

Basic Needs for Parenting Students: Housing & Child Care



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Housing and Parenting Students

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Who Are Parenting Students?

- 1 in 5 undergraduates is a parent | Over 3 million students
- 74% are also working while enrolled | Balancing jobs, caregiving, and coursework simultaneously
- 37% complete a program in 6 years | vs. 60% of non-parenting peers
- 58% experience housing insecurity

Housing Insecurity vs. Homelessness – A Spectrum



Housing Insecurity: A broad spectrum of challenges that compromise safe, stable, affordable housing. Includes:

- Cost burden — spending more than 30% of income on rent
- Frequent involuntary moves — often driven by unaffordable rent or unsafe conditions
- Doubling up — sharing housing out of necessity, not preference
- Unsafe or unstable conditions — living situations that pose risks to a student or their family

Housing Insecurity vs. Homelessness – A Spectrum



- **Homelessness:** The most acute end of housing insecurity. Defined as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Includes sleeping in shelters, transitional housing, cars, or other temporary situations.
- Why the distinction matters for parenting students: Both conditions demand attention, but different policy responses.
- A student couch-surfing with a toddler and a student without shelter tonight face related but distinct crises.

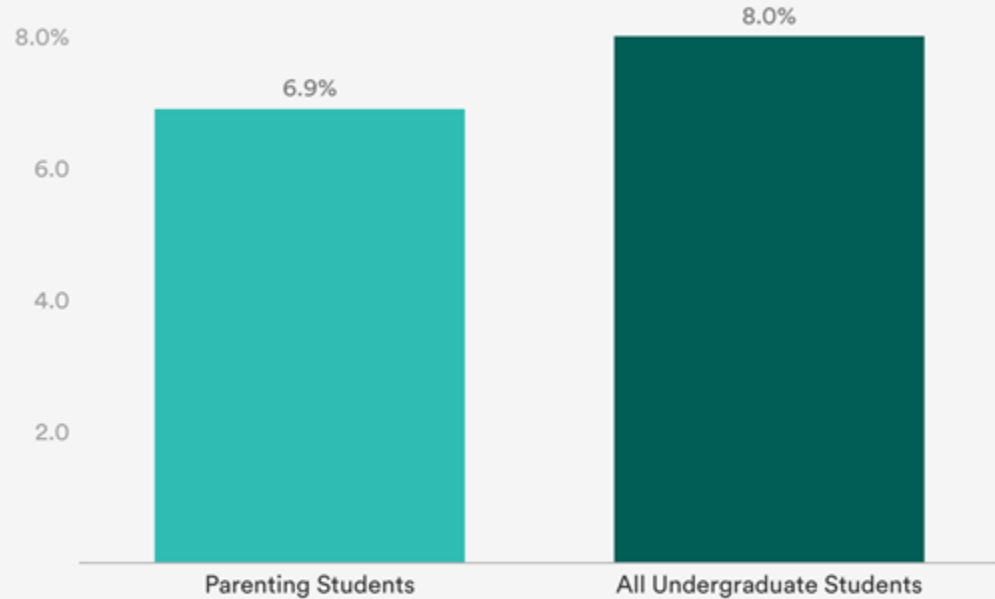
Exploring Homelessness Among Parenting Students

A review of our NPSAS analysis and what we found

Nearly 7% of Parenting Students Experience Homelessness

(Nearly the same rate as non-parenting students — despite being families who should be prioritized by housing safety net programs.)

Percentage of Students Reporting Homelessness in the Previous 30 Days Before Completing the NPSAS Survey



Source: Author's analysis of the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2019-20. Variables: Experienced homelessness: previous 30 days (HOMELESS3); Dependents: Has dependent children (DEPCHILD)

NEW AMERICA

Homelessness Rates Are Highest Among Black and Hispanic/Latino Student Parents

Homelessness Rates Are Highest Among Black and Hispanic/Latino Student Parents

Percentage of undergraduate parenting students reporting homelessness in the previous 30 days before completing the NPSAS survey, by race and ethnicity

Black or African American

10.1%

Hispanic or Latino

7.1%

All Undergraduate Student Parents

6.9%

White

5.3%

Asian

4.2%

Due to data quality concerns, this analysis does not include data for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native populations.

Source: Author's analysis of the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2019—20. Variables: Experienced homelessness: previous 30 days (HOMELESS3); Dependents: Has dependent children (DEPCHILD); Race (RACE)

NEW AMERICA

The background is a solid teal color. There are two abstract, overlapping shapes in a slightly darker shade of teal. One shape is a large, irregular blob on the left side, and the other is a more elongated, curved shape on the right side, partially overlapping the first one.

Exploring Housing Insecurity Among Caregiving Students

New research from New America and Trellis Strategies

The 2025 Student Financial Wellness Survey:

The First Data Specifically Examining Housing Insecurity for Caregiving Students

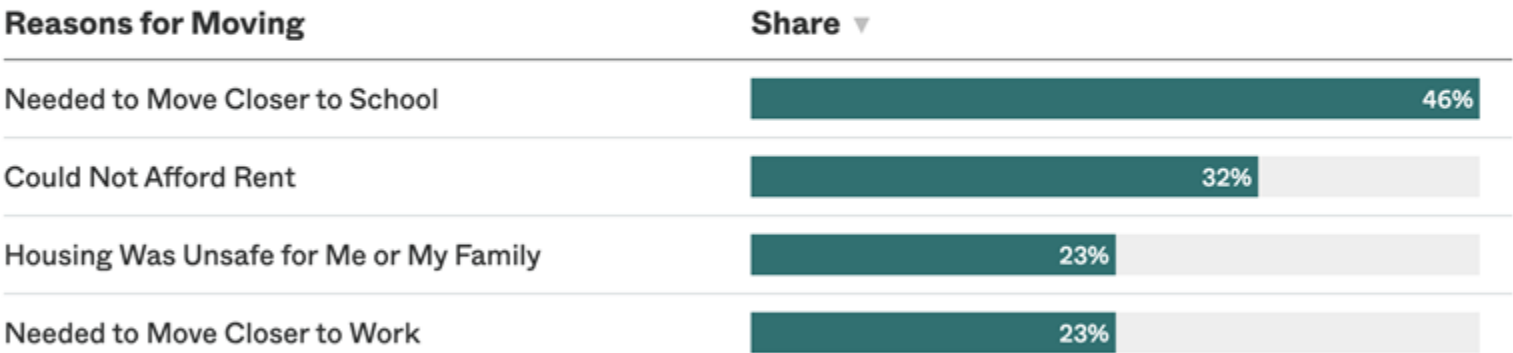
- **24,361** caregiving undergraduates surveyed | Including parenting students, caregivers for other dependents, and those providing financial support for family members
- **153** institutions across 23 states | Fall 2025 survey, implemented October–November 2025; responses weighted by sector, gender, age, and enrollment intensity
- **First** dataset of its kind | New America partnered with Trellis Strategies to add a dedicated module on housing insecurity — capturing not just whether, but how and why

Finding #1: Safety, Affordability, and Stability

TABLE 1

Reasons Why Caregiving Students Moved Three or More Times in the Past Year

Among caregiving students who moved three or more times in the past 12 months (about 5 percent of all caregiving students surveyed); respondents could select more than one reason.



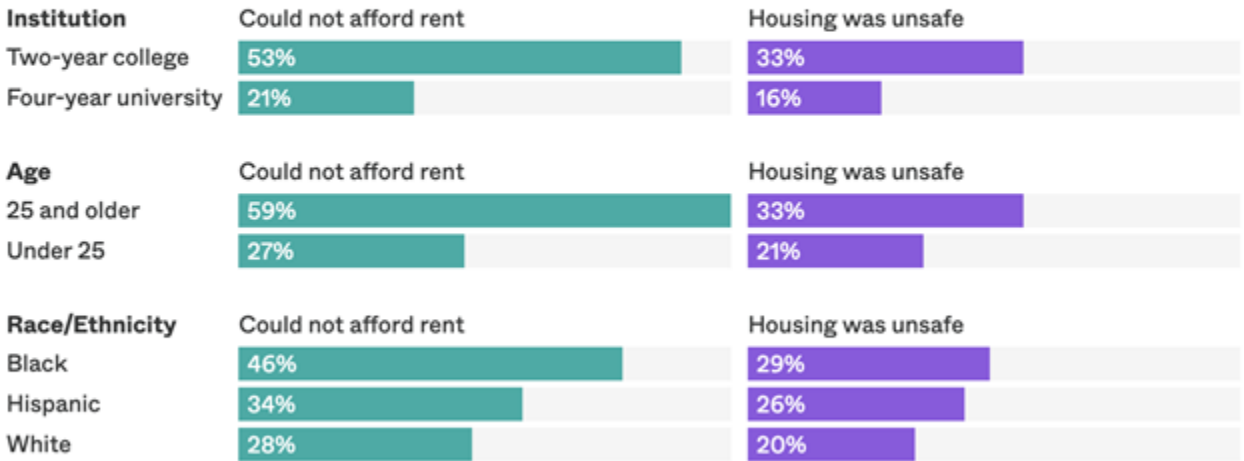
Source: 2025 Student Financial Wellness Survey (SFWS), with housing insecurity experiences of caregiving undergraduates (n = 24,361) analyzed descriptively by Trellis Strategies and New America's Higher Education program

Finding #1: Safety, Affordability, and Stability

FIGURE 1

Student Parents at Two-Year Colleges Twice as Likely to Move Due to Unaffordable Rent, Compared to Those at Four-Year Universities

Percent of respondents who moved because they could not afford rent or because housing was unsafe, among those who moved 3+ times in the past year



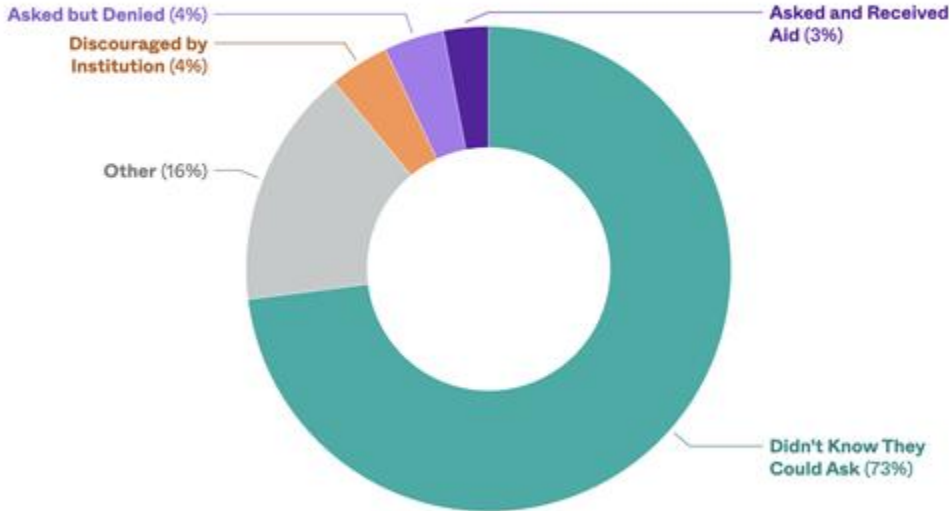
Source: 2025 Student Financial Wellness Survey (SFWS), with housing insecurity experiences of caregiving undergraduates (n = 24,361) analyzed descriptively by Trellis Strategies and New America's Higher Education program

Finding #2: The Awareness and Resource Gap

FIGURE 2

Most Caregiving Students Don't Know They Can Ask For Help With Housing Costs

Share of students who requested additional financial aid from their institution to afford housing, 2025 SFWS



Source: 2025 Student Financial Wellness Survey (SFWS), with housing insecurity experiences of caregiving undergraduates (n = 24,361) analyzed descriptively by Trellis Strategies and New America's Higher Education program

Finding #3: Housing Discrimination

FIGURE 3

Housing Discrimination is a Real and Racialized Barrier for Caregiving Students

Share of caregiving students who reported facing housing discrimination while searching for housing for them and their families



Source: 2025 Student Financial Wellness Survey (SFWS), with housing insecurity experiences of caregiving undergraduates (n = 24,361) analyzed descriptively by Trellis Strategies and New America's Higher Education program

Exploring Eviction Threat Among Caregiving Students

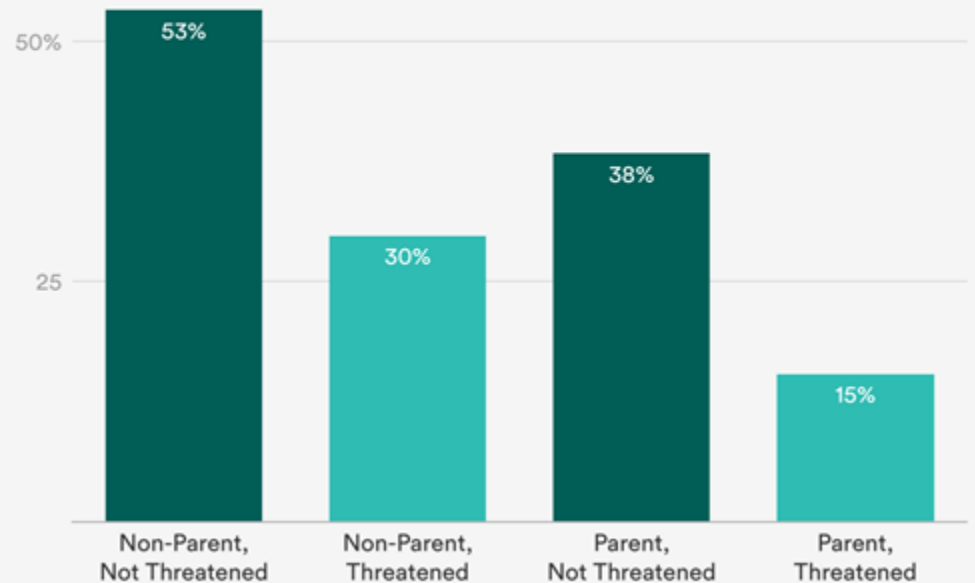
New America partnered with the Eviction Lab to examine outcomes for parenting students who received an eviction filing while enrolled, compared to similar parenting students who did not.

The Impact of Eviction on Degree Completion

- **15% bachelor's completion rate for parenting students threatened with eviction vs. 38% for those not threatened — a 23-point gap**
- **Associate degree completion: 26% vs. 51%**

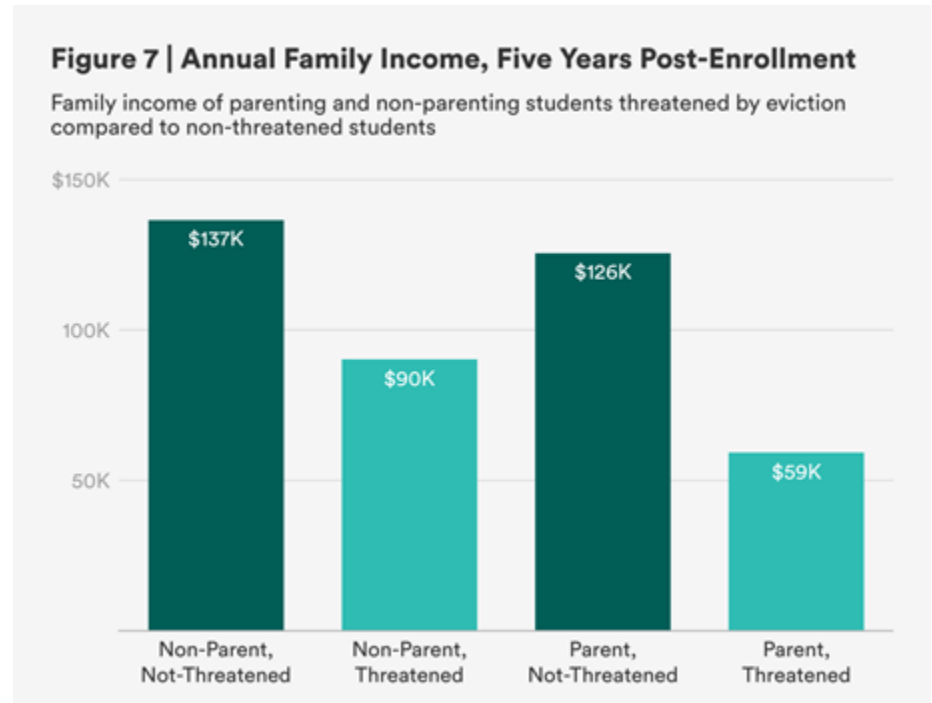
Figure 5 | Bachelor Degree Completion

Bachelor degree completion rate for parenting students threatened with eviction compared to non-threatened parenting students



The Impact of Eviction on Family Income

- **\$59K average household income 5 years after enrollment for threatened parenting students vs. \$126K for non-threatened parenting students — less than half**
- **Driven by especially large impacts on students over 30**

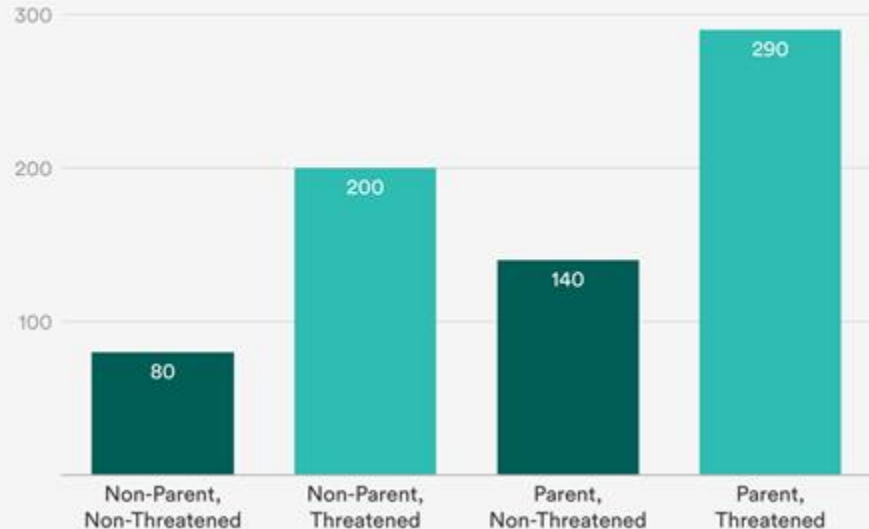


The Impact of Eviction on Mortality

- **2× more likely to die in the 10 years following enrollment compared to parenting students not threatened with eviction**
- **Higher than even non-parenting students who faced eviction**

Figure 8 | Post-Enrollment Ten-Year Mortality Rate: Deaths per 100K

Mortality rate for parenting and non-parenting students threatened by eviction compared to non-threatened students, ten years post-enrollment



Child Care and Student Parents

June, 10 2026



How many student parents need child care?

THE NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATES WHO ARE STUDENT PARENTS

Over 3 million

1 in 5

49%

PERCENT OF UNDERGRAD STUDENT PARENTS WITH AT LEAST 1 CHILD UNDER AGE 6

These students likely need more intensive and/or full time care

Most parenting students are also workers.

They need child care not just for school, but working + study time.

74%

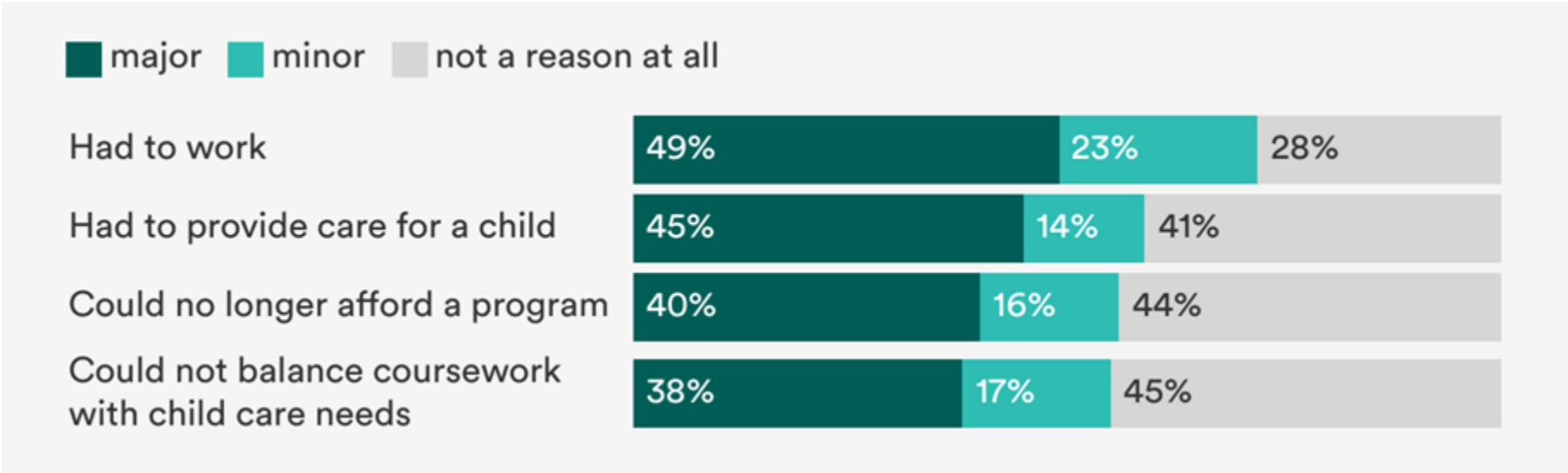
45%

PERCENT OF STUDENT PARENTS WHO RE-ENROLLED & REPORTED A REASON FOR LEAVING WAS LACK OF CHILD CARE

A key barrier to college completion for student parents, particularly single mothers is a lack of access to high-quality and reliable child care.

Top Reasons Caregivers Stopped Out of Community College


59 percent named providing care for a child as a reason for stopping out
55 percent could not balance coursework with childcare needs





I kept dropping classes because I was drowning with all of the responsibilities I had.”

–Rebecca, mother of four attending a rural community college



What types of childcare supports are available to student parents?

4 main types of care support

- ★ On-campus childcare centers
 - Challenge: Small, expensive, & inflexible
- ★ Drop-in care
 - Challenge: Hard to administer
- ★ Referrals
 - Challenge: Lack capacity & community options
- ★ Friends and family care
 - Challenge: Quality & reliability

Parenting Students Often Rely on Informal Care

60 percent rely on family, friend, and neighbor care, either solely or in combination with other care



Common barriers to accessing affordable and reliable childcare



How does the cost of childcare compare to tuition and other college costs?

38 The number of states (+ DC) where childcare is more expensive than public college tuition.

10 The number of hours a week a student should work a job to be successful at school.

30-90 Required hours of work a week to cover childcare & tuition at a public 4-year college.

2-5x The higher (non-tuition) costs for parenting students than non-parenting peers.

Economic Policy Institute: [Updated Resource Calculates the Cost of Child Care in Every State](#)

EdTrust: [For Student Parents, The Biggest Hurdles to a Higher Education are Costs and Finding Child Care](#)

How does the availability of child care impact student parents' retention and graduation rates?

17% of parents complete a program in 6 years vs 50% of non-parents.

- Parents have comparable GPAs to their non-parenting peers.

Childcare on campus is linked to persistence and graduation, but we need more data.

- At Monroe Community College (NY) student parents using the on campus center increased on time grad rates by 20%age points
- Persisted from fall to fall semester at higher rates (71% vs. 42%)

Urban Institute, [The Taxpayer Benefits of Supporting Student Parents](#)

League for Innovation in the Community College: [Supporting One of Our Most At-Risk Populations: Student Parents](#)



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New America Child Care at Community Colleges Research Project



Child Care at Community Colleges Research Project

Overview of the field: Review and synthesis of literature, Interviews with student parents, interviews with advisory committee

Site visits and interviews with staff, student parents, and beyond at 10 community colleges to learn more about effective ways to offer childcare services + barriers to offering services

Child Care at Community Colleges Research Project



Federal Support for Child Care

- Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS):
 - \$75 million annual appropriations (since FY2023)
 - ~264 institutions with grants (FY2023)
 - Served ~3300 students (2016-17), likely more now but no new public data
- Child Care and Development Block Grant/Child Care and Development Fund
 - Administered by states, and some restrict postsecondary education
 - Only 11% of subsidy recipients are participating in education or education & work
- Head Start/Early Head Start
 - Helpful for student parents, but not all qualify
 - Only 27% of all eligible children enrolled in Head Start (limited funding)

§ Federal Support for Child Care

Title IV/Federal Financial Aid

- Include childcare in cost of attendance
 - COA calculations usually don't reflect parenting students higher nontuition costs, including for childcare
 - COA adjustments can help unlock aid, but only if additional aid is available
 - Sometimes the only additional aid available may be loans
- New legislation in CA mandates COA adjustments for parenting students

State Resources

State postsecondary child care grants

- 5 states that we're aware of have aid programs specifically for childcare for postsecondary students.

State universal or income-eligible pre-K

- We didn't find that colleges were systematically linking student parents to state preschool programs
- Some offer spots in campus-based childcare centers

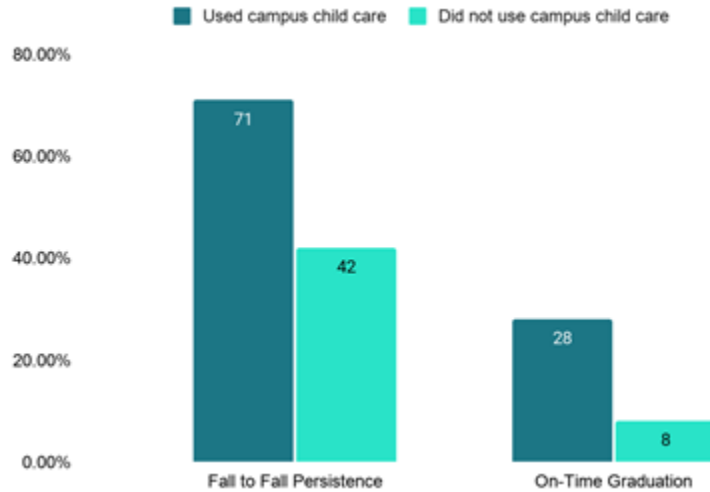
⑤ Institutional Support for Child Care

Most colleges can't afford to support student parents' childcare needs at scale.

In addition to federal resources and federal-state subsidies (CCDF), some institutions support care with:

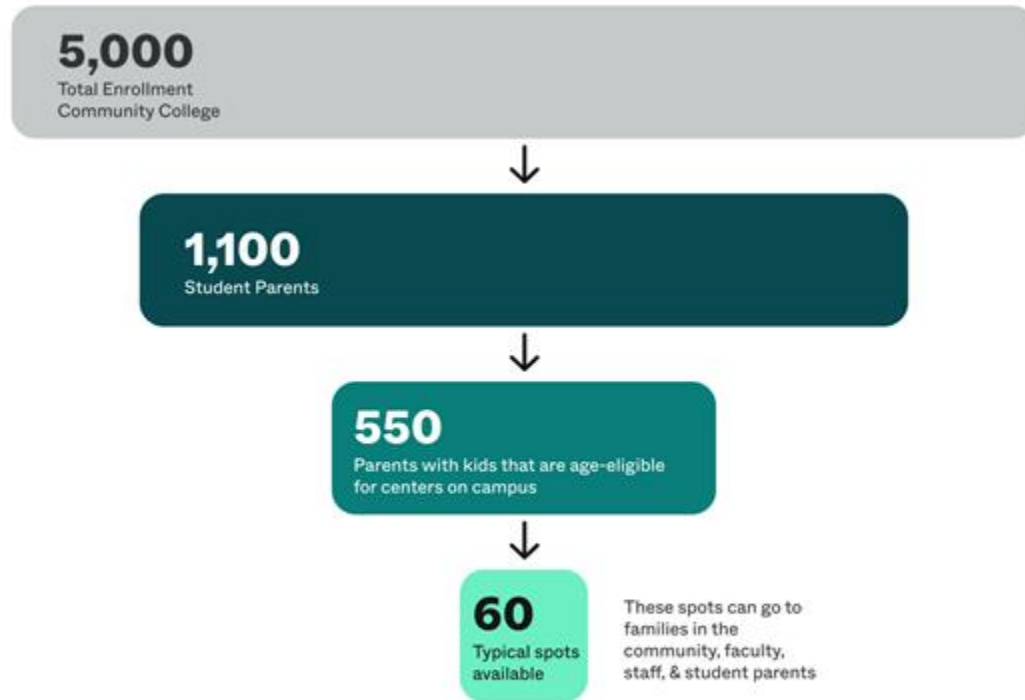
- Institution budget
 - I.e., not breaking even/taking a loss
- Philanthropy
- Tuition
 - Some discount student parents' tuition, but centers that need to break even often charge full-tuition and that can lead to serving more faculty, staff, and community members who can afford it

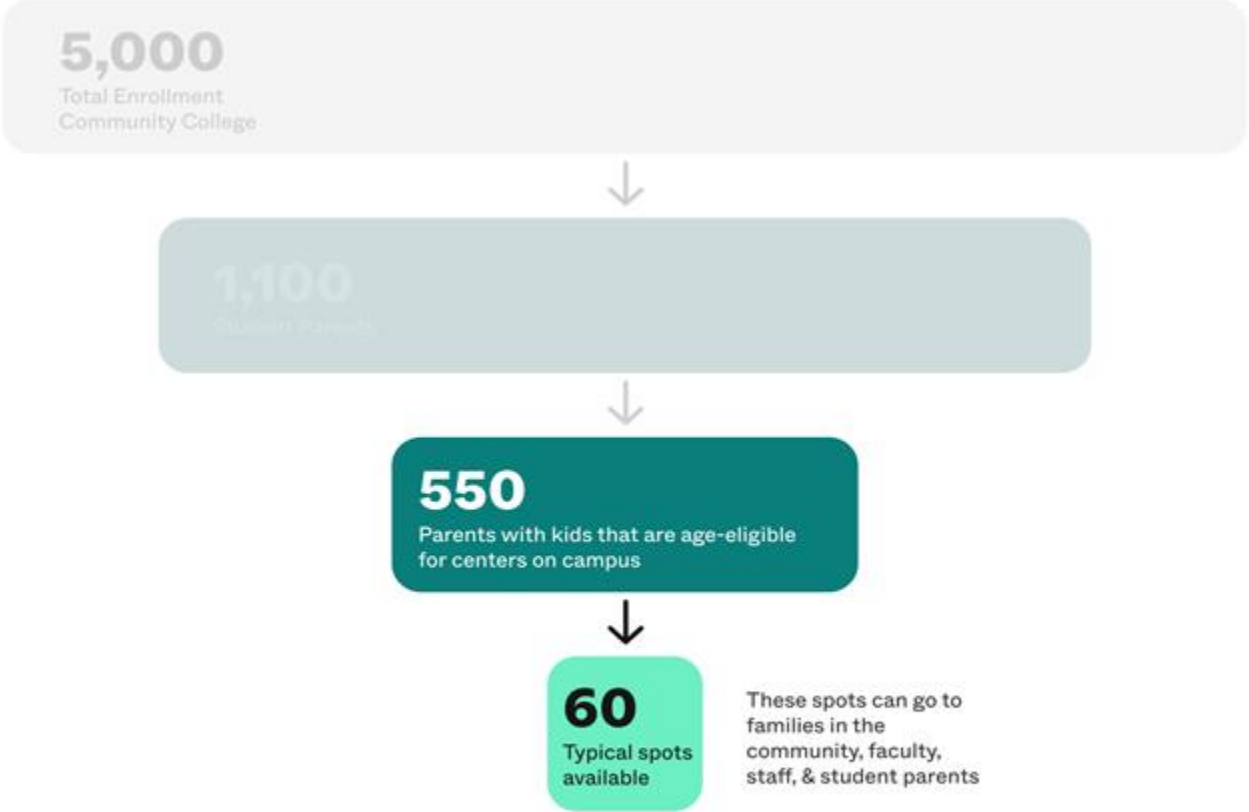
Campus Childcare is an Important Strategy



A study at Monroe Community College found student parents using the campus childcare center were more than **3X** more likely to **graduate on time** than student parents not using the center

... But Campus Childcare Alone Doesn't Solve the Problem





**We need a variety of strategies
to address student parents'
childcare needs.**



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Thank you.