College Students with Children

National and Regional Profiles

Student Parent Success Initiative

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College Students with Children: National and Regional Profiles

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About this Report

This report provides a national and regional profile of undergraduate college students who are raising dependent children. Drawing on original analysis of national postsecondary education data, it quantifies the growth in the student parent population over time, both nationally and regionally, and describes trends in student parents' economic status, their declining access to on-campus child care across regions, and the demands on their time while enrolled, in the context of their low rates of college attainment. This report is part of a broader project on independent student success funded by the Lumina Foundation.

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Introduction

The profile of the typical college student has changed from the 18-21 year old, recent high school graduate, to include a greater proportion of older, financially independent students with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and economic needs (CLASP 2015; Gault, Reichlin, and Román 2014; U.S. Department of Education 2015a; U.S. Department of Education 2015b). Among the growing numbers of undergraduates who are working, older, independent, enrolled part-time, or living off campus, nearly five million undergraduate students, comprising 26 percent of the total college population, are also parents of dependent children (CLASP 2015; Gault et al. 2014; U.S. Department of Education 2015a). Parenting has significant implications for students' ability to attain degrees and credentials.

Educational achievement for students with children benefits the students themselves and the families they are raising. Increasing parents' educational attainment yields positive short and long-term gains, including higher earnings (Baum, Ma, and Payea 2013; Hartmann and Hayes 2013), greater access to resources, greater involvement in their children's education, and greater likelihood of their child pursuing college (Attewell et al. 2007; Magnuson 2007).

As the world of higher education works to increase rates of degree attainment among U.S. adults, it is important to acknowledge and address the unique time-related, financial, and logistical challenges facing students with caregiving responsibilities. This report analyzes trends in regional demographic characteristics, financial need, work rates, completion rates, and child care access among the student parent population compared with other groups of students.[1] It finds that, while all student parents face significant challenges in their pursuit of a higher education, the extent of those challenges vary depending on multiple factors, including the geographic location of institutions, and students' racial/ethnic backgrounds and marital status. The report recommends that colleges and universities, as well as policy makers, design policies and programs to help student parents manage their significant family, financial, and time demands while in college.

The Number of Parents in College is Growing in All Regions and Institution Types

The number of student parents in the United States climbed by 1.1 million, or 30 percent—from 3.7 million in 2004 to 4.8 million in 2012 (the most recent eight-year period for which national data are available; Figure 1). Nationally, student parents make up 26 percent of the total undergraduate student body, and the regional shares of students that are parents vary widely from 18 percent in New England to 35 percent in the Southwest (Table 1).

[1] This report analyzes data from three U.S. Department of Education postsecondary datasets: the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), and the Beginning Postsecondary Student Survey (BPS). Analysis is conducted on a regional level (rather than on a state level) because regions are the smallest unit of analysis deemed representative by NPSAS sampling methodology; NPSAS does not provide data on institution state (i.e. the state in which students are enrolled). Regional definitions can be found in Appendix Table A.1.

The Southwest and Plains Regions have the Highest Shares and Growth of Student Parents

All regions experienced an increase in their student parent population over the eight-year period from 2004-12 (Table 1) with growth ranging from nearly 5 percent in the Far West region to 65 percent in the Southwest region. States in the Plains and the Rocky Mountain regions saw their student parent populations grow significantly in that time frame, with growth rates of 61 percent and 58 percent respectively (Table 1). In addition, nationally and in five of eight regions, the share of students that are parents as a proportion of the total student population grew during the same time frame (Appendix Table B.1).

Table 1. Number and Share of Students Who Are Parents by Region, 2011-12, and Increase in Number of Students who are Parents, 2004-12.

Region	Number of Student Parents, 2012	Share of Students that are Parents, 2012	Percent Increase in Number of Student Parents 2004-12
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	145,739	17.8%	20.3%
Mid East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	512,137	19.6%	18.2%
Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	721,755	25.9%	21.8%
Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	452,408	30.7%	61.4%
Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)	1,188,083	27.0%	25.6%
Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)	838,583	33.7%	65.0%
Rocky Mountains (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)	205,214	27.9%	58.2%
Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)	718,858	21.8%	4.7%
All regions	4,816,226	25.9%	30.2%

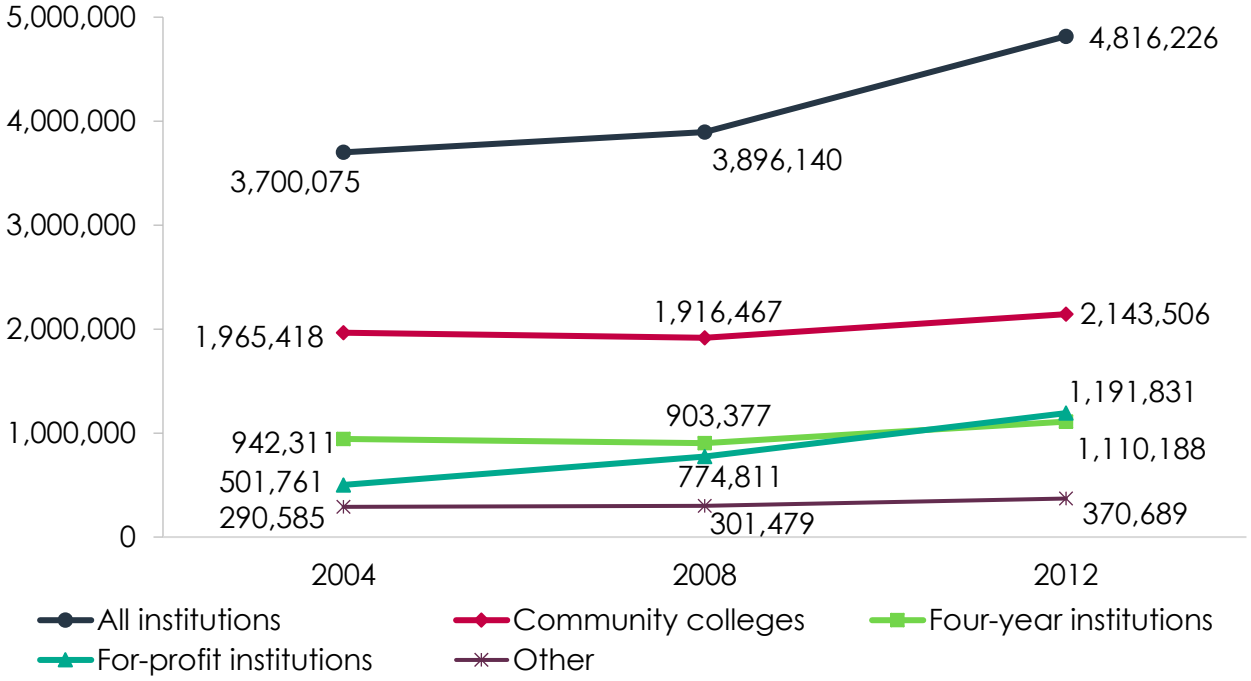
Note: Total for all regions will not add to the sum of the regional subcategories due to rounding.
Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011-12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12); Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall Enrollment 2003-04 and 2011-12.

Numbers of Student Parents Increased across Institution Types

The concentration of student parents differs by institution type, both nationally and regionally. Public two-year student parent enrollment grew by 9 percent from 2004-12, and community colleges enroll the largest share of student parents: nearly half of all student parents (45 percent), or approximately 2.1 million students, attend public two-year institutions, representing 30 percent of the total community college student body (Figure 1; IWPR 2016a). Four-year institutions saw an increase of 18 percent in student parent enrollment over the same period; the 1.1 million student parents enrolled at four-year institutions in 2012 comprise 23 percent of the total student parent population (including public and private not-for-profit institutions; Figure 1; IWPR 2016a). For-profit colleges, which enroll a similar number of student parents to four-year institutions (roughly 1.2 million; Figure 1), saw the most dramatic increase in student parent enrollment from 2004-12, with a growth of 138 percent (Figure 1; IWPR 2016a). As of 2012, half of the total for-profit student body was made up of students who were also parents (Gault et al. 2014).

Community colleges enroll the largest share of student parents: nearly half of all student parents (45 percent), or approximately 2.1 million students, attend public two-year institutions, representing 30 percent of the total community college student body.

Figure 1. Increase in the Number of Student Parents by Institution Type, 2004-2012.



Notes: Community colleges include all public two-year institutions. Four-year institutions include all public and private nonprofit undergraduate institutions. For-profit institutions include all for-profit colleges, less than two years and above. Other includes public less than two-year institutions, private nonprofit less than four-year institutions, and students who attended more than one institution. All institutions include all public and private institutions, and students attending more than one school. Total for all institutions will not add to the sum of the institutional subcategories due to rounding.
Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2003-04 (NPSAS:04); 2007-08 (NPSAS:08); 2011-12 (NPSAS:12), and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Institutional Characteristics and Fall Enrollment 2003-04, 2007-08, 2011-12.

Regionally, the share of student parents enrolled at community colleges ranges from one-quarter student body in the Far West, to over one-third of two-year students (35 percent) in the Southeast. Among public and private four-year institutions, the New England region enrolls the lowest share of students who are parents (8 percent), compared with a high of 23 percent in the Rocky Mountain states (Appendix Table C.1).

Women College Students are Much More Likely to be Raising Children than Men, and a Large Share are Single Mothers

Nearly a third of all undergraduate women are mothers, and the majority of those are single mothers (roughly 2 million women, or 60 percent of all student mothers, are single mothers; Gault et al. 2014;

IWPR 2016a). Single mothers in college must balance the multiple responsibilities of school, parenthood, and often also employment, without the support of a spouse or partner. As seen in Table 2, mothers in the Great Lakes and Southeast regions are the most likely to be raising children on their own—64 percent and 62 percent of mothers in college in those regions, respectively, are single. In contrast, the Rocky Mountains states have the smallest share of student mothers that are single; however, they still make up half of all college-going mothers in that region (Table 2).

Table 2. Gender Distribution and Family Status of Student Parents by Region, 2011-12.

	Gender of Parents		Gender of Single Parents	
Region	**All Mothers**	**All Fathers**	**Single Mothers**	**Single Fathers**
Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	71.1%	28.9%	63.5%	41.2%
Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)	72.1%	27.9%	62.2%	36.5%
Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	70.9%	29.1%	59.4%	36.2%
Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)	72.1%	27.9%	59.2%	35.4%
Mid East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	70.6%	29.4%	58.5%	38.1%
Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)	70.5%	29.5%	57.9%	48.4%
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	68.8%	31.2%	55.6%	43.2%
Rocky Mountains (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)	63.3%	36.7%	50.1%	19.2%
All regions	71.0%	29.0%	59.9%	38.1%

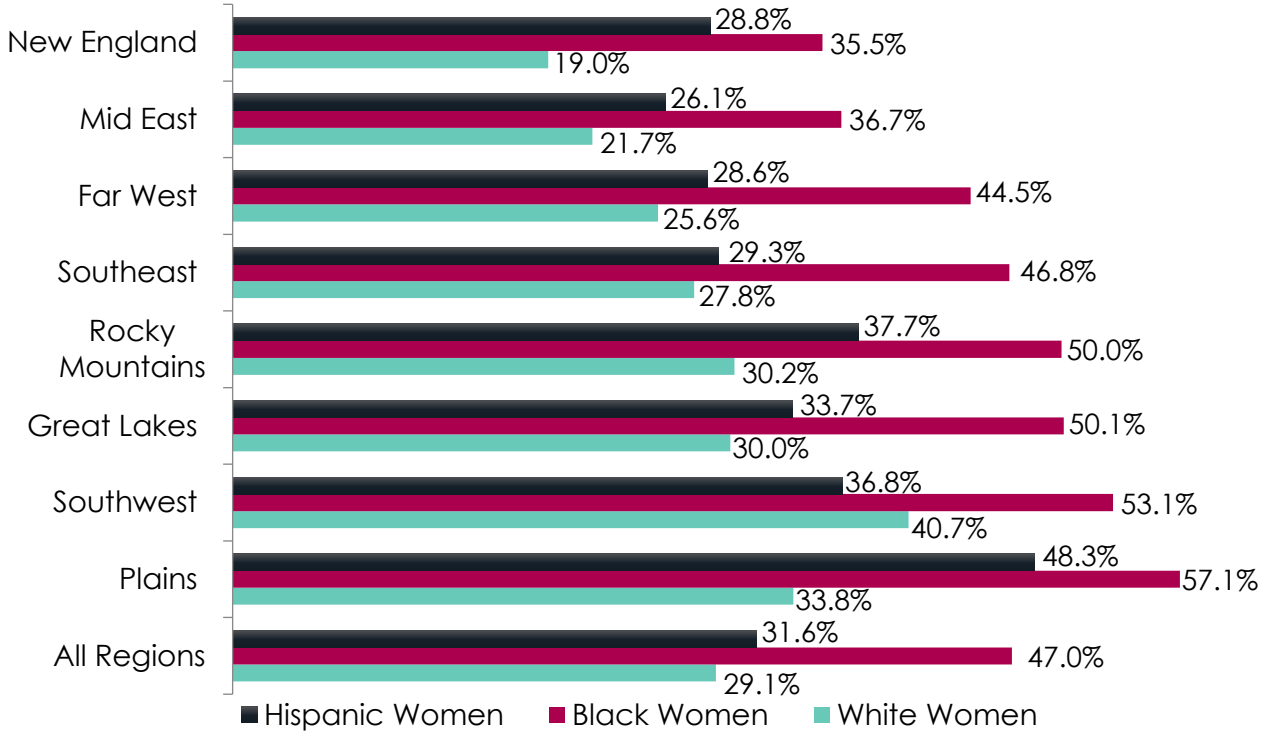
Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011-12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12).

Rates of motherhood among college students vary substantially by race/ethnicity (Figure 2; Appendix Table D.1). Black women are disproportionately likely to be mothers while in college: nearly half of all Black women undergraduate students are raising dependent children, compared with 29 percent of White women and one-quarter of Black men (though Black men are the most likely group of male students to be fathers; Figure 2; IWPR 2016a). Approximately two-in-five American Indian or Alaska Native women and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander women are raising dependent children while in college (41 percent and 39 percent, respectively; Appendix Table D.1). The Plains region has the highest share of Black, Hispanic,

Nearly half of all Black women undergraduate students are raising dependent children, compared with 29 percent of White women and one-quarter of Black men.

and American Indian or Alaska Native women who are mothers (57 percent, 48 percent, and 58 percent, respectively; Figure 2; Appendix Table D.1).[2]

Figure 2. Share of Women Students that are Parents by Race/Ethnicity and Region, 2011-12.



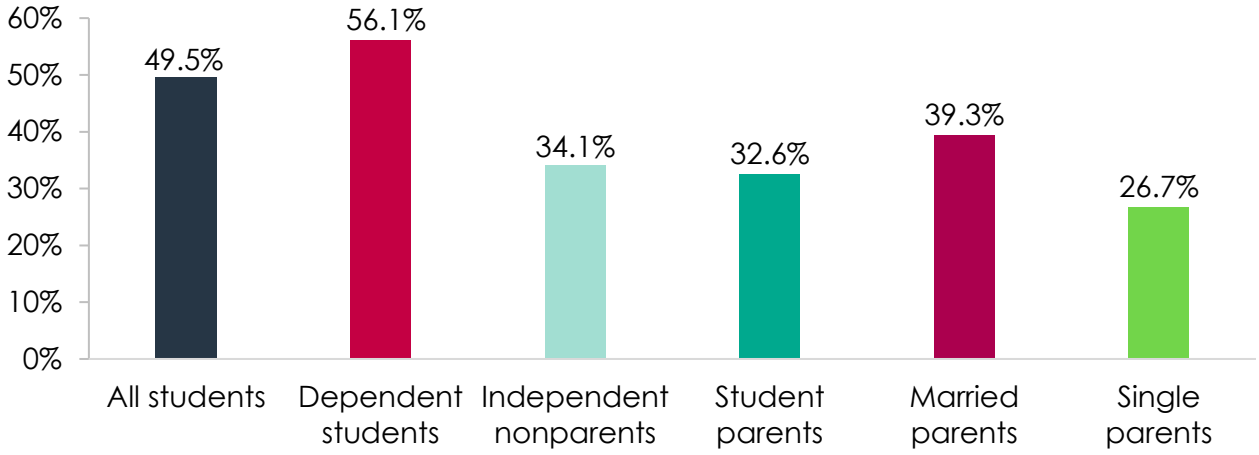
Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011-12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12).

Student Parents have Especially Low Rates of Degree Attainment

Student parents—especially those who are single—have low rates of college completion when compared with non-parenting students. Only 27 percent of single student parents to attain a degree or certificate within 6 years of enrollment, compared with 56 percent of dependent students (Figure 3).

[2] Small sample sizes limit our ability to report the shares of women by every race/ethnicity in each region that are parents.

Figure 3. Share of Students who Enrolled in 2003-04 and Attained a Degree or Certificate by 2008-09 at All Institutions, by Dependency, Parent, and Marital Status.



Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003-04 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, Second Follow-up (BPS:04/09).

Attaining a college degree or certificate in a high-demand occupation is critical to finding quality employment with family-sustaining wages. This is especially true for student parents who need to support their family and pay off their often-significant student debt (Gault, Reichlin, and Román 2014).

Student Parents have Especially Limited Financial Resources to Devote to College

Student parents are more likely than other students to face intense economic challenges, in large part due to the significant costs of raising young children (Duke-Benfield 2015; Gault, Reichlin, and Román 2014; Green 2013). Student parents work full-time and enroll in school part-time more often than their nonparent counterparts, intensifying their need for reliable—and often costly—child care (Gault, Reichlin, and Román 2014; Huelsman and Engle 2013). They are also more likely than other college students to live below the poverty level, to have an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to education of $0, and to have high levels of unmet financial need (Gault, Reichlin, and Román 2014; IWPR 2016a).[3]

Student Parents are Much More Likely than Those without Children to Have an Expected Family Contribution of Zero

Student parents are nearly 50 percent more likely than independent nonparents to have an EFC of $0: 61 percent compared with 41 percent, respectively (Table 3). The disparity in EFC can be seen across the United States: in every region of the country, more than half of undergraduate students with dependent

[3] Expected Family Contribution, or EFC, is calculated using information from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and used to determine a student's eligibility for federal financial aid (such as Pell Grants; Federal Student Aid 2016).

children have no money to contribute to college. The Southeast region stands out with nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of parents with a $0 EFC (Table 3).

Table 3. Share of Students with an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of $0 by Student Parent Status and Region, 2011-12.

Region	All students	Student parents	Indepen-dent nonparents	Depen-dent students
Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)	41.6%	64.7%	45.3%	27.2%
Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)	40.1%	62.4%	43.5%	28.0%
Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	36.3%	62.3%	40.6%	20.4%
Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	34.9%	61.9%	37.8%	15.7%
Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)	41.5%	61.0%	39.1%	26.1%
Mid East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	32.0%	55.9%	38.4%	21.7%
Rocky Mountains (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)	32.5%	53.3%	34.7%	17.2%
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	29.3%	52.2%	36.7%	19.8%
All regions	37.8%	61.2%	41.1%	23.7%

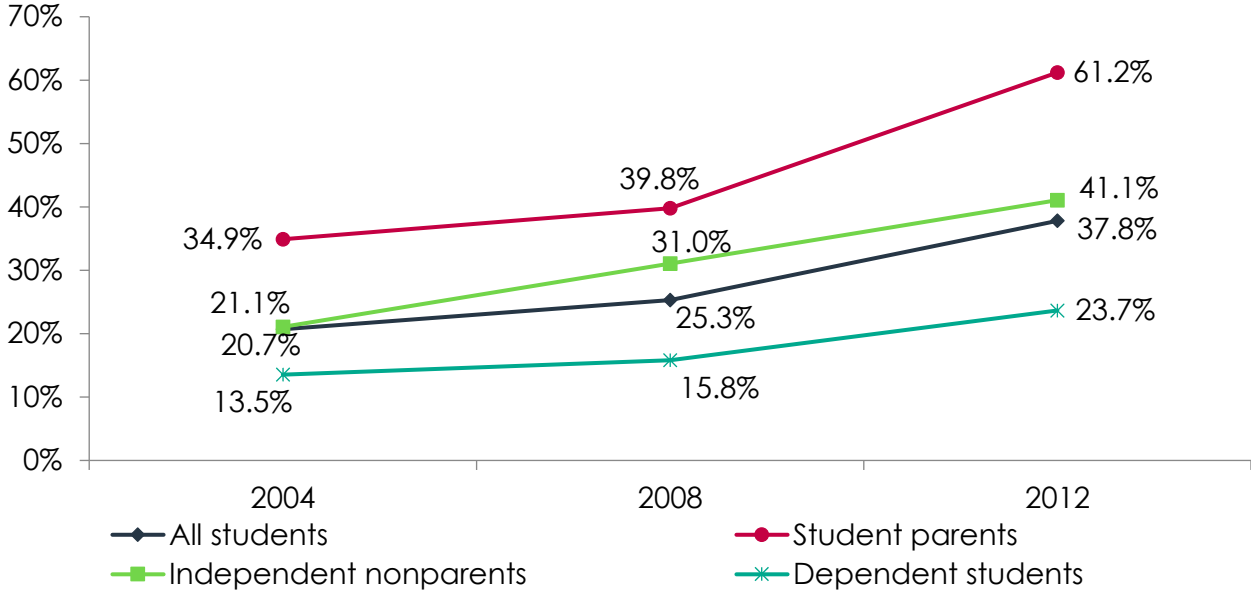
Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011-12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12).

In every region of the country, more than half of undergraduate students with dependent children have no money to contribute to college expenses.

The share of students with no financial resources for college grew significantly from 2004-12. The economic downturn in 2008 was followed by an uptick in college enrollment in the years following (Long 2014).

The share of all students with a $0 EFC increased by nearly 50 percent from 2008-12 (from 25 percent to 38 percent; Figure 4). Students with dependent children experienced an even greater decline in their ability to finance college: the share of student parents reporting a $0 EFC increased from 40 percent in 2008 to 61 percent in 2012 (an increase of 54 percent; Figure 4).

Figure 4. Trends in the Share of Students with $0 Expected Family Contribution (EFC) by Parent and Dependency Status, 2004-12.



Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2003-04 (NPSAS:04); 2007-08 (NPSAS:08); 2011-12 (NPSAS:12).

All regions experienced an increase in the share of student parents with an EFC of $0 during 2008-12, ranging from a 21 percent increase in the Rocky Mountains to a 42 percent increase in the Far West (Appendix Table E.2). More dramatic changes in the shares of student parents with a $0 EFC at the regional level occurred between the years of 2004-12. The Plains and Far West regions saw the greatest increase over this eight-year period—111 percent and 104 percent respectively—followed by a 91 percent increase in the Great Lakes and an 81 percent increase in New England (Appendix Table E.2).

Student Parents have High Levels of Unmet Financial Need

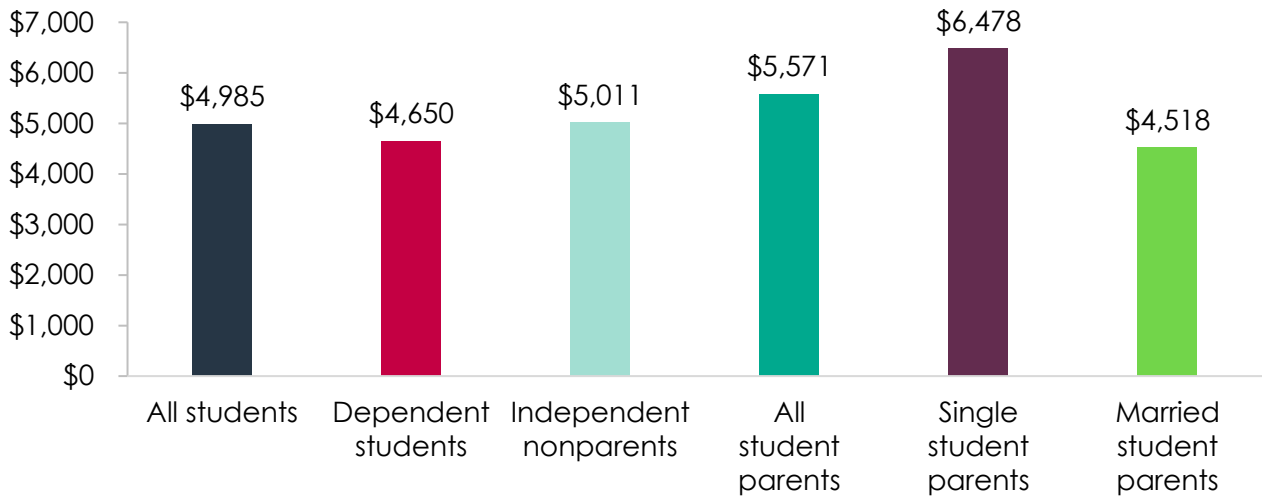
Many student parents experience significant unmet need, or expenses that students must pay out of pocket to cover the cost of college attendance.[4] While independent students that were not parents saw substantial growth in unmet need from 2004-12 (63 percent), unmet need among student parents is and has remained the highest when compared with all undergraduates and with their non-parent counterparts (Appendix Table F.1). From 2004-12, student parents' unmet need—which increased by nearly $1,800 in that time frame—has been, on average, roughly $700 more than need among dependent and independent nonparents, and over $500 more than that of all students (Appendix Table F.1).

Single parents, despite seeing the smallest percent change in unmet need from 2004-12, have consistently had the highest dollar amount of unmet need—a fact that holds particularly true for single mothers.

[4] Unmet need is defined as a student's budget minus EFC and all financial aid received, but excluding private loans.

Unmet need varies significantly according to student parents' marital status and gender. Single parents, despite seeing a relatively small percent change in unmet need from 2004-12 (29 percent), have consistently had the highest dollar amount of unmet need (Appendix Table F.1). In 2012, single parents had nearly $6,500 in unmet need, and single mothers' need, at just over $6,600, was more than $2,000 higher than that of married parents (Figure 4; Appendix Table F.1). While married parents saw a 67 percent increase in unmet need from 2004-12, they have remained the group with the lowest level of unmet need, even when compared with dependent students, indicating that the marital status of student parents plays a critical role in their financial security when pursuing college (Appendix Table F.1).

Figure 5. Average Unmet Need among Students by Dependency and Parent Status, 2011-12, in 2012 Dollars.



Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003-04 (NPSAS:04); 2007-08 (NPSAS:08); 2011-12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12).

Regionally, while all students attending college in New England have the highest levels of unmet need (nearly $6,900 for all undergraduate students), the region ranks third in need among student parents, following the Southwest and the Far West (Appendix Table F.2). In three regions, single student parents have unmet need that exceeds $7,000 (the Southwest, New England, and the Mid East), with single student mothers having more than $7,000 in unmet need in a fourth region of Far West (Appendix Table F.2; IWPR 2016a). Unmet need is highest for single student fathers in the region of the Mid East, the only place in which their unmet need exceeds $7,000 (IWPR 2016a).

Student Parents Face Substantial Time Demands

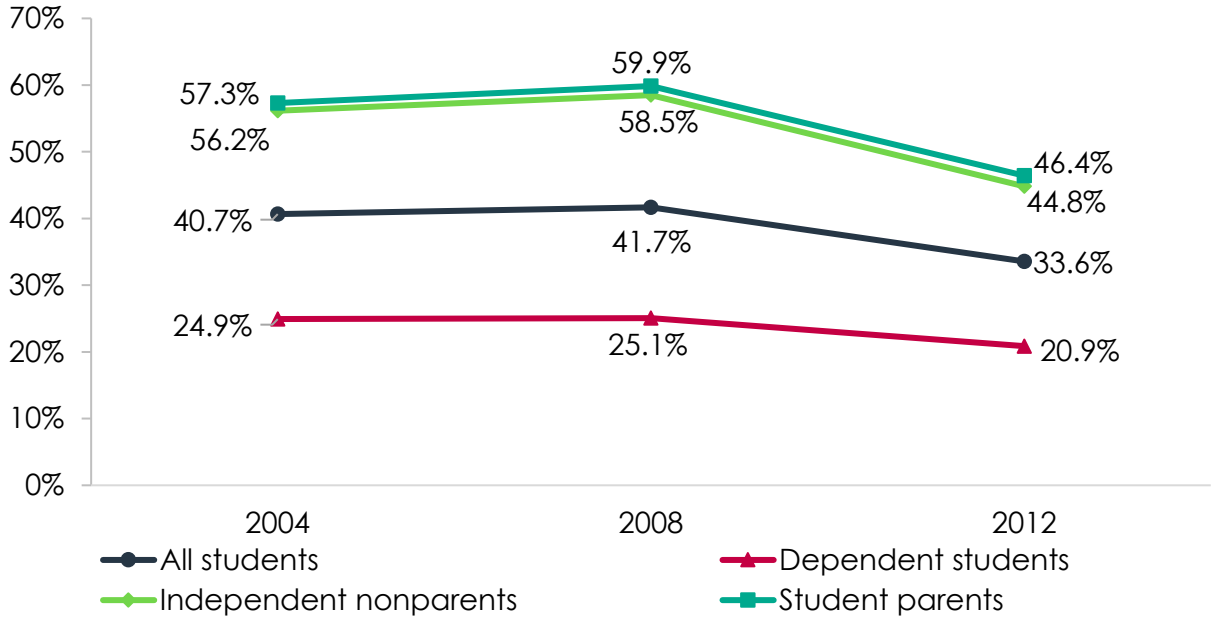
Compounding their financial challenges, students with children grapple with significant demands on their time. In addition to time spent in class and studying, most student parents juggle paid work and substantial time caring for children. With these pressures, college affordability for students with children becomes an issue of time as well as money, and support strategies must consider how to help student parents devote the time for academics that it takes to succeed in school.

Parents Work a Significant Number of Hours while Pursuing College

Student parents often work while in school to make ends meet. Coupled with time needed to meet family obligations, the demands of working while in college can further limit the time student parents have to focus on course work, spend time with their children, sleep, or have time to themselves (Gault, Noll, and Reichlin forthcoming). Student parents are more likely to work while in college than dependent students (66 percent compared with 58 percent, respectively) and more likely to work long hours: 66 percent of student parents worked more than 20 hours per week in 2011-12, compared with 39 percent of their dependent counterparts (IWPR 2016a). Higher rates of employment and higher numbers of hours worked can endanger student parents' ability to complete school on time or at all (Kuh et al. 2007; Orozco and Cauthen 2009). When holding a job leads student parents to enroll less than full-time, it can also threaten their eligibility for financial aid that is tied to school credit hours (Huelsman and Engle 2013).

Employment rates and the number of hours worked per week declined among all college students after 2008, possibly due to the job losses during the Great Recession. Student parents and independent nonparents, however, remained more than twice as likely as dependent students to work 30 or more hours per week (Figure 6). In 2012, 46 percent of student parents and 45 percent of their nonparent counterparts worked this much compared with just 21 percent of dependent students (Figure 6; Appendix Table G.1).

Figure 6. Trend in the Share of Students Working 30 or More Hours per Week by Dependency and Parent Status, 2004-12.



Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003-04 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:04), 2007-08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08) and 2011-12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12).

In 2012, the Southwest region had the largest share of all undergraduates (40 percent), independent nonparents (48 percent), and dependent students (27 percent) who worked 30 or more hours per week, while student parents in the Plains states were the most likely to work that amount (53 percent; Appendix Table G.1).

Student Parents Spend Significant Time Caring for Young Children

Among community college students who have children living with them, nearly three-quarters of women (71 percent) and half of men report spending over 20 hours a week caring for dependents.

In addition to working, students with children have significant dependent care obligations that can impact their time and finances. Overall, 50 percent of student parents have children ages 5 or younger, and another 25 percent have children ages 6-10 (IWPR 2016a). Among community college students who have children living with them, nearly three-quarters of women (71 percent) and half of men report spending over 20 hours a week caring for dependents (CCSSE 2016). These student parents often report that caring for their children on top of going to college can be too much to handle: 43 percent of women and 37 percent of men at two-year institutions say they are likely or very likely to withdraw from college to care for dependents (CCSSE 2016).[5]

Availability of On-Campus Child Care Declining while Student Parent Population Grows

Affordable, stable child care can help student parents juggle their school and work responsibilities, yet campus child care centers have been closing across the country (Table 5). A recent IWPR analysis finds that, from 2005-15, campus child care declined at community colleges and public four-year institutions in 36 states (Eckerson et al. 2016). The share of community colleges reporting the presence of a campus child care center declined sharply—from 53 percent in 2004, to 44 percent in 2015—a particularly concerning trend due to the large share of parents enrolled in community colleges (Eckerson et al. 2016; IWPR 2016b; Appendix Figure H.1). At public four-year institutions, the availability of campus child care declined from a high of 55 percent in 2003-05 to just under half of all institutions in 2015 (Eckerson et al. 2016; Appendix Figure H.1).

Despite the fact that the number of students with children has increased in every region between 2004 and 2012, the share of campuses that provide child care has concurrently declined across all eight regions.

Despite the fact that the number of students with children has increased in every region between 2004 and 2012, the share of campuses that provide child care has concurrently declined across all eight regions. In 2012, the Southwest region had the largest share of student parents (34 percent; Table 1), yet only 12 percent of postsecondary institutions in the region provided on-campus child care (Table 4). Notably, the two

[5] Data used with permission from the *Center for Community College Student Engagement, The Community College Survey of Student Engagement 2016,* The University of Texas at Austin.

regions with the highest increase in the number of students with children (the Southwest and Plains regions) also saw the greatest decrease in on-campus child care (Table 4).

Table 4. Percent Change in Number of Student Parents and Number of Institutions with On-Campus Child Care by Region, 2004-12.

Region	Share of Campuses with Child Care, 2011-12	Percent Decrease in Campuses with Child Care, 2004-12	Percent Increase in Student Parent Population, 2004-12
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	14.7%	-14.3%	21.3%
Mid East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	17.2%	-12.1%	18.3%
Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	16.0%	-14.4%	19.0%
Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	17.4%	-20.0%	61.2%
Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)	10.8%	-19.0%	26.2%
Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)	12.2%	-19.8%	67.5%
Rocky Mountains (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)	15.5%	-13.2%	60.4%
Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)	19.9%	-4.0%	5.5%
All regions	15.1%	-14.2%	29.6%

Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2004 and 2012 Institutional Characteristics Surveys; and the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2003-04 (NPSAS:04); and 2011-12 (NPSAS:12).

Greater access to child care would be likely to increase rates of degree attainment among student parents (IWPR 2016a). Research has shown that, for many parents who leave school without earning a credential, better access to child care could have helped them avoid taking a break or dropping out completely (Johnson et al. 2009; Hess et al. 2014). One study at a community college in New York State finds that parents who have access to campus child care demonstrate better persistence and have a greater likelihood of completing with a degree or transferring to a four-year college than other parents who do not (Monroe Community College 2013). The decline in overall and regional availability of campus child care compounds the time-related and financial challenges facing student parents, particularly those who are single, making it more difficult for them to remain enrolled and complete with a higher credential, on time or at all.

The two regions with the highest increase in the number of students with children (the Southwest and Plains regions) also saw the greatest decrease in on-campus child care.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Growth in the proportion and numbers of college students who are parents has important implications for state and national postsecondary attainment goals. To help ensure that students with children succeed in college, states and institutions across the nation should understand the demographics of their student parent populations, their degree of financial need, and the supports needed to promote their success.

Federal and state policymakers and institutional and program leaders must work to establish policies to promote postsecondary attainment among student parents. Preserving and strengthening campus child care centers and establishing connections with the broader early childhood community can improve student parents' access to quality, affordable child care (Boressoff 2012; Boressoff 2013; Schumacher 2015). Making campuses welcoming for student parents through family-friendly events and spaces can engage student parents in campus life, and help them establish peer support networks (Schumacher 2015). Institutions should also establish data collection practices to track the presence of student parents on campus and their outcomes over time. Colleges can take proactive steps to ensure that students with children receive all available financial aid rather than leaving it to the students' own initiative to request special consideration due to high child care expenses or the need to reduce work hours. Policies and programs intended to improve success among low-income student populations must also take into account student parents' complicated schedules and time demands, ensuring that part-time and working students have access.

Students, states, and the nation as a whole can achieve substantial long-term economic and social gains from increased college completion among students with children. By investing in improved access to financial aid, and in child care and other supportive services, institutions can improve retention and completion outcomes among student parents, which will contribute substantially to increasing higher education attainment in the population overall.

Appendix A. Regional Definitions

Table A.1. Regional Classifications from the National Center for Education Statistics.

New England	Mid East	Great Lakes	Plains
Connecticut	Delaware	Illinois	Iowa
Maine	Washington, DC	Indiana	Kansas
Massachusetts	Maryland	Michigan	Minnesota
New Hampshire	New Jersey	Ohio	Missouri
Rhode Island	New York	Wisconsin	Nebraska
Vermont	Pennsylvania		North Dakota
			South Dakota
Southeast	**Southwest**	**Rocky Mountains**	**Far West**
Alabama	Arizona	Colorado	Alaska
Arkansas	New Mexico	Idaho	California
Florida	Oklahoma	Montana	Hawaii
Georgia	Texas	Utah	Nevada
Kentucky		Wyoming	Oregon
Louisiana			Washington
Mississippi			
North Carolina			
South Carolina			
Tennessee			
Virginia			
West Virginia			

Notes: Regions indicate geographic region where NPSAS sample institution is located; i.e. where surveyed students attend college.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS).

Appendix B. Trends in the Share of Students who are Parents by Region

Table B.1. Share of Students who are Parents by Region, 2004-12.

Region	2003-04	2007-08	2011-12	Percentage Point Difference 2004-12	Percent Change 2004-12
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	17.2%	15.2%	17.8%	0.6%	3.4%
Mid East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	19.8%	18.7%	19.6%	-0.1%	-0.7%
Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	25.4%	26.4%	25.9%	0.6%	2.3%
Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	24.8%	24.2%	30.7%	5.9%	23.6%
Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)	28.2%	25.3%	27.0%	-1.2%	-4.3%
Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)	28.9%	27.7%	33.7%	4.8%	16.8%
Rocky Mountains (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)	22.8%	27.2%	27.9%	5.1%	22.5%
Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)	24.4%	24.3%	21.8%	-2.6%	-10.6%
All regions	24.9%	24.3%	25.9%	1.0%	4.0%

Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2003-04 (NPSAS:04); 2007-08 (NPSAS:08); 2011-12 (NPSAS:12), and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data.

Appendix C. The Share of Students who are Parents by Institution Type and Region

Table C.1. Share of Students who are Parents by Institution Type and Region, 2011-12.

Region	Public Two-Year	Four-Year	For-Profit	All Institutions
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	26.7%	8.5%	39.6%	17.8%
Mid East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	25.2%	12.2%	38.1%	19.6%
Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	32.3%	17.4%	43.7%	25.9%
Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	32.5%	12.5%	61.7%	30.7%
Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)	34.9%	16.0%	52.2%	27.0%
Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)	33.4%	16.7%	59.0%	33.7%
Rocky Mountains (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)	29.6%	23.3%	41.3%	27.9%
Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)	24.7%	12.0%	37.4%	21.8%
All Regions	30.2%	14.9%	49.7%	25.9%

Notes: Community colleges include all public two-year institutions. Four-year institutions include all public and private nonprofit undergraduate institutions. For-profit institutions include all for-profit, less than two years and above. All institutions include all public and private institutions, including students attending more than one school.
Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011-12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12).

Appendix D. Student Parent Demographics by Region

Table D.1. Share of Students who are Parents by Gender, Race/Ethnicity and Region, 2011-12.

	New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	Mid East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)	Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)	Rocky Mountains (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)	Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)	All Regions
All Undergraduate Students									
All	18.1%	19.9%	26.4%	31.2%	27.4%	34.8%	27.9%	22.3%	25.9%
Women	22.1%	25.1%	33.4%	37.8%	33.6%	41.1%	31.9%	26.9%	32.2%
Men	12.5%	12.9%	16.8%	21.1%	17.9%	23.0%	23.0%	15.0%	17.5%
White Students									
All	15.4%	16.8%	23.6%	26.9%	22.9%	32.9%	26.9%	20.5%	23.4%
Women	19.0%	21.7%	30.0%	33.8%	27.8%	40.7%	30.2%	25.6%	29.1%
Men	11.1%	11.4%	16.0%	17.6%	16.8%	22.4%	23.2%	14.0%	16.3%
Black Students									
All	29.5%	30.8%	40.2%	48.5%	37.7%	46.3%	43.4%	37.2%	38.7%
Women	35.5%	36.7%	50.1%	57.1%	46.8%	53.1%	50.0%	44.5%	47.0%
Men	23.9%	20.8%	23.4%	37.0%	22.1%	32.2%	32.4%	25.4%	24.9%
Hispanic Students									
All	23.8%	20.9%	27.9%	41.3%	24.0%	29.6%	32.4%	23.0%	25.7%
Women	28.8%	26.1%	33.7%	48.3%	29.3%	36.8%	37.7%	28.6%	31.6%
Men	15.6%	13.6%	21.3%	31.4%	16.5%	20.2%	23.4%	15.1%	17.6%
Asian Students									
All	10.4%	11.4%	6.7%	25.6%	20.0%	22.1%	14.8%	13.5%	14.8%
Women	‡	15.6%	‡	28.3%	24.4%	26.0%	‡	15.3%	18.2%
Men	‡	7.0%	‡	21.6%	‡	16.1%	‡	11.3%	10.9%
American Indian/Alaska Native Students									
All	11.3%	25.7%	23.5%	43.1%	37.7%	42.2%	16.4%	29.9%	34.3%
Women	‡	‡	‡	57.9%	45.5%	47.1%	‡	37.8%	41.4%
Men	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	33.2%	‡	‡	23.5%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Students									
All	‡	32.4%	32.2%	‡	27.9%	30.0%	‡	22.8%	27.5%
Women	‡	‡	‡	‡	35.4%	‡	‡	33.1%	39.4%
Men	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	15.4%

Notes: ‡ Reporting standards not met.

Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011-12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12).

Appendix E. Expected Family Contribution

Table E.1. Share of Students with $0 EFC by Dependency and Parent Status, 2004-12.

Region	2004				2008				2012			
	All	Dependent	Independent nonparents	Students parents	All	Dependent	Independent nonparents	Students parents	All	Dependent	Independent nonparents	Students parents
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	15.3%	10.0%	20.6%	28.8%	18.7%	10.6%	33.9%	34.8%	29.3%	19.8%	36.7%	52.2%
Mid East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	18.4%	12.6%	21.1%	32.8%	22.9%	15.5%	31.9%	36.5%	32.0%	21.7%	38.4%	55.9%
Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	17.5%	8.9%	19.5%	32.7%	22.9%	12.7%	28.6%	37.3%	36.3%	20.4%	40.6%	62.3%
Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	15.1%	7.3%	18.4%	29.3%	22.5%	11.1%	31.6%	39.0%	34.9%	15.7%	37.8%	61.9%
Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)	24.6%	15.7%	22.3%	41.6%	26.4%	15.9%	31.1%	43.8%	41.6%	27.2%	45.3%	64.7%
Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)	22.5%	13.9%	23.9%	34.1%	26.4%	17.4%	28.9%	38.8%	41.5%	26.1%	39.1%	61.0%
Rocky Mountains (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)	17.9%	10.5%	15.8%	36.6%	23.9%	9.3%	29.1%	42.3%	32.5%	17.2%	34.7%	53.3%
Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)	21.2%	17.1%	19.7%	30.6%	27.0%	19.4%	31.5%	36.3%	40.1%	28.0%	43.5%	62.4%
All Regions	20.7%	13.5%	21.1%	34.9%	25.3%	15.8%	31.0%	39.8%	37.8%	23.7%	41.1%	61.2%

Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2003-04 (NPSAS:04); 2007-08 (NPSAS:08); 2011-12 (NPSAS:12).

Table E.2. Percent Change in Share of Students with a $0 EFC by Dependency Status, Parent Status, and Region, 2004-12.

	All students	Dependent students	Independent nonparents	Student parents
2004-12				
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	91.9%	97.4%	78.1%	81.2%
Mid East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	73.9%	71.9%	82.0%	70.4%
Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	107.7%	127.8%	107.7%	90.7%
Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	132.0%	115.5%	105.3%	111.2%
Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)	69.5%	73.7%	102.9%	55.5%
Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)	84.2%	87.7%	63.6%	79.0%
Rocky Mountains (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)	81.4%	63.8%	119.3%	45.6%
Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)	89.7%	63.5%	120.7%	103.6%
All Regions	82.5%	74.8%	94.9%	75.1%
2004-08				
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	22.4%	5.1%	64.6%	20.6%
Mid East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	24.6%	23.0%	51.3%	11.4%
Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	31.2%	42.0%	46.2%	14.2%
Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	49.2%	52.5%	71.9%	33.0%
Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)	7.5%	1.5%	39.2%	5.3%
Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)	17.4%	25.1%	20.8%	13.9%
Rocky Mountains (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)	33.7%	-11.5%	83.8%	15.7%
Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)	27.6%	13.1%	59.6%	18.6%
All Regions	22.3%	16.6%	47.3%	13.8%
2008-12				
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	56.7%	87.8%	8.2%	50.2%
Mid East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	39.6%	39.7%	20.3%	53.0%
Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	58.3%	60.4%	42.0%	66.9%
Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	55.6%	41.3%	19.4%	58.9%
Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)	57.6%	71.2%	45.8%	47.8%
Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)	56.9%	50.1%	35.5%	57.2%
Rocky Mountains (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)	35.7%	85.2%	19.3%	25.9%
Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)	48.7%	44.6%	38.3%	71.7%
All Regions	49.2%	49.9%	32.3%	53.9%

Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2003-04 (NPSAS:04); 2007-08 (NPSAS:08); 2011-12 (NPSAS:12).

Appendix F. Unmet Financial Need

Table F.1. Average Amount of Unmet Need, and Increase in Unmet Need by Parent and Dependency Status, 2004-12, in 2012 Dollars.

	2004	2008	2012	Percent Increase 2004-12
All students	$3,489	$4,082	$4,985	42.9%
Dependent students	$3,538	$3,503	$4,650	31.4%
Independent nonparents	$3,076	$4,460	$5,011	62.9%
All student parents	$3,798	$4,900	$5,571	46.7%
Single student parents	$5,034	$6,339	$6,478	28.7%
Single student mothers	$5,033	$6,693	$6,638	31.9%
Single student fathers	$5,040	$5,095	$5,873	16.5%
Married student parents	$2,706	$3,479	$4,518	67.0%
Married student mothers	$2,708	$3,509	$4,627	70.9%
Married student fathers	$2,702	$3,424	$4,350	61.0%

Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2003-04 (NPSAS:04); 2007-08 (NPSAS:08); 2011-12 (NPSAS:12).

Table F.2. Average Amount of Unmet Need by Dependency Status, Parent Status, and Region, 2011-12, in 2012 Dollars.

				Student parents		
Region	All students	Dependent students	Independent nonparents	All parents	Single parents	Married parents
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	$6,868	$7,596	$5,792	$5,743	$7,036	$4,350
Mid East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	$5,854	$6,014	$5,609	$5,657	$7,133	$4,032
Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	$4,509	$4,155	$4,714	$4,960	$5,685	$3,983
Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	$4,317	$3,596	$4,377	$5,334	$5,859	$4,764
Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)	$4,657	$4,009	$5,142	$5,393	$6,157	$4,447
Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)	$4,786	$3,654	$4,589	$6,161	$7,131	$5,090
Rocky Mountains (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)	$4,474	$4,270	$4,754	$4,489	$6,385	$3,262
Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)	$5,247	$4,864	$5,206	$6,124	$6,884	$5,166
All Regions	$4,985	$4,650	$5,012	$5,571	$6,478	$4,518

Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2003-04 (NPSAS:04); 2007-08 (NPSAS:08); 2011-12 (NPSAS:12).

Appendix G. Student Employment

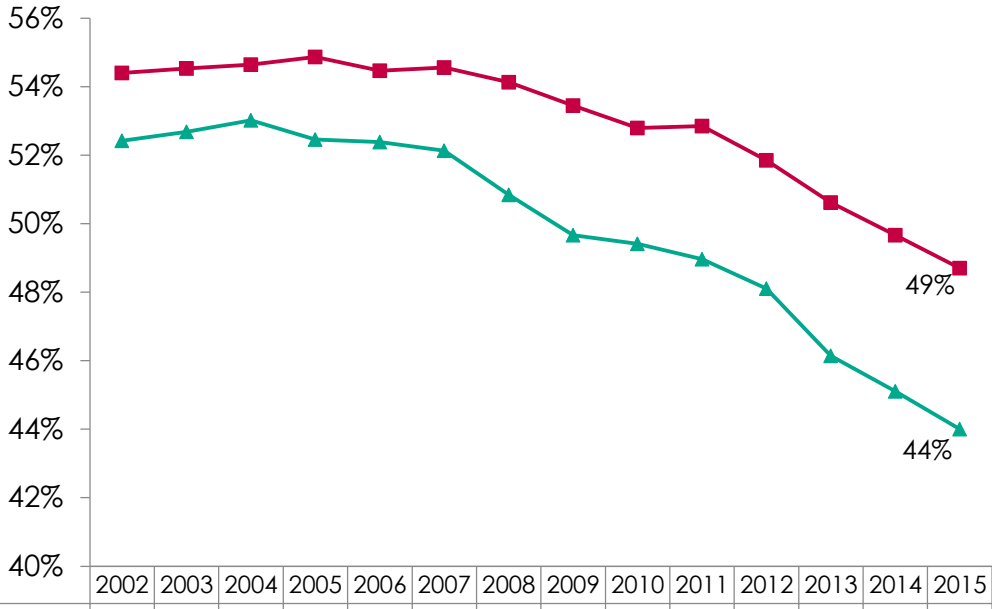
Table G.1. Share of Students who Work 30 or More Hours per Week by Dependency Status, Parent Status and Region, 2011-12.

Region	All students	Student parents	Independent nonparents	Dependent students
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)	29.3%	49.8%	48.2%	16.4%
Mid East (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	29.2%	45.6%	45.8%	17.6%
Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	33.1%	44.5%	43.0%	22.0%
Plains (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	36.0%	52.8%	47.2%	19.3%
Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)	33.3%	45.9%	44.0%	21.2%
Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)	40.2%	49.3%	48.3%	26.5%
Rocky Mountains (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)	37.0%	44.7%	47.3%	24.7%
Far West (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)	31.1%	41.6%	41.6%	19.8%
All regions	33.6%	46.4%	44.8%	20.9%

Note: Hours worked excludes Federal Work-Study.
Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2003-04 (NPSAS:04); 2007-08 (NPSAS:08); 2011-12 (NPSAS:12).

Appendix H. Trends in the Availability of On-campus Child Care

Figure H.1. Share of Two- and Public Four-Year Institutions with Campus Child Care Centers, 2002-2015



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Community colleges	52%	53%	53%	52%	52%	52%	51%	50%	49%	49%	48%	46%	45%	44%
Public four-year institutions	54%	55%	55%	55%	54%	55%	54%	53%	53%	53%	52%	51%	50%	49%

Note: Community colleges are defined as publicly-affiliated institutions granting associate's degrees; four-year public colleges are defined as publicly-affiliated institutions awarding bachelor's degrees. Includes U.S. mainland states, U.S. service academies and other U.S. jurisdictions.
Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2002-15 Institutional Characteristics Component (2002-2013 Final Revised Release; 2014 Provisional Release; 2015 Preliminary Release).

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