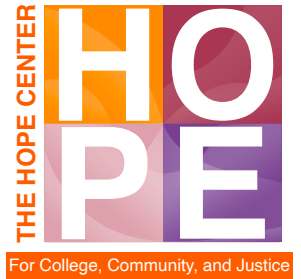


Students Speak: Parenting



National Student Parent Month: Sharing Perspectives from Parenting Students in College

In September 2022, the U.S. Senate passed a [resolution](#) declaring September National Student Parent Month.

Nearly a quarter of today's college students are parents, yet the population is often overlooked. In honor of this month, we talked to parenting students about their experiences and the ways in which colleges and policymakers can do better in supporting them. After all, they're the experts we need to bring to the table to find solutions that will be best for their success.

Instead of viewing September 30 as a deadline for our celebration of the hardwork and dilligence of parenting students, we view the end of this month as a catalyst for bigger and better change.

If you had a magic wand, what's one thing you would change about higher education policy for parenting students?

All universities would have support systems for parenting students. Could you imagine if childcare were offered at colleges? Higher ed just assumes students aren't parents. There aren't family-friendly social mixers or programs. We're completely overlooked because we don't fit a certain outdated image of a student.



Lizzie Merin

Masters in Business
Alvernia University

It would definitely be childcare. A lot of great things are happening on campus where we can't fit childcare into the picture for one reason or the other. Sometimes we can't afford childcare, or our children are out of school. It is really important to embed childcare not only in tuition, but also the campus mentality.



Carolina Hidalgo-Ahmed

BA in Social Work
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It would be financial aid. I think policymakers should think about expanding financial aid packages to cover textbooks, room and board, etc. because parenting students have so many additional expenses.

It's literally the financial aid system—the system that doesn't give you the credit that you need as a parenting student, the system that doesn't make the application clear. The system that just doesn't work. There's no "Are you a parenting student?" circle box. There is no acknowledgement of your really important additional identity. That's what stakeholders, change-makers and those in charge need to understand—you can't leave out those boxes that can literally qualify or disqualify a person.



Christina Hasaan

Program Coordinator
Swipe Out Hunger

What was your experience like as a parenting student on campus?

I felt like I couldn't be myself. I felt like me being a parent on campus was not welcome because there was no support for me. It seems like all that the institution cares about is you being a student and everything else stays outside. However, life happens and that's impossible.



Christina Hasaan

Program Coordinator
Swipe Out Hunger



Lizzie Merin

Masters in Business
Alvernia University

My graduate program is exclusively online. It's been very convenient for me because I don't need to have a babysitter for me to attend class. There's also a big disconnect of not feeling like you're part of the university because you can't build relationships.

There's a lot of stigma we have to deal with being parents and non-traditional students on campus. I wish the stigma was reduced and we focused more on the resilience of parenting students rather than the personal choices that took them there. It's very important to to champion for students who are parents.



Carolina Hidalgo-Ahmed

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