





## ONE IN FIVE COLLEGE STUDENTS TODAY IS A PARENT, and yet they remain a largely invisible


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IN  
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population. The vast majority of institutions do not track parenting status and therefore do not know how many student parents they have at any given time. **Generation Hope**, in partnership with **Imaginable Futures**; **Chegg.org**; the **Institute for Women's Policy Research**; and **The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice**, launched a national student parent survey to gain insight into the higher ed experiences of parenting students<sup>1</sup>. The findings shed light on an incredibly tenacious and driven student population that often feels unwelcome and disconnected as a result of significant gaps in institutional culture, policies, and physical space.


## TOP FINDINGS

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**High numbers of student parents feel disconnected from their college community:** Nearly half of respondents said they felt somewhat disconnected or very disconnected from their college community, and 40% indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they felt isolated as a parenting student on their campus.
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**Overall, 20% of respondents indicated they felt either somewhat unwelcome or very unwelcome on their campuses:** Broken down by race, 30% of parenting Black students and 25% of parenting Hispanic and Latino students feel either somewhat unwelcome or very unwelcome, compared to 16% of parenting White students.
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**Policies that embrace parenting matter:** More than 60% of respondents missed at least one day of class their last semester due to lack of child care, with 7% missing five or more days. Nearly 60% did not know if their school had a policy on whether they could bring their children to class. **Even with significant childcare challenges, the Institute for Women's Policy Research found that student parents have higher GPAs than their non-parenting peers.**
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**Student parents take note when their campuses lack family-friendly characteristics:** More than a third of respondents did not see any family-friendly characteristics on their campuses.
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**Student services aren't designed for student parents:** Securing child care was one of the most difficult challenges student parents reported facing. And yet, three-quarters of respondents said that their financial aid office did not inform them that childcare expenses could be taken into account in the determination of their financial aid award. That number increases to 79% for Black students.

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I feel like I have no guide. I feel like there is no one like me walking around campus.”


NATIONAL STUDENT-PARENT SURVEY RESPONDENT

40%   
FELT ISOLATED AS A PARENTING  
STUDENT ON CAMPUS

  
MORE THAN  
60%  
MISSED AT LEAST ONE DAY OF CLASS  
DUE TO LACK OF CHILD CARE

  
20%  
FELT UNWELCOME  
ON CAMPUS

  
MORE THAN  
1 IN 3  
DID NOT SEE ANY FAMILY-  
FRIENDLY CHARACTERISTICS  
ON THEIR CAMPUSES

  
75%  
WERE UNAWARE THEIR FINANCIAL  
AID COULD BE INCREASED TO  
ACCOUNT FOR CHILDCARE COSTS



# RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on the national student parent survey findings and building on a decade of working with young, parenting college students, Generation Hope has identified recommendations for institutions that want to improve their college completion and success metrics for this population and other marginalized students:

- ▶ **Collect and track the parenting status of your students.**
- ▶ **Apply a parenting-student lens to your institution's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work.**
- ▶ **Designate a staff position to champion the needs of parenting students across your institution.**
- ▶ **Prioritize the creation of family-friendly policies and make sure they are clearly communicated to students.**
- ▶ **Identify ways to be more inclusive of parenting students in campus life.**
- ▶ **Incorporate the needs of student parents in your government relations work.**



Overall, this work requires more than just a program or a childcare center but rather an institution-wide lens that considers the needs of student parents in the implementation of all of its services.

To further explore the national student parent survey and for more in-depth guidance and recommendations for colleges and universities, visit:

→ [supportgenerationhope.org/student-parents-report](https://supportgenerationhope.org/student-parents-report)

**GENERATION HOPE** offers technical assistance for colleges across the country that would like to expand their capacity to serve student parents. If you are interested in this support, please contact us at [info@supportgenerationhope.org](mailto:info@supportgenerationhope.org).



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