



# Prepping Colleges for Parents

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STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENT PARENT SUCCESS IN  
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Rachel Schumacher  
INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S POLICY RESEARCH  
1200 18TH STREET NORTHWEST, SUITE 301  
WASHINGTON, DC 20036

## About This Report

This report examines the range of supports that student parents in postsecondary education typically need to complete their degrees or credentials and provides examples of programs that help to facilitate their success. The information and examples in the report are drawn from internet research, interviews with program leaders, and an online survey that IWPR conducted in the summer and fall of 2011, which collected information about student parent needs and support strategies from more than 80 program directors, staff, community leaders, and students. The report is a part of the Institute for Women's Policy Research's Student Parent Success Initiative, which provides information and tools to promote the success of student parents in postsecondary education.

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## Executive Summary

Completing their education is essential to the economic security and stability of the 4.8 million postsecondary education students in the United States who are parents, yet student parents often face a range of challenges that make it difficult for them to finish their degrees. This report discusses the multiple types of supports that student parents typically need and offers examples of promising strategies that postsecondary institutions across the nation have used to meet these needs. To identify these strategies, the report draws on internet research, interviews with program leaders, and an online survey that elicited responses from more than 80 individuals—including program directors, staff, community leaders, advocacy groups, foundations, and students—affiliated with student parent initiatives at postsecondary institutions.

The report finds that colleges offer a range of services to help student parents succeed academically while meeting their responsibilities as parents. Institutions can develop and administer these services in a variety of ways, including through on- and off-campus offices, departments, or programs. By examining existing initiatives, the report identifies seven strategies that, when integrated, form an educational, economic, and social support system that benefits student parents in postsecondary institutions. These seven strategies are:

- *Conducting outreach and offering transition support.* Colleges can help student parents form strong networks by conducting outreach to potential students, providing help with enrollment and transition to the college environment, and offering activities that acknowledge the presence of student parents on campus and increase awareness of the resources available to them.
- *Providing academic services.* Student parents face many challenges that academic services can help to address. These services include specialized academic advising and skill-building supports, such as courses that cover topics such as how to develop good study skills and the importance of class participation. Colleges can also offer supports such as academic advising and flexible scheduling or hybrid/online courses that accommodate the needs of student parents.
- *Providing campus child care services.* Child care services offered by institutions of higher education can take numerous forms, including campus-organized care, assistance with finding care in the community, and help with paying for care. Colleges can help student parents cover the costs of care by giving them information on how to access available public child care subsidies. They can also provide private resources, such as child care subsidies offered through their financial aid office, to assist students in meeting their child care needs.
- *Offering mentoring, counseling, and peer support.* Given the multiple demands they must negotiate, student parents often do not have the time to build networks of support on campus. To address this challenge, many student parent support programs connect student parents with specialized counseling services or classes on specific topics, such as child development, parenting education, life skills, and stress reduction. One program recruits community, business, and organizational leaders to act as mentors and sponsors for teen parents pursuing postsecondary education. Another maintains a website that provides a centralized platform for students to communicate about various topics related to balancing academics and family responsibilities.

- *Offering a wide range of financial supports and financial education.* Many student parents need financial aid to enroll in postsecondary education, and more than six in ten (62 percent) single student parents are not able to contribute at all to their educational expenses. Colleges can help these students afford the costs of completing a degree by providing financial supports to cover expenses such as books and school supplies, groceries and gas, and supplies for their children, such as clothes and diapers. Colleges can also assist student parents by providing direct financial support and individualized career coaching that can help with budgeting and financial planning.
- *Creating links to economic, community, and health services.* Student parents—especially those who are single—are often eligible for economic benefits and tax programs, but many who qualify for these benefits do not receive them. Some colleges are addressing this gap through programs that coordinate access to benefits. These programs train staff to understand the needs of low-income students, refer students to on- and off-campus resources, provide screening for a range of government resources, and cultivate strong connections to community and state administrators of child care subsidies, work supports, and welfare cash assistance.
- *Helping student parents to secure affordable housing.* For student parents—who often have low incomes—finding affordable and safe housing can be a challenge. Nearly half of respondents to the IWPR survey say the student support programs they represent help students with housing issues. Some programs have developed community-based partnerships to provide residential opportunities for single parents that include a range of services—such as counseling, an on-site child development center, case management, academic advising, and family support services.

## Lessons Learned

A key set of lessons and insights emerged from the experiences shared by leaders of student parent support programs who participated in the study.

- Most campuses do not have a system to identify student parents and be proactive about providing supports. Student parent support programs can address this gap by conducting outreach to identify and build connections to student parents as early as possible in their college careers.
- Finding and affording quality child care is a major concern of student parents. Colleges can use a range of strategies to address this concern, including on-campus child care centers, providing scholarships to help student parents afford off-site child care, working with community centers and family child care home providers to secure slots for student parents, and providing student parents with information about community and public resources for child care.
- Student parents can provide valuable information about their needs to help colleges identify the most effective services and types of information to offer. Many programs regularly ask for feedback on their services and adapt these services to meet the needs of student parents. Such input from students can help program leaders assess whether the services their programs address, and adequately respond to, the most pressing issues student parents face.

- Having staff with expertise in family support and academic issues, or with knowledge about how to refer students as necessary, is essential to assisting students who are juggling parenting responsibilities with their schooling. Program leaders should make sure that staff members understand the challenges faced by student parents and are prepared to provide personal support and information about a wide range of student parent issues.
- Student parent supports can be built in numerous ways, depending on the resources available on campus and in the community. Some leaders of the most established programs say they started with small initiatives and expanded their programs and financing over time.
- To sustain a student parent support program for the long-term, it is important to build support at all levels of the campus, from the President of the college, to faculty and funders, to the larger student body. This support can be built in multiple ways, including by encouraging student parents to advocate for themselves, holding public campus events for parents and children to humanize the issue, and developing a student parent support office or lounge on campus.
- Student parent programs can benefit from a combination of public and private funding. Funding sources may include university or college general funds, foundation grants, federal funds, state or local funds, student fees, corporate and private donations, and others.
- More resources and expertise are needed to better measure the implementation and impact of student parent programs. Few student parent programs appear to have external research evaluations or the capacity to analyze the effects of their programs. Better data collection and analysis are critical to track the use of these services and their potential impact on students.

Given that more than one in four postsecondary education students has a dependent child, it is essential that campus and policy leaders take steps to meet the needs of these students. Many colleges are already taking such action. Expanding existing initiatives and developing new strategies to welcome student parents can increase student parents' success in school, strengthen their prospects for attaining a job with family-sustaining wages, and benefit the next generation.



## I. Introduction

More than one in four (25.9 percent, or 4.8 million) students enrolled in postsecondary education programs in the United States is raising a dependent child (Gault, Reichlin, and Román 2014). These parents are preparing to compete in an American economy in which high skill levels are required to earn family-sustaining wages (Kochhar 2012). In light of the demands of the labor market, college campuses need to support student-parents on their path to educational success. Many postsecondary leaders recognize this and are looking for promising strategies that address the needs of these students.

This report provides a framework for thinking about the range of supports that student parents typically need and examples of programs that help to facilitate their success. It draws from information and lessons learned from initiatives supporting student parents at two- and four-year colleges and universities across the country. The report is a product of the Student Parent Success Initiative (SPSI) at the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), which provides resources to inform the decisions of policymakers and leaders on campuses and in communities seeking to promote better success rates for student parents in postsecondary education.

## Survey and Methodology

The information and examples included in this report are drawn from an online survey, internet research, and interviews with program leaders. In the summer and fall of 2011, IWPR solicited survey responses through several organizations affiliated with student parent initiatives, including 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 (for a summary of the information collected, see Appendix A). Over 80 respondents completed the survey, including program directors, staff, community leaders, and students from programs hosted by four- and two-year colleges, community based organizations, advocacy groups, and foundations. While not representative of all such programs in the country, the survey is the first to describe student parent support programs on this scale (See Appendix B for program examples). In collaboration with IWPR, the author identified models representing an array of student support strategies for inclusion in this paper.

## Why Focus on Student Parents?

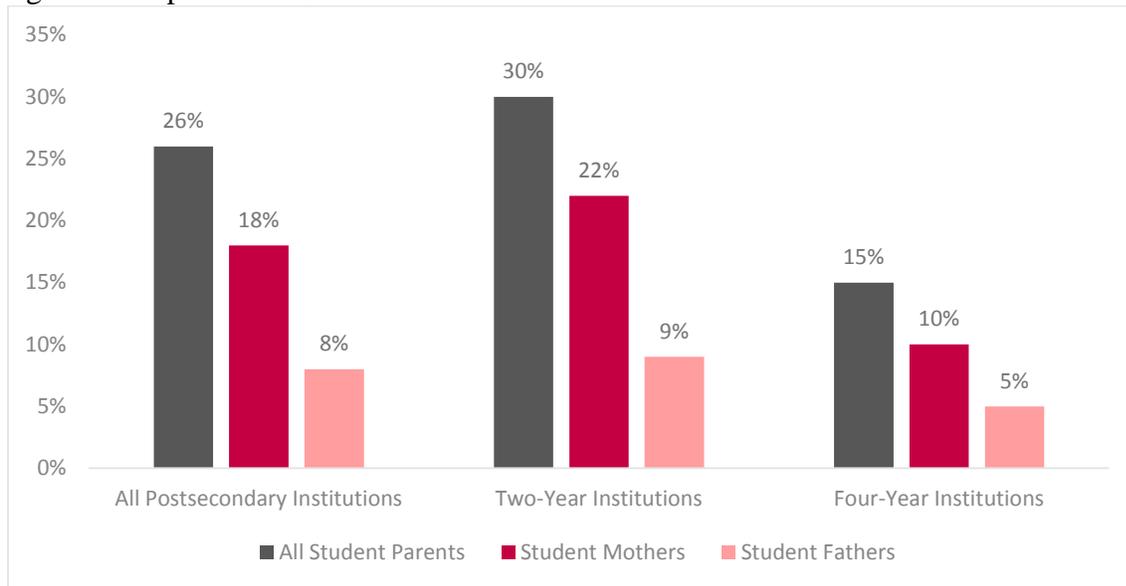
***Student parents make up a substantial portion of the nation's college student population.*** As noted, more than one in four college students in the United States (4.8 million) are parents with dependent children. Students of color are especially likely to be parents: 37 percent of African American, 33 percent of Native American, and 25 percent of Latino students are raising children (Miller, Gault, and Thorman 2011). Twenty-nine percent of students at community colleges and 13 percent of students at four-year colleges are parents (Figure 1).

***Students with children face financial and other challenges that can hinder their ability to earn a degree or certificate within six years.*** In 2012, nearly seven in ten student parents (69 percent) had

incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty line (IWPR 2014a). In addition to the financial challenges many student parents face, student parents are more likely than nonparent students to enter school with lower standardized test scores, less likely to have parents who hold college degrees, and more likely to work full time (Miller, Gault, and Thorman 2011). These challenges make it difficult for many to complete their degrees: just 34 percent of student parents at community colleges and 26 percent of student parents at four-year colleges earned a degree within six years, compared with 40 percent of nonparents at community colleges and 67 percent of nonparents at four-year institutions (IWPR 2014b).

### Nearly Three in Ten Community College Students and More than One in Four Students at All Postsecondary Institutions Are Parents, 2012

Figure 1. Proportion of Students Who Are Parents



Note: Figures for student mothers and student fathers may not sum to the total of all student parents due to rounding.  
 Source: IWPR 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.

***Student parents spend a significant amount of time caring for dependents and need assistance to balance their caregiving responsibilities with schoolwork.*** Fifty-six percent of single student parents in community colleges and 68 percent of married student parents report that they spend 30 hours per week or more caring for dependents (Miller, Gault, and Thorman 2011). Single student parents especially struggle to balance these responsibilities with their educational goals. Forty-two percent of single student parents say it is likely or very likely they may have to withdraw from school due to their dependent care responsibilities (Miller, Gault, and Thorman 2011).

***When student parents reach their educational goals, their achievements can improve the lives of their children.*** Researchers have found that the language skills of three-year-old children increase as their mothers further their education (Ryan and Siebens 2012). In addition, national data on children entering kindergarten have consistently shown that young children of parents with higher levels of education have better reading and math scores than young children of parents with lower levels of education (Mulligan, Hastedt, and McCarroll 2012). In the United States, parental education is a stronger predictor of children’s future economic, educational, and emotional outcomes than in most European nations (Pew Economic Mobility Project 2011).

## **Student Supports Develop in Different Ways**

There is no one way to support student parents. Campus and community leaders are building supports for student parents in multiple ways, both through independent student parent centers and through resources strategically located where student parents may be reached. Respondents to the IWPR survey are working to build supports through:

- student service centers
- women’s centers
- early education services/departments
- financial aid systems
- academic services
- offices designed to support working students
- student diversity and inclusion support centers
- on-campus housing
- academic departments
- collaborations with community-based organizations, and
- local government agencies.

## Getting Started: How Can Colleges Support Student Parents?

To increase the odds that student parents are successful in postsecondary education, it is critical that administrators, faculty, student services, and other students come to recognize and welcome them and the unique challenges and opportunities they bring. Leaders should consider how best to:

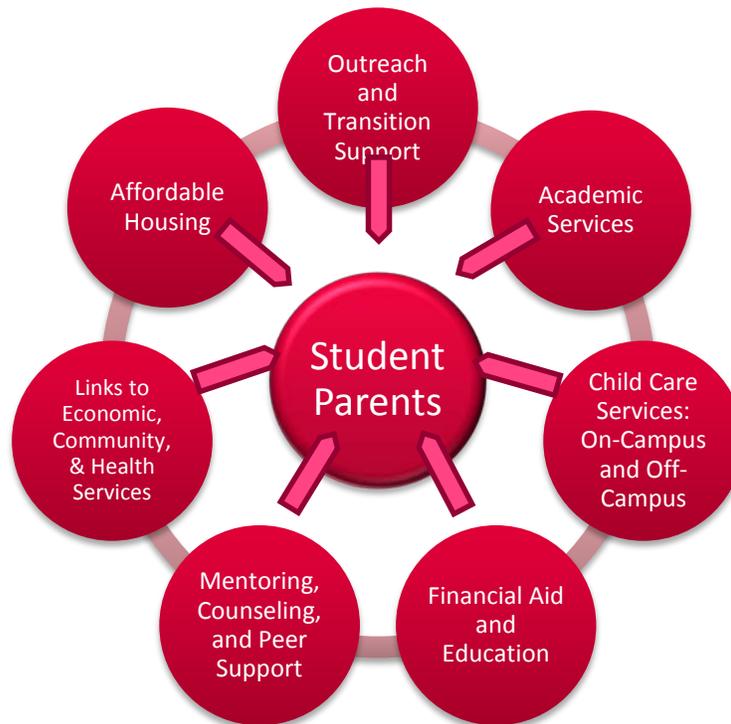
- **Make campuses welcoming and responsive to student parents.** Increase recognition and responsiveness to the needs of student parents on campus through existing structures, such as outreach, admissions, financial aid, coursework scheduling and advising, and campus life and social supports.
- **Provide access to a range of services to support low-income families.** Expand the continuum of services to student parents' access on campus to address child and family needs.
- **Integrate supports for academic and family success.** Make it easier for student parents to access the services they need to be successful academically while also meeting their responsibilities as parents.

Colleges and universities must examine their current student populations, practices, and existing resources to develop their own strategies for supporting student parent success. For example, IWPR's survey (see Appendix A) found that support initiatives are developed in a variety of ways and can be anchored in a range of on- and off-campus offices, departments, or programs (see Box: **Student Parent Supports Develop in Different Ways**).

The following section of this report outlines seven strategies to support student parents and illustrative examples from around the country. The profiled initiatives may employ multiple strategies, although they are highlighted in just one category. These seven strategies, when integrated, form an educational, economic, and social support system for student parents and their families in postsecondary education. For readers just beginning to plan their approach to supporting student parents, this full continuum may not seem immediately possible. In fact, several of the veteran program leaders interviewed for this report say their programs have slowly developed over years and even decades. What is important is that all higher education institutions with student parent populations consider which of the following strategies are possible in the short- and longer-term to increase student parents' educational success. Figure 2 represents the array of strategies to consider.

## Multiple Strategies Can Increase the Success of Student Parents

Figure 2. Key Elements of a Support System for Student Parents in Postsecondary Education



## II. Outreach and Transition Support

One often overlooked barrier to parents enrolling in and completing college-level education is their sense of feeling unwelcome on a college campus. Outreach to potential students, supports to help with enrollment and transition to the college environment, and 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 address this barrier and create an inclusive campus culture. The majority (72 percent) of respondents to the IWPR survey said they conduct outreach to nonstudents, 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 (Debra Smith, personal communication, November 20, 2014).

## Recruitment and Enrollment Support

- The **Self Sufficiency Program (SSP)** 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. Over 14 weeks, students develop a foundation of critical thinking, writing, math and computer/technical skills; become familiar with the process of applying for admission and financial aid; and set educational goals. SSP graduates who enroll at the university or other local two-year colleges and

are in good academic standing can qualify for a \$500 scholarship for the first four semesters of school.

- The **Single Mothers Academic Resource Team (SMART) in Oklahoma** started by traveling across the state to provide workshops on what supports are available to single mothers to enroll in and complete postsecondary education. SMART staff reached out to campus parent groups, YWCA community centers, domestic violence shelters, and social service agencies to contact single mothers. A three-year grant from the Women’s Foundation of Oklahoma allowed SMART to focus on building the capacity of two Oklahoma colleges—a two-year and a four-year school—to recruit and support student parents and become more family friendly. SMART provides training on mentoring skills and approaches to working with student parents. “Just having one person on your side can help a single mother get to graduation,” says Statewide SMART Coordinator Joanna Wall.
- The **University of California at San Diego Undergrad Student Parents Network** advocates for, helps design, and makes students aware of resources to support student parents, including child-friendly study rooms in campus libraries, access to recreation and swimming facilities for families, and a student parent email list. The group sought and won a policy that allows student parents to apply for priority enrollment for classes, so they can balance their school and family schedules more easily. Student parents can find out about the network through outreach at orientations to campus, the campus women’s center, and flyers around campus. In addition, the founder of the group created a webpage describing available resources for student parents. UCSD’s office of Health, Recreation, and Well-Being supports the part-time employment of an intern to staff the network.

## Transition Support

- **Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton and Oshkosh, Wisconsin**, offers one-on-one counseling and group Starting Point workshops. Staff counselors provide career, personal, academic, and financial counseling plus internal and external referrals to help students begin and stay in college. Services are offered to help female and male displaced homemakers and single parent students become oriented to college life and expectations. Starting Point workshops include topics such as assertiveness, goal setting, stress management, and writing successful scholarship applications, among others.
- **Project Independence at Portland Community College** in Oregon is a free credit-bearing course to prepare women for college life. Designed for single mothers and other nontraditional adult students, it addresses a range of topics, including Career and Life Planning, Values Clarification, Introduction to Assertiveness, College Survival and Success, and Overcoming Math Anxiety. The intent is to explore career and life options and gain self-confidence with a cohort of women in an educational setting.

### III. Academic Services

Student parents face a range of challenges that academic services can help to address. Many have had to take time off during their schooling (Achieving the Dream 2009; Hess et al. 2014). Others work while in school and have family obligations to meet (Hess et al. 2014). Specialized academic advising, skill-building supports, and flexible scheduling and online courses are valuable forms of support for many student parents seeking to overcome these barriers to degree completion.

#### Academic Advising

- All students at the five campuses of **Central New Mexico (CNM) Community College** have access to CNM Connect–coordinated services and supports to promote student success. CNM Connect started in 2006 as a pilot focused on students with high needs, based on the Center for Working Families model developed with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Center for Working Families approach seeks to provide at-risk families with a central location to receive key economic support services that can help increase earnings and income, reduce financial transactions costs, and build individual and community wealth (Liston and Donnan 2012). Now available to all students, the CNM Connect program is designed to promote student connections to the college and access to academic supports, financial aid and asset building, and linkages to needed services. CNM also offers Assistance Centers for Education that provide learning support services such as study materials, tutoring, and computer labs. Student parents make up 55 percent of the students who use CNM Connect services. The student team success leaders and achievement coaches that staff each Connect center are trained to address the concerns of student parents.

A 2012 report sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation identified CNM Connect as a highly successful model. The retention rate for students who accessed services during the 2010–2011 school year through CNM Connect was 85 percent, compared with 71 percent for all first-time students (Liston and Donnan 2012).

- At **Endicott College** in Beverly, Massachusetts, student parents participating in the **Keys to Degrees Program** receive appropriate tutoring until they are able to maintain a 3.0 average. The tutoring is tailored to the student’s needs, including study skills, review of course work, and making up for lost class time if the parent had to miss a class due to their parental responsibilities or other issues. Student parents also receive coaching to communicate with faculty members about their status as a parent and to explain any challenges they are having related to being a parent. Student parents may also enroll in additional courses during a January break or during the summer to spread out their course requirements over the year. Endicott Keys to Degrees staff receive regular updates on academic performance so they can flag issues and offer students support as early as possible.

## Building Skills Needed for College

- The **Single Mothers Achieving Real Triumph (SMART) program** at **Lakeland Community College in Ohio** uses a peer cohort model to help student parents negotiate academic life and connect to campus resources they might not otherwise find. As a group, participants take an English class and Skills for College Success class, equaling six credits. The skills course covers such topics as how to interact with college professors and administrators, study skills, and the importance of note taking and class participation. Students also receive financial support in the form of a gas or Walmart gift card.

## Flexible Class Scheduling and Hybrid/Online Courses

Strategies that use the internet to allow more flexible access to education can help student parents fit postsecondary education into their busy lives; in the 2007–2008 school year, three in ten student parents (30 percent) took a distance education course compared with 18 percent of students without children (Gatta forthcoming). Over half of the respondents to the IWPR survey said their college offered hybrid/online courses, and 45 percent indicated that flexible course scheduling is possible at their school.

- The **Baby Bears @ Cal Project** at the University of California - Berkeley provides academic flexibility so that pregnant students and those who are new parents can continue to progress toward degree completion. Students are given help with reduced course load planning and strategies and with requesting academic accommodations. They also receive information about and assistance with navigating specific campus policies regarding delayed admission, stopping out, and withdrawal and readmission for students with parenting responsibilities.
- **Rio Salado College in Tempe, Arizona**, is a leader in adapting online technologies for postsecondary education. Currently more than 100 associate degree, certificate, and transfer programs are available through Rio Salado. Rio Salado does not have a student parent program per se, but gives students the flexibility to schedule their education to fit their life circumstances rather than requiring them to follow a traditional academic calendar. Students can start their coursework at one of more than 40 start dates a year and can control the length of their courses with the option of eight-, twelve- or sixteen-week courses. Rio Salado also makes technical, instructional, and other support services available to registered students online and available 24 hours a day.

## IV. Child Care Services: On and Off Campus

Student parents need affordable, accessible, quality child care to attend class and study (and often to work as well). Many strategies can help address this barrier, including campus-organized care, assistance in finding care in the community, and help with affording the cost of care (Boressoff 2012).

As of 2013, just over half of public four-year (51 percent) and fewer than half (46 percent) of public two-year colleges offered on-campus child care centers (IWPR 2014c). While these centers provide a vital

resource for many students, they often cannot meet the demand for their services. An IWPR survey of more than 80 members of the National Coalition of Campus Children's Centers found that 89 percent of centers maintained waiting lists, and the average waiting list was approximately 85 percent of the size of the enrollment of a center (Miller, Gault, and Thorman 2011). In addition, a limited number of child care slots at on-campus centers are available for the children of students. Respondents to the IWPR survey reported that on average, 41 percent of their centers' slots were occupied by the children of students. An additional 39 percent were occupied by the children of faculty and staff, and 20 percent by the children of other community members (Miller, Gault, and Thorman 2011).

Institutions that do not provide on-campus child care can help student parents find child care in their community that meets their needs for work and school, as well as the developmental needs of their children. Like on-campus care, this type of service can make it easier for parents to manage their school and family responsibilities.

Colleges can also help student parents access available public child care subsidies. Access to federal and state-funded Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) child care assistance for low-income families, however, varies according to state policies, and 18 states had waiting lists or frozen intake for assistance in 2014 (Schulman and Blank 2014). In at least 20 states and the District of Columbia, students cannot qualify for CCDBG subsidies without working a minimum number of hours set by the state. Seven states (Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, New York, Oregon, and Utah) do not consider postsecondary education an allowable activity for low-income parents to qualify for a child care subsidy (although some of them allow parents receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families to qualify for approved postsecondary education programs; Minton, Durham, and Giannarelli 2011).

A more detailed discussion of options to help student parents with child care are discussed in IWPR's *Varieties of Campus Child Care Toolkit* (Boresoff 2012). The following examples are drawn from that toolkit unless otherwise noted.

## **Campus Organized Child Care Centers and Family Child Care**

- **The Oklahoma City Community College Child Development Center and Lab School** provides care for children six weeks to kindergarten age within the Family and Community Education Center facility. The center serves students, faculty, and members of the community with a traditional full day program that receives the top state rating for child care quality and is nationally accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The program also offers student scheduled drop-in care for children whose parent/guardian is in class by reservation at the rate of \$10 per three-hour session. The reservations are made for a complete semester, scheduled to match the student-parent's course schedule.
- **The Family Child Care Network at California State University, Northridge**, is a program of the Associated Students Children's Center. The Network Coordinator links parents to participating independently owned and operated licensed family child care homes in the community. The Network Coordinator screens the homes and works with providers to support the

quality of care children receive. Eligible student parents receive state or federal aid in paying for care.

## Assistance Finding Appropriate Child Care

- **Arizona State University (ASU)** provides child care resource and referral services as one of many family supports available through a Family Resource program on campus. Resource and referral services include support and information about on and off campus child care options, breastfeeding support, and housing information.
- Students at **Lane Community College** in Eugene, Oregon, have access to no-cost assistance with finding child care through a child care resource and referral center located on campus. Family Connections of Lane and Douglas Counties is one of 13 community-based referral centers that are part of a statewide network supported in part by the state Child Care Division within the Department of Employment. Staff are specially trained to assist parents in finding the right child care for them.

## Assistance Paying for Child Care

- The **University of Michigan** provides child care subsidies through the Financial Aid office. The child care subsidy is a need based program available for students who are attending school at least half time to use for licensed child care for their dependent children under 13 or special needs children under 19. In 2012, Michigan began a two-year pilot providing a smaller subsidy for graduate students. In addition, the University offers tuition grants to qualifying students who place their children in their on-campus centers.
- The **Madison Area Technical College Child and Family Center** uses funding from a federal Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) grant, the student activity board, and the Madison College Foundation to provide several scholarships to qualified students.

## V. Mentoring, Counseling, and Peer Support

Low-income parents in postsecondary education may not have strong support from their partners, families, and friends, especially if they are the first in their social network to attend college. Given that they are balancing school and family responsibilities, student parents are also less likely to have free time to form supportive personal connections on campus. Individualized encouragement and support are critical components of many of student parent support programs. Almost three-quarters of the respondents to IWPR's survey say their program offers or links student parents to specialized counseling addressing one or more issues, including mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence. A third say they offer classes specifically for student parents, which can include child development, parenting education, food and nutrition, life skills, and stress reduction. Some example strategies are one-on-one mentoring, fostering peer groups, and intensive counseling and coaching.

## Mentoring

- The **Generation Hope Scholar Program** recruits community, business, and organizational leaders to act as mentors and sponsors for teen parents attending postsecondary education in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Sponsors commit to developing a one-on-one relationship with a matched parent scholar until the student parent earns a college degree. Sponsors provide financial assistance of \$1,200 for a two-year college student or \$2,400 for a four-year college student per year.

## Counseling/Coaching for Student Cohort Groups

- The **Access and Success program at St. Catherine University** with campuses in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, provides a number of student parent support services, including resource information, advocacy, emergency grants, laptop loans, child-friendly study spaces, family friendly events, and peer support groups. Any student at any degree level who is raising a child is eligible for Access and Success. The program is staffed by licensed social workers who provide support and connections to resources on- and off-campus to facilitate academic support. A more intensive pilot program called Steps to Success received funding from the federal Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF)—a competitive grant program created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA)—and is evaluating the potential impact of a comprehensive package of coaching, linkages to resources on and off campus, and a \$1,350 scholarship per year on student parent success. Participants meet bi-weekly with staff to set goals and work toward academic achievement, financial stability, social connectedness, and leadership development. Positive results for the first cohort of student include higher retention rates and better grades than a comparison group of student parents (Demeules and Hamer 2012).
- **CareerAdvance®** uses a cohort model to support parents of children enrolled in Early Head Start/Head Start as they work to earn a progression of certificates and degrees that are in demand in the local health care field. Developed by CAP Tulsa (CAP), and expanded using a \$10 million federal Health Professional Opportunities Grant (HPOG), the CareerAdvance® package has several supportive components, including Career Coaches, performance incentives, direct links to employers, and family support workers. Career Coaches facilitate weekly peer group meetings with each cohort of student parents and provide individualized academic and career counseling. CAP has formed partnerships with Tulsa Community College, the Tulsa Technology Center, the Union Public Schools district, and the Tulsa Workforce Investment Board as well as with other community resources to implement CareerAdvance®.

*“The peer support and networking opportunities are the best keys to our success. Many students have said that they would have had difficulty being successful and graduating without the program. We know their biggest need is child care funding, but they also find the long lasting friendships are crucial to their success. The (student parent) organization has empowered student parents to take on leadership roles which has helped them after graduation.”*

*- Lori Strom, Michigan State University Family Resource Center Coordinator*

## **Fostering Peer-to-Peer Connections**

- At the **College of the Sequoias** in Visalia, California, several programs are designed to help students facing educational and socioeconomic challenges, including balancing school and parenting. The stated goal of the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) initiative is to support low-income students not only to complete their degree but also to continue on to four-year universities. In addition to regular visits with program counselors, EOPS students participate in workshops together addressing personal development issues. In addition, students who are single parents and receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are enrolled in the Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) support program. The CARE program offers special advising and mentoring, peer support, resource information, advocacy, and other collaborative services.
- **Student Parent Help Center at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities** offers a range of supports and services to parents, including voluntary weekly Parents as Students Support (PASS) group lunch meetings designed to foster peer-to-peer connections. Using input from students, HELP center staff developed a mix of support group content—some structured presentations on requested topics and some intended to facilitate conversation among students. The foundation of the SPHC model is a thorough, hour-long intake process designed to both screen each student entering the program for state-sponsored child care grant eligibility and identify any academic, family, or emotional needs the student might be presenting at program entry. The SPHC also utilizes their successful college enrolled student parents to conduct teen parent college encouragement activities in the greater community, providing real world success models for single teen parents and career presentation skills to SPHC involved students. The center offers comfortable space for conversations, and a licensed social worker facilitates conversation.
- The **Transfer, Re-Entry, and Student Parent Center at the University of California-Berkeley** promotes social connectedness of students in multiple ways. One strategy the University uses is to offer a trilogy of credit-bearing courses for student parents to become oriented to college life, create a collaborative learning environment, build leadership skills, foster connections, and manage the transition into work. It also 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 the university.

- 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. GPS and UPS created and implement a highly successful “Sitters for Service” program that provides student parents with 30 hours of free babysitting each semester.

## VI. Financial Aid and Education

Student parents—especially single parents—often need financial aid to enroll in postsecondary education. Almost two-thirds (62 percent) of single student parents who apply for federal aid have an expected family contribution of zero, meaning the government believes they are not able to contribute at all to their educational expenses. This is much higher than for students without children (20 percent) or married student parents (18 percent). Even when they receive aid, single student parents average \$5,507 a year in additional unmet costs (Miller 2012).

Respondents to IWPR’s survey of student parent service programs provide a wide range of financial supports to student parents beyond traditional aid, including emergency funds, food banks, grants to purchase books and supplies, gift cards for groceries and gas, and supplies for their children, such as diapers, clothes, and school supplies. In addition, financial education to help student parents manage their expenses and debts are common.

### Financial Assistance: Scholarships, Expenses, and Emergency Funds

- The **Life Impact Program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee** assists low-income parents in their efforts to attain a higher education. The program provides participants with a \$5,000 renewable scholarship and with academic, professional, and personal support. Program scholars work with a Life Coach team who serves as a first point of contact for all concerns and provides resources and referrals to campus and community programs. Life Impact Scholars have access to student parent workshops, family friendly events, support groups, post-graduation support, and emergency funds. As of 2014, program efforts had resulted in 84.2 percent graduation and retention rate for the 133 UWM student parents that had been served. Of the program graduates, 100 percent have reported employment and/or are seeking advanced degrees within six to nine months of graduation. The Life Impact Program was established in 2005 through a generous donation from the Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation. Along with their continued

support, funding from Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation has allowed Life Impact to expand and extend their program services.

- The **Jeannette Rankin Women's Scholarship Fund** awarded funding to 85 women in 2012. Scholarships are available to low-income women aged 35 and older who are pursuing a technical or vocational education, an associate's degree, or a first bachelor's degree. Most scholarship recipients (81 percent) are the heads of their households, and 49 percent are the first in the family to attend college.
- The **Young Student Parent Program at the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College** in Minnesota offers a range of concrete and social supports to student parents between the ages of 18 and 35 years old. The community college partners with the Carlton County public health nurses and the Fond du Lac Reservation public health nurses. Student parents who join the program can receive academic advising, access to special workshops and presentations, free tutoring services, nutrition education, financial counseling, parenting and parent/child classes, free health screenings and immunizations, connections and referrals to on-campus and off-campus services and activities. The program activities, one-on-one sessions with the coordinator, public health nurse home visits, tutoring sessions, and involvement in student activities earn students points for rewards such as gas cards, grocery cards, bookstore gift certificates, and Wal-Mart gift cards.

## Financial Education

- **Norwalk Community College** in Connecticut operates the Family Economic Security Program (FES\$P) in partnership with community foundations. FES\$P started its work with a pilot, serving small cohorts of students with children to help them meet their personal, career, financial and academic goals through direct financial support and intensive individualized coaching. Based on the research from the pilot, the college now intends to institutionalize the best practices to serve all students with children. Students will continue to receive specialized scholarships, free financial education, achievement coaching, and family friendly activities. An online resource—Cash Course—is available to help with budgeting and planning.

## VII. Links to Economic, Community, and Health Services

Student parents—especially single parents—are often eligible for numerous economic benefits and tax programs. The proportion of student parents receiving economic supports, however, is likely much less than the number who might benefit from them (Gault, Reichlin, and Román 2014). Strategies to link parents to benefits programs and make it easier to navigate the process to qualify are growing around the country. In addition, there are postsecondary support initiatives targeted to specific parents already participating in benefits programs.

## Coordinated Access to Benefits

- **Single Stop USA** is a nonprofit organization that helps low-income people across the country gain access to multiple economic supports in partnership with trusted local agencies, such as community colleges. Single Stop provides access to screening for a range of government resources and legal, financial, and tax preparation expertise. In 2012, Single Stop USA helped almost 32,000 community college students access benefits and services—including Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program (SNAP, formerly called food stamps), Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income/Disability (SSI/DI), health insurance, and child care assistance—worth more than \$60 million dollars (Kendrick 2011). The Single Stop model places a full time site coordinator on campus with access to an online benefits network. Single Stop is currently working with community colleges in seven states (California, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, and New York) and several multi-site community college systems: the City University of New York, Miami Dade College, and the City College of San Francisco.
- **Northampton Community College** in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, is working to develop better understanding of low-income student needs and increase capacity to refer students to necessary on- and off-campus resources throughout the college (Maryann Haytmanek and Stephanie Piper, personal communication, 2013). Northampton is one of seven community colleges participating in the Benefits Access for College Completion (BACC) initiative managed by the Center for Law and Social Policy and the American Association of Community Colleges. The goal of BACC is to help develop and integrate sustainable policies and practices that connect low-income students to an array of public benefits and community resources, such as food assistance, health care, and scholarship opportunities (Amy Ellen Duke-Benfield, personal communication, 2013).

Northampton staff members with experience implementing a pre-existing campus program—New Choices and KEYS—that supported student parents and other nontraditional students are leading efforts to train campus administrators, staff, faculty, and counselors. In addition, New Choices/KEYS staff have cultivated strong connections to community and state administrators of child care subsidy, work supports, and TANF. “We act as advocates for our students so they can focus on their school work and family responsibilities,” says Maryann Haytmanek, the New Choices Project Director, “We know their caseworkers, and they know us.”

## Postsecondary Support for Current Recipients of Economic Benefits

- **The Bridge to Hope program at the University of Hawaii** is a partnership between the university and the state Department of Human Services offering on-campus employment and student support for First-to-Work public assistance participants enrolled full-time at any of the 10 University of Hawaii campuses. There is no time limit for using postsecondary education activities to meet “non-core” requirements (up to 60 month TANF limit), and the State of Hawaii supports utilizing the postsecondary education option within Job Skills Training (JST). In addition to the Vocational Education and Training (VET) and JST options offered by TANF, Bridge to Hope offers a third path for those students unable to successfully transition to the

required 20 hours of paid employment (or volunteer hours) for JST. This third path is a vestige of pre-2006 DRA rules changes and reduces the required “work activity” to a total of 20 hours a week of postsecondary education and on-campus work. Student parents may keep all of their on-campus wages rather than deduct them from their First-to-Work benefit. The initiative started in 2000 through a partnership between the university and the state Department of Human Services.

- The **Ready to Work** program is another long-established initiative to help mothers move their families out of welfare permanently through postsecondary education. Started in 1999 through a partnership between the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services’ Department for Community Based Services, Ready to Work offers work-study opportunities, support services, and academic and employment counseling. A key component of Ready-to-Work is having on-campus coordinators financed through federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds, who help students access financial aid, transportation, and child care and develop and support their TANF-funded work study placements.

## VIII. Affordable Housing

Low-income student parents need help securing affordable and safe housing. Since the recession, the proportion of households that face severe housing cost burdens (paying more than half their income for housing) has risen sharply; 68 percent of households earning less than \$15,000 fall into this category (Harvard University 2013). Analysis of national data found that these families have significantly less in their family budgets for food, clothes, and health care than families living in affordable housing. Yet, government housing assistance programs are not increasing to meet the need (Harvard University 2013).

Almost half (49 percent) of respondents to the IWPR survey say that the student support programs they represent help students with housing issues. For those student parents who wish to live on campus, the choices may be few; data collected from the American Association of Community Colleges showed that just one in four offered on-campus housing (Epstein 2007).

There are examples of innovative programs that bring together housing and education supports. Some are community-based partnerships to provide residential opportunities for single parents to succeed in school and in their careers; other resident models are campus-led.

- **Buckner Family Place** is a residential student parent support model developed through a partnership of Angelina College, a nonprofit agency called Buckner Children and Family Services, and the Women’s Shelter of East Texas. Private funds helped build 40 apartments in a complex on college land with an on-site child development center and multiple support services available, including counseling, case management, and parent education and supports. The protected environment is helpful for mothers who have experienced domestic violence. Follow up data show that 60 percent of participants leave with a certificate or associate’s degree. Efforts are underway to develop other means of financing residential facilities across Texas (Buckner Family Place 2012).

- **Family Scholar House, Inc.** in Louisville, Kentucky, is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to end the cycle of poverty by giving single-parent students the support they need to earn a college degree. Family Scholar House provides a comprehensive continuum of services that target any barrier their parent scholars must overcome to obtain college degrees, achieve career-track employment, and attain and maintain self-sufficiency, including supportive housing, academic advising, and family support services. As of October 2014, Family Scholar House had four campuses in Louisville providing housing for 167 families. Family Scholar House has developed public-private partnerships, creative collaborations, and strong **community buy-in to finance** the array of services they provide, including housing. For example, federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, project-based Section 8 from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, and support from private and public donors, including a grant from Louisville Metro's Office of Community Services and Revitalization, all contribute to the organization's overall budget.
- The **Women with Children program at Wilson College in Pennsylvania** offers on-campus housing to single mothers with children (20 months and older) enrolled full-time in this four-year college. There is a dedicated building for student families with common area playrooms, computer rooms, kitchens, and laundry facilities. Students may stay in residence through all academic year break periods without additional charges and may stay for the summers for an additional charge. The Wilson College Child Care Center offers services for children 20 months to five years old, and participants in the Women with Children program have priority placement. The college covers the cost of child care.
- **Texas State Technical College-Waco Campus** operates Brazos Community, a housing area of duplexes and homes that is available to full-time students who are married or single with dependent children. The housing is sizable; duplexes are available in two or three bedrooms options and homes have three or four bedrooms. Students pay rent, but at below market rates (Michelle L. Rachels, personal communication, 2013).

## What do Student Parents Want?

Focus groups conducted by the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Parent Support programs at the University of Alabama said they needed the following supports:

- affordable and flexible child care
- opportunities to meet with other student parents
- information about campus and community resources
- lactation centers
- affordable and safe housing, and
- acknowledgement of their special needs and supports from departments.

*Perdue, Cori and Lisa Tallin, 2012. "Bridging the Gap." Presentation at the Ohio State University Student Parent Symposium, June 2012.*

## IX. Implications and Lessons Learned

A key set of considerations emerged from the insights shared by the individuals who participated in the interviews and survey for this project.

- 1. Most campuses do not have a system to identify student parents and be proactive about providing supports. To be most effective, support programs should conduct outreach to identify and build connections to student parents as early as possible in their college careers.** School administrators may not realize how many student parents they already serve. Sometimes student parents do not want to bring attention to themselves because they feel different from other students. Separate student parent orientations and invitations to visit the student parent center early are some strategies that could increase student parent participation. “Often parents come in because they have heard we can help securing child care,” says Susan Warfield at the Student Help Center at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, “...but once they are there we have a very inviting space and other services to draw them in.” In addition, several programs partner with local high schools, health clinics, and community-based organizations to reach young parents, encourage them to enroll in postsecondary education, and tell them about the supports they can receive.
- 2. Finding and affording quality child care is a major concern of student parents. On-campus child care centers are just one of several strategies schools can use to help.** Postsecondary leaders who want to address this major obstacle to degree attainment can find other solutions. Some are providing scholarships to help students afford child care off campus. Others forge partnerships with community centers and family child care home providers to secure slots for student parents. Even taking the simple step of proactively linking student parents to information about available community and public resources, such as child care resources and referrals, public funding for child care assistance for low-income families, and Early Head Start and Head Start programs can assist them with these important decisions about the well-being of their children.
- 3. Student parents can provide valuable information about their needs to help colleges identify the most effective services and types of information to offer.** Programs regularly ask for feedback on their services and adapt to meet the needs of student parents. For example, multiple programs mentioned that they learned that public transportation passes were not adequate to help student parents commute to school because they needed to drop off children in multiple locations or bus routes were ill-timed. Solutions such as resources for low-cost auto loans, car repairs, and gas cards were a better support. Focus groups at the University of Alabama found that student parents wanted a range of supports, including lactation centers (see Box: **What do Student Parents Want?**). The Student Parent Help Center at the University of Minnesota uses student input to design the content of the weekly parent support group, which brings in experts to discuss a range of topics including cooking nutritious meals on a budget, parenting strategies, financial aid and planning, and writing resumes.
- 4. The personal connection between staff and students is critical to success.** Student parent programs can enhance their impact by making sure that staff are knowledgeable about the challenges faced by student parents and prepared to provide personal support as well as information about a range of student parent issues. According to Sue Russell, President of the

Child Care Services Association and founder of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarship initiative, “The T.E.A.C.H. counselors are a key component of student success, helping scholarship recipients juggle work, family and school while staying focused and committed to the long haul toward degree and certificate completion.” Staff either need to have expertise in both family support and academic issues, or know how to refer students as necessary. Many survey respondents say they also have to advocate with faculty on behalf of student parents.

5. **Student parent supports can be built in numerous ways depending on the resources available on campus and in the community.** This report identified a range of ways that parents are receiving supports on campuses through initiatives launched by diverse departments and offices. Leaders of the most established programs say they started with small initiatives and expanded their programs and financing over time. Simply acknowledging the student parent community and providing opportunities for parents to network and support each other can make a difference.
6. **To sustain a student parent support program long-term, it is important to build support from all levels of campus, from the President of the college, to faculty and funders, to the larger student body.** Raising awareness that student parents are a portion of the student body who face unique issues can be a challenge, but often once key campus leaders and funders recognize this reality they become strong supporters of students with children. Student parents themselves are the best and most sympathetic messengers, say veterans in the field. “Helping students gain the confidence to advocate for themselves is most effective,” said Joanna Wall of the Oklahoma SMART program. Holding public campus events for parents and children serves the dual purposes of strengthening student parents’ connections to each other and humanizing the issue. Some say it is important to establish an identifiable and visible student parent support office or lounge on campus for similar reasons. In addition, high levels of support are needed to make sure that academic and administrative departments, as well as any community partners, are on board and support integrating services for student parents.
7. **Student parent programs need a combination of public and private funding.** Programs listed a wide range of funding sources, including university/college general funds, foundation grants, federal funds, state or local funds (including allocations from federal block grants like the Child Care and Development Block Grant and general revenue), student fees, and corporate and private donations. Eighty percent of respondents to the IWPR survey, however, answered that funding was the biggest challenge their programs faced, and 44 percent said they believe support for their programs had weakened in recent years.
8. **More resources and expertise are needed to better measure the implementation and impact of student parent programs.** As student parent programs are implemented, data collection and analysis are critical to track the use of services and potential impact on student parents, their children, and future success. Few programs appear to have external research evaluations or the capacity to conduct rigorous analysis of the ways in which their programs are or are not working.

The United States needs to invest in enhancing the education and skills of the workforce. Just 29 percent of the American adult population aged 25 and older has attained a college degree (Hess and Williams 2014). Student parents, in particular, face multiple challenges to completing their education. Given that

more than one in four postsecondary education students is a parent of dependent children, it is critical that campus and policy leaders take proactive steps to meet the needs of these students. This report identifies numerous ways for postsecondary institutions to welcome student parents and provide supports that can help them reach their educational goals. Even small changes can make a difference in their lives and success rates. IWPR urges leaders interested in promoting college success to consider which aspects of this framework make sense in their community and to begin prepping colleges for student parents.

## Appendix A. Analysis of Student Parent Program Survey

The Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) collected data through a Survey Monkey from Student Parent Service (SPS) organizations in the summer and fall of 2011. The following is a summary of the information collected and characteristics of respondents.

### Who Responded to the Survey?

Respondents to this survey included SPS staff and participants. The programs they represent vary widely, ranging from a representative of a college department serving 20 students a year to the director of a multi-state initiative to help early childhood teachers increase their education reaching 20,000. In some cases, more than one respondent entered data regarding the same program. Although there are 103 survey entries, some were incomplete. Eighty-three unique SPS organizations are named in the survey. Respondents are affiliated with 33 different institutes of higher education (IHE). Thirty-one respondents say their programs are targeted to student parents; 28 serve only low-income families.

Most respondents were from four-year (40 percent) or two-year (29 percent) educational institutions.

<b>Table A-1. Type of Organization of Survey Respondents</b> <i>N=85</i>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Program in four-year higher education institution	40%	34
Program in two-year higher education institution	29%	25
Community-based organization	9%	8
Advocacy group	5%	4
Foundation	2%	2
Program in a less than two-year educational institution	0%	0
Other answers included: <i>state or local government, nonprofit organization, child care center, association, researcher, graduate program, Medicaid managed care/health care company</i>	14%	12

Source: Author’s analysis of IWPR Student Parent Program Survey.

The location of SPS organizations within the postsecondary system appears to vary substantially. Of those respondents who are affiliated with a campus, 42 percent are affiliated with the student services division of the school but an equal percentage answered “other.” The only other category to exceed 10 percent is women’s center/services at 12 percent.

<b>Table A-2. Location of Student Parent Services Within Postsecondary Campus</b> <i>N=57</i>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Student services	42%	24
Women's center/services	12%	7
Early education or child development department	7%	4
Work/life or work/family services	4%	2
Other answers included: <i>office of diversity and inclusion, academic services, financial aid, enrollment, residential life, and specific academic departments.</i>	42%	24

Note: Respondents were asked to select all responses that apply.  
Source: Author's analysis of IWPR Student Parent Program Survey.

### **Types of Services Provided by Programs**

Initiatives vary in what and how many services they provide. Child care and support groups are the most common.

<b>Table A-3. Type of Parent Services Offered</b> <i>N=78</i>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Child care, child care subsidies, or other child care supports	64%	50
Support groups	62%	48
Academic advising	56%	44
Mentoring	51%	40
Job placement services	33%	26
Residential services	23%	18
None of the above/other answers included: <i>case management, life coaching, financial assistance with tuition, books and other academic costs, parenting education, free tax assistance, and student parent meeting place.</i>	10%	8

Note: Respondents were asked to select all responses that apply.  
Source: Author's analysis of IWPR Student Parent Program Survey.

Many SPS organizations help draw parents into the education system through outreach in the community and advocate for student parents in multiple ways.

- **Outreach** - Seventy-two percent indicated they conduct outreach to nonstudents. Examples of outreach activities include mentoring for teen parents at local high schools, in partnerships with community organizations serving low-income families, or through free workshops offered to parents interested in higher education.
- **Advocacy** - Many respondents (64 percent) said they advocate both for individual students (e.g., with faculty, administrators, or to help them access other services) and student parents in general (e.g., regarding campus, local, and state policies and programs).

Most SPS organizations surveyed (62 out of 72 who answered the question) also help student parents to access benefits.

<b>Table A-4. Types of Economic Supports</b> <i>N=72</i>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Child care supports	67%	48
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/welfare benefits	65%	47
SNAP/food stamps	63%	45
WIC	60%	43
Housing assistance	49%	35
Other answers included: <i>Health insurance for adults &amp; S-CHIP; offer a navigator who assists families one-on-one in navigating the system of community resources and supports available; over 20 benefit applications including free tax assistance that can feed information into a FAFSA for easy submission; free and reduced price lunch; Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).</i>	31%	22
Not applicable	14%	10

Note: Respondents were asked to select all responses that apply.

Source: Author's analysis of IWPR Student Parent Program Survey.

SPS programs also offer classes for student parents, in some cases tailored to their specific needs.

<b>Table A-5. Types of Classes Offered for Student Parents</b> <i>N=66</i>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Study skills	55%	36
Courses specific to student parents	32%	21
Adult Basic Education	24%	16
Job training	23%	15
ESOL	11%	7
Other examples included: <i>financial literacy, child development, life skills, transition to employment, parenting education, nutrition, exercise, and stress reduction.</i>	27%	18
Not applicable	18%	12

Note: Respondents were asked to select all responses that apply.

Source: Author's analysis of IWPR Student Parent Program Survey.

Survey respondents provided information on other services they provide.

- **Transportation Assistance** – Transportation continues to be an issue. Nineteen survey respondents offer bus transit passes to student parents and 16 say their students have access to bus and shuttle services on campus. Twenty-four indicated they offer other types of transportation help. Examples include gas cards or allowances or reimbursement for transportation costs. Many wrote in their concerns about the lack of public transportation in rural areas. (N=64)
- **Specialized Counseling** – Forty-six survey respondents said the SPS program they represented offers specialized counseling, including 34 that offer mental health, substance abuse, or domestic violence counseling. Seventeen survey respondents said legal assistance services are provided by the SPS, and 16 offer family counseling. (N=63)
- **Financial Supports** – According to survey respondents, SPS programs offer several different kinds of financial supports to student parents including scholarships (42), emergency funds (29), grants (23), and loans (18). Fourteen respondents said they offer other supports. Those include a food bank, grants to purchase books and supplies, funding for child care and housing, gift cards for groceries and gas, and supplies for children, including diapers, clothes, and school supplies for school age children. (N=68)

Thirty-four respondents said they offer services beyond the multiple choice questions in the survey. Some other types of activities reported are:

- career assessments and personal preparedness inventory
- fatherhood programs and engagement
- a workforce intermediary who builds connections between the industry student parents are becoming prepared to enter and the postsecondary institution and SPS initiative
- training in computer skills; laptops to borrow or keep
- student parent centers and other means to encourage peer support networks, e.g. peer mentoring, study tables/areas for student parents, list serve for student parents only
- campus-wide activities that highlight and embrace student parent families, and
- assistance in making connections to community resources, such as tickets to museums, sporting events, and performances that are family friendly.

Finally, the survey solicited information about how campus-affiliated efforts accommodate student parents. The most commonly mentioned features are hybrid/online courses, flexible class scheduling, and child care. Several respondents, however, wrote in that child care availability is limited.

<b>Table A-6. Campus Affiliated Services for Student Parents</b> <i>N=40</i>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Hybrid/online courses	53%	21
Child care	48%	19
Flexible class scheduling	45%	18
Extracurricular group(s) for student parents	30%	12
Special orientation for student parents	28%	11
Meal plan	20%	8
Not applicable	23%	9
Other answers included: <i>food bank, student parent center, student parent handbook.</i>	18%	7

Note: Respondents were asked to select all responses that apply.

Source: Author’s analysis of IWPR Student Parent Program Survey.

### **Program Challenges**

According to survey respondents, SPS programs face challenges in their work. Lack of sufficient funding is an issue for the overwhelming majority (80 percent) of respondents. Yet, 53 percent say the level of support they receive from the administration of the education institution is “strong” or “very strong”. As one respondent wrote in, “As long as you are not asking for money or staff!” Just 17 percent said they received “weak” or “very weak” support.

<b>Table A-7. Biggest Challenges Student Parent Programs Face</b> <i>N=71</i>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Funding	80%	57
Need more support from institutional administration	35%	25
Need more support from outside community	21%	15
Other answers included: <i>not enough staff; creating connection and feeling of belonging for student parents on campus; inadequate physical space for the SPS; housing for student parents is limited; child care for infants and at night; state limits child care subsidy for study time to one hour a week.</i>	21%	15

Note: Respondents were asked to select all responses that apply.

Source: Author’s analysis of IWPR Student Parent Program Survey.

With funding limited, just over half (55%) say they are unable to serve as many parents as are eligible, but the data provided do not indicate what percentage are reached. Survey respondents say they utilize a variety of funding sources—not limited to public funding—to operate their programs.

<b>Table A-8. Funding Sources</b> <i>N=73</i>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Private donations	45%	33
University/college general funds	44%	32
Foundations	36%	26
Federal funds	33%	24
State or local funds. Answers included <i>California, North Carolina, and Ohio provide supports for SPS programs, including allocation of federal dollars from Child Care and Development Block Grant dollars, TANF and TANF Maintenance of Effort (MOE) grants, General Revenue, State Preschool and Education funding, and department grant initiatives.</i>	33%	24
Student fees	19%	14
Corporate donations	14%	10
Other	29%	21

Note: Respondents were asked to select all responses that apply.

Source: Author's analysis of IWPR Student Parent Program Survey.

In answer to a question about the funding and organizational strength of the SPS program, 44 percent said the support level was weaker or much weaker than the previous year, compared with 19 percent who believed it was stronger and 37 percent who perceived no change over that period of time.

## Appendix B. Information on the Examples Included in the Report

Program	City/State	Contact
<b>Affiliated with Two-Year Colleges</b>		
<b>Access and Success Program – St. Catherine’s College</b> <a href="http://minerva.stkate.edu/offices/administrative/access.nsf">http://minerva.stkate.edu/offices/administrative/access.nsf</a>	St. Paul, Minnesota	Joan Demeules, Director of Access and Success for Student Parents at St. Catherine University <a href="mailto:jmdemeules@stkate.edu">jmdemeules@stkate.edu</a>
<b>Bridge to Hope – multiple community college locations through University of Hawaii</b> <a href="http://www.hawaii.edu/bridgetohope/index.htm">http://www.hawaii.edu/bridgetohope/index.htm</a>	Hawaii	Teresa Bill, Bridge to Hope Coordinator <a href="mailto:bthinfo@hawaii.edu">bthinfo@hawaii.edu</a>
<b>Career Advance - Community Action Project of Tulsa</b> <a href="http://captulsa.org/our-programs/family-advancement/careeradvance/">http://captulsa.org/our-programs/family-advancement/careeradvance/</a>	Tulsa, Oklahoma	Monica Barczak, Innovation Lab Tulsa CAP <a href="mailto:mbarczak@captc.org">mbarczak@captc.org</a>
<b>CNM Connect – Central New Mexico Community College</b> <a href="http://www.cnm.edu/student-resources/get-help">http://www.cnm.edu/student-resources/get-help</a>	Central New Mexico	Ann Lyn Hall, Executive Director of CNM Connect <a href="mailto:ahall@cnm.edu">ahall@cnm.edu</a>
<b>Family Economic Security Program - Norwalk Community College</b> <a href="http://www.ncc.commnet.edu/fesp/">http://www.ncc.commnet.edu/fesp/</a>	Norwalk, Connecticut	Kristina Testa-Buzzee, Director of the Family Economic Security Program <a href="mailto:KTesta-Buzzee@ncc.commnet.edu">KTesta-Buzzee@ncc.commnet.edu</a>
<b>Family Resource program at Arizona State University</b> <a href="http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/reslife/family">www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/reslife/family</a>	Arizona	Maureen Duane, Program Coordinator <a href="mailto:Maureen.Duane@asu.edu">Maureen.Duane@asu.edu</a> (480) 965-9723
<b>Lane Community College</b> <a href="http://www.lanecc.edu/lfc">http://www.lanecc.edu/lfc</a>	Eugene, Oregon	Terri Hansen, Project Specialist for Networks <a href="mailto:hansen@lanecc.edu">hansen@lanecc.edu</a> (541) 463-3304

<b>Madison Area Technical College and Family Center</b> <a href="http://madisoncollege.edu/cfc">http://madisoncollege.edu/cfc</a>	Madison, Wisconsin	Cigdem Unal, Director <a href="mailto:cunal@madisoncollege.edu">cunal@madisoncollege.edu</a>
<b>Northampton Community College</b> <a href="http://www.northampton.edu/campus-life/student-services/new-choices.htm">http://www.northampton.edu/campus-life/student-services/new-choices.htm</a>	Bethlehem, Pennsylvania	Maryann Haytmanek, New Choices Project Director <a href="mailto:mhaytmanek@northampton.edu">mhaytmanek@northampton.edu</a>
<b>Oklahoma City Community College Child Development Center and Lab School</b> <a href="http://www.occ.edu/childdev/index.html">http://www.occ.edu/childdev/index.html</a>	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	Dr. Mary McCoy, Director <a href="mailto:MMcCoy@occ.edu">MMcCoy@occ.edu</a>
<b>Project Independence at Portland Community College</b> <a href="http://www.pcc.edu/resources/women/cascade/project-independence.html">http://www.pcc.edu/resources/women/cascade/project-independence.html</a>	Portland, Oregon	Debbie Stone, Coordinator <a href="mailto:dstone@pcc.edu">dstone@pcc.edu</a>
<b>Ready to Work - Kentucky Community and Technical College System</b> <a href="http://kctcs.edu/en/system_initiatives/ready-to-work.aspx">http://kctcs.edu/en/system_initiatives/ready-to-work.aspx</a>	Kentucky	Shauna King-Simms, System Director of Transitions Programs <a href="mailto:shauna.king-simms@kctcs.edu">shauna.king-simms@kctcs.edu</a>
<b>Rio Salado College</b> <a href="http://www.riosalado.edu/">http://www.riosalado.edu/</a>	Tempe, Arizona	Mira Radovich, Communications Coordinator <a href="mailto:mira.radovich@riosalado.edu">mira.radovich@riosalado.edu</a>
<b>Single Mothers Achieving Real Triumph (SMART) program - Lakeland Community College</b> <a href="http://www.lakelandcc.edu/web/about/women-center-programs">http://www.lakelandcc.edu/web/about/women-center-programs</a>	Lakeland, Ohio	Gloria Lane, Manager, Women's Center at Lakeland Community College <a href="mailto:glane@lakelandcc.edu">glane@lakelandcc.edu</a>
<b>Starting Points - Fox Valley Technical Community College</b> <a href="http://www.fvtc.edu/public/content.aspx?ID=1716&amp;PID=1">http://www.fvtc.edu/public/content.aspx?ID=1716&amp;PID=1</a>	Appleton, Wisconsin	Sandi Moore, Counselor, Fox Valley Technical College, <a href="mailto:moores@fvtc.edu">moores@fvtc.edu</a>
<b>Texas State Technical College – Waco Campus Brazos Community</b> <a href="http://www.waco.tstc.edu/housing/">http://www.waco.tstc.edu/housing/</a>	Waco, Texas	Michelle Rachels, Director of Campus Living <a href="mailto:Michelle.rachels@tstc.edu">Michelle.rachels@tstc.edu</a>
<b>Young Parent Support Program - Fond Du Lac Community and Tribal College</b> <a href="http://www.fdlcc.edu/academics/departments/special/youngstudentparent/">http://www.fdlcc.edu/academics/departments/special/youngstudentparent/</a>	Cloquet, Minnesota	Tina Alcalá, Young Student Parent Program and Student Activities Coordinator <a href="mailto:talcala@fdlcc.edu">talcala@fdlcc.edu</a>

Affiliated with Four-Year Colleges/Universities		
<b>Baby Bears @ Cal Project</b> <a href="http://prezi.com/ks5_krcmf4nr/baby-bears-cal/">http://prezi.com/ks5_krcmf4nr/baby-bears-cal/</a>	Berkeley, California	Ginelle Perez, Program Director, Student Parent Programs and Services <a href="mailto:ginelle@berkeley.edu">ginelle@berkeley.edu</a>
<b>Family Child Care Network at California State University - Northridge</b> <a href="http://www.csunas.org/childrens-center/family-care-network/">http://www.csunas.org/childrens-center/family-care-network/</a>	Northridge, California	Sandy Abrams, Director Children's Center <a href="mailto:sandy.abrams@csun.edu">sandy.abrams@csun.edu</a>
<b>Keys to Degrees at Endicott College</b> <a href="http://www.endicott.edu/Student/SingleParProg-Student.aspx">http://www.endicott.edu/Student/SingleParProg-Student.aspx</a>	Beverly, Massachusetts	Karin Croucher, Director Keys to Degrees <a href="mailto:kcrouche@endicott.edu">kcrouche@endicott.edu</a>
<b>Life Impact Program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee</b> <a href="http://www4.uwm.edu/lifeimpact/">http://www4.uwm.edu/lifeimpact/</a>	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Natalie Reinbold, Life Coach & Program Coordinator <a href="mailto:Natrein@uwm.edu">Natrein@uwm.edu</a>
<b>Self Sufficiency Program - University of Wisconsin</b> <a href="http://www.uwlax.edu/ssp/">http://www.uwlax.edu/ssp/</a>	La Crosse, Wisconsin	Andrea Hansen, Director <a href="mailto:ahansen@uwlax.edu">ahansen@uwlax.edu</a>
<b>Student Parent Help Center - University of Minnesota – Twin Cities</b> <a href="http://www.sphc.umn.edu/">http://www.sphc.umn.edu/</a>	Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota	Susan Warfield, Program Director Student Parent HELP Center <a href="mailto:warfi002@umn.edu">warfi002@umn.edu</a>
<b>Support for Students with Child Care Expenses - University of Michigan</b> <a href="http://www.finaid.umich.edu/Home/HowtoApplyforAid/StudentswithChildCareExpenses.aspx">http://www.finaid.umich.edu/Home/HowtoApplyforAid/StudentswithChildCareExpenses.aspx</a>	Michigan	Margaret Rodriguez, Sr. Associate Director <a href="mailto:mhr@umich.edu">mhr@umich.edu</a>
<b>Transfer, Re-Entry, and Student Parent Center - the University of California – Berkeley</b> <a href="http://studentparents.berkeley.edu/studentparents.shtml">http://studentparents.berkeley.edu/studentparents.shtml</a>	Berkeley, California	Ginelle Perez, Program Director, Student Parent Programs and Services <a href="mailto:ginelle@berkeley.edu">ginelle@berkeley.edu</a>

<b>Undergraduate and Graduate Parent Support Program - University of Alabama</b> <a href="http://www.gps.ua.edu/">http://www.gps.ua.edu/</a>	Alabama	Cori Perdue, Graduate Parent Support Coordinator, also a graduate student and parent <a href="mailto:cmperdue@crimson.ua.edu">cmperdue@crimson.ua.edu</a>
<b>University of California at San Diego Undergrad Student Parents Network</b> <a href="http://students.ucsd.edu/well-being/wellness-resources/student-parents/index.html">http://students.ucsd.edu/well-being/wellness-resources/student-parents/index.html</a>	San Diego, California	Rochelle Lorkovic, Student Parent Wellness Intern UC San Diego Wellness <a href="mailto:studentparents@ucsd.edu">studentparents@ucsd.edu</a>
<b>Women with Children program at Wilson College</b> <a href="http://www.wilson.edu/admissions/women-with-children-program/national-clearing-house/index.aspx">http://www.wilson.edu/admissions/women-with-children-program/national-clearing-house/index.aspx</a>	Chambersburg, Pennsylvania	Katherine Kough, Director of Women With Children Program <a href="mailto:katherine.kough@wilson.edu">katherine.kough@wilson.edu</a>
<b>Other Resources for Student Parents</b>		
<b>Buckner Family Place</b> <a href="http://www.buckner.org/tag/family-place-lufkin/">http://www.buckner.org/tag/family-place-lufkin/</a>	Lufkin, Texas	Marisa Phillips, HR and TDHCA housing contract manager, IPC/NCC Buckner Children and Family Services <a href="mailto:mphillips@buckner.org">mphillips@buckner.org</a>
<b>Family Scholar House</b> <a href="http://www.familyscholarhouse.org/">http://www.familyscholarhouse.org/</a>	Louisville, Kentucky	Cathe Dykstra, Chief Possibility Officer President & CEO Family Scholar House <a href="mailto:cdykstra@familyscholarhouse.org">cdykstra@familyscholarhouse.org</a>
<b>Generation Hope Scholar Program</b> <a href="http://www.supportgenerationhope.org/">http://www.supportgenerationhope.org/</a>	Washington, DC	Nicole Lynn Lewis, Founder & CEO <a href="mailto:nicole@supportgenerationhope.org">nicole@supportgenerationhope.org</a>
<b>Jeannette Rankin Women's Scholarship Fund</b> <a href="http://www.rankinfoundation.org/">http://www.rankinfoundation.org/</a>	Athens, Georgia	Sue Lawrence, Executive Director <a href="mailto:info@rankinfoundation.org">info@rankinfoundation.org</a>

<b>Single Mothers Academic Resource Team (SMART) Oklahoma</b> <a href="http://www.smartok.org/">http://www.smartok.org/</a>	Oklahoma	JoAnna Wall, SMART Statewide Coordinator <a href="mailto:jwall@osrhe.edu">jwall@osrhe.edu</a>
<b>Single Stop</b> <a href="http://www.singlestopusa.org/program/community-colleges/">http://www.singlestopusa.org/program/community-colleges/</a>	Community colleges in 7 states (CA, FL, LA, MA, NJ, NM, and NY)	Vanessa Marquez, Development Officer <a href="mailto:VMarquez@singlestopusa.org">VMarquez@singlestopusa.org</a>
<b>T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship Project</b> <a href="http://www.childcareservices.org/ps/teach.html">http://www.childcareservices.org/ps/teach.html</a>	22 states	Sue Russell, President Child Care Services <a href="mailto:suer@ipass.net">suer@ipass.net</a>

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