



Fact Sheet

IWPR #C375

June 2010

Child Care Support for Student Parents in Community College Is Crucial for Success, but Supply and Funding Are Inadequate

Student parents are over one-quarter of the students at community colleges

Of the over 6 million students earning college credit at community colleges, 1.7 million (27 percent) are parents.¹ Of those, about 1 million (16 percent) are single parents, more than twice the proportion at 4-year institutions. Three-quarters of single parents in college are women.²

Child care makes the difference when enrolling student parents

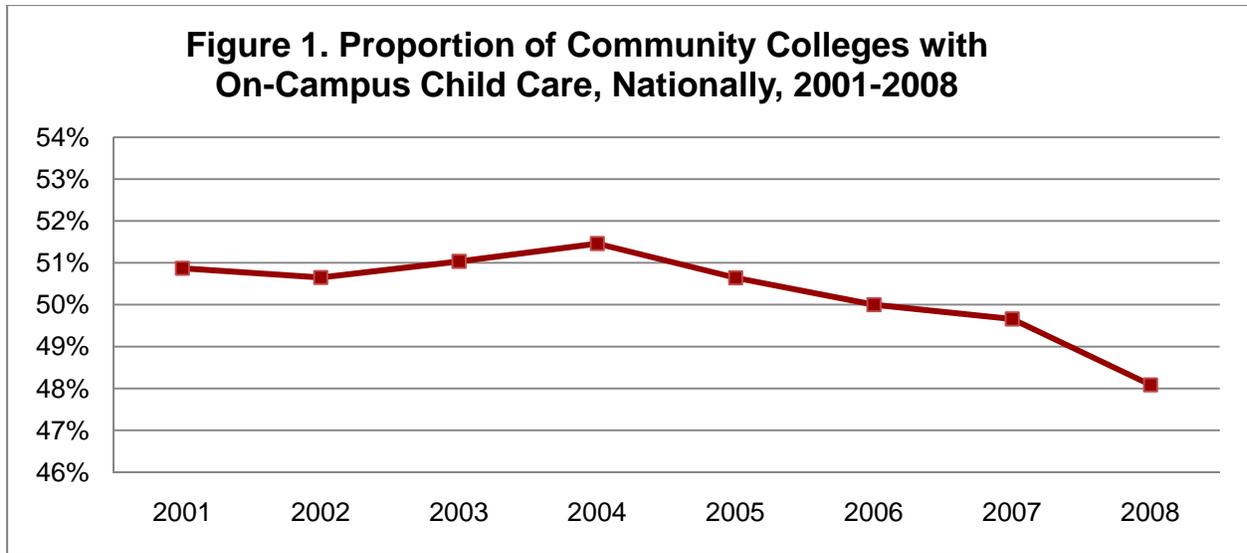
One study of student parents attending community college found that over 80 percent reported that the availability of child care was very important in the decision to attend college and 46 percent reported that campus child care was their first priority when enrolling. Nearly 60 percent of respondents reported they could not have continued college without child care and 95 percent reported that child care allowed them to increase their class load.³

Campus centers often cannot meet demand

A survey of campus children's centers found that 90 percent of centers maintain waiting lists; the average center serves 110 children per week but has another 90 children on its waiting list. Less than half of centers (48 percent) offer care for infants under a year of age, only 13 percent of centers provide evening care, and only 3 percent of centers provide care on weekends.⁴

On-campus child care for students at community colleges is becoming rarer

Between 2001 and 2008, the proportion of community colleges providing on-campus care for the children of student decreased from 51 percent to 48 percent (Figure 1). Center staff interviewed by IWPR suggest that this trend has continued due to budget cuts during the recent recession.⁵



Source: IWPR analysis, data from U.S. Department of Education Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Federal funding for campus child care is limited and favors 4-year institutions

The U.S. Department of Education’s Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program was allocated only \$15.8 million in 2009, awarded to about 160 centers to help reduce the cost of care for low-income student parents.⁶ In addition, community colleges receive only 38 percent as much CCAMPIS funding per parent (\$1,460) as do four-year institutions (\$3,793 per parent), despite serving more parents.⁷

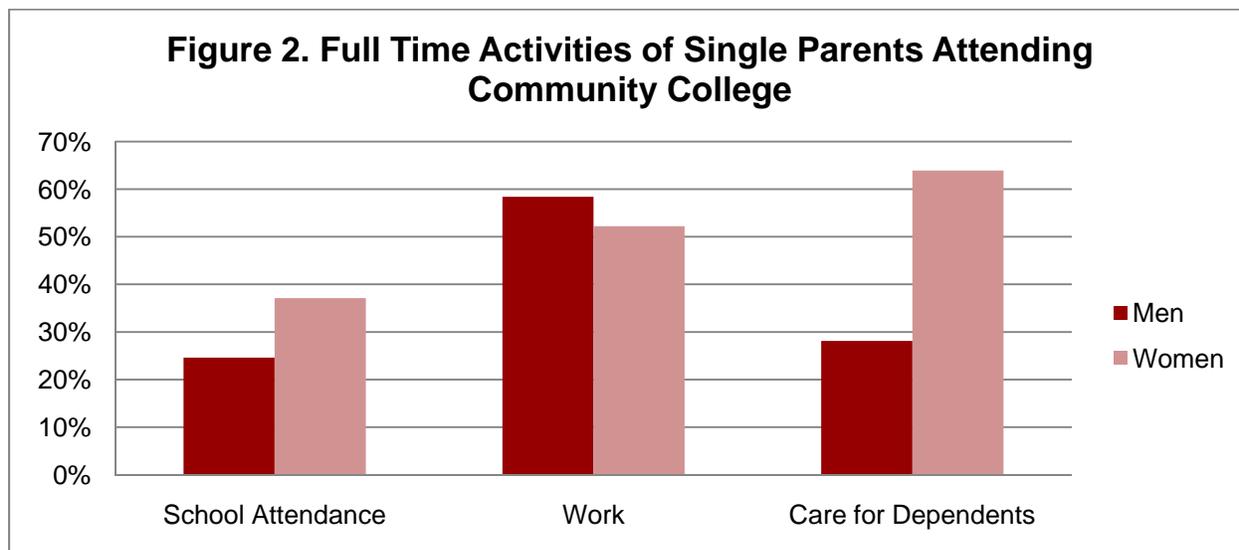
Off-campus child care can be prohibitively expensive

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) estimates that a year of full-day care for a 4-year old costs \$7,000 on average, while similar care for an infant or toddler costs \$8,800 a year.⁸ Federal and state subsidies for child care for low-income parents average \$4,600 per year, leaving a substantial out-of-pocket cost for many parents.⁹ Student parents who work while enrolled—see below—may also need additional care outside of weekday business hours while attending classes or working during evenings or on weekends.

Single parents struggle to balance work, family, and school

Single parents attending community colleges are more likely than other community college students to work full-time (54 percent of single parents, 41 percent of other students) and are less likely to attend school full-time (33 percent of single parents, 43 percent of other students).² In addition to being more likely to work full time, care for children and other family members is also a significant demand on single parents’ time. This is particularly true for women; single

mothers are more than twice as likely (64 percent) as single fathers (28 percent) to report spending 30 hours a week or more caring for dependents (Figure 2). 11 percent of single mothers say that they go to school full time, work full time, and care for dependents more than 30 hours a week, as do 8 percent of single dads.¹



Source: Data on school attendance patterns and work hours derived from IWPR analysis of National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey, 2008 undergraduate cohort. Data on time spent caring for dependents was calculated by IWPR from the 2008 Community College Survey of Student Engagement.

This fact sheet was written by Kevin Miller, Ph.D., and is based on the forthcoming IWPR publication “Improving Child Care Access to Promote Postsecondary Success among Low-Income Parents.” Funding for this fact sheet and IWPR’s ongoing work on postsecondary success has been provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

¹ IWPR analysis of the 2008 Community College Survey of Student Engagement.

² IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Education National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey, 2008 undergraduate cohort.

³ Keyes, Carol R. and Pamela Boulten. 1995. “Campus Children’s Centers: Support for Children and Families.” *Children Today* 23 (4): 18-21.

⁴ IWPR survey of members of the National Coalition of Campus Children’s Centers, 2009.

⁵ IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Education data, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

⁶ U.S. Department of Education, Child Care Access Means Parents in School. 2009 Funding Status:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/campisp/funding.html>

⁷ U.S. Department of Education, Child Care Access Means Parents in School. 2002 Performance Measure Analysis: 36-Month Performance of FY 2002 Grantees. <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/campisp/ccampisanalysisfy02.pdf>

⁸ National Association of Child Care Resources & Referral Agencies. 2009. “2008 Price of Child Care.”

http://www.naccrra.org/randd/docs/2008_Price_of_Child_Care.pdf (October 1, 2009).

⁹ Average annual subsidy calculated from FY 2008 Child Care Development Fund direct services spending (\$7.35 billion) divided by number of children served in FY 2008 (1.6 million).

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/data/expenditures/08acf696/overview.htm>

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/data/ccdf_data/08acf800_preliminary/table1.htm