Student Parents in the Shadows:
The Academic and Personal Costs of Unmet Child Care Needs

A Report on the Child Care Needs Study
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Executive Summary

Eastern Michigan University has a large number of student parents, many of whom are low-income single parents for whom higher education is a critical pathway out of poverty. This study was conducted to address the neglected needs of this non-traditional student parent constituency, who confront many barriers and challenges related to affordable, accessible, and high-quality child care as they struggle to succeed academically while parenting their children. In order to investigate the multiple challenges of student parents and the impact on academic progress and timely graduation, a Child Care Needs Survey was conducted in September, 2013 with follow-up focus groups and interviews with a sub-set of Survey respondents. The findings illuminate the child care crisis that EMU student parents face, and the academic and social costs incurred. In addition to extensive quantitative data from the Survey, the open-ended Survey questions, focus groups and individual interviews provide a window into the stressful and complex lives that EMU students encounter daily. The Student Recommendations emerged directly from the voices of student parents, and the Action Strategies provide EMU with a road map to create a more inclusive learning community for all students.

Profile of Respondents  Total: 1094

- 76.6% are women
- 23.4% are men
- 64.6 are two-parent households
- 31.4% are single-parent households
- 22.5% are African American/Black
- 68.1% are White
- 67 % are undergraduate
- 32.1 are graduate
- 33.5% of single parents have incomes below $800 a month
- More than 60% of single parents have incomes below $1,199 per month

Findings

Academic Costs

Academic costs related to child care were significant for both single parents and student parents in two-parent households. However single parents suffered disproportionately from the lack of affordable, quality child care. Single parents with children under 5 reported:

- 81.6% lacked study time
- 57.2% missed classes which hurt their grades
- 50.7% failed to complete an assignment
- 34.3 % had to withdraw from a class
- 30.3% needed to bring their child to class
- 26.9% delayed degree completion
- 26.4% received a poor grade

Individual Costs

With inadequate resources to comfortably care for their children student parents reported that their multiple roles took a toll on their children and themselves. Both student parents in single and two-parent households reported stress, financial concerns, health problems and children’s behavioral problems:

- 83.3% experienced stress
- 66.7% struggled with financial concerns
- 36.6% were coping with health problems
- 19.6% reported children’s behavior problems
Child Care

Student parents have a very difficult time finding affordable, high-quality, flexible child care. The average annual cost of child care for children under 5 in Michigan is $7,930 and $10,114 for infant care. These high costs leave students settling for less, necessitating choices that are unsatisfactory and often unsafe. Other barriers include lack of flexible hours and lack of on-site child care for infants, preschool, and school-age children leaving student parents to patch together multiple child care arrangements for evening and weekend classes.

- 48.6% of student parents had difficulty finding child care
- 23.9% of student parents with children under 5 spend more than $600 per month on child care
- 30.3% of single parents with children under 5 expressed concerns about the quality of care
- 24.1% of parents in two-parent families with children under 5 expressed concerns about the quality of care
- 46.3% of student parents need child care in the evening for a total of 760 children

Institutional Indifference

Student parents commented in the open-ended Survey questions and the focus groups that they felt both invisible and marginalized at EMU. They did not receive any assistance in finding resources focused on student parent support, nor did they receive financial aid to pay their high child care costs, frequently incurring extreme loan debt. Many students stated that EMU provides little in the way of family-friendly facilities or activities on campus, and that they could not participate in any extracurricular or co-curricular activities due to lack of child care.

Student Recommendations

Student parents offered an extensive list of suggested recommendations. There was strong consensus about the urgent need for accessible, affordable, high-quality child care. Students emphasized the need for a range of supports so that they could juggle less and study more.

Flexible and Affordable Child Care Arrangements

- Student parents need child care from early in the morning until late at night to accommodate work and class schedules that are not 9-5
- Student parents need infant care for children under 18 months
- Student parents need child care for school-age children after school, during public school vacations, and on weekends when EMU classes are in session
- Student parents need free drop-in care for their children so that they can bring them to campus while they are in class or need to study at the library
Institutional Support

- Child care scholarships to help pay for high-quality child care and to minimize high loan debt
- A Student Parent Resource Center that is a child-friendly space on campus where student parents can network, find campus and community resources to support them, and where there is on-site advising and registration with child care provided
- EMU staff who are knowledgeable and well prepared to answer questions about what resources exist for student parents
- Availability of child care for campus activities so that they can attend extra-curricular and co-curricular activities

It is clear that student parents would benefit greatly from recognition and affirmation of their distinctive roles as parents and students. Providing the supports that EMU student parents need to flourish in both their academic and their parenting roles would make EMU a far more welcoming and inclusive campus for this neglected student population, and would serve as an attractive recruitment opportunity to encourage more student parents to attend.

Action Strategies for EMU

- Provide need-based child care scholarships for all student parents at the Children’s Institute as well as for licensed off-campus sites for infants and preschool care.
- Establish a free evening and weekend drop-in program for preschool and school-age children of student parents while they are in class, using various sites such as the library and Rec/IM building.
- Establish a Student Parent Resource Center to be housed at the Women’s Center and hire a Student Parent Coordinator to coordinate existing resources and develop new resources for student parents.
- Support a student parent organization that would advise EMU Administrators on child care and provide peer support to student parents.
- Partner with Child Care Network to establish referrals for affordable, high-quality child care in local communities, including developing satellite sites for infants and toddlers as well as preschool children in order to expand EMU’s capacity to provide child care.
- Develop a public campaign for child care scholarships through the EMU Foundation and work with student government to establish a student fee for child care.
- Collect institutional data on student parents so that EMU can evaluate their academic progress, respond proactively to their distinctive challenges, and provide support for their academic progress and student well-being.
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Student Parents in Higher Education

Currently, in the United States more than 36% of all undergraduate students enrolled in post-secondary education are non-traditional students over the age of 25 years (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2011). This group is predominantly female comprising substantial numbers of low-income, minority, and single parents. About 25% (3.9 million) of all undergraduate students have dependent children and over half of this group lives below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level\(^1\) (Schumacher, 2013; Miller, Gault, & Thorman, 2011). Research conducted over the past two decades indicates that child care is a persistent barrier for parenting students, particularly single mothers, and that higher education institutions have neglected the distinctive challenges and burdens that low-income student parents encounter in their pursuit of post-secondary education (Gittell, Vandersall, Holdaway, & Newman, 1996; Heller & Bjorklund, 2004; Levine & Nidiffer, 1996). A further analysis by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR, 2013) based on the data from the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, points to high rates of student parent attrition (53%), more than 20% higher than for students without children.

The importance of post-secondary education for women, particularly single mothers of color, has been extensively documented. Higher education acts as a buffer against job loss during economic downturns as job losses disproportionately affect those with the lowest levels of education. Women who do not complete high school are 43% more likely to live in poverty than men without a high school diploma, and women’s earnings increase dramatically with each year of college completion (Jones-DeWeever & Gault, 2006). Further, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012) the income gap between male and female high school graduates amounts to more than $12,000 leaving women far more vulnerable to impoverished circumstances. While an associate’s degree increases earnings up to 60%, for those women who complete a four year degree, the educational benefits are even more dramatic, conferring a 182% increase in \emph{lifetime earnings} in comparison to women who have not graduated from high school (Jones-DeWeever & Gault, 2006). Similarly the U.S. Census Bureau (2012) documents that the difference in annual income between women with a high school diploma and those with a bachelor’s degree amounts to more than $20,000. Hence post-secondary education becomes a crucial exit from poverty, increasing long-term economic self-sufficiency and family stability (Polakow, 2007).

Remediating family poverty by promoting post-secondary education for women has been one of the most “powerful and dependable way[s] to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty” (American Psychological Association, 1998, p.15). Further, it is the mother’s educational attainment that is the significant determinant for children’s academic success in school, serving as a profound influence on motivation and future educational aspirations.

\(^1\) The 2013 Federal Poverty Level for a family of three was $19,530. Families living between 100%-200% of the federal poverty level are classified as low-income (Addy, Engelhardt, & Skinner, 2013; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013).

However, there are considerable barriers faced by low-income student parents in terms of access to, and financial support for, post-secondary education. According to the College Board (2013) about 60% of all four-year college graduates in 2011/12 were in debt with an average of $26,500 (The College Board, 2013). This average represents all student graduates — both traditional and non-traditional students. But as Heller & Bjorklund (2004) have pointed out, for non-traditional students such as single mothers, financial needs dramatically exceed those of traditional students, with child care and the costs of raising a child comprising one of the largest expenses and these costs are frequently unaccounted for when assessing financial aid packages for student parents. In Michigan, for example, the average annual costs of full-time care at a licensed child care center for a 4-year-old child are $7,930, and even higher for an infant — $10,114 (Child Care Aware, 2013). These costs are comparable to the costs of undergraduate tuition and fees at Eastern Michigan University, creating a crisis of affordability for parenting students who require financial aid.

**Background to Current Child Care Needs Survey**

Besides the high cost of child care, student parents are also in need of flexible child care that fits their needs as student parents. In an earlier Eastern Michigan University Child Care Needs Survey, Polakow and Ziefert (2002) reported that 63% of 479 student parents, who participated, needed child care in the evening. Further, the results of the same study indicated that 74% had difficulty finding affordable and satisfactory child care, 80% reported limited time for studying, 55% were hindered in completing their degrees and 15% failed at least one class. These results, reported over a decade ago, indicated that lack of child care has a clear impact on students’ well-being and capacity to succeed academically, affecting both retention and timely graduation.

Following the 2002 Survey, a Child Care Scholarship Initiative proposal was written as part of the Division of Student Affairs Strategic Initiative requesting $553,500 for an initial period of three years to support 30 FTE student-parent scholarships per year. However, due to budget cuts, the University funded only a one-year pilot program and a total of 29 students were awarded partial child care scholarships for their children to attend the Children’s Institute during the Winter, Spring, and Summer semesters of 2004. Even with this very truncated period of support, the scholarship pilot program resulted in short term positive outcomes for those students who received child care scholarships (See Wiencek, 2004) Student parents who were recipients of the scholarship awards were able to take more credit hours, work less time both on and off campus, had higher GPAs during the semesters that they were scholarship recipients, and reported increased study time. As importantly, they also reported an increase of quality and amount of time with their families and a reduction in stress.

During the past decade, (with the exception of the Keys to Degrees program currently serving five student parents), no new EMU child care initiatives have been implemented to address the neglected needs of this non-traditional student parent constituency, who continue to
report persistent problems accessing affordable and high-quality child care with flexible hours to accommodate study and class schedules, as well as child care for infants. In July 2013, Provost Schatzel funded a more extensive second Child Care Needs Survey which was launched in September, 2013 to determine the current needs of student parents at EMU, with a particular interest in students who were single parents. The Survey findings were analyzed and focus groups and individual interviews were conducted with a small sub-set of participating students. This Survey also examined the relationship between child care needs and academic impacts in alignment with the Provost’s Degree Completion/Retention (DRC) initiative with a commitment to increasing retention and timely graduation.

**Methodology**

The Child Care Needs Survey consisted of an extensive web-based questionnaire (comprising 35 questions and two open-ended narrative questions) sent to all students via campus email and the link was posted on campus announcements. The link was active for two weeks from September 16 to September 30, 2013 yielding 1094 qualified respondents (the initial question in the survey was used to filter out respondents who did not have any children or had children 13 years and older). Incentives to complete the Survey included a drawing for four iPads, sponsored by the Provost’s Office. Two hundred and ten student parents from the Survey initially volunteered to participate in follow-up focus groups or individual interviews. Subsequently, in fall 2013, a sub-group of students who volunteered participated in one of five focus groups and 14 individual interviews were conducted. The detailed findings from the Survey, the focus groups, and the individual interviews yielded comprehensive documentation of the challenges and obstacles confronting EMU’s undergraduate and graduate student parents, as they juggle parenting, work, and academic demands in pursuit of their degrees. In the following sections of the Report, key findings from the Survey together with the voices of student parents are reported and analyzed, and future recommendations and action strategies are discussed.
Profile of Respondents

Total Respondents
1094

Gender
Women
838 (76.6%)
Men
254 (23.4%)

Household Status
Two-Parent
707 (64.6%)
Single Parent
343 (31.4%)
Other
44 (4%)

Student Status
Freshman/Sophomore
133 (11.8%)
Junior/Senior
624 (55.2%)
Graduate
351 (32.1%)
International
22 (2%)

Ethnicity
African American/Black
246 (22.5%)
American Indian: 23 (2.1%)
Asian
21 (1.9%)
Hispanic/Latino/a
37 (3.4%)
White
745 (68.1%)

**Figure 1: Demographics of Student Parents at Eastern Michigan University.**
(See Appendix A, Tables 2-5 and Appendix B, Figure 15 & Figure 16 for further details)

**Income and Support**
There is a significant variation in income between single and married student parents. One third of all single parents (33.5%) reported an income below $800 per month and more than 60% had an income below $1,199. In comparison only 10.3% of student parents in a two-person household had an income below $800 and almost 60% indicated an income above $1600 (see Figure 2 & Figure 3). Further analysis indicated that for more than 35% of all student parents, loans accounted for a significant source of their income. Single parents relied to a greater extent on student loans (46.1%), food stamps (46.4%), and WIC food assistance (21.3%) compared to student parents in a two-parent household (See Appendix A, Table 9 &Table 10).
Child Care Arrangements

The child care arrangements of student parents vary based on affordability and availability of care. Only 43 children of student parents (out of a total of 917 children under 5 identified in the Survey) are enrolled at the Children’s Institute. While the majority of children are supervised by only one provider, a large number of children are in a patchwork of child care arrangements.

### Children below 18 months: 312 Children
- **Top 3 Child Care Arrangements:**
  - Relative Care: 195 (62.5%)
  - Licensed Center Care: 40 (12.8%)
  - Friend/Neighbor: 38 (12.2%)

- **Number of Providers:**
  - 1 Provider: 253 (81.1%)
  - 2 Providers: 43 (13.8%)
  - 3 Providers: 16 (5.1%)

### Children between 18 months and 5 years: 605 Children
- **Top 3 Child Care Arrangements:**
  - Relative Care: 304 (50.2%)
  - Licensed Center Care: 137 (22.6%)
  - Licensed Family Day Care/Home: 68 (11.2%)

- **Number of Providers:**
  - 1 Provider: 435 (71.5%)
  - 2 Providers: 131 (21.55%)
  - 3 Providers: 34 (5.6%)

### Children 5 years and older: 1040 Children
- **Top 3 Child Care Arrangements:**
  - Relative Care: 430 (41.3%)
  - Before/After School Programs: 221 (21.3%)
  - Friend/Neighbor: 123 (11.8%)

- **Number of Providers:**
  - 1 Provider: 823 (79.1%)
  - 2 Providers: 165 (15.9%)
  - 3 Providers: 36 (3.5%)

Figure 4: Child Care Arrangements by Age of Children (See Appendix A, Table 6 for further details)
Findings

Academic Costs
Student parents reported numerous obstacles and barriers regarding child care that impacted their academic success. Failure to find affordable, satisfactory child care led to an array of academic costs including lack of study time, missed classes, failed assignments, and delayed degree completion, and parents reported that they frequently needed to bring their children to class. Child care problems were more severe for student parents with young children under 5 years compared to student parents with children 5 years and older; and single student parents experienced the most obstacles.

![Academic Costs due to Child Care Problems: Single Parent Households](chart)

Figure 5: Academic Costs: Single-Parent Households (%)
Student Voices: Single Parents

An undergraduate student and single mother of four describes failing two classes:

*I can’t afford Latchkey. . . . I pay a hundred and fifty dollars a week for my youngest. . . it’s difficult with four kids. . . . I’ve failed two classes here because of kids . . . failing both of those classes was just because it was too much.*

An undergraduate single mother recounts that lack of support resulted in her missing classes and delaying her degree as she could not complete her internship:

*I had nowhere else to take him, and so I had to keep him and I had to miss a lot of classes. . . . And there have been times when I was so tired to even study after I put him to sleep that I just didn’t study. Of course the consequence was a bad grade on an exam. . . . I am unable to do it [required internship] because I don’t have a babysitter. Now I kind of have to push back one semester before I graduate and do my internship.*

A recently widowed graduate student with two school-age children describes the lack of affordable child care that caused her to drop a class:
I had taken an online course. And they expected us to do groups and get together. And it was summer. The kids were . . . off of school. I'm like, "There's no way." I had to drop the class. That was like, "Oh, psht."

An undergraduate single mother of a 3-year-old, who works two part-time jobs, experiences the constant stress of juggling her family needs and her academic demands:

Oh yeah, because instead of studying, writing papers, or something- you're like researching online, like places to live with a child, or places like, cheaper child care.

A single mother, who is a graduate student with three school-age children is endlessly distracted due to concerns about accessing child care:

I just think in general, it's hard to concentrate on some classes when you're always worried about, "Where's your child gonna go... one of my classes, I mean, I took a lower grade because . . . I didn't have day care. And I couldn't make the test . . .

A graduate, single mother of two young children describes the lost time and delays in degree completion due to regular absences from classes, and she frequently brings her youngest child to class because of problems regarding the hours of child care:

You know, you're really torn between being a parent and being a student. . . . I struggle with guilt with it too. . . . And I definitely think that I don't produce the level of work that I could . . . .And it's definitely delaying because the lack of time I have to work on my thesis is prolonging my being in the program. . . .It's delaying me another year.

A graduate single student father with a school-age child with learning disabilities describes his inability to participate in campus life:

A lot of times they have speakers here — undergraduate and graduate symposiums. Those type of things that, I would like to be involved with, but I can't because I don't have the child care.

Student Voices: Two-Parent Households
A married, undergraduate father of three children, who works full-time, needed to delay enrollment as his wife pursued her degree due to lack of child care. He describes the constant stress of parenting and lack of study time:

We were taking turns going to school. . . . And then I have to keep an eye out for my daughter who's going through her terrible twos. . . . It impacts my grades. I'm a 'C' student because of that!
A married, undergraduate mother with three children describes how she was delayed almost two years from completing her degree:

*I had no choice, because I kept running into day care issues . . . there’s a big year and a half, almost two years delay, just because I mean, I was getting no help here [at EMU] . . . I had problems taking out more loans and trying to figure out how I’m gonna pay for day care.*

A married, international student in her forties, with a 10-year-old daughter is pursuing a master’s degree part-time while working full-time off campus. The lack of support coupled with a lack of time has delayed both her enrollment as well as successful degree completion:

*We have no family in the area . . . if I can’t get child care, I can’t come to college . . . having child care or not having child care makes the difference to be able to get my course completed or not. . . . It is definitely a direct correlation between finding time to do work and the grade that I get . . . socially I’m not really integrated in my course at all.*

A married, graduate mother of two school-age children describes the challenge of unexpected needs for child care in the evening and voices concern that students will need to drop out due to lack of child care:

*My classes are all in the evening now. And this is what makes it tricky for us . . . That could make a huge difference if you felt like, "I can get through these X years and don’t have to drop out because the child care thing has just become too much."

**Student Voices from the Survey**

A large number of student parents responded to the open-ended Survey questions expressing their academic concerns and the need for recognition of their distinctive circumstances. A sample of their comments follows:

*Allow for flexibility when being a single parent. I have missed test/pop quizzes and lost points on them because my son was in the hospital, he’s been sickly for two years of attending college. Offer drop-in care for older students when public schools are closed. Often I have had situations come up when my oldest didn’t have school and I did.*

*I would like to be involved in extracurricular activities like the various clubs but they all require evening/weekend participation for social events. And the crux is that employers ask if you are a member and penalize you if you are not. As a single parent, it is hard enough to work, attend class and get the studying done. ‘Social’ activities should not be required to participate in these clubs . . . there should be exceptions for parents of small children.*
Allow students to withdraw easier if they fall too far behind due to child’s illnesses . . . I had to miss several days that semester. I failed a class and was told that I couldn’t withdraw just with speaking to an advisor.

Child care is needed for students to be able to go to class and to be able to pass a class, [EMU should] help as much as they can to help single parents succeed.

**Individual Costs: Stress, Finances, Health, and Children’s Behavioral Concerns**
The vast majority of student parents reported that lack of available, affordable, quality child care caused persistent stress, coupled with ongoing financial concerns, lack of time, and health problems such as depression, anxiety, high blood pressure, headaches, and exhaustion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Costs Due to Child Care Problems (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s behavioral problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Individual Costs due to Child Care Problems— All Student Parents (%)

**Student Voices: Single Parents**
A junior with a 3-year-old son describes her struggles accessing affordable housing leading her to request a place in an EMU dorm because she could not afford an apartment on campus, as well as child care:

_I called a few times over the summer before I started going here and I was asking about child care. I was asking about student housing with children . . . And they would not give me any information. Or “Sorry, we have nothing for you.” I called about dorms, and they’re like, “You can’t live in the dorms with a kid”. . . A dorm would be convenient . . . ‘cause I cannot afford $800-to $900 a month!_

A graduate student and single mother of three children comments on her stretched financial circumstances:

_I took out extra loans to pay my day care expenses to get through these programs and now in the long run, I’m gonna have to pay these back because Eastern didn’t have anything that was reasonable. I mean, because a hundred fifty-five dollars a week for one kid was just, to me, a little high. . . And the guilt, this semester, because I’m not home at all. . . I mean, it’s bad enough I pay for child care when I’m at work, let alone adding another twenty hours for internship._
A graduate single father, who works as a graduate assistant on campus and part-time off-campus, describes his constant dilemma of creating a better life for his 7-year-old son through post-secondary education. His son has exhibited behavioral problems at school and the father wrestles with guilt as he has nowhere to leave his son on campus as he attends evening classes three times a week:

*You know, it just makes you feel like you’re not doing enough. It’s your fault. The behavior is your fault. ... And it- it just makes you feel pretty lousy, you know!*

**Student Voices: Two-Parent Households**

A young, married, undergraduate student mother and her husband are both full-time students, each works 20-25 hours on the weekends off campus. They have a 2-year-old son who is in relative care that is not satisfactory, but she has no other choice stating, “[that] is what works at the time” although she really would prefer to have her child attend the Children’s Institute, saying “I really liked it. . . . I would love to take my child over there… But it was just . . . too much.” The lack of time for studying and for taking care of her son results in frustration and excessive stress and is aggravated by her long commute of more than forty minutes:

*So, working, and dropping him off at the babysitter, and coming to school, and just study time . . . It definitely gets to me sometimes. . . . So, when I have to leave him for a couple days in a row . . . I’ve actually- like, I’ve had a few breakdowns sometimes over that. . . . Nobody wants to be away from- from their child, you know, and especially because he’s so young. He’s only two. So, yeah it gets a little overwhelming at times.*

An international graduate student, married with a 4-year-old son emphasizes her financial concerns and the high cost of child care, while coping with the unfamiliarity of a different country and different academic setting:

*I feel like if I was at least financially stable enough so I could just afford to send him to preschool, and feel comfortable going to my classes, and handle my own academic difficulties.*

**Student Voices from the Survey**

Students from the Survey commented on the inadequate financial aid assistance, the stress of worrying about the welfare of their children, and how having on-campus child care options would decrease their stress:

*There's not enough financial aid assistance, especially for those who have children, there is not enough help with finding jobs in our field outside of internship, and having child care available would be nice. Especially, since I get charged for things I don’t have time to use like the gym.*

*More consideration with our financial aid award. Increases in award offers so that we can afford to take care of our children´s needs while pursuing our desired degree.*
At WCC I was able to afford to have both my toddlers in their child care program. . . . On average my portion of child care was $150 per month for two children. At Eastern’s Children’s Institute I can only afford one child in the program and I pay close to $350 per month . . . . This puts a financial strain on families that need their children to be in a safe environment and cared for during the times a student is in school.

If there was a scholarship program available I would have applied and had my kiddo’s safe on campus when I attended classes.

Accept children from 6 weeks, that’s when I worried most about being so far from my daughter and would have gladly paid to have her on campus.

A flexible [hours] child care center. That would surely take a lot of stress off me when it comes to obtaining child care so that I may attend school.

Lack of Affordable Child Care
The average annual cost for a 4-year-old child in full-time center-based child care in Michigan amounts to $7,930 ($660/month) and costs rise to $10,114 ($842.83/month) for an infant (Child Care Aware, 2013). A student parent of a 4-year-old who wants to enroll her child at the Children’s Institute would have to pay $740/month – more than the statewide average. Nationally, there is a general negative relationship between the age of the child and the cost of child care as indicated by the cost surveys of Child Care Aware (2013). The Survey reveals a similar relationship. The costs for child care are far more burdensome for student parents with younger children. Figure 8 indicates that almost 25% of all student parents with at least one child below 5 years have monthly child care expenses of more than $600. In comparison, only 5.1% of student parents with children 5 years and older reported such high costs (see Figure 9). Student parents repeatedly referred to the fact that they were taking out loans to pay for child care.

Figure 8: Child Care Expenses of Student Parents with Children under 5 years

Figure 9: Child Care Expenses of Student Parents with Children above 5 years
Student Voices: Single Parents

A single, undergraduate father of a 2-year-old comments on the high costs for his child:

*Child care is just too expensive. I've been struggling with the state, trying to get assistance for child care all semester pretty much. And I've used - I don't know how much money in student loans just paying off child care. ... It's just tough... I contacted Eastern earlier this year about child care before I applied here. And I don't know if they had any scholarships at all, but there weren't any available when I talked to them. .... I mean, you know, it restricts your schedule. It restricts your money.*

A single, undergraduate mother of a 2-year-old works full-time for $7.40 an hour from Monday to Friday and is taking four courses. She regrets that she cannot afford the Children’s Institute “because it’s so expensive.” Even with a state child care subsidy “it would still be between $300 and $400.” She settles for less enrolling her son in a center that lacks early educational enrichment and where “the TV [is] on in the mornings and I don’t care for the TV at all.”

An undergraduate, full-time student and single mother who works two part-time jobs has a 3-year-old son currently enrolled for two days a week in child care. She compares her experience of being a student at Washtenaw to her EMU experience:

*When I was going to Washtenaw, he went to the day care there... child care was completely covered... it would be a hundred dollars for him to go [2 days/week] here [Children’s Institute]. A hundred dollars is way too expensive. I barely even make a hundred dollars every two weeks, let alone every single week to pay for it... there’s no family help. It’s just me.*

A graduate, single mother of a 6-year-old girl describes herself as “kind of stunned” when coming to Eastern “because there really wasn’t much [child care] available.” She relates how her loans were used to pay for child care:

*I knew that Eastern wasn’t cheap... and I thought, ‘Okay, if I can somehow pull this off... my plan was just to pay for everything with student loans, which is what I did.*

Student Voices: Two-Parent Households

A married, undergraduate student parent and a mother of a 4-year-old comments on the high cost of child care which forces her to work longer hours and devote less time to her academic program:

*My experience is, child care is too expensive. I have to work full-time and literally half of what I make goes to paying day care. But I can't afford not to work. So, I can't get a part-time job, so I have more time to spend on my studies.*
An international graduate student, married and mother of a 4-year-old expresses her astonishment that full-time work does not pay all the bills, including the high cost of child care in the United States:

_I thought that if I will work, if my husband will work, we should be able to make enough money. So that was the idea. . . . I had no idea about minimum wage at that time. So, that came gradually later when I realized the money my husband was making wasn't enough. So . . . it's I guess, ignorance?_

**Student Voices from the Survey**

Many students emphasized the stress that they experienced due to unaffordable child care, and how the need to work more hours to pay for child care compromised their academic progress:

_Make it [child care] affordable so that parents can actually complete college. And not have to worry about working more just for child care._

_Child care needs to be more affordable for students. Receiving a $5 discount at the Children's Institute is such a small gesture. Moreover, there is no infant care in the immediate area, which is a huge problem._

_Financially help me [with child care] because I have no support from family so I pay everything on my own and I stress so bad about taking loans out that I will take forever to pay back._

_My entire life would change dramatically if we could have received child care on campus for free. My entire academic trajectory would improve._

**Restricted Choice: Compromising Quality for Affordability**

Concerns about safety and quality were recurrent themes for all student parents creating considerable stress as they faced a reality where some knowingly compromised their children’s early educational lives because they had no other choices, and no financial support to make wiser decisions.

![Figure 10: Concerns about Child Care Quality and Safety (%) – Single Parent Households](image-url)
Figure 11: Concerns about Child Care Quality and Child Care Safety (%) – Two-Parent Households

**Student Voices: Single Parents**

An undergraduate, single mother who tried to access child care support from EMU has been unable to find affordable and high-quality infant care and continues to rely on her mother and her boyfriend whose schedule is unreliable, as well as “whoever can keep her,” as she expresses concerns about safety, saying:

*I have a lot of trust issues with people outside of the family . . . my biggest thing is she can’t talk . . . if anything happened I would definitely not forgive myself . . .*

A graduate, single mother with three young children expresses her concerns:

*He was going to X in Canton. And he kept getting hurt. And there was no answer . . . like, it was very questionable. . . . And that’s an issue I ran into too.*

Another graduate student and single mother of a preschooler and school-age child expresses her frustration about both access and safety:

*I got so angry, because everyone was like, "Well, just put him in X . . . I would rather work extra shifts so I know he's safe, and people don't understand that. . . . But it’s also hard because . . . you're really picky about who you leave your kids with. You can’t just leave them with someone . . . Like especially the way the world is, it’s terrifying!*

A graduate single mother describes her frustration with the quality and safety of the after school program her 7-year-old daughter attends:

*Their program it's cheap . . . but the program itself is terrible . . . And I had picked up [my daughter] one day, and her chin was purple and blue, like, really, really, really badly bruised, like the whole thing. And she had this huge scrape on her arm. And she’s sobbing when I pick her up . . . She said, none of the teachers asked if she was okay, nobody even came over . . . I can have high expectations, but in the end I still need child care. And in the end I'm gonna have to choose whatever's there.*
Students Voices: Two-Parent Households

An international, married graduate student with a preschool child describes her anxiety about quality and safety, leaving her extremely stressed:

There was a feeling like I really don’t want my child to go there. But I don’t have other options. So, each time after I leave him there, I came back, I said, “Well, I really don’t know what to do. Like, how can I handle [this]?” Like, my mind is there, and my body's here. And my body and my mind are divided into two places and trying to focus on [my] studies. . . .

Student Voices from the Survey

Student parents responded to the Survey with many concerns about safety, where lack of affordability led to unsatisfactory choices that were not in the best interests of their children.

Most of the time when you come across an affordable facility you are sacrificing quality i.e. no educational programs being offered and cleanliness is minimal.

It is absolutely necessary for students that are parents to feel secure in the welfare of the child in order to perform at highest level in academia, or the concentration won't be on studies but obviously on the need of the child.

Make sure that if I need to bring my children to campus with me, have somewhere I can take them without fearing for their safety.

They could have free day care that is safe and provides a safe environment for my child. It's not right that we pay tuition, and then try to be good parents by getting an education for our children, but have no safe place to put them while we are trying to do that. I am mad about all the money that goes into so many things at the university that don’t even directly help students, but this could help a lot of students.

Frequently the lack of choices means finding unsatisfactory care that is cheap and fits within limited or minimal student budgets. Almost 50% of student parents reported difficulty finding child care (see Appendix A, Table 11). However both the Survey and focus groups revealed that many students were unable to choose the child care that was in the best interests of their children and had to settle for less, further exacerbating their stress. Student parents who experienced the most anxiety about quality and safety were also those parents whose child care costs were the lowest (see Figure 12 & Figure 13). More than 60% of student parents who indicated concerns about child care quality and safety spent less than $400 a month on child care and single parents expressed far more concerns (see Appendix A, Table 13). Only a small percentage (5%) of student parents were able to benefit from state subsidies (see Appendix A, Table 10). Consequently, student parents with the least financial means were disproportionately those with the most precarious child care arrangements and experienced the highest levels of stress.
Restricted Choice: Inflexible Hours

Both undergraduate and graduate students experienced extreme difficulty juggling hours of work and hours for child care. Forty-six percent of all student parents (49.6% of graduate and 45% of undergraduate students) reported that they needed child care for a total of 760 children in the evenings, due to class schedules and the need for study time (see Table 1 & Figure 14).

Table 1. Number of Student Parents Who Need Child Care in the Evening by Student Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Parents who need Child Care in the Evening by Student Status</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate (n=757)</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate (n=351)</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Student Parents (N=1094)</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 14: Times Student Parents need Child Care for their Children (N); Total Number of Children: 1957

Student Voices: Single Parents
A single graduate mother with two school-age children describes her need for child care in the evening:

*If the school had a program that was, you know, decent in price where you can drop them off- because I'm a single parent now. So I do need day care on regular basis. But it's for evenings. I don't see that they have anything.*

Student Voices: Two-Parent Households
An international, married, graduate student, with a 4-year-old son describes her constant struggle to find child care during her evening classes:

*I have another worry. Like where to find a babysitter [for night classes]. Like, what should I do? So, I had already lots of babysitters. Like, they stayed for a while and they moved out. They stayed for a while then realized they were too busy . . . if EMU could have somewhere I could just leave my child when I'm having night classes so I don't have to worry about who to find for my child and . . . I know I have a place where I could . . . bring my child.*

Many students in the Survey commented on the need for a drop-in center. The quotes below capture some of the students’ perspectives:

*I like the Children's Institute and the proximity to the campus, but I wished something like a drop-in child care on campus were available for the evening classes.*

*Child care should be available on weekends and evenings for class and opportunities to study at the library.*

*I would recommend that the university had child care centers according to the course schedule in place. I think this would be a great help for parents across the board, and for*
future reference attract more new or transfer students ... That would surely take a lot of stress off me when it comes to obtaining child care so that I may attend school.

Child care hours [should be] as flexible as can be and also the cost be determined based upon the income of the parent not just a standard rate. Not all EMU student parents work or have the same amount of income but that doesn't mean everyone should be charged the same rate.

Graduate students are often forgot [ten] about due to our weird hours. We are on campus in the late afternoons and evenings. So a lot of things are closed to us.

Having evening care and weekend care so that we are able to finish school and not stress about where our child would go during a night class.

The university could make child care available in the evening or offer classes only during the day when the Children’s Institute is open. . . . And having the option for reasonable priced drop-in child care while in class, especially in the evening would help me tremendously otherwise I see myself again missing a couple of classes in the next months

Institutional Indifference to Student Parent Needs
It is clear from the Survey responses and the students’ perspectives that emerged during the focus groups and individual interviews that student parents feel a sense of invisibility on EMU’s campus; their unique needs as parenting students are not addressed, there are few resources available, and their capacity to participate in campus life is diminished.

Student Voices: Single Parents
An undergraduate, single mother of a five-month-old daughter describes her frustration and disappointment about the Keys to Degrees program.

*I thought it would be a resource, you know what I mean? And I went up there, I called plenty of times. Come to find out, I didn't get accepted. I didn't have a reason. I didn't even get to meet with them. And I kind of felt like, a slap in the face. . . . It was last year. So, it just seems to me, when you are supposed to be so helpful and a resource to young mothers, it seem like you should at least talk to me. You know what I mean? At least give a denial reason. You know what I mean?*

Another undergraduate single mother with two young children comments:

*It is really hard to become involved in your, you know, like school and be excited about your school when you can't participate in anything for your school.*

A graduate student and single parent of a 7-year-old child describe her frustration attempting to receive more information about available child care on EMU campus:
It was really frustrating because at Washtenaw it was very simple. So yeah, I was frustrated here . . . I had talked to someone who said they didn’t know if there was any sort of financial aid for parents. . . . But the Children's Institute, even, was like, “We don’t know, we don’t know what’s available.”

A graduate, single mother with three school-age children describes her dilemma as her family support system is far away:

It's hard for me ...because I don't have anybody here. ... My support system down here is not the greatest. But, I wish Eastern would have something for us moms trying to move forward.

**Student Voices: Two-Parent Households**

An undergraduate, married student describes the lack of responsiveness while accessing information about child care on campus:

I actually called Eastern, right after she was born. So this would have been . . . Fall 2012. Or Winter, early 2013, saying like, "Can- is there somewhere near campus where she can go and-" I couldn't even tell you who I talked to. But they were like, very confused. Like, "What are you talking about? Why would you think we could help you?" And I was like,"Oh, never mind. I'll look on my own."

An undergraduate psychology major, who is married with a 2-year-old daughter, describes her experience as a student at EMU as “very isolating,” and comments that the evening scheduling of classes and the lack of child care has caused her to seek another university for graduate studies:

So, for those reasons, I will not do my Master’s program at EMU . . . . It’s so ridiculous . . . I think that’s very discriminatory to parents. . . . If you’re really looking out for what’s best for the students and the school, I think that EMU needs to take a look.

A graduate student, married, and mother of two school-age children describes her frustration with the lack of support for student parents at EMU:

My first semester, it was very disheartening to find that there was no real support for the parents that were coming back to school . . . . I wasn't really familiar with the area. I didn't know anybody. . . . There was nobody to recommend me to other places.

**Student Voices from the Survey**

There were many Survey respondents who commented on the lack of information about child care, the lack of resources and support, and the general lack of inclusiveness for student parents as a distinctive campus constituency. A small sample of comments follows:
I felt very uncomfortable at EMU events I went to as there was not a single event set up for student parents. I feel the university does a great job of being inclusive of all groups except this one.

There are departments and professors who act as though the demographic and college experience is the same as that of the 70's. I think this is odd for a university that prides itself on the diverse demographic including non-traditional students.

It would be helpful to hear more about organizations within/or external to EMU that can help parents with school/family/work balance. Giving us tools/ways to cope with the stress and managing time better. Even if there is a place to go that provided a dinner and supervised play time for the kids, would really alleviate some of the burdens of being a student parent. Even if it was once or twice a week to catch up on studying. If there are such programs, I have not heard of them.

Assist students in finding child care that will help them maintain their college status.

Make it better known to students what services are provided on campus. Also, offer more varied services to different age groups. In addition to that add in evening hours.

I was interested in learning about what child care EMU offers, but struggled to find information online. I think it would be good to advertise what help EMU can give parents.

I was given no resources on how to receive outside child care when I first started at the University. Also, I was not told by anyone that I could apply for help with child care expenses or apply for a higher financial aid loan because my child was in child care. Also, you could help parents with gaining access to government subsidies available such as WIC or Food Stamps.

**Summary**

The voices of Eastern Michigan University student parents revealed an array of obstacles and challenges specific to this student population. Flexible, affordable, and high-quality child care is one of the biggest needs mentioned by student parents, and it is particularly onerous for those who live on a budget at or below the federal poverty line. The availability of affordable child care that is tailored to the needs of student parents and their children is the most critical piece of the puzzle that can make post-secondary education accessible to student parents and successful and timely graduation an achievable goal. As this study reveals, student parents pay a high cost academically for not having child care that is accessible, affordable and of satisfactory quality. Most in the study reported reduced hours to study and many have experienced lower grades, failed classes, dropped classes and other negative consequences. Some have had to stop out or delay their graduation because child care was not available, or too expensive. Student parents
also reported needing to bring their children to class, particularly in the evenings and on weekends when child care is not available. Trying to juggle children, work, and school responsibilities has many personal consequences as well for student parents. This juggling has left about 80 percent of EMU student parents feeling stressed, two thirds of them financially burdened and over a third of them with related health problems. Almost a quarter of student parents report that as a consequence of unsatisfactory and/or multiple child care arrangements and inordinate amounts of time away, their children are experiencing behavior problems.

Although child care is a pivotal resource for student parent families, an overarching theme in this study has been the isolation and invisibility student parents experience at EMU. They do not see EMU as a supportive institution in their efforts to accomplish their goal of degree completion. In fact, they see their own university as creating barriers that they need to confront. Student parents report that there is little information anywhere on campus to help them with finding child care or other resources they might need. The Children’s Institute is not affordable for most students and only enrolls a small number of student parents’ children under 5 (43 out of 917 in the Survey) and does not provide infant care. Student parents are unable to participate in the rich extracurricular and co-curricular activities on campus, are frequently isolated from their peers, and are not well integrated into campus life.

This study paints a picture of a non-traditional group of student parents who learn and study in the shadows, with little institutional recognition of, or support for, their distinctive struggles, burdens, and aspirations. EMU has a large population of student parents; yet their path to degree completion, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, has not been made easy and with some effort and commitment on the part of the University, they, too, could feel included, supported and affirmed as valued and significant members of the student body. Other universities have demonstrated a commitment to student parents and currently provide some models of best practices.

Campuses such as Arizona State University, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota, Oregon State University, the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee and numerous community colleges across the nation have made a commitment to student parents by advocating for the needs of this unique population, and ensuring that they have equal access to all of the same campus opportunities and resources that other students have. These campuses have a designated space and person responsible for attending to the needs of student parents and their children. They provide scholarship programs to ease the burden of expensive child care and assist student parents in finding the best quality care that meets their particular family needs. They all offer both support services for community building and parenting education as well as skill-building for academic and professional development.

EMU has already launched a Degree Completion/Retention (DRC) Plan with two targeted initiatives; men of color and single parents. The findings and recommendations in this Report clearly address the urgent needs of single parents. In addition, the needs of all student parents would be well-served by the expansion of such an initiative to include all student parents
with preschool and school-age children. An inclusive focus on non-traditional students who confront constant barriers to successful academic progress and degree completion would enlarge EMU’s commitment to diverse learners, and create a far more inclusive learning community where all students are welcomed, with significant positive impacts that extend across two generations of learners: parents and their children.

**Student Recommendations**

Student parents who participated in this study offered an extensive list of recommendations that would be responsive to their needs. There was strong consensus about the urgent need for accessible, affordable, high-quality child care. Students emphasized the need for a range of supports so that they can juggle less and study more. The following specific recommendations emerged directly from the voices of student parents in the Survey, focus groups and individual interviews.

**Flexible and Affordable Child Care Arrangements**

- Student parents need child care from early in the morning until late at night to accommodate to work and class schedules that are not 9-5.
- Student parents need infant care for children under 18 months.
- Student parents need child care for school-age children after school, during public school holidays and vacations, and on weekends when EMU classes are in session.
- Student parents need free drop-in care for their children so that they can bring them to campus while they are in class or need to study in the library.

**Institutional Support**

- Child care scholarships to help pay for high-quality child care and to minimize high loan debt.
- A Student Parent Resource Center that is a child-friendly space on campus where student parents can network, find campus and community resources to support them, and where there is on-site advising and registration with child care provided.
- EMU staff who are knowledgeable and well prepared to answer questions about what resources exist for student parents.
- Availability of child care for campus activities so that student parents can attend extra-curricular and co-curricular activities.
It is clear that student parents would benefit greatly from recognition and affirmation of their distinctive roles as parents and students. Providing the supports that EMU student parents need to flourish in both their academic and their parenting roles will make EMU a far more welcoming and inclusive campus for this neglected student population, and would serve as an attractive recruitment opportunity to encourage more student parents to attend. Based on the student recommendations, we propose the following Action Strategies.

**Action Strategies for EMU**

- Provide need-based child care scholarships for all student parents at the Children’s Institute as well as for licensed off-campus sites for infant and preschool care.

- Establish a free evening and weekend drop-in program for preschool and school-age children of student parents while they are in class, using various sites such as the library and Rec/IM building.

- Establish a Student Parent Resource Center to be housed at the Women’s Center and hire a Student Parent Coordinator to coordinate existing resources and develop new resources for student parents.

- Support a student parent organization that would advise EMU Administrators on child care and provide peer support to student parents.

- Partner with Child Care Network to establish referrals for affordable, high-quality child care in local communities, including developing satellite sites for infants and toddlers as well as preschool children in order to expand EMU’s capacity to provide child care.

- Develop a public campaign for child care scholarships through the EMU Foundation and work with student government to establish a student fee for child care.

- Collect institutional data on student parents so that EMU can evaluate their academic progress, respond proactively to their distinctive challenges, and provide support for their academic progress and student well-being.
References


Appendix A

Table 2: Age of Student Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Student Parents (N=1094)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>31.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
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Table 3: Veteran Student Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veteran Student Parents (N=1094)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>94.4</td>
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</table>

Table 4: Student Parents with a Disability

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student Parents With a Disability (N=1094)</th>
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<th>%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>5.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1029</td>
<td>94.0</td>
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</table>

Table 5: Number of Student Parents by Household Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Parents by Household Status</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>% by Household Status</th>
<th>% of All Student Parents (N=1094)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Parents (Total)</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Parents (Children under 5)</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Parents (Children over 5)</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Parent Household (Total)</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Parent Household (Children under 5)</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Parent Household (Children over 5)</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>17.9</td>
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</table>
### Table 6: Child Care Arrangements by Age of Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Children below 18 months (n= 312)</th>
<th>Children between 18 months and 5 years (n=605)</th>
<th>Children 5 years and older (n=1040)</th>
<th>Total (N=1957)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMU Children's Institute</td>
<td>2 (0.6%)</td>
<td>31 (5.1%)</td>
<td>3 (0.3%)</td>
<td>36 (1.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMU Children's Institute Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>7 (1.2%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>7 (0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>9 (1.5%)</td>
<td>2 (0.2%)</td>
<td>11 (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start Program</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>54 (8.9%)</td>
<td>7 (0.7%)</td>
<td>61 (3.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Center Care</td>
<td>40 (12.8%)</td>
<td>137 (22.6%)</td>
<td>27 (2.6%)</td>
<td>204 (10.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Family Day Care/Home</td>
<td>23 (7.4%)</td>
<td>68 (11.2%)</td>
<td>7 (0.7%)</td>
<td>98 (5.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlicensed Family Day Care/Home</td>
<td>6 (1.9%)</td>
<td>16 (2.6%)</td>
<td>11 (1.1%)</td>
<td>33 (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Care</td>
<td>195 (62.5%)</td>
<td>304 (50.2%)</td>
<td>430 (41.3%)</td>
<td>929 (47.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend/Neighbor Care</td>
<td>38 (12.2%)</td>
<td>48 (7.9%)</td>
<td>123 (11.8%)</td>
<td>209 (10.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babysitter</td>
<td>30 (9.6%)</td>
<td>57 (9.4%)</td>
<td>75 (7.2%)</td>
<td>162 (8.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before/After School Programs</td>
<td>1 (0.3%)</td>
<td>13 (2.1%)</td>
<td>221 (21.3%)</td>
<td>235 (12.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling Care</td>
<td>9 (2.9%)</td>
<td>13 (2.1%)</td>
<td>110 (10.6%)</td>
<td>132 (6.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latchkey</td>
<td>0 (0.5%)</td>
<td>3 (0.5%)</td>
<td>68 (6.5%)</td>
<td>71 (3.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>1040</td>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7: Number of Hours Worked on Average per Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Number of Hours Student Parents Work (N=1094)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5 hours</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10 hours</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15 hours</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 20 hours</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 25 hours</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 30 hours</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 35 hours</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 40 hours</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 40 hours</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently not employed</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Cross Tabulation - Number of Credit Hours by Student Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Credit Hours</th>
<th>1–5 credit hours</th>
<th>6-10 credit hours</th>
<th>11–15 credit hours</th>
<th>16-20 credit hours</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Student</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9: Sources of Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Income in the Past Year (N=1094)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment off Campus</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-study Employment</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Employment on Campus</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Insurance</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistantship/Stipend</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants/Scholarships</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Support</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Assistance</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Sources of Support and Household Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other current sources of support</th>
<th>Single-parent Household (n=343)</th>
<th>Single-parent (%)</th>
<th>Two-parent Household (n=707)</th>
<th>Two-parent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid/MIChild</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Stamps</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid - Self</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIC</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHS Child Care Subsidy</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Subsidy</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Grant or Scholarship</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Student Parents Who Reported Difficulties Finding Child Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Parents with Difficulties Finding Child Care</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12: Student Parents Who Need Child Care in the Evening (By Student Status)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Parents Who Need Child Care in the Evening (N=1094)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Student</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Cross Tabulation – Household Status and Concerns about Child Care Quality and/or Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Status and Concerns about Child Care Quality and/or Safety (n=386)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>% by Household Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-parent</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-parent</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Figure 15: Number of Children in Student Parents Households

![Number of Children (%)](image)

1 Child: 4.5%, 2 Children: 9.5%, 3 Children: 27.4%, 4 Children: 41.0%, 5 Children: 27.4%, 6 or more Children: 0.8%

Figure 16: Number of Children by Age (%) – Total Number of Children: 1957

![Age of Children (%)](image)

- Below 18 months: 15.9%
- 18 months - 5 years: 53.1%
- 5 years and older: 30.9%
Figure 17: The Times Student Parents Need Child Care for Their Children (N); Total Number of Children of Undergraduate Students: 1338; Total Number of Children of Graduate Students: 623

The survey question about the Household Status had three response options. For further analysis the third category “Other” was omitted.

The calculated child care expenses refer to one or more children i.e. a student parent who indicated spending more than $800 for child care could have spent this amount for more than one child. A comparison of child care expenses and child care safety amongst student parents with only one child revealed that only 10% of the student parents who spent more than $800 for one child were also concerned about child care safety.

A comparison of Figure 14 with Figure 17 indicates that the numbers do not match exactly. The numbers in Figure 13 are minimally higher (<5). This is a result of the survey design where student parents could check multiple boxes, e.g. a graduate and an undergraduate student, resulting in the fact that these students appear twice in this calculation.