Seizing the Moment: Ideas & Strategies to Inspire Policy Change for Student Parents

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Institute for Women’s Policy Research
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About IWPR’s Student Parent Success Initiative

SPSI focuses on supporting students with dependent children who are pursuing college.

- Raises awareness of the need for student parent supports.
- Shares strategies that help low-income parents succeed in PSE.
- Provides technical assistance to community colleges & other stakeholders.
The Benefits of College Reverberate Throughout Society & Across Generations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits to the Individual</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prolonged &amp; increased earnings/employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits related to a high-quality job</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased career satisfaction, autonomy, &amp; authority at work</td>
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<td>Improved self-worth, self-confidence, &amp; happiness</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits to Families</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved social mobility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved academic &amp; social outcomes for children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved health</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits to Society</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduced public assistance receipt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased tax contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More skilled workers in labor force</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced health care spending</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“It is not easy being a student parent, but if you want the best for your child, then getting the proper education is a MUST…”

Source: IWPR Survey of Women in Mississippi’s Community and Technical Colleges.
Threats to Child Care Access & the Social Safety Net for Low-Income Adults

**Child Care Access**
- $95 mil cut from CCDBG
- $85 mil cut from Head Start
- Eliminates Social Services Block Grant
- $1.2 bil in cut to grants for after-school & summer programs

**CCAMPIS**
- Funding eliminated

**Public Benefits**
- SNAP cut by $191 bil over 10 years
- TANF cut by 10% ($2.2 bil)
- Cuts to Medicaid & CHIP
Threats to Higher Education & Training
Financial Aid and Programs

**Financial Aid**
- Pell grants cut by $3.9 bil
- Work-study cut by $488 mil
- Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG) eliminated

**Student Loans**
- Public service loan forgiveness & subsidized loans eliminated

**Workforce Development**
- $168 mil cut from Perkins
- Cuts to WIOA training for low-income youth and adults, & adult basic ed. and literacy grants
“Being in college as a parent, I feel like you can’t do it on your own.

You need a strong support system & financial independence... Loans & grant[s] can only cover so much... I need to be able to pay a preschool that [is] going to give my child a great education...”

Source: IWPR Survey of Women in Mississippi’s Community and Technical Colleges.
This is Our Moment!

**The Washington Post**

Campus child care made it possible for this young parent to graduate college. Now Trump wants to ax the program.

She started college as a single mother at age 18. Now she has a diploma.

**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

College, With Kids

As more students with young children enroll, colleges find ways to help them succeed

**THE HECHINGER REPORT**

Trump’s budget axes campus-based childcare for low-income students

Parents enrolled in college would lose a childcare program aimed at helping them graduate under Trump budget

**MarketWatch**

A surprising group is taking over college campuses

Photo: M. Scott Brauer for The Chronicle

Photo: Bill Losh/Getty Images
Potential Changemakers

Federal & State Policymakers
College & University Administrators
Community Leaders
Business Community
Philanthropy
Single Parents are the Least Likely to Earn a Credential Compared with Their Peers

Attainment among Undergraduate Students within 6 Years of Enrollment by Parent, Dependency, & Marital Status, 2011-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Nonparents</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Single Parents</th>
<th>Married Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Undergraduates</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Parent Subgroups</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Nonparents</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Parents Represent a Growing Share of Undergraduate Students

- Community Colleges: 9% increase
- Public & Private Four-Years: 18% increase
- All Institutions: 30% increase
- For-Profit Colleges: 138% increase

"Being a student and a parent is difficult. You have children competing for attention while you try to concentrate on school. I have managed to squeeze 4 classes into 2 hours per week while working online.

Time is a luxury most parents do not have."

Source: IWPR Survey of Women in Mississippi’s Community and Technical Colleges.
Child Care Access Can Improve Student Parent Graduation Rates

Student parents who used MCC’s child care center were ~3xs as likely to graduate or transfer to a 4-year than those who did not.

Student parents receiving CCAMPIS support appear to graduate at much higher rates than student parents overall.

More than 2 in 5 women in community college who live with kids say they are likely or very likely to withdraw to care for dependents.

“Family commitments” are a top reason that students who leave college would find it difficult to return.

“Without CCAMPIS I would not have graduated. It’s as simple as that.”

Michel Cocuzza, MWCC Graduate
Reversing Campus Child Care Trends could Improve Parents’ College Outcomes

Child Care Assistance Rules Should Align with State Goals for Degree Attainment

Work Requirements for Child Care Subsidy Eligibility for Parents Enrolled in Education and Training by State, 2016-18

- **No work requirement**: (39 states & DC)
- **Less than 20 hours per week**: (8 states)
- **20 hours or more per week**: (3 states)

“Like many Americans, I have to make hard decisions every day about how to support my family. For me, the hardest sacrifice has been postponing my college degree so I could afford to pay for my daughter’s daily needs…

…[Why does] the administration [want] to make life harder for families like mine, when so many of us are barely getting by as it stands”?

Student Parents have Seen the Sharpest Decline in their Ability to Pay for College

Trends in the Share of Undergraduate Students with $0 EFC by Parent and Dependency Status, 2004-03 to 2011-12.

### Student Mothers Graduate with $4,300 More in Debt than All Male Students

#### Average Student Loan Debt One Year After BA Attainment, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Average Debt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>$25,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>$26,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>$25,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>$28,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>$29,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>$26,181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2008/12 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B:08/12).
Supporting Student Parents Means Promoting Equity in Higher Education

The Share of Women Undergraduate Students by Race/Ethnicity who are Mothers, 2011-12.

- New England: Hispanic Women 19%, Black Women 29%, White Women 36%
- Mid East: Hispanic Women 22%, Black Women 26%, White Women 37%
- Far West: Hispanic Women 26%, Black Women 29%, White Women 44%
- Southeast: Hispanic Women 28%, Black Women 29%, White Women 47%
- Rocky Mountains: Hispanic Women 30%, Black Women 30%, White Women 50%
- Great Lakes: Hispanic Women 30%, Black Women 34%, White Women 50%
- Southwest: Hispanic Women 30%, Black Women 37%, White Women 53%
- Plains: Hispanic Women 32%, Black Women 34%, White Women 48%
- All Regions: Hispanic Women 29%, Black Women 32%, White Women 47%

After becoming a parent at a young age, I didn’t think I would ever attend college, so it means everything to me. After I complete, I can support my family and hopefully be a role model to my daughter.”

Source: IWPR Survey of Women in Mississippi’s Community and Technical Colleges
Making the Case at Your Institution

The numbers matter

• Collect data on program outcomes; the more evidence the better!

• Advocate for collecting data on parent and marital status—educate administrators about who is on their campuses

Connect with your community, on- & off-campus

• Bring student parents together to advocate for their interests

• Start small – e.g. crayons in admin. offices or flyers about child care & other parent supports

• Form partnerships in your community, e.g. R&Rs, Head Start, community & women’s funds
Making the Case to Policymakers

Make it personal

• Share student’s stories to illustrate why specific policies & programs are important to their success

• Remind policymakers that they work for you!

Engage potential—and unlikely—champions

• How does student parent success intersect with what community or business leaders care about? Help them connect the dots!

• Institutional support is valuable currency; use official letterhead and get your administrators to sign on
We are Stronger Together!

Make a connection

Set a goal

Make a plan
Keep in touch!

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