Parenting Students in Higher Education

- 26% of all the total college population are parents
- 71% of all parenting students are women
- 87.8% of single students with children have incomes at or below 200% of the poverty level
- Parenting students are nearly twice as likely to have an EFC of $0 and have almost $1000 more in unmet need
- EMU fall 2013 enrollment
  - 1644 undergraduate students (50.5% single)
  - 696 graduate students (33% single)
Degree Completion & Retention Plan

- Nationally, 52.2% of parenting students who enrolled in 2003-04 left without a degree after 6 years
- Child Care Grants and Financial Assistance Programs
- Wrap Around Support Services (academic and personal)
  - Family Resource Center
  - Special Academic Advising and Course Registration Assistance
  - Academic Support and Personal Development Workshops
- Mentoring/Coaching/Peer Support Program
- Single Parent Student Organization
EMU Campus Survey

- Conducted in fall 2013 by Dr. Valerie Polakow and Marjorie Ziefert, LMSW, ACSW
- 1094 respondents
- Key Findings
  - 33.5% of single parents have incomes below $800 per month
  - More than 60% have incomes below $1199 per month
  - Need for evening and weekend childcare to accommodate schedules that are not 9 am-5 pm
  - Need for standardized collection of institutional data
EMU Campus Survey Results

- Academic Costs
  - Lack of study time
  - Class absence
  - Failure to complete an assignment
  - Withdraw from course
  - Delayed degree completion

- Individual Costs
  - Stress
  - Financial concerns
  - Health problems
  - Children’s behavioral issues

- Primary student recommendation was for accessible, affordable, high-quality child care
Recommendations from Research

• Affordable child care and transportation services
• Provide adequate space for breastfeeding or pumping
• Priority class registration
• Campus policies regarding child access to campus labs, recreation services, and the library
• Designate a staff member who is directly responsible for advising and serving pregnant and parenting students
Pilot Program Proposal

- Winter 2015 launch
- Childcare grants
  - Supplemental to financial aid and government assistance
- Drop-in childcare location during evenings
  - Available to school-aged children from 2-10 pm
- Hiring of a Parenting Student Resource Coordinator
  - Oversight of grants
  - Programmatic responsibilities
  - Case management
  - Connection to public benefits
Outcomes & Assessment

- Outcomes
  - Course completion rate during winter 2015
  - Grant recipient satisfaction with services provided
  - Credit hour enrollment for fall 2015
  - GPA
  - Decrease in amount of unmet need
  - Decrease in class absences
- Assessment tools
  - Focus groups
  - End of semester survey
  - Comparison of IRIM data
Next Steps

- Expansion of the pilot into a fully supported program
  - Funding
  - Staff
  - Physical space
- Explore additional services
  - On-campus enrichment childcare facility
  - Funding for programs via student fees
  - Mentoring program among faculty, staff, and students
  - Absence policy and priority registration
  - Emergency fund
  - Outreach education to local high schools