

# Student Parents in Research

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# Student Parents in Higher Education Research

- College students who are parents or caregivers of dependent children make up more than one in five U.S. undergraduates. (Institute for Women's Policy Research and Ascend at the Aspen Institute 2019).
- Seventy-one percent of parents attending college are women and approximately 59% of these women are unmarried (Kensinger & Minnick, 2017).
- On average, student parents earn higher grade point averages , yet their college degree outcomes are significantly worse: 52% of student parents dropout within 6 years of enrolling, compared with 32% of nonparent (Wladis, Hachey & Conway, 2018).
- Across postsecondary institutions, a majority of student-parents (55%) are employed full time while others are balancing part-time employment with their caregiving and academic responsibilities (Sallee & Cox, 2019).
- Student parents often describe their experience of navigating academia as a struggle, in which time-related, financial, health and emotional problems prevail (Moreau & Kerner, 2013).
- Student-parents feel marginalized in the classroom, stigmatized by the larger campus and as a result end up feeling isolated (Brown & Nichols, 2013).

# Online Survey-Spring and Summer 2017-CSULB Students Demographics

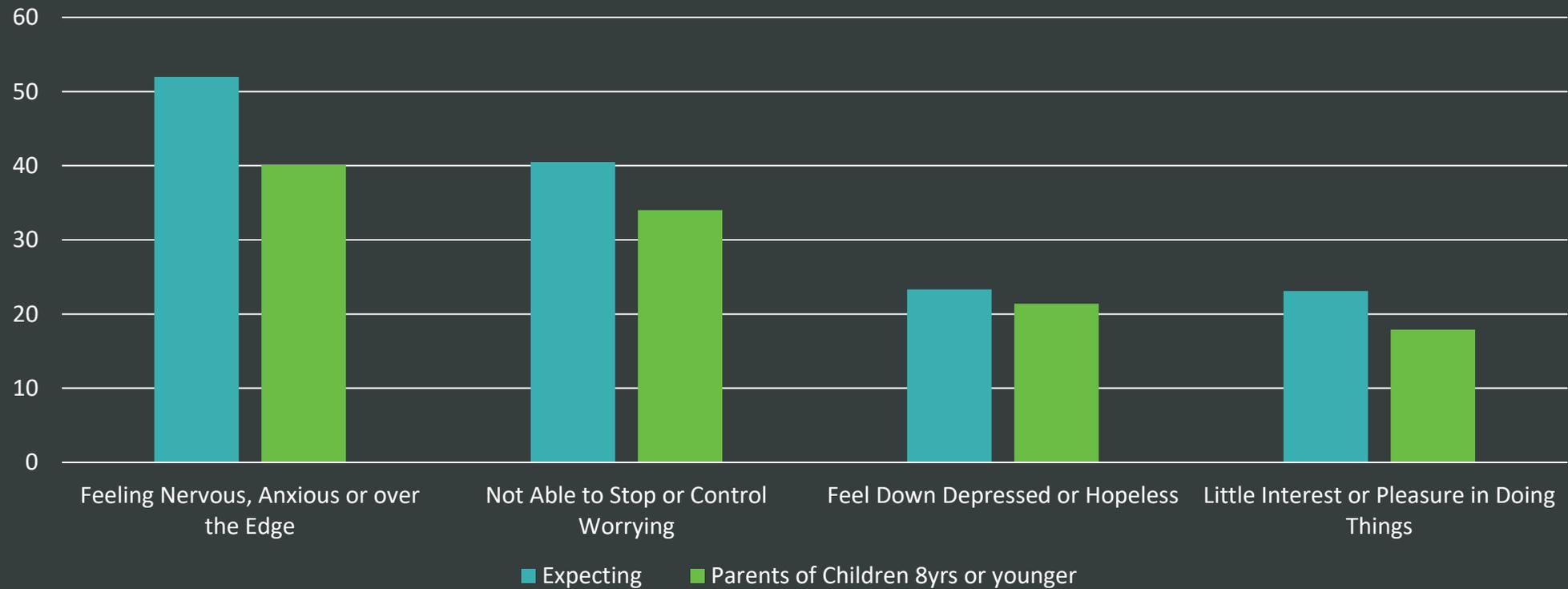
- Are you a parent of a dependent child under the age 8 years old or currently expecting?
  - 151 expecting
  - 635 parents
- Identify your ethnicity/race:
  - 54% Hispanic/Latino
  - 20% White
  - 10% Asian American
  - 5% African American
  - 6% Multi-racial
  - 5% Other Categories

# Demographics Continued

- Identify your Gender:
  - 526 women
  - 198 men
  - 2 transgender
  - 3 self-identify
- How many children do you have?
  - Respondents had between 1-5 children
    - 45% have 1; 21% have 2; 6 % have 3 (N= 786)
    - 55% have 1; 27% have 2; 8% have 3 (N=635)
- What is your current student status?
  - 482 fulltime students
  - 217 part-time

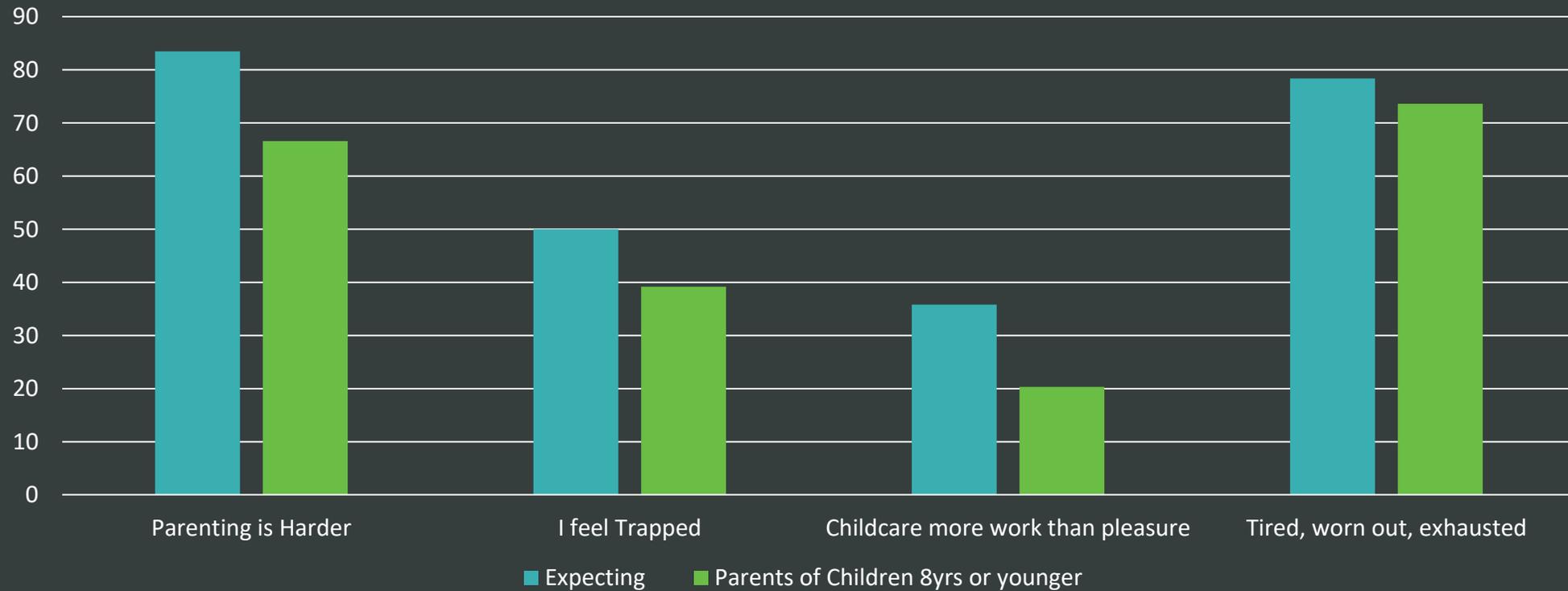
# Findings Cont.

## Anxiety & Depression (Several Days, More Days than Not & Nearly Every Day)



# Findings

## Parenting Stress (Agree & Strongly Agree)



# Findings Cont.

- Significant relationships identified between
  - ❑ Parenting stress & Anxiety and Depression
    - ❑ Relationship with Other Parent
    - ❑ Relationship with Father
    - ❑ Relationship with Mother
    - ❑ Relationship with the other Grandfather
- 26 % of the change in Anxiety and Depression can be predicted by
  - ❑ Parental stress
  - ❑ Relationship with Other Parent
  - ❑ Relationship with Father
  - ❑ Relationship with the other Grandfather
- 24% % of the change in Parental Stress can be predicted by
  - ❑ Anxiety and Depression (worried and little interest)
  - ❑ Relationship with Other Parent

# What are your main challenges as a student parent at CSULB?

- 20% Coordinating family schedule
- 27% Time to study and complete assignments
- 13% Finding quality affordable childcare
- 16% Cost of college/loss of income
- 6% Isolation
- 18% Balancing school and educational demands

# Childcare Experiences

- *Childcare is extremely difficult to afford as a single parent, and it seems like the IPCDC only can afford to pay for childcare during scheduled class time, study time, or fieldwork. The hours that I can afford to pay for are 0, and it seems like the Center could use extra funding to help me pay for my work hours as well. Its hard to balance school, work, study, and fieldwork as one parent.*
- *There was no information as an incoming transfer student. I had to figure it out on my own. The first week of the semester I went to Isabel Patterson and they said the waitlist is months away. I needed care asap. There should be information given to students at SOAR or sometime before the semester starts*
- *I had the unfortunate experience to be placed on a waiting list for the childcare services that are offered at school. I applied a year ago and never heard back. I also contacted the childcare center and was told to be patient. Therefore, I was forced to find a different option to have my son taken care of while I went to school and work.*

# Support Services for Student Parents and Families

- *Offer more programs for moms to be. It's been really hard to find any help offered by the school. Only resource I was able to find was the Child Development Center. Even then, you have to get on a wait list and hope you are able to get in. Safe places for college parents to balance schoolwork and time with their kids, maybe a playground with study area.*
- *I would say better availability since the waitlist for Isabel Patterson is very long. Also, understanding faculty when it comes to childcare issues. I had some very understanding professors when it came to my daughter but there were a very few who were not as understanding at the multiple spheres I juggled as student, worker, and mother.*
- *Offer more information and awareness such as workshops for parents and parents to be. Perhaps daycare programs with more benefits.*
- *I heard there is a study area near the children's library. In my ideal world there would be a play area with study area, it would be beneficial for when I needed study time. Sometimes I needed extra time for studying or to finish off a paper or complete a project. It would have been nice to have a place where I can study, bring dinner for my children and have a play area for them. I usually went to Mc D's. At Mc Donald's I had free Wi-Fi and play area for my kids. My kids can get loud and a quiet place would be stressful for my children.*

# Support Services for Student Parents and their Families

- *It would be nice to have areas around campus suitable for children. Sometimes children are not attending the Isabel Patterson Center and children are brought to campus by parents. It would be nice to have an areas where families could debrief with children on campus. It would also be nice to have more comfortable rooms for breastfeeding/pumping stations. Not just hidden inside bathrooms that nobody knows where to find. Bathrooms also don't smell the best, so having lactation rooms in only restrooms, is something I personally never enjoyed.*
- *Provide more family-friendly spaces, have parenting groups host events after 4pm instead of mid-day when some parents have to work, host more family-friendly events so we can integrate our children into our campus life, provide parking spaces for expecting mothers and parents with small children on upper campus, better advertise the Isabel Patterson center and truly ensure students are first priority on waiting lists, post more images of parenting students in media - make us visible.*
- *I think outreach for parents would be extremely helpful because its hard for parents to find the time to go looking for services/programs for parents. Perhaps also having more programs and services for parents such as support groups, workshops, referral services or extended opportunity programs. I did not know that the school offered childcare until a coworker mentioned it. Also, because there are no groups for parents its hard to find people to connect with who understand the struggles or are willing to support one another. Evening hours for childcare would also be helpful for working parents who have no choice but to take evening classes.*

# Additional Survey Findings

- Participants described their negative experiences with lack of empathy from faculty.
- Unfamiliarity with or lack of campus resources in place for student-parents.
- They shared difficulties related to an absence of campus policy for pregnant and parenting students.
- Participants suggested developing trainings for staff and faculty regarding the needs of student-parents, and suggested development of support groups for student-parents on campus.

# Based on our Findings...

- Family Resource Center
  - Information on Campus Resources
  - Parenting Classes
  - Well-being Workshops
  - Clothing Exchange
  - Child-friendly study lounge
  - Play groups
  - Private Lactation room
  - Referrals to campus and community resources
- Family-friendly campus events
- Support Groups
- Faculty/Staff Training
- Additional Child Care options for Students and Faculty

# NEW CSULB Student Parent Research –Fall 2020

- Student Parent Support During the Covid-19 Pandemic
  - Childcare during the pandemic
  - Support services accessed
  - Resources needed
  - How student parents access campus information and news
  - Stress related measures
  - Most challenging aspect of being a student parent during this time