



INSTITUTE FOR
WOMEN'S POLICY RESEARCH

Informing policy. Inspiring change. Improving lives.

1200 18th Street NW, Suite 301
Washington, DC 20036
202 785-5100
iwpr@iwpr.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Number of College Students with Children Increased by 30% Since 2004

Regions with greatest increases in student parents saw largest declines in on-campus child care

Washington, DC—More than one million more college students are raising children while attending school than there were in 2004, representing a 30 percent increase in the country's student parent population over the last decade, according to a new analysis released today by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR). The number of student parents increased in every region of the United States, with growth highest in the Southwest (65 percent increase) and the Plains (61 percent) regions, the regions that also saw the greatest decrease in on-campus child care during this period. Campus child care declined in all eight regions of the United States since 2004.

For more information, contact

- [Jennifer Clark](mailto:clark@iwpr.org) 202-683-6855 | clark@iwpr.org

Jan 30, 2017

Washington, DC—More than one million more college students are raising children while attending school than there were in 2004, representing a 30 percent increase in the country's student parent population over the last decade, according to [a new analysis](#) released today by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR). The number of student parents increased in every region of the United States, with growth highest in the Southwest (65 percent increase) and the Plains (61 percent) regions, the regions that also saw the greatest decrease in on-campus child care during this period. Campus child care declined in all eight regions of the United States since 2004.

Black women are disproportionately likely to be balancing parenthood and coursework: nearly half of Black women undergraduates are raising children, compared with 29 percent of White women and one-quarter of Black men (Black men are the most likely group of male students to be fathers).

While community colleges enroll the largest share of student parents, enrollment of parents in for-profit colleges grew 138 percent from 2004-2012, the largest increase across institution types. Half of students at for-profit colleges have dependent children.

“Understanding and addressing the needs of students with children is essential to improving college attainment and equity in the United States,” said IWPR Vice President and Executive Director Barbara Gault, Ph.D.

Student parents are nearly two and half times more likely to have no money to contribute to college than dependent students (61 percent of student parents versus 24 percent of dependent students). In every region of the country, more than half of student parents have no money to contribute to college. The share of student parents with no income to contribute to college costs increased by 54 percent between 2004 and 2012 following the Great Recession.

Student parents are twice as likely as dependent students to work at least 30 or hours per week (46 percent of student parents versus 21 percent of dependent students). In addition, nearly three-quarters of mothers (71 percent) and half of fathers in community colleges spend over 20 hours a week caring for dependents. Care for children is a major reason student parents consider withdrawing from community college.

“Colleges can promote success for student parents by connecting them to child care and other supports in the community, and by actively ensuring that their caregiving expenses are considered in financial aid eligibility decisions. Federal and state policy can encourage campuses to be family-friendly to help increase postsecondary access and attainment,” Dr. Gault said.

[The Institute for Women's Policy Research \(IWPR\)](#) is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that conducts and communicates research to inspire public dialogue, shape policy, and improve the lives and opportunities of women of diverse backgrounds, circumstances, and experiences.

###

- See more at: <http://www.iwpr.org/press-room/press-releases/number-of-college-students-with-children-increased-by-30-since-2004#sthash.a9nSdddM.dpuf>