



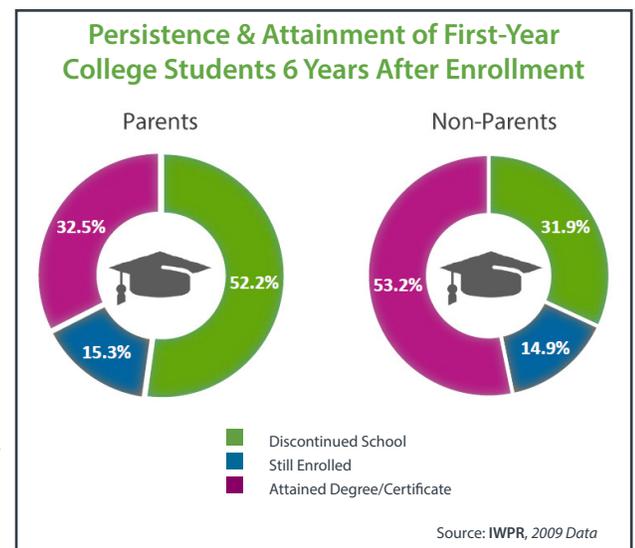
## Supports for Success: Child Care Need and Availability for Community College Students

**Due to increased responsibilities and demands, young parents who are college students spend significantly less time on their studies than their childless peers, and are also much more likely to attend evening classes, work third shift, and live in poverty.**

### SCOPE OF CAMPUS CHILD CARE DEFICIT

Students with dependent children make up a significant [share](#) of the undergraduate population in the U.S. today, accounting for over a quarter (26%) of all undergraduate students in 2012 (4.8 million). Because of relative low-cost and accessibility, many of these student parents are concentrated at 2-year institutions. Despite the growing number of college students with children, [campus-based child care has been on the decline](#), particularly at community colleges. The proportion of community colleges with child care on campus declined from a high of 53% in 2003-2004 to 45% in 2014. For those colleges that do offer campus child care, [demand tends to outweigh supply](#) of slots available, with many schools reporting long waitlists for child care assistance.

Moreover, [fewer than 18%](#) of eligible children receive any type of child care subsidy, and costs can rival those of tuition, ranging on average from \$3,997 per year in Mississippi to \$12,781 per year in Massachusetts (for a 4-year-old in center-based care). Even when a student parent is able to access child care subsidies, many states require parents to work for a certain number of hours to receive subsidies, and may also place [limits](#) on the amount of time parents can stay in school.



### WHY IS THERE A SHORTAGE OF CAMPUS CHILD CARE OPTIONS?

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, the federal program that funds child care on campuses, has remained essentially unchanged from 2003-2012, with cuts to the program in 2013. As a result, the [number of CCAMPIS grants](#) to institutions has decreased from 341 in fiscal years 2001-2004 to 85 in fiscal year 2015. Furthermore, the formula that determines the amount of [CCAMPIS funding](#) an institution can receive is flawed. It is based on the Pell grant amounts awarded to students at the school and does not consider other factors such as the proportion of low-income income student parents at the school. As a result, community colleges receive only [38%](#) as much CCAMPIS funding per parent as four-year institutions.

### WHY DOES A LACK OF CAMPUS CHILD CARE OPTIONS MATTER?

When low-cost child care options become scarce, student parents become at risk of dropping out of college. Students with children are especially [unlikely to complete a certificate or degree](#) within six years of enrollment, with only 33% attaining a degree or certificate in that time. For student parents that somehow manage to balance all of their varied responsibilities and graduate, they tend to have higher levels of debt after graduation than their non-parent counterparts. According to [Young Invincibles](#), Bachelor's degree recipients take on 25% more student debt if they have a child.



## Supports for Success: Recommendations for Community Colleges

### **Institutions of higher education should actively collect and report data on their student parent population, and provide outreach to student parents accordingly.**

Programs targeted to the needs of student parents can have an impact on student success. However, more information is needed to better target these programs. Based on [interviews](#) with leaders of parent support programs, the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) found that very few institutions regularly identify student parents and their needs. While imperfect, the FAFSA may be utilized to gather information on student parents, or the institution may add parenting questions to an existing campus survey. This information should be made publicly available and be utilized to offer academic and other support services to the student parent population. Additionally, having access to this information may better position institutions to advocate for continued or additional funding for parent support programs.

### **Institutions of higher education should explore ways to provide or strengthen child care services offered to student parents.**

Colleges and universities should examine their current student populations, practices, and resources to develop their own strategies for supporting student parents. Support initiatives can be tailored to meet institutional need and can be anchored in a range of on- and off-campus entities. [Child care services](#) offered by institutions can take many forms, including campus-organized care, assistance with finding care in the community, and help with paying for care by offering child care subsidies to qualifying students.

### **Institutions of higher education should provide information to student parents on child care resources that already exist in their communities.**

Most communities have an agency that provides [Child Care Resource & Referral](#) (CCR&R) services that can help student parents find child care options that meet their needs. Additionally, federal programs like [Head Start and Early Head Start](#) or other early childhood education programs can provide free care and learning to young children.

### **Institutions of higher education should explore partnerships with local organizations to provide additional holistic supports to their students.**

Student parents are often eligible for economic benefits and tax programs, but [many who qualify for these benefits do not receive them](#). For example, in 2011-2012, among students with children earning under 50% of the federal poverty level, only 7.4% received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits. Nonprofits in many communities offer services that institutions do not need to duplicate. National experts, such as Single Stop, can work with colleges to assess whether students and their families are eligible for public benefit programs so that they can leverage all existing opportunities in pursuit of their degrees.

### **Institutions of higher education should develop policies or programs to provide student parents with safe, convenient, and affordable housing.**

An [analysis](#) of effective strategies to support single student parents found that affordable housing was one of the most important factors to ensure student success. For colleges that offer housing, an appropriate amount (based on campus demographics) should be designated for student parents. For colleges that do not offer housing, partnerships should be forged with community-based organizations to develop cost-effective housing options for student parents.

## Innovative Child Care Service Models

*[Hostos' Two-Generation Student Retention and Degree Acceleration Program](#): Launched in 2014 through a grant from the Aspen Institute's Ascend Fund, the [Hostos' Two-Generation Student Retention and Degree Acceleration Program](#) helps student parents accelerate their higher education through one free Hostos summer course and free enrollment for up to two of their school-aged children in the Hostos' College for Kids Summer Academy. The program also keeps student parents connected to vital on-campus support services and provides MetroCards to cover transportation costs for their seven-week summer session. Initial evaluative data from this program is promising. In 2014, 93% of the students returned for the fall semester or graduated. This benefit is two-fold because the Kids Summer Academy also keeps children involved and engaged and helps prevent summer learning loss.*

## More Information

For an introduction to possible child care service delivery models:

[IWPR Toolkit](#)

For more information on possible ways to finance child care services:

[IWPR Toolkit](#)

Housing resources and programs for single parents:

[IWPR Brief](#)