



# Fact Sheet

IWPR #C425

November 2014

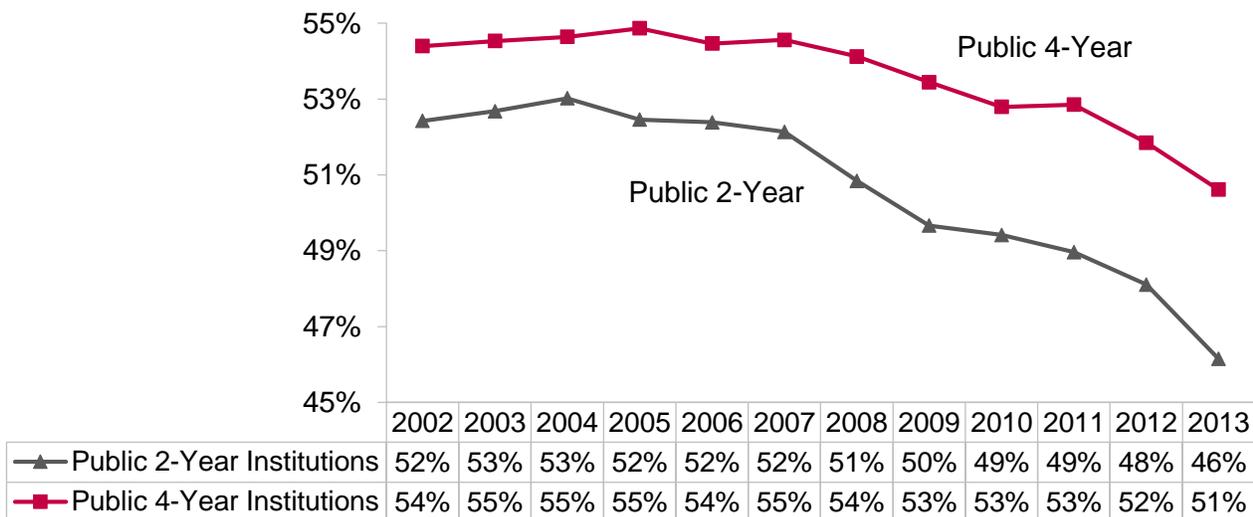
## Campus Child Care Declining Even As Growing Numbers of Parents Attend College

Affordable, reliable child care is a crucial support for the 4.8 million college students raising dependent children, but is often tough to find. High child care costs, difficulty obtaining subsidies, and scheduling challenges often create significant obstacles for student parents, and may contribute to their relatively low rates of college completion.<sup>1</sup> Postsecondary systems can play an important role in promoting college success by helping student parents locate and pay for the child care they need to succeed in school.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the growing number of postsecondary students with children, campus-based child care has been declining in recent years. The proportion of community colleges with child care on campus declined from a high of 53 percent in 2003-2004, to 46 percent in 2013. In public 4-year institutions, the proportion of campuses with child care decreased from 54 to 51 percent from 2002 to 2013 (Figure 1).<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 1: Campus Child Care Declining in the U.S., Especially in Community Colleges**

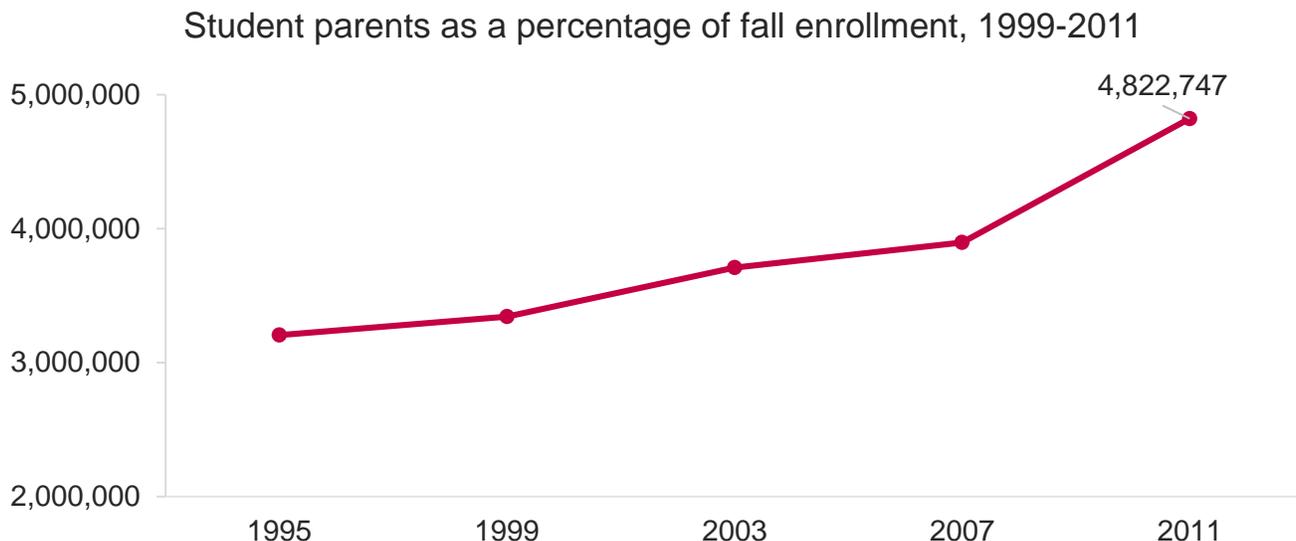
**Percent of Colleges with Campus Child Care**



Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

In 2011, 26 percent of all postsecondary students in the United States, or 4.8 million students, were parents of dependent children.<sup>4</sup> From 1995 to 2011, the number of student parents increased by more than 1.6 million (50 percent; Figure 2).

## Figure 2: The Number of Parents in College is Growing

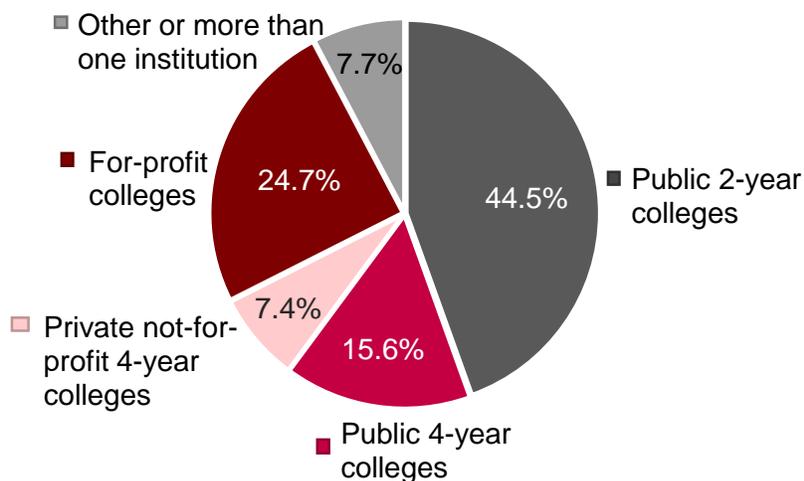


Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Nearly half (45 percent) of all students with children in the United States attend public 2-year institutions while 16 percent attend public 4-year schools (Figure 3).<sup>5</sup> Campus child care has decreased most dramatically at community colleges, with less than half of all 2-year campuses offering campus child care services as of 2013 (Figure 1).

## Figure 3: Largest Share of Student Parents Attend Community Colleges

Distribution of Student Parents by Institution Type, 2011



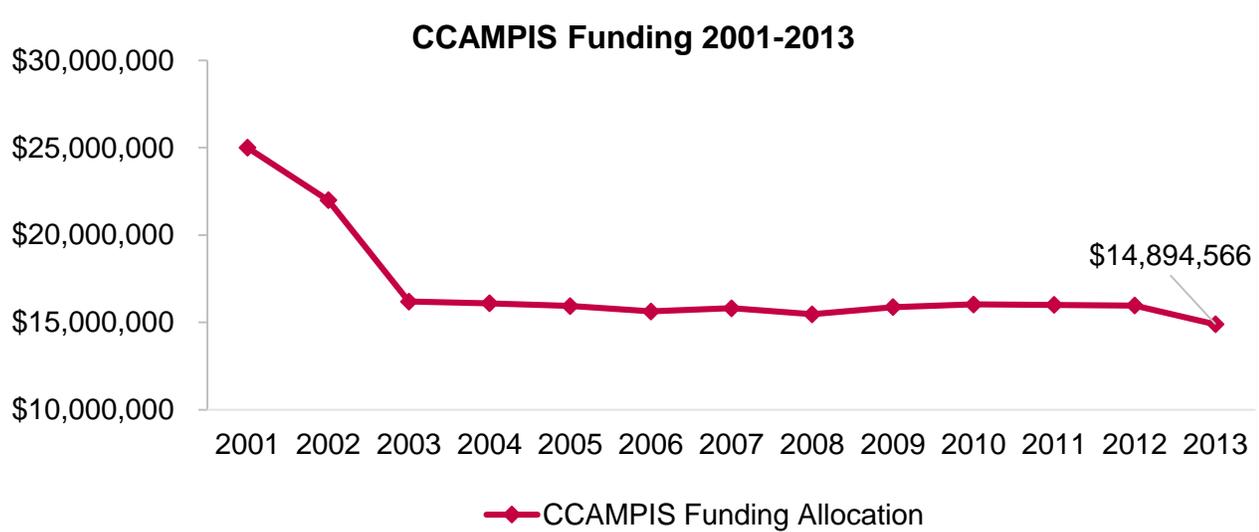
Note: There are 371,207 student parents that fall into the “other or more than one institution” category, which includes public less-than-2-year institutions, private less-than-4-year institutions, and more than one institution.

Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Despite increasing numbers of students with children, federal funding for campus child care through the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) grant program has remained essentially

unchanged in recent years (Figure 4). CCAMPIS seeks to support the participation of low-income parents in postsecondary education through the provision of child care. Campuses use these funds in a variety of ways, including to establish and expand campus-based child care and to provide students with subsidies for child care services.<sup>6</sup> CCAMPIS funding peaked in 2001 (at \$25 million) and declined significantly in 2003. Since then annual funding for the program has remained at approximately \$15 to \$16 million (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Federal Campus Child Care Funding Stagnant**



Source: U.S. Department of Education. 2014. "Funding Status." <<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/campisp/funding.html>> (accessed July 23, 2014).

Child care can be prohibitively expensive for many families, especially those with low-incomes. Low-income families with children under 15 spend, on average, 40 percent of their average monthly income on child care, whereas their higher-income counterparts spend between 7 and 13 percent on child care.<sup>7</sup> In all 50 states, the average annual cost of center-based infant care (for children less than one year old), which ranges from \$4,863 in Mississippi to \$16,430 in Massachusetts, exceeds the average fees and tuition of a 4-year public university in 31 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>8</sup>

Federally-funded child care subsidies could help alleviate child care costs, yet they are limited and inaccessible to many families who need them. In 2009 (the most recent year for which federal estimates of child care eligibility and receipt are available), only 18 percent (2.5 million) of the 13.8 million federally-eligible children received subsidized care.<sup>9</sup> As of 2014, 18 states had waiting lists or had frozen intake for families applying for assistance.<sup>10</sup> In addition, eligibility requirements can make it difficult for college students to access subsidies. While 47 states allow parents engaged in postsecondary education or training to be eligible to receive child care assistance through the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), many states limit eligibility by requiring parents to work while in school or training, requiring them to be in education or training for a minimum number of hours (e.g. at least 20 hours a week), or imposing time limits on education and training (e.g. 20 months to 40 months).<sup>11</sup> Such restrictions can threaten parents' ability to succeed in postsecondary education and training.

Student parents often rely on family members or friends for care, which suggests that those without such family supports may not have the option to enroll in college. A 2014 Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) survey of female community college students in Mississippi found that respondents with dependent children most often receive child care from the child's grandparents or other relatives (65

percent), neighbors and friends (21 percent), the children's older siblings (13 percent), and some have their children take care of themselves (17 percent).<sup>12</sup> Fourteen percent use either on- or off-campus center-based care. More than three-quarters of parents in the IWPR survey relying on grandparents or other relatives for child care (77 percent) say they do not pay for this care, and nearly half (47 percent) of respondents with children aged 10 and under said they strongly agree or agree that they cannot get the kind of quality child care they want for their child or children because it is too expensive.<sup>13</sup>

Care for dependents can take up a significant amount of student parents' time, which can threaten their ability to persist in college. Twenty eight percent of female community college students report spending 30 hours or more providing dependent care, and thirty percent say that caring for dependents is likely or very likely to cause them to withdraw from class or from college altogether.<sup>14</sup> IWPR's survey of female Mississippi community college students found that 24 percent of student parent survey participants had taken time off from school because of insufficient child care.<sup>15</sup> Improving access to child care for students with children would be likely to contribute to increasing college persistence and degree attainment among low-income adults. College campuses overall should play a more active role in helping to meet the child care needs of students with children.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Gault, Lindsey Reichlin, and Stephanie Román. 2014. *College Affordability for Low-Income Adults: Improving Returns on Investment for Families and Society*. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research.

<sup>2</sup> Todd Borressoff. 2012. *Tools for Student Parent Success: Varieties of Campus Child Care*. IWPR #C393. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research.

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research. 2014. IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

<sup>4</sup> Gault et al. *College Affordability for Low-Income Adults*.

<sup>5</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research. 2014. IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

<sup>6</sup> Todd Borressoff. 2013. *Financing Child Care for College Student Success*. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research.

<sup>7</sup> Lynda Laughlin. 2013. "Table 6. Average Weekly Child Care Payments of Families with Mothers Present and Children Under 15 Years, by Selected Characteristics: 2011." *Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Spring 2011*. <<http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2013/demo/p70-135.pdf>> (accessed October 28, 2014). Low-income families are those who earn less than \$1,500 a month; higher-income families refer to those making a monthly family income of between \$3000 and \$4,499 (who spend 13 percent, on average) and \$4,500 and over (who spend 7 percent, on average).

<sup>8</sup> Child Care Aware of America. 2013. *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2013 Report*. Arlington, VA: Child Care Aware of America. <<http://usa.childcareaware.org/sites/default/files/Cost%20of%20Care%202013%20110613.pdf>> (accessed May 30, 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. 2012. *ASPE Issue Brief: Estimates of Child Care Eligibility and Receipt for Fiscal Year 2009*. Washington, DC: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the Office of Human Services Policy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/12/childcareeligibility/ib.pdf>> (accessed July 3, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Karen Schulman and Helen Blank. 2014. *Turning the Corner: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2014*. Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center.

<sup>11</sup> Gina Adams, Caroline Heller, Shayne Spaulding, and Teresa Derrick-Mills. 2014. *Child Care Assistance for Parents in Education and Training: A Look at State CCDF Policy and Participation Data*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

<sup>12</sup> A majority of respondents who said their children take care of themselves are parents of children who are older than 10 years.

<sup>13</sup> Cynthia Hess, Sylvia Krohn, Lindsey Reichlin, Stephanie Román, and Barbara Gault. 2014. *Securing a Better Future: A Portrait of Female Students in Mississippi's Community Colleges*. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research

<sup>14</sup> Community College Survey of Student Engagement. 2014. "2014 Cohort Data." Austin, TX: Community College Survey of Student Engagement, University of Texas at Austin. <<http://www.ccsse.org/survey/reports/2014/reports.cfm>> (accessed October 20, 2014).

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<sup>15</sup> Hess et al. *Securing a Better Future*.

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