

One in four Texas students are raising children while attending college, yet higher education systems are often not set up to meet the needs of this important population. While higher education can reduce poverty for young families, numerous obstacles make it difficult for parents to finish their degree. Identifying and supporting student parents is critical to advancing statewide postsecondary completion. Texas can be a leader in this space by appointing an existing staff member on college and university campuses to serve as a student parent liaison. Liaisons provide information on academic and social service resources to students who are parents of minor children, as well as track data on their campus presence and educational outcomes.

One quarter of the Texas college population are raising children while working toward their degree.¹

- Over 72% of student parents nationwide are mothers, and 62 percent of student parent mothers are raising their children alone.²

Student parents face unique challenges in completing college.

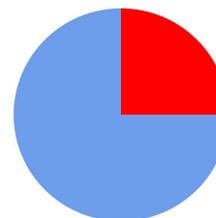
- One third of student parents attain a degree or certificate within 6 years of enrollment.² Each additional child reduces a student parent's chances of completing their degree by approximately 50 percent.
- Two thirds of student parents surveyed in Texas reported missing school due to child care reasons.
- Student parents are more likely to be employed and working longer hours, both factors that decrease a student's likelihood of graduating.

Colleges and universities have not adapted to the realities of these students.

- Large Texas public education institutions e.g., The University of Texas and Texas A&M University do not track the number of enrolled student parents or their outcomes.
- Student parents surveyed identify a lack of recognition and supports specific to their needs on their college and university campuses and would like to see their universities and service providers offer more information on resources available to parents.

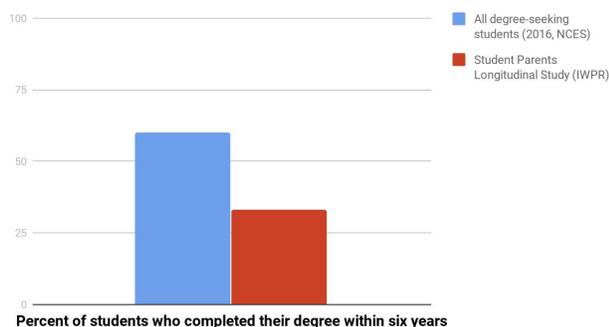
Liaisons are essential to increasing college completion of student parents.

- Liaisons are key to connecting students to campus resource or social services crucial to their success, such as childcare. Students who use on campus childcare are three times more likely to graduate.³



• Texas Student Parents • Other Students

Six Year Graduation Rates



- 56% of student parents indicate that a staff person available to address student parent needs or to provide related support was one of the most helpful services.⁴
- 56% of student parents indicate that learning about resources on campus was one of the most helpful services.⁴
- At the University of Minnesota- Twin Cities, where there is a student parent center connecting students to childcare and other resources, the graduation rate of student parents is 70%.

When student parents complete their degree, individual and societal economic benefits abound.

- Single mothers with an associate degree gain roughly \$153,000 more in lifetime earnings; single mothers with a bachelor's degree gain \$296,000 more in earnings.³
- Total lifetime tax contributions for just one class of single mother graduates amounts to \$7.8 billion.³
- Fewer student parent alumni are using public benefits than when they were in school.⁴ Single mother graduates save society a total of \$309 million in public benefits spending over the four years following graduation.³

Student parent liaisons would bridge critical gaps in college completion by:

- Providing guidance and information to student parents on social and health services, eligible benefits, campus resources, and student success strategies.
- Building the state and university system's knowledge of student parent needs by requiring schools to collect demographic and outcomes data on student parents through appropriate means.
- Addressing the specific academic and social needs of student parents in the Texas context to improve student graduation rates and help thousands of students escape poverty by adapting their campus to better serve non-traditional students.

References

Unless otherwise cited, information on student parents for this fact sheet comes from Young Invincibles' report.

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