

Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Students

National Student-Parent Action through Research Knowledge (SPARK) Launch Event

March 7, 2023



Thank you to our Leadership Council!

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[Ann Reynolds](#), Mt. Wachusett Community College
[Annalyssa \(Gypsy\) Murphy](#), North Shore Community College
[Blake Flanders](#), Kansas Board of Regents
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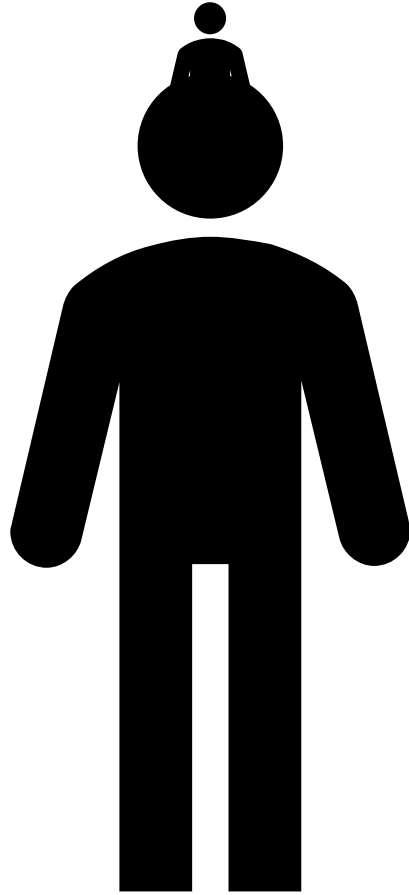
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[Venus Barnes](#), Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
[Yasmina Vinci](#), The National Head Start Association

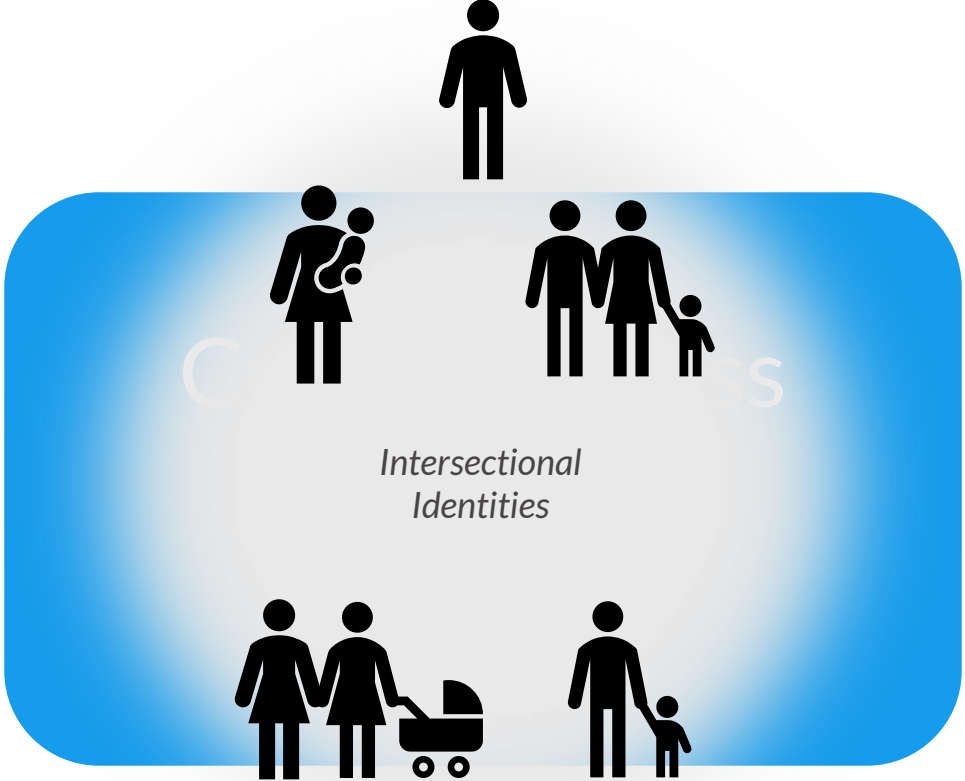
The Student-Parent Families at the Center Framework

Check out the project page

**[www.urban.org/projects/
student-parent-families-center](http://www.urban.org/projects/student-parent-families-center)**



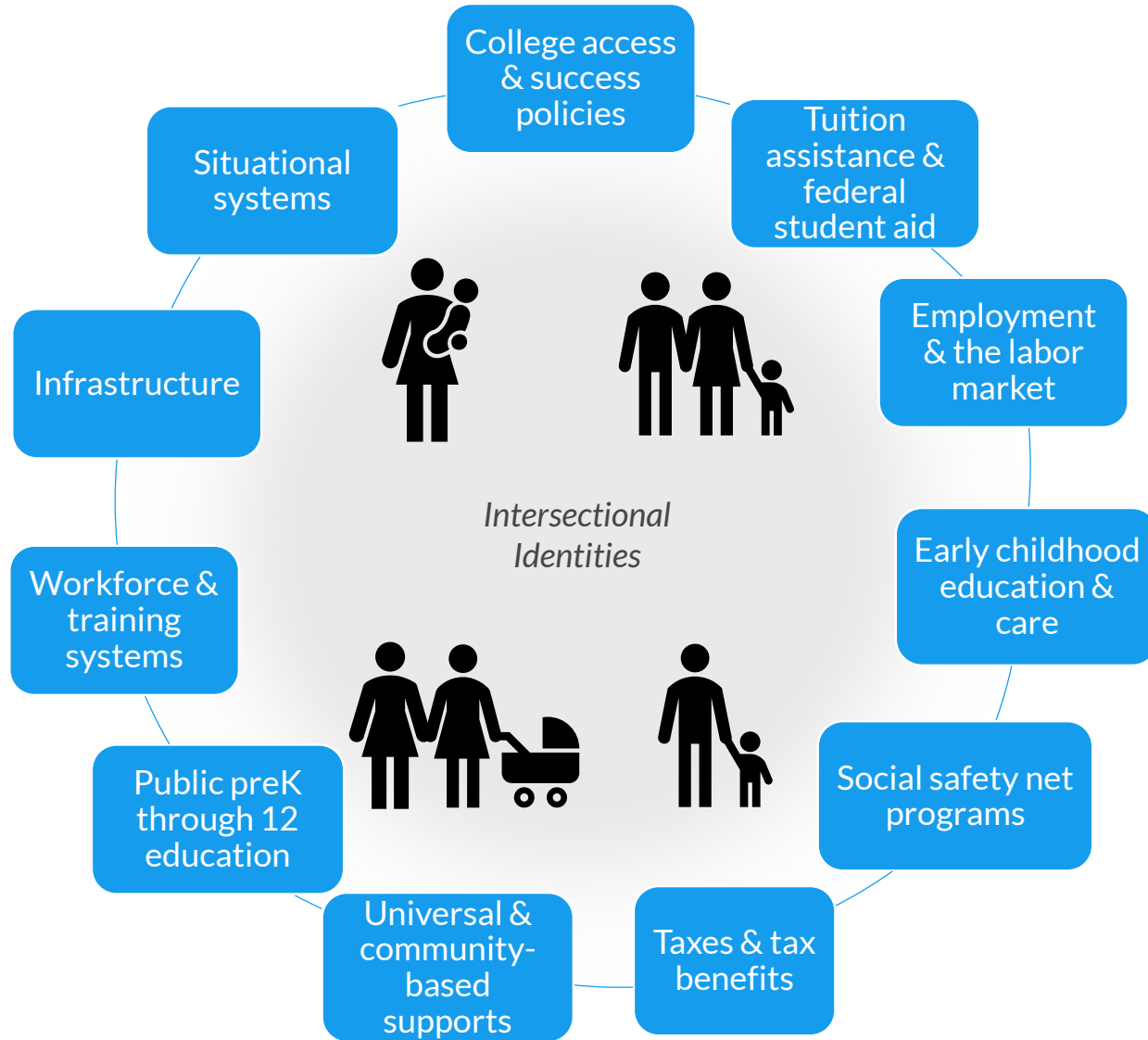


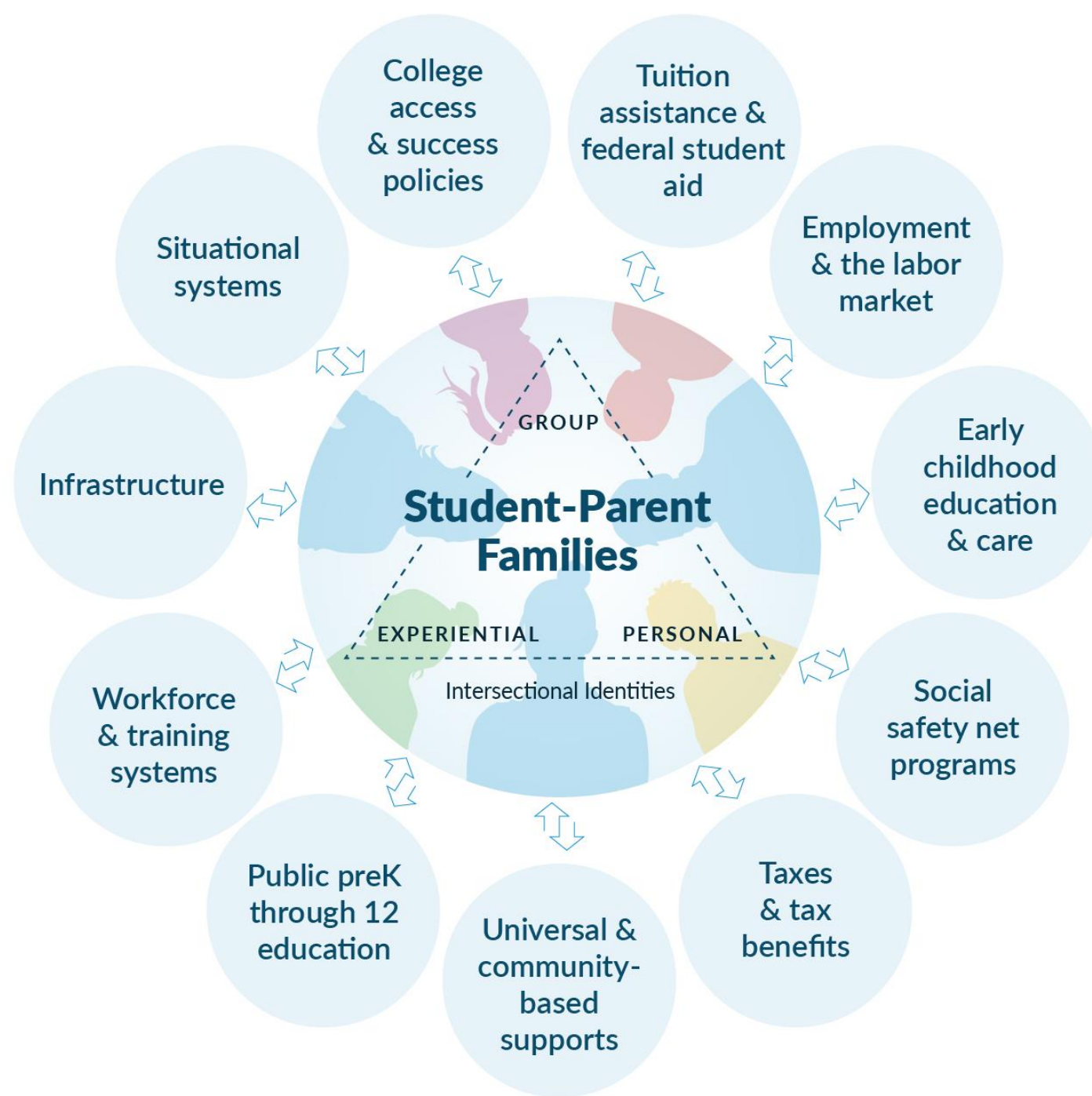




*Intersectional
Identities*







College access & success policies

- Recruitment & outreach
- Orientation & registration
- Class scheduling
- Academic, basic needs, & legal supports
- Health & mental health services offered by colleges
- On-campus dining & college-provided food supports
- Student-parent data collection
- Title IX
- The Civil Rights Act
- ADA protections
- Family-friendly campuses
 - On-campus family housing
 - Inclusive classroom learning experiences
 - Student-parent-specific services, spaces, & policies
- Federal policies on minors on campus
- Higher education funding
- College accountability policies & practices
 - Accreditation bodies
 - Regulations on for-profit colleges

Situational systems

- Child welfare & foster care system
- Child support system
- Fatherhood programs
- Veterans' services/military (and spousal) benefits
- Immigration system & services
- Justice system
- Additional support for people with disabilities & neurodiversity
- Teen & young parent programs
- Tribal policies

Infrastructure

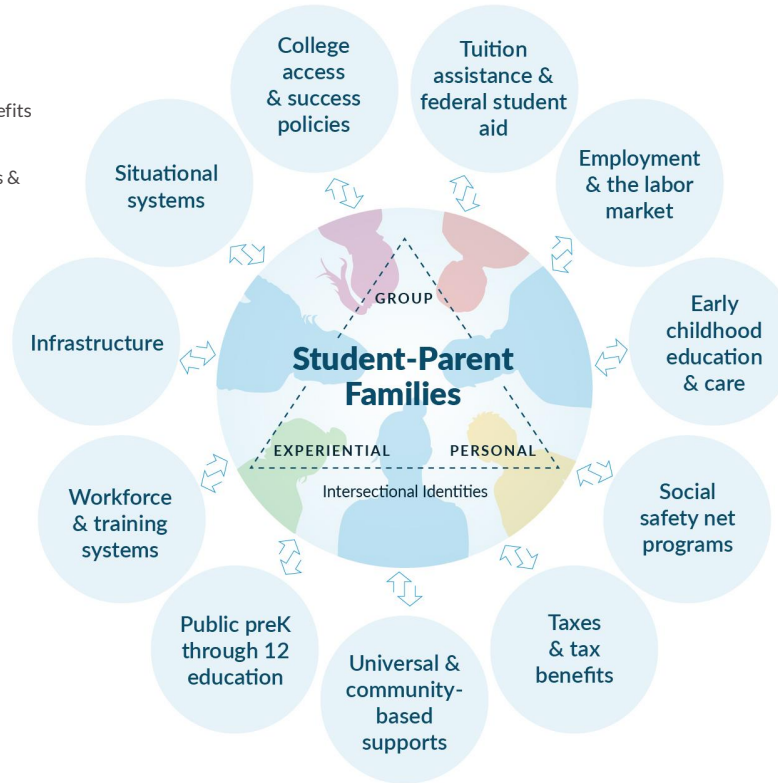
- Technology infrastructure & supports
- Transportation
- Housing & rental market
- Health infrastructure
- Mental health infrastructure
- Data systems (state or federal)

Workforce & training systems

- Individual Training Accounts
- American Job Centers/workforce development system
- SNAP E&T
- Non-credit-bearing job training

Public preK through 12 education

- Local & state preK & 3K policies
- Elementary & secondary education quality
- School logistics, including hours, location, & transportation
- School choice/out-of-district attendance policies
- School expectations of parent engagement/involvement
- Health & mental health services through schools/districts
- IEP & special needs policies
- After-school program offered through schools/districts
- Postsecondary education counseling/ navigation services
- Services for pregnant/parenting high school students



Universal & community-based basic need supports

- Stimulus payments
- CARES Act funding
- Private lending, credit, debt, & bankruptcy services
- Non-profit organization supports

Tuition assistance & federal student aid

- Pell Grants
- Scholarships
- FAFSA & EFC, including child care allowances
- Federally subsidized loans
- Private loans
- Work-study
- Cost of higher education and return-on-investment
- Student debt & loan cancellation or forgiveness
- College income share or outcome agreements

Employment & the labor market

- Nondiscrimination policies
- Minimum wage & wage equity
- Family leave
- Unemployment Insurance
- Employer tuition support or training
- Work-based learning (paid & unpaid)
- Predictable & flexible hours
- Remote work opportunities & policies

Early childhood education & care

- CCDF subsidies
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- PreK & 3K education & care
- College/university child care (CCAMPIS)
- College/university child care (self-funded, private, & partnerships)
- After-school care
- Child care supply/availability
- Child care quality issues
- Child care on demand, drop-in, & back-up care
- Resource & referral centers

Social safety net programs

- TANF
- SNAP, WIC, & FRPL
- Public/Subsidized housing
- Medicaid & CHIP
- Heat & energy assistance
- SSI/SSDI (adult & child)

Taxes & tax benefits

- Income taxes
- Tax credits for families with children
- Higher education tax benefits for students
- Affordable tax software & preparation

PROJECT

Student-Parent Families at the Center

Project Home

Leadership Council

Systems, Policies, and Programs

Publications

Systems, Policies, and Programs

More research briefs and fact sheets to come. Topics with forthcoming publications denoted by an asterisk.

College access and success policies

Colleges have varied policies and practices to recruit and support students with children.

Tuition assistance and federal student aid

Tuition assistance and federal student aid encompass a range of resources to make college economically viable for students.

Roadmap for Change to Support Pregnant and Parenting Students

Putting Student-Parent Families at the Center of
Recommendations for Practice, Policy, Research, and
Investment (Version 1.0)



RESEARCH REPORT

Roadmap for Change to Support Pregnant and Parenting Students

Putting Student-Parent Families at the Center of Recommendations for Practice, Policy, Research, and Investment (Version 1.0)

Theresa Anderson
December 2022

Autumn R. Green



www.urban.org/projects/student-parent-families-center

Changing the Narrative

- The *Roadmap* aims to change the narrative from student parents as individuals with barriers to student parents as a group that is systematically underserved → this is a policy choice
- The *Roadmap* represents a set of alternative choices that can be undertaken in practice, policy, research, and investment spaces
- We could imagine also changing the narratives around student parents in the media, in social interactions, and in other places that reflect a deficit mindset

Roadmap of the *Roadmap*

-  **Destination 1:** Stakeholders Are Aware of Student-Parent Families and the Conditions They Face
-  **Destination 2:** Student-Parent Families Experience Less Time Poverty and Have Sufficient Support as They Pursue Education
-  **Destination 3:** Postsecondary Education Is Financially Feasible for Parents
-  **Destination 4:** Families' Basic Needs Are Met during and after Education Programs
-  **Destination 5:** Student Parents Enter and Complete Education Programs and Attain Good, Fulfilling Jobs
-  **Destination 6:** Parenting Students' Children Are Supported
-  **Destination 7:** Colleges Meet Their Goals by Supporting Student Parents
-  **Destination 8:** Research and Advocacy around Student-Parent Services, Policies, and Investments Are Sufficient and Effective

Check out the Appendix Worksheets

Worksheet Appendix

A reader interested in making progress toward the goals listed in the *Roadmap for Change to Support Pregnant and Parenting Students* could create their own roadmap. This appendix provides two worksheets that can be used to identify promising opportunities that merit further exploration. Many suggestions will require implementation steps that also need to be mapped out, including necessary buy-in or sign-off, partners, and resources (financial, material, and personnel).

Mapping Opportunities to Support Student Parents

This worksheet can help process and prioritize the many opportunities presented in the roadmap. Feel free to fill this out as you review the document.

Who is completing this document?

What is your role?

- Student parent
- College personnel
- College instructor/faculty
- College administrator/leader
- Local government
- State government
- Federal government
- Philanthropic funder
- Researcher
- Other _____

Describe the context you are referencing when reviewing this roadmap (e.g., institution, locality, state, agency, funding environment, body of research) and your role in that context, including how you can influence change.

Destination 1



Stakeholders Are Aware of Student-Parent Families and the Conditions They Face

- **Mile Marker 1A:** Define Key Terms for the Field
- **Mile Marker 1B:** Treat Pregnant and Parenting Student Access Barriers as Discrimination
- **Mile Marker 1C:** Collect Data on Pregnant and Parenting Students
- **Mile Marker 1D:** Recognize the Complexity of Student-Parent Families

Destination 1



Stakeholders Are Aware of Student-Parent Families and the Conditions They Face

Suggested approaches and examples are below:

- 📍 Colleges, policymakers, researchers, and advocates could be more precise about when and how each name for this population is used, which might require explicit discussions about language and purposeful collaboration across the field, ideally guided by the perspectives of diverse parenting students.
- 📍 Every stakeholder could promote asset-based framing in all language, situating the parenting student and their family as a unit of strength rather than a student burdened by their parenthood or at a perpetual disadvantage.
- 📍 Anyone referring to this population could consider all students in a parenting role rather than constraining to biological parents. Nonbiological parents (kinship parenting) or communal caregiving may be more common in certain settings, such as Indigenous communities.
- 📍 Data collection efforts could use language that is as inclusive as possible to count every student with parental responsibilities (see mile marker 1C). Collected data could be disaggregated to identify more specific subpopulations and situations through thoughtfully developed questions or cross-tabulating parental status data with other student demographics.
 - » Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission (2022) and the Office of Civil Rights (2022) at the US Department of Education have developed inclusive definitions of parental status that may offer useful examples.

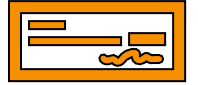
Destination 2



Student-Parent Families Experience Less Time Poverty and Have Sufficient Support as They Pursue Education

- **Mile Marker 2A:** Disseminate Information and Help Student Parents Navigate Supports
- **Mile Marker 2B:** Make College Supports Student-Parent-Friendly
- **Mile Marker 2C:** Align Safety Net Policies and Practices to Support Participants in School
- **Mile Marker 2D:** Do Not Penalize Parents for Having Children or Navigating Situational Systems
- **Mile Marker 2E:** Help Parenting Students Act as Self-Advocates

Destination 3



Postsecondary Education Is Financially Feasible for Parents

- ◉ **Mile Marker 3A:** Offer Financial Coaching and Education Tailored to Student-Families
- ◉ **Mile Marker 3B:** Revise Financial Aid Policies
- ◉ **Mile Marker 3C:** Financially Support Cost-of-Attendance beyond Tuition
- ◉ **Mile Marker 3D:** Support Students Who Need to Earn Income While in School
- ◉ **Mile Marker 3E:** Reduce Student-Parent Debt

Destination 4



Families' Basic Needs Are Met during and after Education Programs

- ◊ **Mile Marker 4A:** Support Student-Based Families' Basic Needs and Consider Them in Design
- ◊ **Mile Marker 4B:** Help Student Parents Have Sufficient Income
- ◊ **Mile Marker 4C:** Ensure Convenient and Affordable Food Access
- ◊ **Mile Marker 4D:** Provide Affordable On-Campus Housing
- ◊ **Mile Marker 4E:** Help Student-Parent Families Maintain Their Health
- ◊ **Mile Marker 4F:** Value Mental Health and Well-Being
- ◊ **Mile Marker 4G:** Make Transportation Accessible
- ◊ **Mile Marker 4H:** Provide Reliable, Affordable Technology

Destination 5



Student Parents Enter and Complete Education Programs and Attain Good, Fulfilling Jobs

- **Mile Marker 5A:** Deliver High-Quality Advising at K–12 and Postsecondary Levels
- **Mile Marker 5B:** Assist with Career and Future Planning
- **Mile Marker 5C:** Implement Flexible and Effective Transfer Pathways and Policies
- **Mile Marker 5D:** Design Family-Friendly Career Pathways
- **Mile Marker 5E:** Develop Supportive Employers
- **Mile Marker 5F:** Hold Colleges and Programs Accountable

Destination 6



Parenting Students' Children Are Supported

- **Mile Marker 6A:** Help Parents Access High-Quality, Affordable Child Care
- **Mile Marker 6B:** Welcome Children on Campus
- **Mile Marker 6C:** Garner Support from Child-Serving Institutions

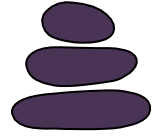


Destination 7

Colleges Meet Their Goals by Supporting Student Parents

- **Mile Marker 7A:** Increase College Enrollment
- **Mile Marker 7B:** Provide Equal Education Opportunities
- **Mile Marker 7C:** Attract Resources to Provide Supports

Destination 8



Research and Advocacy around Student-Parent Services, Policies, and Investments Are Sufficient and Effective

- **Mile Marker 8A:** Promote Parenting Students to Leadership Positions
- **Mile Marker 8B:** Collaborate to Build on Previous Efforts and Progress
- **Mile Marker 8C:** Create Supportive Entities
- **Mile Marker 8D:** Fund and Support Research to Inform Action

Data-to-Action Campaign for Parenting Students

[www.urban.org/projects/
data-action-campaign-parenting-students](http://www.urban.org/projects/data-action-campaign-parenting-students)



Considerations for Postsecondary Data on Student Parenting Status

Few sources of data for parenting students exist

- There is a lack of data on the extent of student parents' needs for child care, housing, academic accommodations, and other supports
- Institutions cannot conduct targeted outreach to parenting students without a way to identify them
- IR offices, state, or federal education agencies cannot bolster academic opportunities for student parents without tracking them in data systems
- Improved data collection (at all levels) is an early and important milestone to meaningful positive change in practice, policy, research, and investment to support parenting students

Federal Surveys, Questionnaires, Legislation:

- National Center for Education Statistics nationally representative surveys
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Census Bureau household surveys
- College Equity Act of 2021 – *not passed*

State Legislation:

- Oregon
- Illinois
- California

We examined at least **18 different questions** from various sources that were meant to identify parenting students

No two questions were exactly the same

- 2 college data systems
- 1 federal administrative dataset
- 1 federal survey
- 1 research report
- 2 pieces of state legislation
- 11 one-time or intermittent surveys of students

5 definitions use **amount of time** a person cares for a child or children

- e.g., “most” or “more than half” of the time with the child, or being the “primary” caregiver or parent

3 different words describe **what parents do for their children**, including:

- “Support” (2 definitions), “responsible for” (2 definitions), “care for” (3 definitions, including “depend on for care” and “caregiver”)

2 definitions depend on **legal dependent status**

5 definitions specify that the child must be under **age 18** or a minor

4 definitions indicate that the parent and child must live in the same **household**

3 definitions allow **self-identification**, with no qualifications or criteria

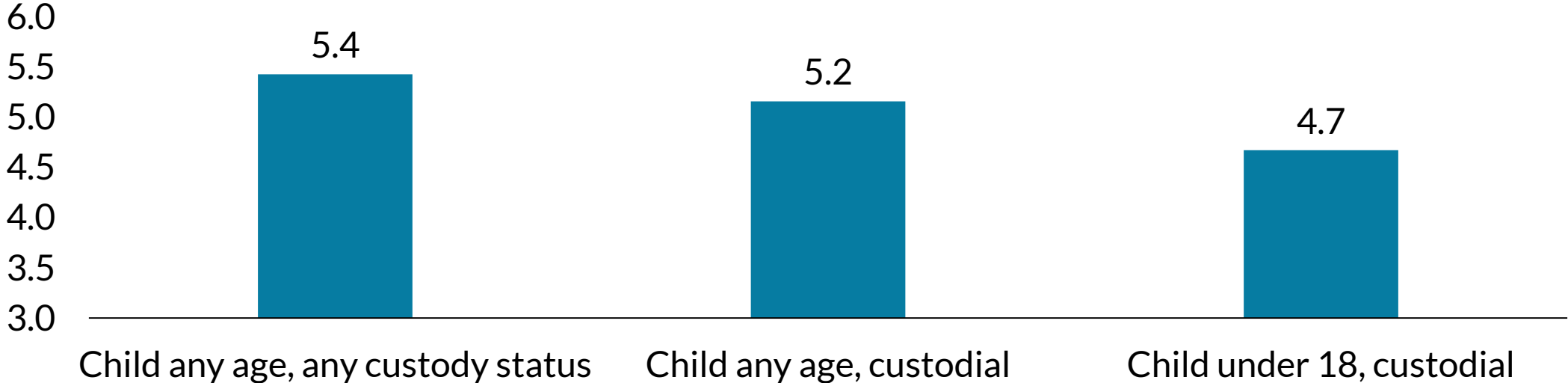
Also:

3 definitions include people who are **pregnant or expectant**

The definition matters

Changing a few criteria result in a 13% reduction in how many parenting students are identified nationally

Millions of parenting students



Source: Authors' calculations using the 2018 Survey of Income and Program Participation. Data are nationally representative as of December 2017.

Our current definition

A parenting student is someone who is enrolled in any level of education or training and is concurrently responsible for (or imminently will be responsible for) providing for a child of any age. They may be biological parents, stepparents, adoptive parents, foster parents, unmarried partners in a relationship, grandparents, extended family, or siblings.

Other cross-sectional statuses

- **Pregnancy or expectancy status**
- **Number of children**, since parents with more children may have greater needs—and to count number of children who may need appropriate services, such as child care
- **Child(ren) age(s)**, primarily to assess child care needs
- **Relationship or partnership status**, because parents without a co-parenting partner may face tougher circumstances, but:
 - Relationship/co-parenting status can be complicated, fluid, and personal
 - Clear categories are a challenge - marital status does not always align with partner status
 - Terms like “solo parenting” or “lone parenting” may be preferable over “single parenting,” as someone might not consider themselves to be “single” but could be the only person with parenting responsibilities

Sample questions

Option 1:

“Are you currently pregnant or expectant? Check if yes.” [check box]

“For each of the following categories, indicate the number of children you are parenting:” [numerical fields]

- Children ages 0 to 2
- Children ages 3 to 5
- Children ages 6 to 12
- Children ages 13 to 17
- Children ages 18 or older

Option 2 (omits an exact count of the number of children):

“Check as many of the following categories as apply to you:”

- I am currently pregnant or expectant
- I am parenting a child or children ages 0 to 2
- I am parenting a child or children ages 3 to 5
- I am parenting a child or children ages 6 to 12
- I am parenting a child or children ages 13 to 17
- I am parenting a child or children ages 18 or older
- None of the above

To identify single or solo parents:

“Are you currently a single, solo, or lone parent to any of the children you are parenting? Check if yes.” [check box]

Apply for the Data-to-Action Campaign College Community of Practice by April 7

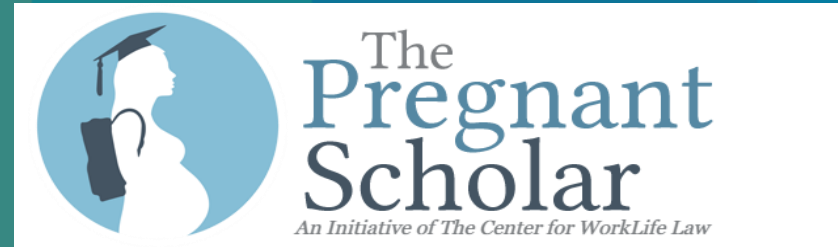
For community and technical colleges that have an annual request or mandate to collect student-parent data at the student-record level

<https://www.urban.org/projects/data-action-campaign-parenting-students/college-community-practice>





Student-Parent Action through Research Knowledge (SPARK)



SPARK Collaborative Vision

- ✿ A cross-organizational effort that offers:
 - A mechanism of alignment for the field across siloed discussions
 - A forum for communication that offers real-time insight sharing and coordinated action
 - A focus on research, evidence-building, and case-building for policy change
- ✿ Student parents can get paid for their work as Skills and Training in Action Research (STAR) fellows, and create connections with others involved in similar roles through a National STAR Network

SPARK Collaborative Goals

Build evidence and make the case for policy change through data, research, lived/living expertise, and past learning, while developing future generations of leaders

- ✿ Make college count as a pathway out of poverty
- ✿ Promote a shared agenda based on the *Roadmap*
- ✿ Support continuous forward momentum through feedback, ongoing learning activities, and action at all levels

SPARK Collaborative Values

- ✿ Move to collaborative approaches
- ✿ Put families first in driving insight and change
 - ✿ Current and recent pregnant and parenting students and their families lead strategic directions
- ✿ Respect how families define themselves with regards to parenting, caretaking, partnership, and membership
- ✿ Promote support without strings attached
- ✿ Give credit where credit is due
- ✿ Anchor the work in data, research, lived expertise, and past learning

SPARK Collaborative Opportunities

- ✿ Review the Framework and Roadmap to see how they can help you:
www.urban.org/projects/student-parent-families-center
- ✿ Indicate your interest in staying connected at urbn.is/SPARKinterest
- ✿ Register and join a discussion:
 - ✿ TODAY, March 7, 1:30-3:00 Eastern/10:30-12:00 Pacific:
urbn.is/SPARKdiscussionMar7
 - ✿ Right after this session!
 - ✿ Wednesday, March 29, 2:00-3:30 Eastern/11:00-12:30 Pacific:
urbn.is/SPARKdiscussionMar29
- ✿ Email us at StudentParentFramework@urban.org
- ✿ We're hiring a research associate (mid-level role): urbn.is/BAW-AssocJob-Mar2023

Appendix

Research Opportunities from the *Roadmap*

- ✿ Build evidence through mixed-methods **program and policy evaluation**
- ✿ Analyze **family-friendliness** across postsecondary institutions, while also determining and refining the definition of a family-friendly campus
- ✿ Combine insights from outcome and impact studies with research on the cost of various education pathways (and accumulated debt) to estimate **return on investment** for students and society
- ✿ Generate evidence about **employers' return on investment** when hiring student parents into family-sustaining careers, implementing family-friendly employment policies, and supporting employees' continued education and training
- ✿ Establish **pathways** for current or former parenting students to become researchers and policy experts

Tools

- ✿ Student-Parent Families at the Center Framework and Roadmap
- ✿ Campus Family Housing Database
- ✿ Find Your Way Studies
- ✿ Family-Friendly Campus Toolkit (with PERG Learning)
- ✿ Resources on Title IX basics and toolkits for campuses to enact policies that follow federal rules for pregnant and parenting students
- ✿ SPARK knowledge library
- ✿ Grant opportunities and insights from the Data-to-Action Campaign for Pregnant and Parenting Students
- ✿ Research on intergenerational effects of college enrollment for kids and families
- ✿ Data analysis and digestible summaries of student-parent issues