



Webinar Series

Washington Parenting Student Success Learning Series

March 10, 2026



Washington Parenting Student Success Learning Series

PRE-WEBINAR: Advancing Parenting Student Success

🕒 February 6, 2026 – see link in chat

SESSION 1: How can data collection about parenting students improve experiences and success?

🕒 TODAY 10:00-11:30 PST

SESSION 2: What can campuses do to advance parenting student success?

🕒 Tuesday, March 31, 2026, 10:00-11:30 PST

→ Explore campus practices and policies that can support parenting students' experiences and success

SESSION 3: How can communities work together to advance parents' access and success?

🕒 Tuesday, May 5, 2026 10:00-11:30 PST

→ Explore how communities – cross-sector organizations, campuses, and other partners – can support parents' access and success.

Welcome

Introducing the Core Collaborators

- **Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC):**
 - Ami Magisos and Abby Chien
- **Communities For Our Colleges (C4C):**
 - Xochilt Lopez, Gabby Fitz and Fernando Mejia Ledesma
- **Washington Campus Children's Center Coalition (WCCCC):**
 - Ann Slaughter (Pierce College)
 - Casey Lalonde (The Evergreen State College)
- **Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)**
 - Jennifer Dellinger

Why Washinton Parenting Students?

18% of students

Disproportionately

- Female (75%)
- Students of color
- Low income (62%)

High rates of basic needs insecurity:

- 68% Food/Housing insecurity
- 3 in 4 struggle to have childcare

Strategy Priorities:

- Making parenting students visible
- Promote strong campus practices
- Support development of community partnerships

Opportunities:

- Learn
- Build network
- Recommendations and support



Theresa Anderson



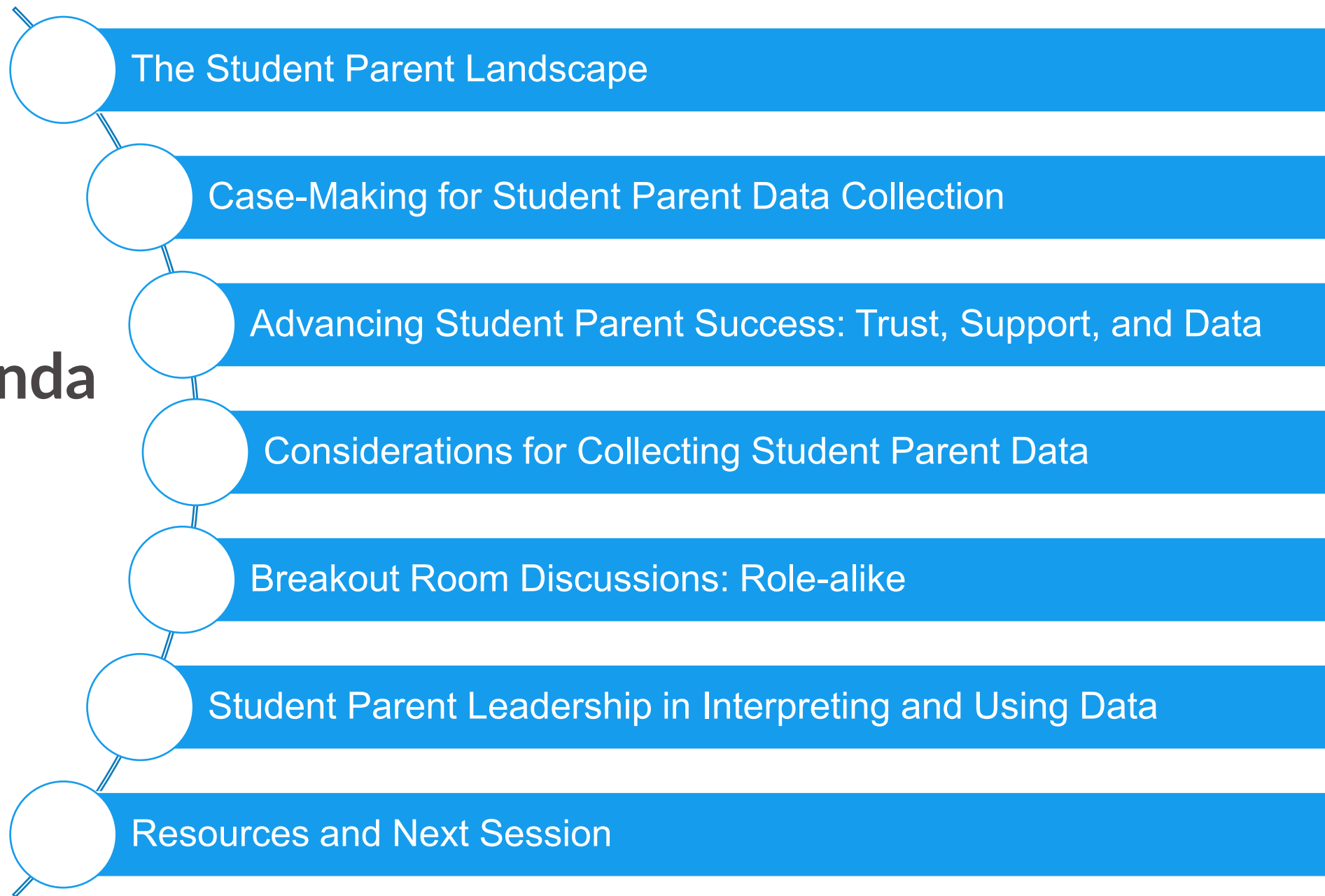
Kimberly Salazar



Kate Westaby

**The information shared also builds on the work of additional Data-to-Action Team members:
urban.org/projects/data-action-campaign-parenting-students**

Today's Agenda



The Student Parent Landscape

Parenting students are a key population across the nation

18% or 3.14 million
undergraduate community
college students are student parents

73%
of student parents at baccalaureate institutions
have community or technical college experience

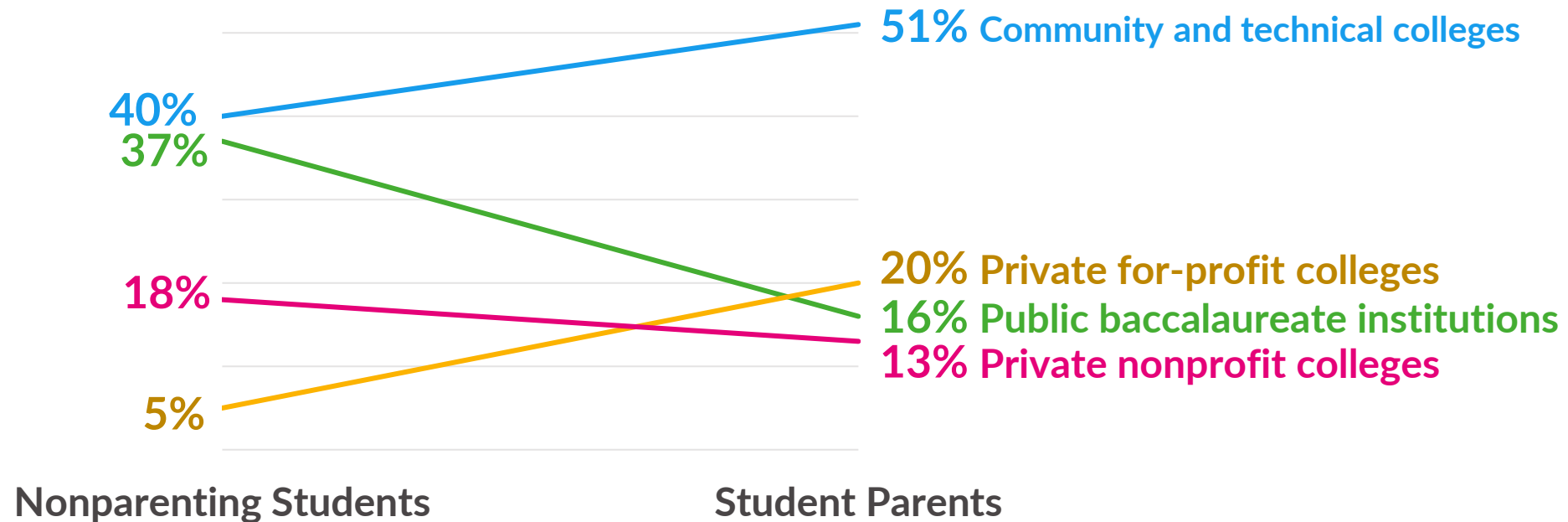
LEARN MORE
[STUDENTPARENTACTION.ORG/
RESOURCES/DATAINSIGHTS](https://STUDENTPARENTACTION.ORG/RESOURCES/DATAINSIGHTS)



Source: National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2020.

Dundar, Afet, Theresa Anderson, and Kate Westaby. 2024. Where Do Student Parents Attend College? A Snapshot of Student-Parent Attendance Patterns Using 2020 Data. n.p.: Student-Parent Action through Research Knowledge (SPARK) Collaborative.

Parenting students are more likely to attend community and technical colleges



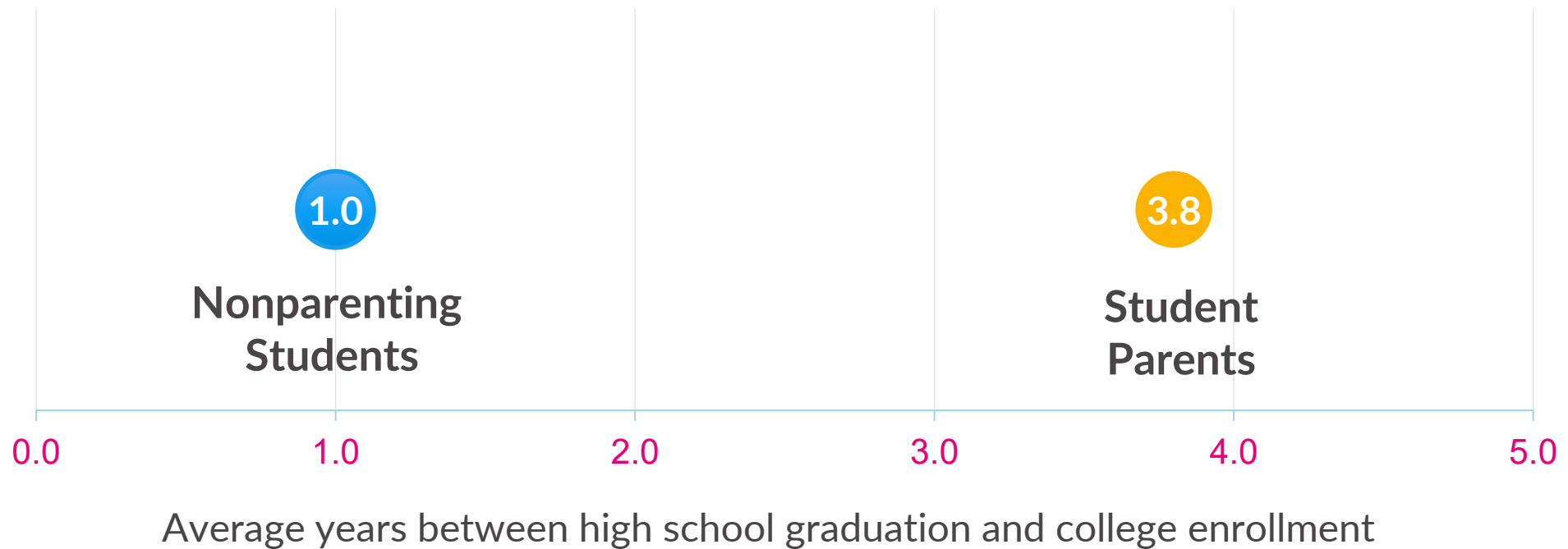
Source: National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2020.

Dundar, Afet, Theresa Anderson, and Kate Westaby. 2024. Where Do Student Parents Attend College? A Snapshot of Student-Parent Attendance Patterns Using 2020 Data. n.p.: Student-Parent Action through Research Knowledge (SPARK) Collaborative.

Parenting students are strong but face completion gaps

- Had GPAs (3.2) **similar to** nonparenting classmates
- Only 17% of SPs complete a degree in 6 years, compared to 50% of nonparenting students
 - 55% less likely to complete, after controlling for other differences
- Most are juggling caregiving, school, *and* work:
 - 73% had a non-work-study job
 - Worked **36** hours per week (on average)

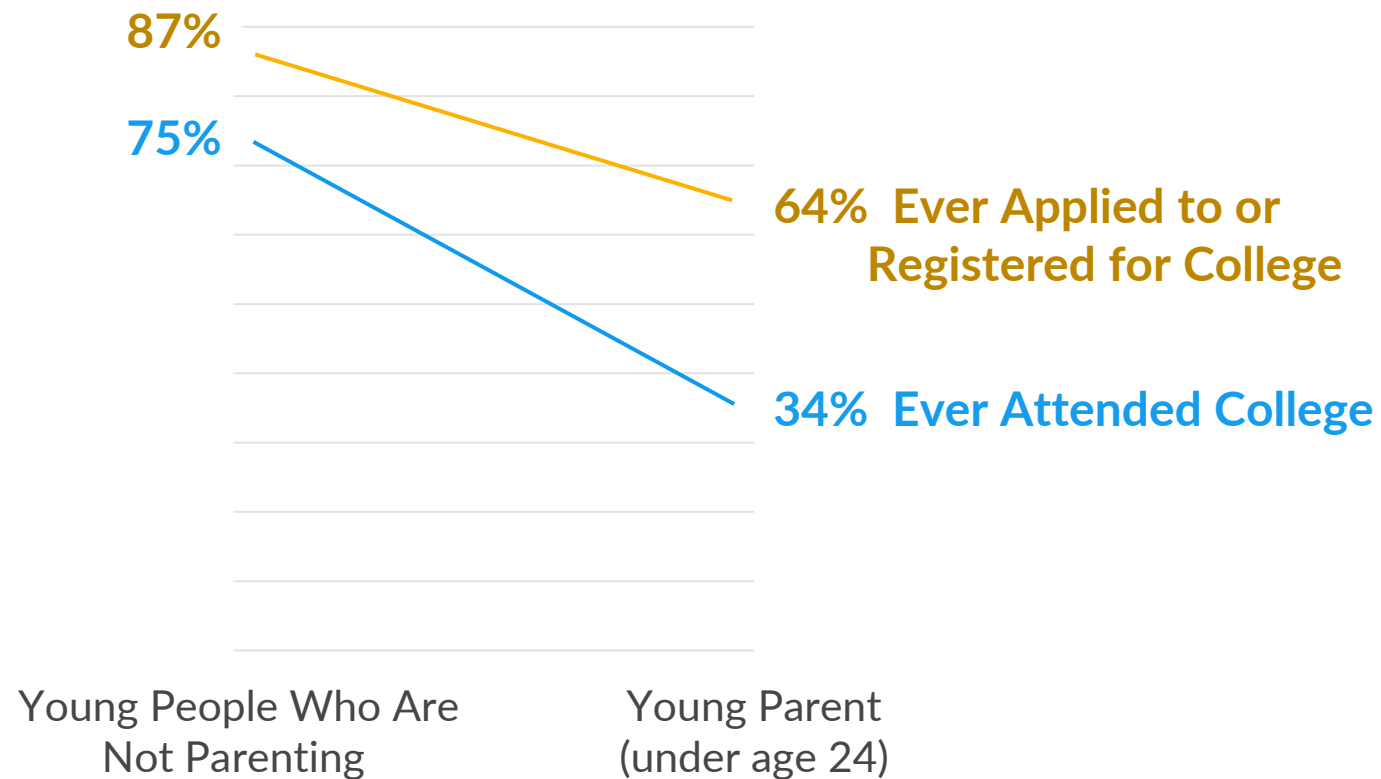
Student parents experience a longer gap between high school graduation and college enrollment



Source: National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2020.

Anderson, Theresa, Afet Dundar, Sheron Gittens, Renee Ryberg, Rebecca Schreiber, Laney Taylor, Jessica Warren, and Kate Westaby. 2024. Who Are Undergraduates with Dependent Children? An Updated Overview of Student-Parent Characteristics Using 2020 Data. n.p.: Student-Parent Action through Research Knowledge (SPARK) Collaborative.

A focus on student parents means understanding which parents struggle to access college

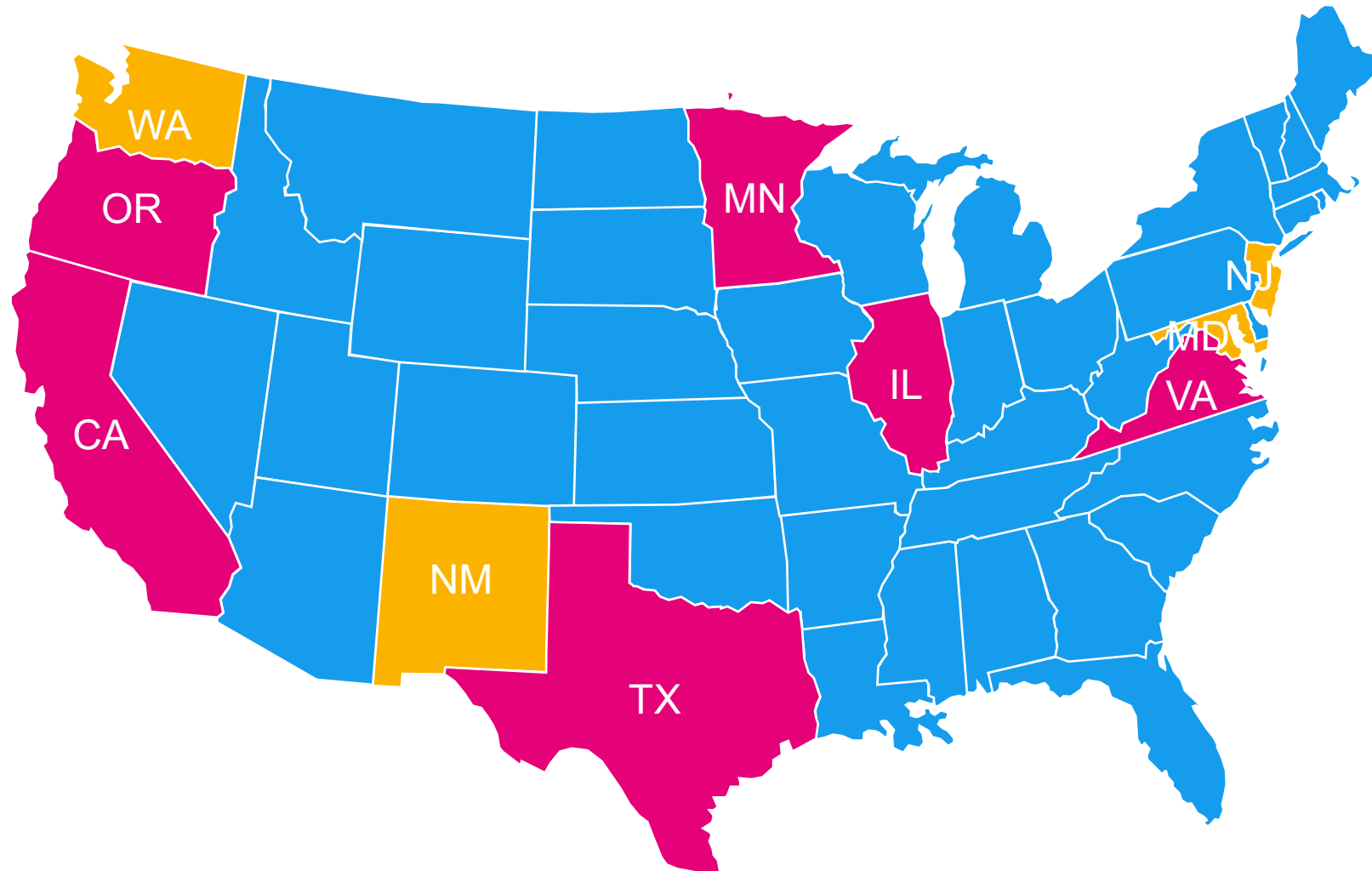


“I noted the gap between the number of young parents who applied or registered (64%) versus ever attended (34%), which I think demonstrates that twice as many young parents actually go to college as wanted to go to college...**You can't say that it's for lack of interest or that they don't value higher education, there's some sort of barrier.** I think that's what it is, or it's a strong indication.”

-Anne, young mom in early 20s

Source: Westaby, K. A. (2025). Resisting punishment across ecological levels via participatory action research: A multi-method study with young parents in postsecondary education. University of Wisconsin-Madison. Proquest

A growing number of states **require** student parent data collection and data collection is **being legislatively proposed** in others



Casemaking for Student-Parent Data Collection

Supporting student parents can be a win all around

Good for students

Good for children and families

Good for states

Good for colleges!

Supporting Student Parents Pays Off

Promoting college success for parents makes sense for families, taxpayers, and colleges.

Over 3 million undergraduates and 1 million graduate students have dependent children.

LEARN MORE



Their average GPA is similar to nonparenting students —3.17 vs. 3.15— but only 17% complete a degree in 6 years compared to 50% of nonparenting students.

Support Pays Off for Families

LEARN MORE



After reenrolling and completing a college degree, mothers earn over \$9,000 more annually.

Their children are 38% more likely to complete a college degree and earn over \$5,500 more annually before age 30.

Support Pays Off for Taxpayers

A Virginia study shows that taxpayers can gain \$1.86 billion in tax revenue and public benefit savings in 11 years by offering a comprehensive student-parent support program on public campuses, a return of over \$5 per \$1 invested.

LEARN MORE



Providing on-campus child care can boost student-parents' graduation rates substantially and pays for itself.

Other states are likely to see a similar return on investment.



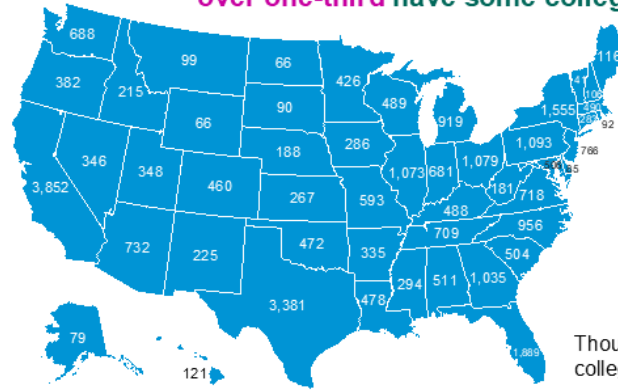
Sources: SPARK data insights from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2020; the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study 2012/17; Theresa Anderson, "What If Mom Went Back to School?" (Urban Institute, 2022; dollar values are updated from the original brief to 2025 US dollars); Garrett Hicks and Theresa Anderson, "The Taxpayer Benefits of Supporting Student Parents: An Analysis of Three Policy Options for Virginia's Public Colleges" (Urban Institute, 2024).

THERESA ANDERSON (URBAN INSTITUTE)
STUDENT-PARENT ACTION THROUGH RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE (SPARK) COLLABORATIVE | STUDENTPARENTACTION.ORG

OCTOBER 2025 (UPDATED MARCH 2026)

Support Pays Off for Colleges

Nearly 31 million parents are without a college degree—over one-third have some college experience.



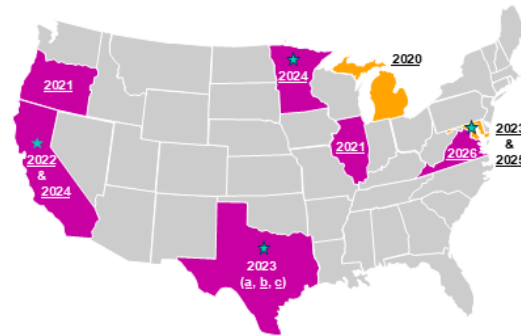
Parents are an important college recruitment population, and they represent an opportunity to upskill state workforces.

Thousands of parents without a college degree, by state

State Policies Are Expanding

Knowing who student parents are is an important first step.

Six states require colleges to track students' parenting status, as of March 2026, and many have attached other required supports.



- Collects student-parent data
- Collected student-parent data at least once but does not currently
- Legislated other supports

Click dates on map to access policy documentation

LEARN MORE

Student-Parent Action through Research Knowledge (SPARK) Collaborative at StudentParentAction.org



Note: The top map was developed with Bing. © GeoNames, Microsoft, TomTom. Source: Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rogers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Karl C. W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 American Community Survey, 2023. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2025. Tabulations checked by Renee Ryberg.

THERESA ANDERSON (URBAN INSTITUTE)
STUDENT-PARENT ACTION THROUGH RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE (SPARK) COLLABORATIVE | STUDENTPARENTACTION.ORG

OCTOBER 2025 (UPDATED MARCH 2026)



“When you are invisible, so are your problems.”

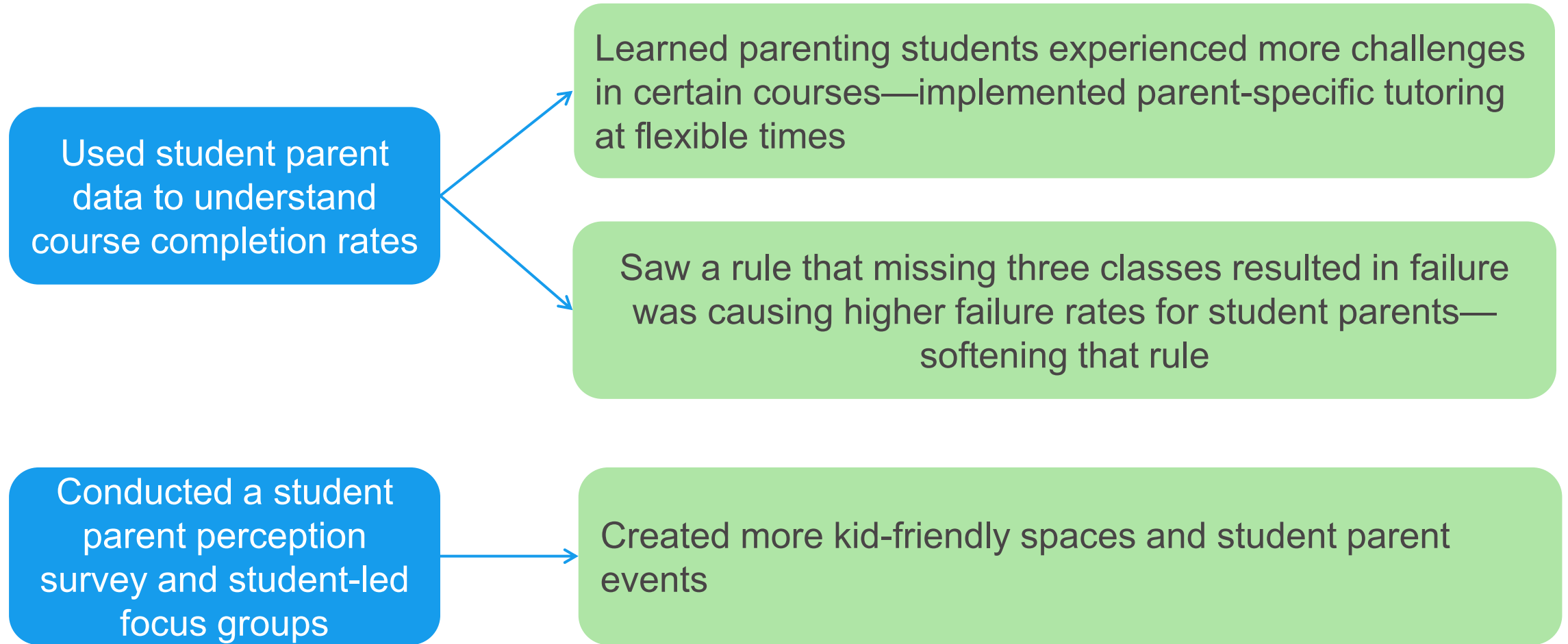
—Oregon campaign for student-parent data legislation

Data motivate change

Knowing averages on the national, regional, or even state level is not enough

- Colleges and college systems needs to be able to identify:
 - How many parenting students they are serving, and how many could they be serving
 - What their parenting students’ characteristics are
 - Trajectories, tripping points, and successes for their students

How **Data** Influenced **Practices** at San Diego Mesa College



How Data Influenced Practices at California Polytechnic State University

More systematically collected parenting status—created an infographic and college reports

Student parents are an important population for the college overall

Student parents are an important population for transfer centers

6 out of 10 student parent have transferred

Over and underrepresentation in schools/colleges

Student parents need more support in those colleges or in building pipelines to those colleges



STUDENTS WITH DEPENDENTS (SWD) POPULATION DATA FALL 2024



*Students in self-supported programs are not included in this count

SWDS ARE IN EVERY COLLEGE*

81.2% UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS



18.8% GRAD/POST-BACC STUDENTS

57.1% IDENTIFY AS WOMEN



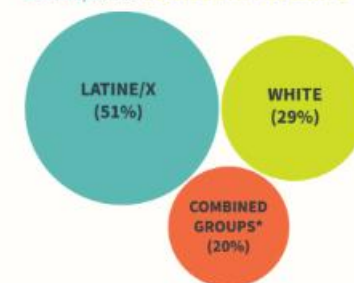
42.9% IDENTIFY AS MEN

6 OUT OF 10 SWD ARE TRANSFERS



*specific to undergraduate SWD

OVER HALF OF SWD IDENTIFY AS LATINE/X AND 29% IDENTIFY AS WHITE



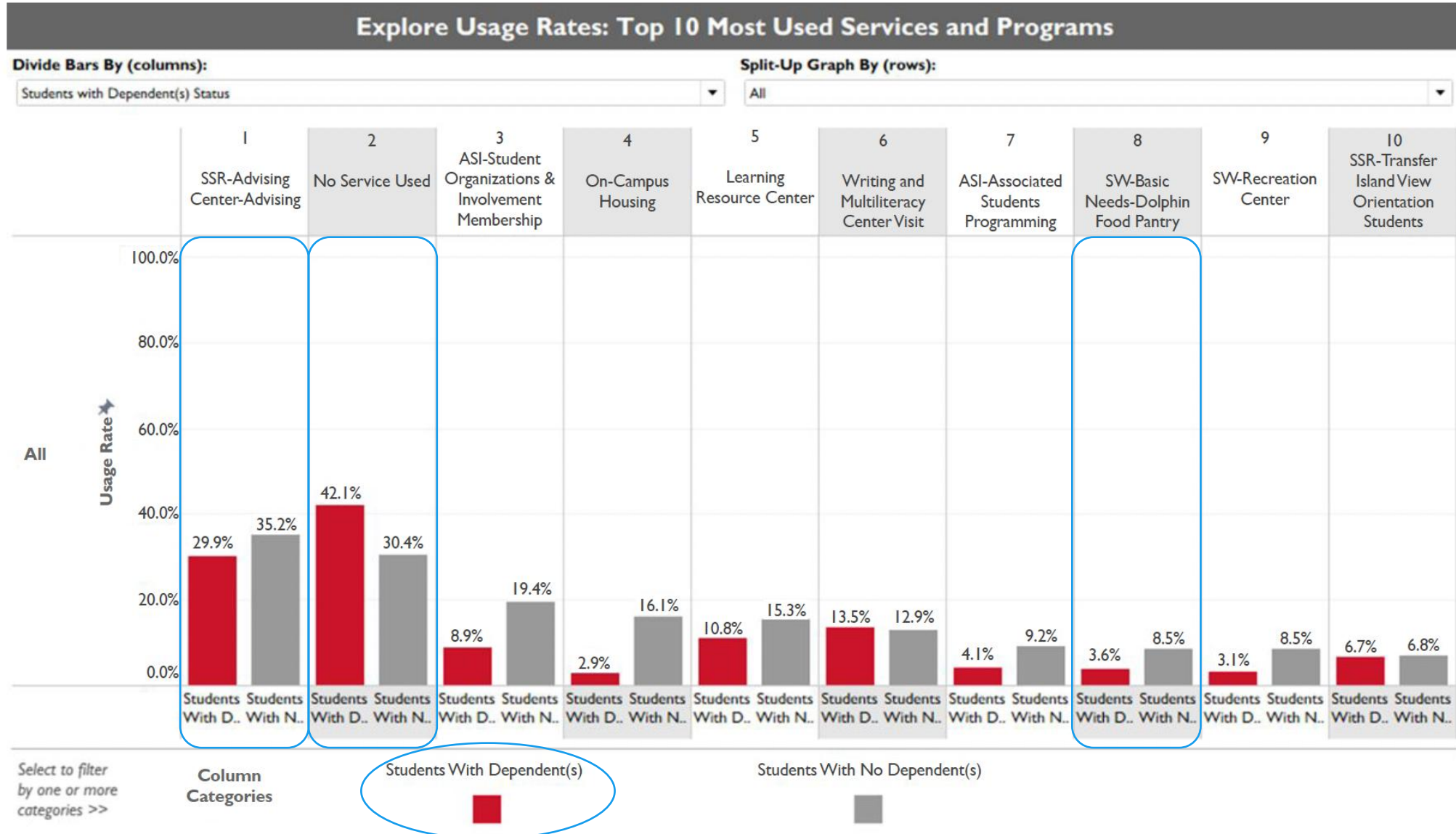
AVERAGE AGE OF 28



SWD TAKE AN AVERAGE OF 13.7 UNITS



California State University – Channel Islands



Spotlight on Klamath Community College



Advancing Student Parent Success: Trust, Support, and Data

Student Parent Data Collection: Cultivating Trust

- **Skepticism.** Student parent data collection efforts often encounter skepticism and reluctance, shaped by historical patterns of invisibility or adverse outcomes following disclosure.
- **Building trust.** Robust data systems require not only institutional commitment and leadership buy-in, but also the active cultivation of trust among student parents.
- **Participation.** Effective participation in data efforts is most likely achieved when student parents perceive their information leads to meaningful and sustained positive change.

The Interplay of Support, Culture, and Data

- **Comprehensive support services** serve as both critical access points for identifying student parent needs and as ongoing channels for dialogue and engagement.
- An **institutional culture** that visibly recognizes and responds to student parents' realities directly increases willingness to participate in data initiatives.
- Strengthening key **student support hubs**—such as transfer centers, EOP/first-generation programs, and re-entry centers—creates cultural shifts that make data collection feel more routine and relevant, rather than intrusive. When student parents notice tangible improvements in their support network, they are more likely to engage openly with data efforts.

Advancing a Student Parent-Centered Campus: Data, Trust, and Institutional Goals

- **Enhance and promote existing supports.** Strengthening and raising awareness of current resources builds early wins, demonstrates institutional commitment, and encourages student parents to engage.
- **Lay the groundwork for robust data collection.** As student parents see tangible improvements and clearer communication, willingness to participate in data initiatives grows—leading to higher quality information over time.
- **Advance college priorities along the way.** This approach not only supports effective data collection but also contributes to core goals of student retention and graduation throughout the process.

Considerations for Collecting Student Parent Data

Application

E.g., state, system, or college application
One-time only

Registration

E.g., Registration intake form for priority registration
Every term

Nudges or SIS Profile

E.g., SIS log-in questions, SIS profile
As often as you want

Surveys

E.g., Student basic needs survey, internal or external
As often as you want

External Data

E.g., Public program data – FAFSA is NOT an option!
As often as is available

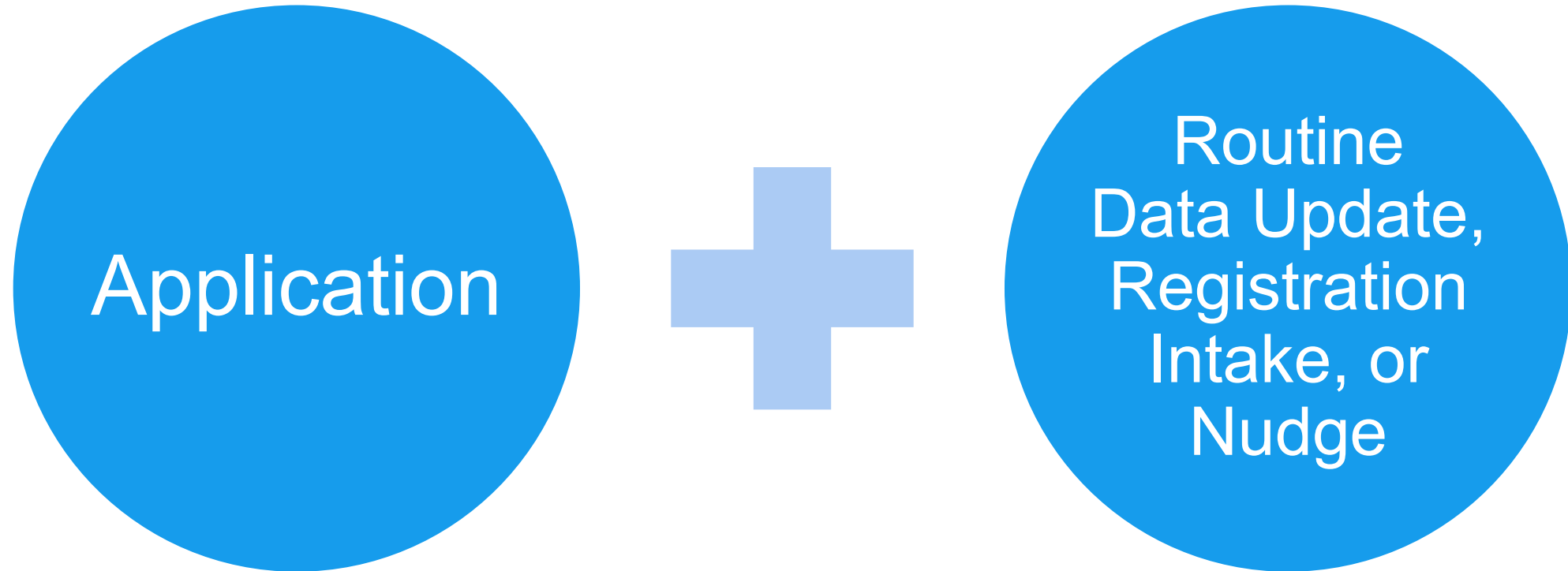
FAFSA no longer provides useful information about most students with dependents

See blog post here:

urbn.is/NoMoreFAFSAforSPs



Recommended data collection practice



Helpful resources



www.urban.org/research/publication/how-colleges-can-ask-students-about-parenting-status



How Colleges Can Ask Students About Parenting Status

Nathan Sick and Theresa Anderson

March 2026

This resource draws on insights from the Data-to-Action Campaign for Parenting Students and provides recommended question options colleges can use to collect parenting status data. It accompanies a longer guide to data collection (Sick and Anderson 2025) and presents options across varying levels of complexity. Some recommendations have been refined from prior publications.

How to Define Parenting Status

“Parenting” takes many forms. We recommend the following inclusive definition of a parenting student (or student parent):

A parenting student is someone enrolled in education or training who is currently—or soon will be—responsible for providing care or support for a child of any age. This may include a biological parent, stepparent, unmarried coparent, adoptive parent, foster parent, guardian, grandparent, extended family member, or sibling caregiver.

This definition is designed to maximize inclusion and flexibility. It intentionally avoids restrictive criteria that can limit who identifies as a parent (see Sick et al. 2023). Some states, however, define “student parent” more narrowly in statute, including:

- **California (Education Code §66025.81):** A student with a child under 18 who receives more than half of their support from the student.
- **Illinois (110 ILCS 149):** The parent or legal guardian of a child under 18.
- **Minnesota (HF 4024):** A student who is the parent or legal guardian of, or can claim as a dependent, a child under 18.
- **Oregon (ORS 350.203):** A parent, person acting as a parent, or legal guardian.
- **Texas (TEC §51.9357 referencing §51.982):** A student enrolled at an institution of higher education for the current academic year who is the parent or guardian of a child under 18.

These definitions may determine how specific questions are framed or worded for students. Colleges operating in states with specific statutory definitions can adapt the inclusive definition above as needed (for example, by specifying “a child under 18”). Or colleges can collect more expansive information, but it is likely important to be able to disaggregate the data to match the formal definition.

Please note that survey questions and response options should align with the definition, but the full definition is typically not presented to respondents.

THE DATA-TO-ACTION CAMPAIGN FOR PARENTING STUDENTS

The [Data-to-Action Campaign for Parenting Students \(D2A\)](#) has partnered with colleges in California, Illinois, Oregon, and Texas to strengthen data collection and supports for student parents. Participating institutions work with the Urban Institute to assess existing resources, gather student input, refine parenting-status questions, and implement data-informed strategies to improve student success. In Texas, institutions are also building leadership hubs to support colleges statewide.

Throughout this document, boxes along the side share examples of how Texas colleges and universities can implement the recommendations.

Simplest Approach: One Question, One Status

Option 1: Category Selection

Check the category that applies to you: *[one option allowed]*

- I am parenting** [or am the legal guardian of] **at least one child** [add “under 18” or other statutory language, if required]
- I am not parenting** [or am not the legal guardian of] **any children** [add statutory language, if required]
- Prefer not to say**

Option 2: Yes/No Format

Are you parenting [or acting as the legal guardian of] **at least one child** [add “under 18” or other statutory language, if required]? *[one option allowed]*

- Yes**
- No**
- Prefer not to say**

Nuanced Approach: “Check All That Apply”

Option 1: Parenting and Pregnancy Status in One Question

Check all categories that apply to you: *[check boxes or yes/no fields]*

- I am parenting at least one child
- I am pregnant *[optional]*
- I am not pregnant but expect to become a parent in the next nine months *[optional; should not be selectable with “pregnant”]*
- I am not parenting, pregnant, or expecting *[exclusive; leave off pregnant or expecting if not included above]*
- Prefer not to say *[exclusive]*

Nuanced Approach: “Check All That Apply”

Option 2: Adding Child Age Categories

Check all categories that apply to you: *[check boxes or yes/no fields]*

- I am parenting at least one child or children under 18
- I am parenting at least one child or children age 18 or older
- I am pregnant *[optional]*
- I am not pregnant but expect to become a parent in the next nine months *[optional; should not be selectable with “pregnant”]*
- I am not parenting, pregnant, or expecting *[exclusive; leave off pregnant or expecting if not included above]*
- Prefer not to say *[exclusive]*

Age categories can be simplified (for example, under 18 vs. 18 or older) or expanded depending on intended use.

Nuanced Approach: “Check All That Apply”

Option 3: Most detailed version (age ranges)

Check all categories that apply to you: *[check boxes or yes/no fields]*

- I am parenting at least one child or children ages 0–2
- I am parenting at least one child or children ages 3–5
- I am parenting at least one child or children ages 6–12
- I am parenting at least one child or children ages 13–17
- I am parenting at least one child or children ages 18 or older
- I am pregnant *[optional]*
- I am not pregnant but expect to become a parent within the next nine months *[optional]*
- I am not parenting, pregnant, or expecting *[exclusive; leave off pregnant or expecting if not included above]*
- Prefer not to say *[exclusive]*

Colleges should select age ranges that align with eligibility, campus services (such as child care), or reporting needs. Commonly used age groupings include 0–5, 6–12, 13–17 or 0–2, 3–5, 6–12, 13–17.

If You Need Data on Students' Number of Children

Option 1: Numerical Entry

How many children are you parenting? *[numerical field]*

Option 2: Categorical Response (If Numerical Entry Is Not Feasible)

Indicate the number of children you are parenting: *[one option allowed]*

- 1 child
- 2 children
- 3 children
- 4 or more children
- Prefer not to say

With any questions asked, **it is important that colleges have a planned use for the data** so that only relevant information is collected and **students are not burdened providing answers that will not inform policy or practice**

If You Need Info about the Ages of Students' Children

Option 1: Youngest Child (Simplest)

What is the age (in years) of the youngest child you are parenting? (If your child is less than 1 year old, enter 0.) *[numerical field]*

Option 2: Age Categories (No Numeric Counts)

For each age category, indicate whether you are parenting at least one child in that range: *[check boxes or yes/no fields]*

- Ages 0–2
- Ages 3–5
- Ages 6–12
- Ages 13–17
- Ages 18 or older
- Prefer not to say *[exclusive]*

With any questions asked, **it is important that colleges have a planned use for the data** so that only relevant information is collected and **students are not burdened providing answers that will not inform policy or practice**

Age ranges can be condensed (e.g., 0–5, 6–12, 13–17) if fewer categories are sufficient.

If You Need Info about the Ages of Students' Children

Option 3: Age Categories with Numeric Counts (Most Detailed)

For each category, indicate the number of children you are parenting: *[numerical fields]*

[#] Ages 0–2

[#] Ages 3–5

[#] Ages 6–12

[#] Ages 13–17

[#] Ages 18 or older

With any questions asked, **it is important that colleges have a planned use for the data** so that only relevant information is collected and **students are not burdened providing answers that will not inform policy or practice**

Single Parent Question

Are you currently a single parent to any of the children you are parenting?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

With any questions asked, **it is important that colleges have a planned use for the data** so that only relevant information is collected and **students are not burdened providing answers that will not inform policy or practice**

Breakout Room Discussions

~20 minutes

1. Institutional Research or Data Leads
2. Parenting Students
3. Student Services/Affairs and College Administration
4. State and National Leadership
5. Community Partners

Student Parent Leadership in Interpreting and Using Data

[https://tinyurl.com/
D2A-SPrubric](https://tinyurl.com/D2A-SPrubric)



RUBRIC

Rubric for the Authentic Engagement of Student Parents

A Self-Assessment Opportunity for Partners Working with Student Parents

Kate Westaby, Kimberly Salazar, Afia Adu-Gyamfi, Alyssa Callender, Alex Davis, Elaina N. Frieson, Lynne Hamblin, Alexis Primo-Hawkins, Kevin Relf

October 18, 2024

DOWNLOAD REPORT ↓

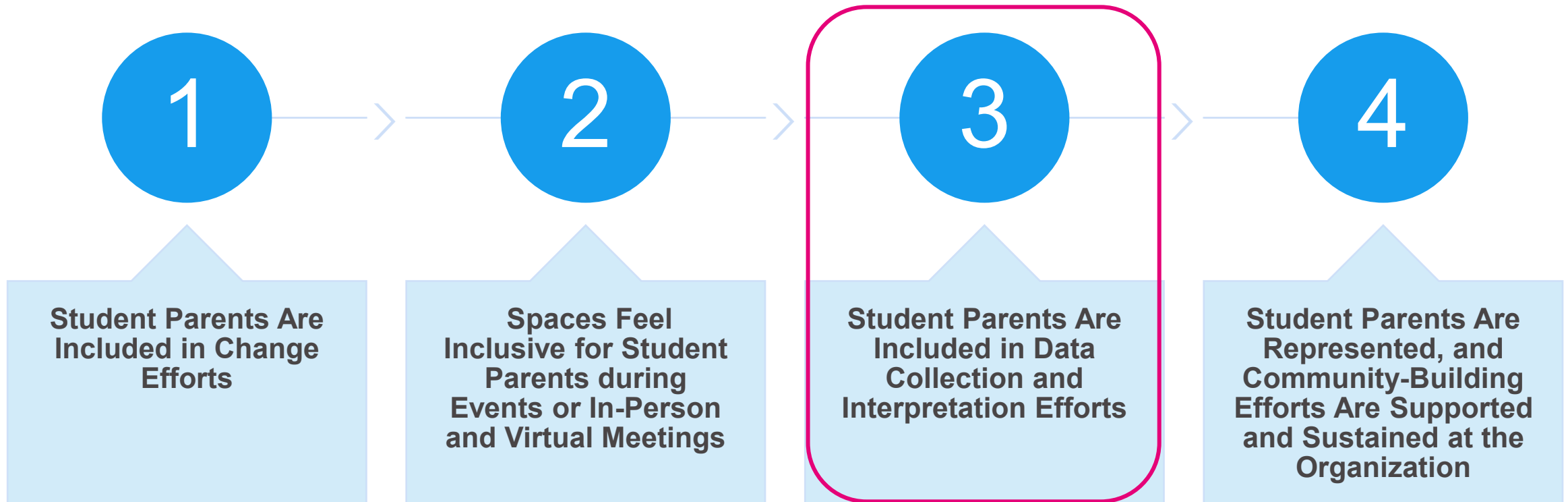
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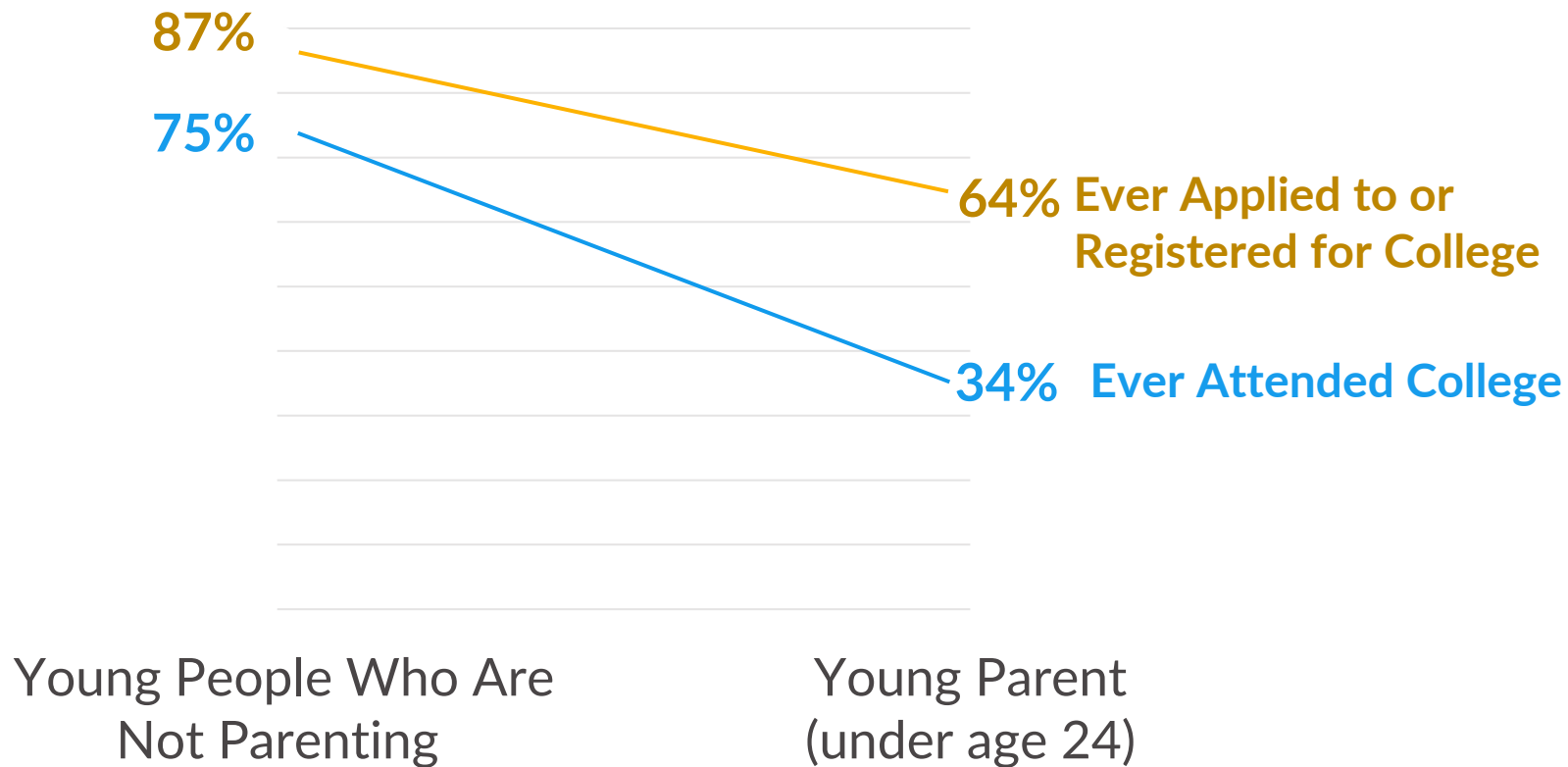
Rubric for the Authentic Engagement of Student Parents

A Self-Assessment Opportunity for Partners Working with Student Parents

Rubric Sections:



Example of Student Parents Being Included in Data Collection and Interpretation Efforts



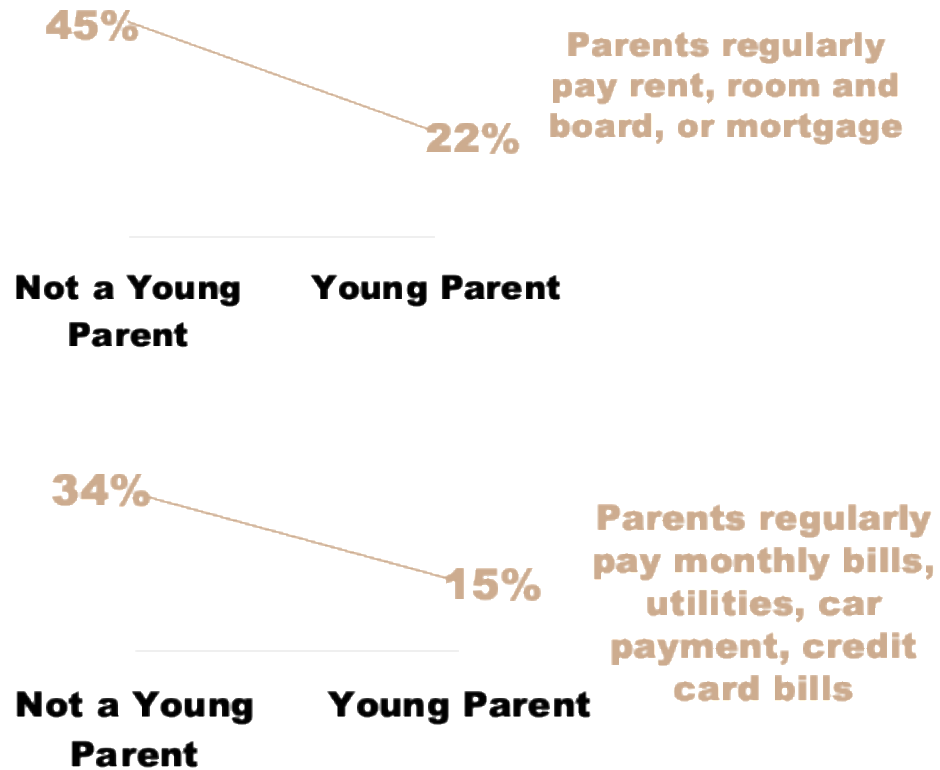
“I noted the gap between the number of young parents who applied or registered (64%) versus ever attended (34%), which I think demonstrates that twice as many young parents actually go to college as wanted to go to college... **You can't say that it's for lack of interest or that they don't value higher education, there's some sort of barrier.** I think that's what it is, or it's a strong indication.”

-Anne, young mom in early 20s

Source: Westaby, K. A. (2025). *Resisting punishment across ecological levels via participatory action research: A multi-method study with young parents in postsecondary education.* University of Wisconsin-Madison. Proquest

A Young Parent Research Question:

Do Young Parents Have Family Support?



Source: Westaby, K. A. (2025). Resisting punishment across ecological levels via participatory action research: A multi-method study with young parents in postsecondary education. University of Wisconsin-Madison. Proquest

The Young Parent Collective Research and Evaluation Lab

- Earned a UW-Madison Certificate
- Participants must be current or former young parents and receive a stipend, childcare, transportation, and meals
- Trainees are now paid evaluation consultants where they are co-evaluating our local WIC office



Source: youngparentcollective.org

Impact of Including Lived Expertise in Data Collection and Use: Quotes from Training Parents as Co-Researchers

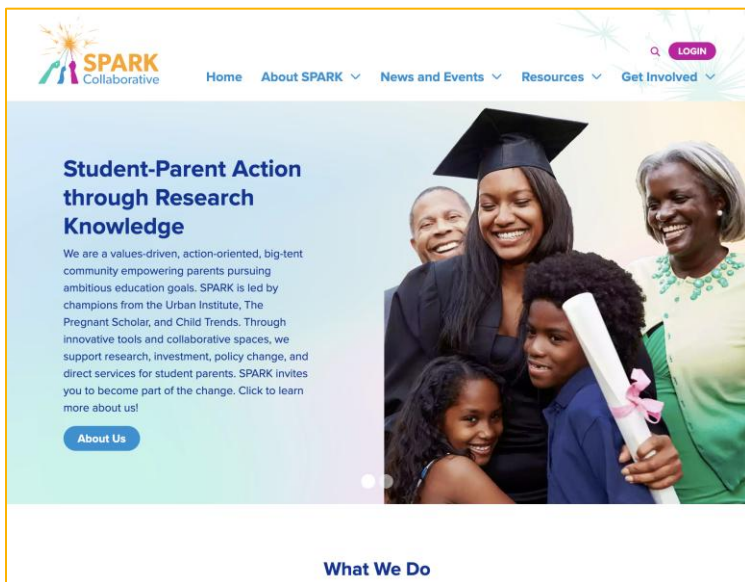
“It's a safe and supportive space for young parents to share and **legitimize their lived experiences** with other young parents, which in and of itself is **crucial to combating isolation and stigma**. I also think it's a great experience because from there they can learn the **power** of their experiences and how to use it for their advantage (intellectual mobility, networking, gaining professional experience, etc.).”

“Thank you for this incredible opportunity. It truly feels like a **once in a lifetime chance** in my early career stages, to do work at the intersections that I'm most passionate about. As someone who's still fighting against stigmas, needing opportunities to learn, and continue social justice work, I'm so glad to have been a part of this.”

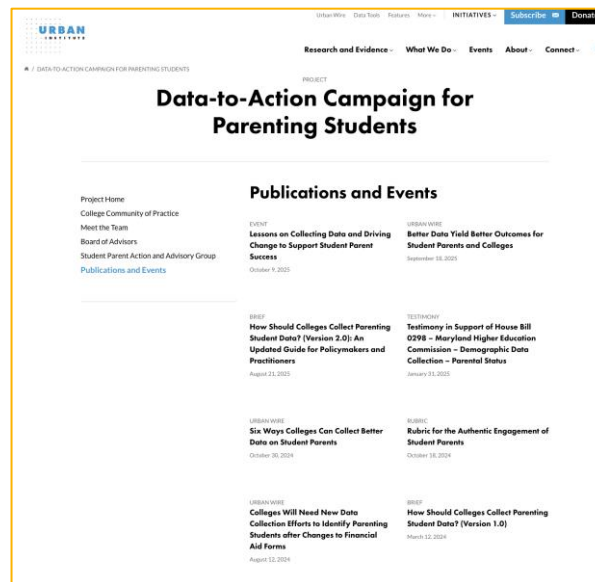
Source: Westaby, K. A. (2025). Resisting punishment across ecological levels via participatory action research: A multi-method study with young parents in postsecondary education. University of Wisconsin-Madison. Proquest

Resources

Resources



SPARK Collaborative
studentparentaction.org



Data-to-Action Campaign
urban.org/projects/data-action-campaign-parenting-students



Young Parent Collective
youngparentcollective.org

Share your Feedback and Support Request

As we end,
please complete this
survey and share how
we can support you.



<https://tinyurl.com/urban-spsurvey-s1>

Thank you for attending!

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