pacific Islander	18%

3. **The education you provide student parents is important to the economic advancement of Michigan families and the State.** *Research illustrates that completion of postsecondary education is one of the biggest predictors of whether a given family will exit poverty and become self-sufficient.[4] According to the Pew Economic Mobility Project, parental education\is a strong predictor of American children's future economic, educational, and emotional outcomes.[5]*

4. **Student parents can be some of your best students!** *Despite the many responsibilities managed by students caring for children, these students have been found to have greater enthusiasm for learning and higher GPA's than students who are not parents.[6] Unfortunately, there's not much research on the impact student parent support programs have on graduation rates. However, the* Life Impact Program *started at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2005 was able to demonstrate an 84% graduation and retention rate for the 133 student parents it had served as of 2014. Within nine months of graduation, 100% of its graduated participants were either employed or seeking advanced degrees.*

Unique Challenges that Student Parents Face

A number of factors conspire to make it especially challenging for student parents to graduate from college. Beyond the obvious demands of raising a child, student parents are more likely than non-parenting students to:

- *Be poor.* In 2012, nearly seven in ten student parents (69%) had incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty line.[7] For a two-person household, that is less than $30,260 in annual income.[8] Poverty decreases these students' ability to secure adequate housing, child care, health insurance and other basic necessities for their families.

- *Work full time.[9]*

- *Be less prepared and supported in attending college.* Low-income student parents tend to have lower standardized test scores, are less likely to have parents who hold college degrees, and may be the first in their social network to attend college.[10]

> **Being able to academically and socially integrate into the collegiate atmosphere increases the chance of completing a degree.[12]**

- *Have less free time to develop supportive personal connections.* Individualized encouragement from college personnel and student parent peers are critical components of any student parent support program.[11]

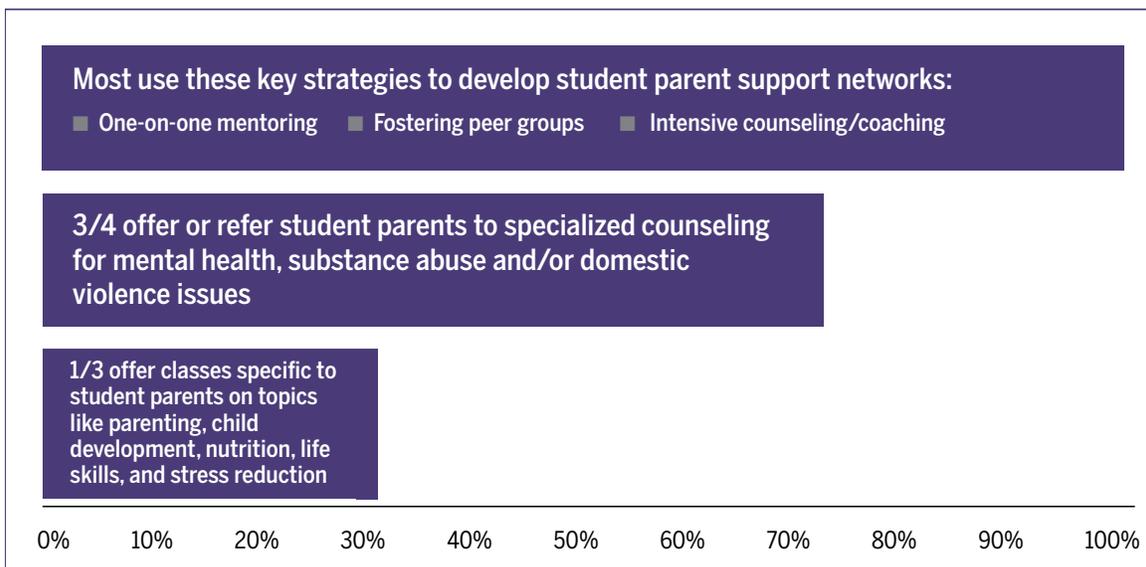## Key Components of a Successful Student Parent Support Program

Academic & Social Supports to Transition Into College, Persist & Graduate

Knowing which of your students are parents is the first challenge. Student parents' efforts to "fit in" and the lack of data about students' status as parents make it hard to identify the population you are trying to serve. The first step, then, is to conduct outreach and build connections to student parents as early as possible. This can be done through a campus-wide welcoming email that highlights the programs, web information, office staff or other resources your college offers to student parents. Your message should be sure to ask student parents to reply so that you have their contact information for future notices targeted to students parents only.

The unique challenges of student parents mean they often require social support services. In the largest and most comprehensive study to date of student parent support programs, the Institute for Women's Policy Research received survey responses from 34 four-year and 25 two-year higher education institutions, as well as 26 others representing mostly community-based, governmental or nonprofit organizations serving student parents.[13] These best practice institutions use a variety of programs and strategies in order to provide the social support needed by student parents.

Among Student Parent Support Programs Surveyed by the Institute for Women's Policy Research. . .

Most use these key strategies to develop student parent support networks:
- One-on-one mentoring
- Fostering peer groups
- Intensive counseling/coaching

3/4 offer or refer student parents to specialized counseling for mental health, substance abuse and/or domestic violence issues

1/3 offer classes specific to student parents on topics like parenting, child development, nutrition, life skills, and stress reduction

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

In addition, **academic support services such as specialized academic advising and skill-building can help student parents develop good study habits and successfully participate in the classroom.** Flexible scheduling of classes, such as letting student parents register early or giving them preference for enrollment in hybrid/online courses, are other ways to support the academic needs of student parents.[14,15]

As will be discussed later, **a variety of the services and benefits that student parents need will not be provided by your college or university. However, your staff play a critical role in making students aware of these services and helping to ensure they receive them.**

CASE EXAMPLE:

"The Undergraduate and Graduate Parent Support (UPS and GPS) programs at the University of Alabama provide an innovative and accessible academic, social, and emotional support system for student parents. GPS and UPS help to create new programs and assistance for participants, as well as implement multiple family-friendly campus events to help student parents access campus and community resources, develop social networks of support, and have a presence on campus (Perdue and Tallin, 2012). For example, these programs have a Family Resource Fair every year in partnership with at least 15 partner organizations, including the public library, a local family resource center, and the campus outdoor recreation department. UPS and GPS maintain a website with links to a range of services and partner agencies and hold an interactive summer camp exposition each spring. In addition to resource links, the website hosts forums that provide a centralized platform for students to communicate about various topics related to balancing academics and family. Partnerships with a local child care center and two housing complexes secured discounts for student parents using those services."[16] *Prepping Colleges for Parents, Schumacher 2015*

Using Incentives to Encourage Use of Services

Demeules and Hamer, in their article, *Retaining young student parents: A growing challenge* found that some parents don't seek help to stay in school until it's too late.[17] To address this problem proactively, some student parent programs require regular contact with a staff person and focus on key goal areas and/or participation in activities. In return, students receive a modest stipend. At the Young Student Parent Program at the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in Minnesota, involvement in program and student activities, one-on-one sessions with the coordinator, public health nurse home visits and tutoring sessions earn students points for rewards such as gas cards, grocery cards, and bookstore gift certificates.[18] Use of incentives such as these have been associated with higher retention and course completion rates.

Reaching Potential Student Parent Enrollees

If your college or university already offers academic and social support services to student parents, your next step may be to conduct outreach to *potential* student parent enrollees. Nearly three-quarters of IWPR's survey respondents do this, including mentoring teen parents at local high schools, partnering with community organizations serving low-income families, and offering free workshops to demystify higher education for interested parents. Some programs also use FAFSA data to identify and reach out to student parents.[19]

Model Outreach Program Examples Include:

■ The Student Parent Help Center at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities uses currently enrolled student parents to encourage interest in college and provide real world success models for single teen parents in the larger community.

■ The Transfer, Re-Entry, and Student Parent Center at the University of California–Berkeley runs a mentoring program that matches current university students with community college student parents to encourage them in their education and connect them to resources they need to transition to a four-year institution.

■ The Self Sufficiency Program offered through the Women's Studies Department at the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse encourages low-income parents to enroll in postsecondary education by offering a free, semester-length college preparation course.[20]

Child Care Services & Subsidies

Finding Care:

Finding care that's high quality, affordable and close to campus is a constant challenge.

As of 2013, 51% of public four-year and 46% of public two-year colleges provided campus-based child care services, yet this represented only five percent of the care needed by student parents![21,22] As all parents know, the number of child care providers nationwide is insufficient to meet demand, especially for infant care. A survey of more than eighty members of the National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers found nearly all had waiting lists almost as long as their enrollment lists.[23] The same survey found that children of students accounted on average for 41% of campus centers' enrollment, while 39% was made of faculty or staff children and 20% were community members' children.

TIP: Determine what percentage of your campus centers' enrollments are filled by children of students. If this percentage is significantly lower than for other groups' children, create a policy giving preference to the children of students for some number or percentage of enrollments. Also, be sure you provide child care subsidies to students.

RESOURCE: If you are thinking of starting or expanding child care services on your campus, review the IWPR Toolkit for Childcare.[24]

Referral to off-campus providers

Help students find child care or preschool programs in Michigan by contacting any Great Start to Quality Resource Center across the state. They offer free help to locate child care providers, use the state's quality rating system, and identify potential financial support for child care. Follow the link above or call 1-877-614-7328. See the section below on Head Start programs for more details.

Other special initiatives

Some campuses have developed special programs to supplement traditional child care offerings. Some host a monthly "kids night out" where volunteers provide free babysitting for student parents who sign up in advance for the event. Other institutions have enlisted student volunteers who are matched with student parents for three hours of free child care each week.[25] Some colleges arrange for special child care events in advance of final exams. At Michigan State University, a

special Children's Nook in the library was created with children's books, toys, table, and a children's computer so parents don't need to arrange child care every time they go to the library.

One resource that may only be cost-effective if offered to faculty and staff as well as students is backup child care services. For an example, explore the Kids Kare program available at the University of Michigan. This care is helpful when a child is mildly ill and therefore cannot attend their usual child care arrangement, or the parent's regular child care provider is unavailable.

Paying for Care:

University child care subsidies & discounts

One of the most direct ways your campus can assist student parents with child care is by providing a subsidy through the Financial Aid office. At the University of Michigan, the child care subsidy is a need-based program available for students attending school at least half time and can only be used for licensed child care. In addition, U-M offers child care tuition grants to qualifying students who place their children in an on-campus center. For more details, visit: https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/family/work-life-resource-center/find-child-care/financial-assistance-child-care

Another helpful subsidy to consider offering student parents is to pay for on-site or at-home child care so that student parents can participate in academic conferences.

Federal CCAMPIS grant helps colleges expand child care

The federal Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program assists colleges in providing campus-based child care services for low-income student parents. An institution may receive a grant if the total amount of all federal Pell grant funds awarded to students enrolled for the preceding fiscal year equals or exceeds $350,000. (Federal Pell grants are direct grants awarded through participating institutions to students with financial need who have not received their first bachelor's degree or who are enrolled in certain post-baccalaureate programs that lead to teacher certification or licensure.) CCAMPIS Program funds may be used to subsidize a student's child care costs, provide child care via campus-based programs or by outsourcing within the community, and/or provide child care services before and/or after school.

Ninety CCAMPIS grants were awarded across the U.S. in 2013.[26] Future funding levels are uncertain, but the Department of Education expects to publish a Request for Proposals in the Federal Register early in 2017 for the next round of three-year grants to be awarded in fall of 2017. Michigan colleges or universities interested in learning more about the program may contact Mary.Dominguez@ed.gov or call 202-219-7059. Additional information is at: http://www2.ed.gov/programs/campisp/applicant.html.

Michigan colleges with CCAMPIS grants as of 2015 include Ferris State University, Grand Rapids Community College, Lansing Community College, Mott Community College, University of Michigan and Wayne State University. Through it's Early Learning Children's Community child care program, Lansing Community College has really made the most of CCAMPIS grant funding and is a great model to explore.

Try to access varied college and non-college funding sources for child care

Sometimes students who don't have children want to demonstrate their support of student parents by offering a portion of their student activity funds. At the University of Michigan, graduate student lecturers once included increased child care capacity as one of their union bargaining demands. Initial funding for U-M child care subsidies came when students voted to increase the overall student fee structure in order to create the program. Local foundations and education groups may also be willing to support expanded child care on your campus. The Madison Area Technical College Child and Family Center, for example, uses funding from a federal CCAMPIS grant, the student activity board, and the Madison College Foundation to provide several child care scholarships to qualified students.[27] Don't hesitate to seek additional funding from new sources.

State child care subsidies

Student parents with low incomes or who care for foster children may be eligible for child care subsidies through Michigan's Child Development and Care (CDC) program. The state subsidy will not pay for all of a child care providers' charges, but is still tremendously helpful toward ensuring that student parents can afford consistent care for their children while they take classes and often work. To learn about and apply for State of Michigan child care subsidies, encourage student parents to visit: http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-63533_63534_72609---,00.html

Head Start programs

Head Start is a free, federally-funded program that promotes school readiness for young children from low-income families by providing comprehensive early learning services, health screenings and family support. Both Head Start (for 4 and 5 year olds) and Early Head Start (for pregnant women, infants, and toddlers) offer a variety of service models, depending on the needs of the local community. Programs may be based in centers, schools, family child care homes, or home-based. Parents are also supported in achieving their own goals, such as housing stability, continued education, and financial security.

In general, eligibility is based on family income at or below the poverty level. Families with other situations including homelessness, children in foster care, or those receiving Supplemental Security Income or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families also are eligible. Over 33,000 Michigan children and their families are served by Head Start. Due to limited government funding, there are not enough spaces for all eligible children. If there is not enough space at the time, parents may ask to be put on the waiting list. Go to http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/directories/apply/howdoiapplyfo.htm to find a local program and learn about enrolling a child.

Great Start Readiness Program is Michigan's free preschool program serving at-risk and low-income four-year-olds. It expands access to preschool for children in families who don't qualify for Head Start or those without access because of too few available and funded Head Start slots. Funding is allocated to each intermediate school district to administer the program locally. To find a nearby program and learn about eligibility, visit the Great Start to Quality website.

Financial Assistance and Education

Financial assistance for student parents means much more than just "financial aid." Federal financial aid only covers student expenses, leaving student parents to bear the additional costs of housing, clothes, and food for their dependents. Especially for single student parents, a comprehensive package of federal, state, college and sometimes private funds and program supports are necessary in order to prevent financial difficulties from derailing parents' educational plans.[28] This section of our guide highlights key points to remember in addressing the financial needs of student parents.

■ **Help student parents avoid relying too heavily on loans.** Studies have found that student parents tend to use more loans, and for those who withdraw from school without getting a degree, they are less likely than other students to be able to pay off that debt over time.[29] The University of Michigan-Dearborn provides special financial support to participants in its Student Outreach and Academic Resources program. In addition to giving first-year students a subsidy to cover all their textbooks, staff help students find scholarships to pay for tuition and other expenses.

■ **Encourage student parents to obtain federally funded Work-Study jobs, rather than off-campus work.** The predictability and students' increased control over their Work-Study schedules allows them to better manage their school, work, and parenting responsibilities.[30]

■ If you don't already have one, **design a Pregnancy & Parental Leave Accommodation policy so that students don't lose their status as an enrolled student or student employee if they take time to recover and bond with a new child born during the semester.** The vast majority of graduate or teaching assistantships legally work for 20 hours/week or less, making the majority of graduate students ineligible for job protection under the Family and Medical Leave Act if they take more leave than is available through their student labor contract (if they have such a union).[31] See the University of Michigan's policy at:
http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/policies/parental-accommodation-policy

■ **Any student can benefit from financial literacy education, but student parents are in special need of this given their advanced economic responsibilities.** Students and colleges can use a free online resource called Cash Course to get unbiased information about six key areas of personal finance. In addition to course modules and test questions, Cash Course includes interactive financial tools such as budget worksheets, financial calculators, videos and a financial expert chat wall. Find it at: http://www.cashcourse.org/

■ **Student parents with low incomes may be eligible for cash assistance through the State of Michigan's Family Independence Program (FIP).** Welfare assistance typically requires the student to work a minimum number of hours and may ask the college to verify the number of hours spent in class. To learn about eligibility for cash assistance or other state benefits, encourage student parents to visit:
https://www.mibridges.michigan.gov/access/

■ **Student parents, particularly single parents, are often eligible for state and federal Earned Income Tax Credits.** EITC is a refundable credit for workers who earn low or moderate incomes. This credit is meant to supplement the income earned through working and can either reduce taxes owed or increase the student's tax refund. Free assistance in filing taxes is available at: http://michiganfreetaxhelp.org/

Affordable Housing

While nearly half of the student parent support programs responding to the IWPR survey said they help students find housing, many times that housing is not campus based. Data collected from the roughly 1,200 colleges represented by the American Association of Community Colleges shows that just one in four offered on-campus housing.[32] Four-year colleges and those with graduate school programs may be better able to afford campus-run family housing areas. One longstanding example of this is the Northwood Community Apartments and Townhouses at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor. See: http://housing.umich.edu/family-housing. U-M's family housing is located near university-run child care and offers community center programs. While these supportive services are located near housing meant for students with children, use of them is not required by the university.

Another model of affordable housing is the residential program run by Endicott College in Beverly, Massachusetts. Since 1993, Endicott has offered single parent students a comprehensive program called Keys to Degrees: Educating Two Generations Together. The program provides dedicated housing, academic and other supportive programming, case management and child care assistance. Eastern Michigan University worked with Endicott to replicate the Keys to Degrees program in Michigan, graduating its first class of students in 2015. Compared to the university's usual six-year graduation rate of 38%, EMU's Keys to Degrees cohort graduated 50% of its participants within five years. Despite this success, no start date for a new cohort has been given due to funding cutbacks across the university.

> **Find Student Parent Programs Anywhere in the U.S.!**
>
> ***The Institute for Women's Policy Research Student Parent Program Finder** is searchable by state, services offered (e.g., residential or non-residential), or type of college program (e.g., four-year vs. community college).
>
> *Only interested in residential programs? Use the **Endicott College Residential Student Parent Program Locator.**

Even more innovative housing arrangements include collaborative public-private-university partnerships like Family Scholar House in Louisville, Kentucky.[33] This nonprofit organization developed strong community buy in to finance not only housing, but an array of services that enable single parent students to obtain college degrees and careers to achieve self-sufficiency. Family Scholar House operates residential and nonresidential programs using funds from Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, project-based Section 8 funds from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, a grant from Louisville Metro's Office of Community Services and Revitalization, as well as support from private and public donors.

Health Services & Insurance

Unlike traditional students who are often covered on their parents' health insurance, students with children require more comprehensive and costly forms of health insurance. They are not typically satisfied with on-campus health clinics, which are often limited to providing only adolescent and adult care. Therefore, helping student parents locate health insurance and care services for the entire family should be a key component of every student parent support program.

Eligibility for enrollment in Michigan's low-cost health insurance options will vary depending on factors such as the student's income level, the family member covered, age, and any special medical conditions.

The following Michigan Department of Health & Human Services webpage is a good place to start: http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-63533_63534_72609---,00.html#faq1 This site links to detailed information about programs including, but not limited to:

- **Medicaid** - For families that meet the poverty guidelines to receive Family Independence Program cash assistance from the state.

- **Healthy Michigan Plan** is available for those who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but earn no more than 133% of the federal poverty level. (In 2014, 133% of the poverty level for an individual was $15,521 or $31,721 for a family of four) See www.HealthyMichiganPlan.org.

- **MIChild and Healthy Kids** are health care programs provided through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).

You may apply online for Medicaid, Healthy Michigan Plan, MIChild or Healthy Kids at www.michigan.gov/mibridges or call the Michigan Health Care Helpline at 1-855-789-5610.

- **Children's Special Health Care Services** helps parents and professionals collaborate to remove any barriers inhibiting full access to a broad range of appropriate medical care, health education and other supports for children and some adults with special health care needs.
Visit http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71547_35698-15087--,00.html or call the CSHCS Family Phone Line at 1-800-359-3722.

Free clinics and public health departments are additional resources to which you can refer. Some programs, such as the Young Student Parent Program at the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in Minnesota partner with the county's public health nurses to provide students with free health screenings, immunizations and nutrition education. County health departments in Michigan also typically offer family planning services and screening of children's hearing and vision, among other services. The Michigan Association for Local Public Health publishes contact information for all of Michigan's health departments at http://www.malph.org/directory.

Strategies to Build & Improve Your Student Parent Program

Proactively & Systematically Identify Student Parents

It is not legal to ask about parental status on college admissions or employment forms. Therefore, the parental status of your students is not standard information you will find in the university's data system. Each term, you need to advertise student parent resources and contacts to all students, faculty and staff so that student parents come forward and others can refer them appropriately. Ask academic advisors, financial aid counselors, and teachers at on-campus children's centers to help identify student parents and direct them to your resources. Build and update your list of student parents so you can send targeted information directly to them.

Collaborate & Refer

It is crucial that program leaders make sure their staff understand the challenges faced by student parents and are prepared to provide personal support and information about a wide range of issues. **Staff need not have a degree in social work, but they must be educated about the breadth of needs of student parents and be ready to reach across and outside of the college to help students get the support they need.** Within the university, many units and groups may be positioned to help, including work-life offices, women's centers, student diversity and inclusion centers, early education and teacher certification programs, student government and student organizations (particularly women's organizations).

As noted in the previous section, numerous resources outside the university are also ready and interested in helping your student parents succeed in finishing college. The experiences of Northampton Community College exemplify some best practices in connecting low-income students to an array of public benefits and community resources, such as food assistance, health care, and scholarship opportunities. Northampton was one of seven community colleges across the nation that participated in the three-year Benefits Access for College Completion (BACC) initiative.[34] Three key findings emerged from the initiative:

1. **Colleges need a centralized hub to deliver student parent services**
2. **Students should have to opt-out of these services**
3. **Leadership at all levels of the college need to make the services an institution-wide priority**

Northampton staff members support student parents and other nontraditional students through the New Choices and KEYS programs. They have cultivated strong connections to community and state administrators of child care subsidy, work support, and TANF programs. "We act as advocates for our students so they can focus on their school work and family responsibilities."[35] In addition, these staff are leading efforts to train other campus administrators, staff, faculty and counselors so that the network for referrals to support services can be broadened.

Make Student Parent Resource Information Easily Accessible

When you make information for students with children more accessible, you raise their visibility as a group and affirm them as a community of value within the university. A key way to do this is to create a central webpage for student parents that links information from other existing sites so that multiple needs can be addressed starting from a single portal. A good example of this is the Students with Children website created by the University of Michigan Ann Arbor. This site brings together information on financial and social supports, child care and health care, relevant university policies, housing, and other parenting resources.

A great model of an all-in-one listing of student parent resources was created by the Family Resource Center at Michigan State University. This guide is available through both the FRC website as well as the student organization it supports, called Student Parents on a Mission.

Another way to elevate dialogue and generate support for and among student parents is to have a centralized communication platform.[36] Some campuses provide moderated message boards or listserves that allow students to discuss various topics related to balancing academics and family responsibilities. This is a key step in helping them identify resources and strategies that promote their success on campus.

Address Culture & Climate, Not Just Visible Policies & Programs

In their research on pregnant and parenting students, Brown and Nichols found that many of them feel stigmatized by the larger campus population, which results in experiences of isolation.[37] Policies and programs alone are not enough to impact the culture within which student parents must operate. Part of any effort to create a diverse and inclusive community must be training for department chairs and faculty. This training needs to emphasize the role they play in creating a family-friendly atmosphere–not just for students–but for their faculty and staff colleagues as well.[38] Specific suggestions follow for improving climate and normalizing a culture of family support on campus.

> *"…ongoing activities that highlight the presence of student parents on campus and amplify their voices are some of the strategies that can be used to … create an inclusive campus culture."* *Prepping Colleges for Parents,* Schumacher 2015[39]

Departmental Culture:

1. Arrange activities for children at annual picnics or similar events.

2. Enforce a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination based on parental status. For example, remind professors that they should not prohibit a student from bringing a child into class when regular child care arrangements fall through.[40]

3. Provide informational support and coaching to help students manage negotiations with faculty around parenting conflicts with class.[41]

4. Conduct occasional evaluations of the family-friendly atmosphere on campus and at the departmental level.

Institution-Level Supports:

1. Assess and improve the availability of lactation rooms and changing tables across campus.[42,43] Work with your university architecture office to ensure that planning for these facilities is included in the development of all new building plans.

2. Provide some designated parking spaces for pregnant students that are close to building entrances.[44]

When (now retired) Work-Life Resource Center Director Leslie de Pietro wanted to publicize an increasing number of lactation rooms at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, she enlisted graphic designers to help her create this icon, which is free for anyone to download and use. JPEG and EPS files, as well as signmaker specifications, are available at:
https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/family/work-life-resource-center/lactation-resources/lactation-sign

Use this "universal symbol" for lactation rooms!

There's No One-Size-Fits-All Strategy for Designing these Programs.
Just Use What You've Got!

Student parent supports can be built in numerous ways, depending on the resources available on your campus and in the community. As noted earlier, a variety of funding streams can be tapped to support subsidies and services to student parents. These range from university or college general funds, or student fees; foundation grants; federal, state or local funds, and corporate as well as private donations.

Some leaders of the most established programs say they started with small initiatives and expanded their programs and financing over time. To sustain your program for the long-term, be sure to build support at all levels of the campus and across as many areas of the university (e.g., academic affairs, student life, human resources) as possible.[45]

A Word about International Student Parents

Unfortunately, there is little research about international student parents and the spouses, partners or children they bring with them to the United States.[46] One unique stressor for these families is that the non-student spouse is often very isolated, not only because they are not involved in student life, but because they often do not have legal authority (i.e., a "green card") to work. In addition to language differences, some students come from countries where cultural norms about gender, family relations, and domestic violence make it harder for families to understand that they can and perhaps should seek outside assistance.

Resources

General Information & Advocacy

ACCESS Collaborative at Ohio State University: http://odi.osu.edu/access/

Association for Nontraditional Students in Higher Education: http://www.myantshe.org/

CUWFA, the College and University Work-Life-Family Association: http://www.cuwfa.org/

Higher Education Alliance for Students with Children: http://heaoafswc.memberlodge.org/

Institute for Women's Policy Research: http://www.iwpr.org/

National Center for Student Parent Programs at Endicott College: https://www.endicott.edu/Center-for-Residential-Student-Parent-Programs.aspx

Women Employed: http://womenemployed.org/

Academic & Social Supports

Model outreach program examples noted in this paper:

- The Life Impact Program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee: http://www4.uwm.edu/lifeimpact/

- The Undergraduate and Graduate Parent Support (UPS and GPS) programs at the University of Alabama: http://graduate.ua.edu/about/our-students/gps/

- The Student Parent Help Center at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities: http://www.sphc.umn.edu/

- The Transfer, Re-Entry, and Student Parent Center at the University of California–Berkeley: http://studentparents.berkeley.edu/

- The Self Sufficiency Program offered through the Women's Studies Department at the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse: http://www.uwlax.edu/self-sufficiency-program/

- The 2015 report by Rebecca Shulman *Prepping Colleges for Student Parents: Strategies for Supporting Student Parent Success in Postsecondary Education* includes contact information for over 30 programs described in that report. See: http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/prepping-colleges-for-parents-strategies-for-supporting-student-parent-success-in-postsecondary-education

Child Care Services & Subsidies

National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers

Institute for Women's Policy Research Toolkit for Childcare: http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/tools-for-student-parent-success-varieties-of-campus-child-care

Find child care and preschool programs in Michigan by contacting any Great Start to Quality Resource Center across the state. Go to http://greatstarttoquality.org/great-start-quality-resource-centers or call 1-877-614-7328.

Library Children's Nook at Michigan State University: https://msu.edu/user/studentp/library.htm

Kids Kare program model at the University of Michigan: https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/family/work-life-resource-center/sick-or-backup-child-care-service

Child care tuition grant model at the University of Michigan: https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/family/work-life-resource-center/find-child-care/financial-assistance-child-care

The federal **Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program** assists colleges in providing campus-based child care services for low-income student parents. Michigan colleges or universities interested in learning more about the program may contact Mary.Dominguez@ed.gov or call 202-219-7059. Additional information is at: http://www2.ed.gov/programs/campisp/applicant.html.

> *Michigan colleges with CCAMPIS grants as of 2015 include:* *Ferris State University, Grand Rapids Community College, Lansing Community College, Mott Community College, University of Michigan and Wayne State University.*
>
> *Model CCAMPIS grant programs referenced in this report:*
> - Lansing Community College Early Learning Children's Community: http://www.lcc.edu/elcc/ccampis_grant/
> - Madison Area Technical College Child and Family Center: http://madisoncollege.edu/cfc
>
> *State of Michigan child care subsidies:* Student parents with low incomes or who care for foster children may be eligible for child care subsidies through Michigan's Child Development and Care (CDC) program. See http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-63533_63534_72609---,00.html

Head Start is a free, federally-funded program that promotes school readiness for young children from low-income families by providing comprehensive early learning services, health screenings and family support. Go to http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/directories/apply/howdoiapplyfo.htm to find a local program and learn about enrolling a child.

Great Start Readiness Program is Michigan's free preschool program serving at-risk and low-income four-year-olds. It expands access to preschool for children in families who don't qualify for Head Start or those without access because of too few available and funded Head Start slots. To find a nearby program and learn about eligibility, go to: http://greatstarttoquality.org/parents/free-low-cost-quality-care

Financial Assistance and Education

Student Outreach and Academic Resources (SOAR) program at University of Michigan-Dearborn. See: https://umdearborn.edu/soar/

Model parental leave policy for students at the University of Michigan. See: http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/policies/parental-accommodation-policy

Cash Course is a resource for unbiased information about six key areas of personal finance. It provides free online interactive financial tools such as budget worksheets, financial calculators, videos, and a financial experts chat wall. See: http://www.cashcourse.org/

Cash assistance through the State of Michigan's Family Independence Program. Welfare assistance typically requires the student to work a minimum number of hours and may ask the college to verify the number of hours spent in class. To learn about eligibility for cash assistance or other state benefits, see: https://www.mibridges.michigan.gov/access/

State and federal Earned Income Tax Credits. EITC is a refundable credit for workers who earn low or moderate incomes and can either reduce taxes owed or increase the student's refund. Free assistance in filing taxes is available at: http://michiganfreetaxhelp.org/

Affordable Housing

Campus-run family housing model at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor: http://housing.umich.edu/family-housing

Comprehensive residential program model at Endicott College: http://www.endicott.edu/Keys-Degrees-Prog.aspx

Collaborative public-private-university partnership model for student parent housing in Louisville, Kentucky: http://familyscholarhouse.org/

Institute for Women's Policy Research online Student Parent Program Finder: http://www.iwpr.org/initiatives/student-parent-success-initiative/program_search. Searchable by state, services offered (e.g., residential or non-residential), or type of college program (e.g., four-year vs. community college).

Endicott College's online tool to locate residential student parent programs anywhere in the U.S.: http://www.endicott.edu/Center-for-Residential-Student-Parent-Programs/Programs/Find-A-Program.aspx

Health Services & Insurance

The State of Michigan offers a variety of low-cost health insurance options. See the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services website: http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339- 71547_2943_52115-- -,00.html. You may apply online for *Medicaid, Healthy Michigan Plan, MI Child or Healthy Kids* at www.michigan.gov/mibridges or call the Michigan Health Care Helpline at 1-855-789-5610. See also

Children's Special Health Care Services helps parents and professionals collaborate to increase access to medical care, health education and other supports for children and some adults with special health care needs. Visit http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71547_35698-15087--,00.html or call the CSHCS Family Phone Line at 1-800-359-3722.

Michigan Association for Local Public Health publishes *contact information for all of Michigan's health departments at* http://www.malph.org/directory.

Model partnership between college and county public health resources at the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College: http://fdltcc.edu/student-support/young-student-parent-program/

Benefits Access for College Completion (BACC) initiative: http://www.clasp.org/issues/postsecondary/pages/benefits-access-for-college-completion.

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> Northampton Community College is a *model for connecting low-income students to an array of public benefits and community resources,* such as food assistance, health care, and scholarship opportunities: http://www.northampton.edu/campus-life-and-housing/student-services/new-choices.htm

Make Student Parent Resource Information Easily Accessible

Model of a centralized webpage for information relevant to student parents at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor: http://www.studentswithchildren.umich.edu/

Model all-in-one listing of student parent resources at Michigan State University: https://www.frc.msu.edu/publications/2015%20MSU%20Resource.pdf

Michigan State University student organization Student Parents on a Mission: https://msu.edu/~studentp/

JPEG and EPS files, as well as signmaker specifications, for *lactation room icons* are available at: https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/family/work-life-resource-center/lactation-resources/lactation-sign

Endnotes

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