

State Policy Toolkit for Supporting Pregnant, Postpartum, and Parenting Students

Coalition for Pregnant and Parenting Students Advocacy

WORKING DRAFT as of March 24, 2026

The purpose of this toolkit is to equip state stakeholders to advocate for and enact robust legislation that supports pregnant, postpartum, and parenting students in every stage of their educational journey. With the current upheaval at the Department of Education, and the failure of the Office for Civil Rights to resolve cases of pregnancy discrimination and other sex discrimination cases,¹ it is imperative that state lawmakers and school officials fill the gap and protect pregnant and parenting students' right to equal educational opportunity. While many of the needs of pregnant and parenting students remain the same regardless of age or stage of education—like access to leave and scheduling accommodations—some of the specific policy recommendations do differ depending on whether they are addressing K-12 students or post-graduate student populations. Where possible, we have noted when certain policy issues are targeted at one population in particular. In addition to what is provided in this toolkit, the coalition has factsheets, reports, and additional resources to help inform and guide advocacy to support pregnant and parenting students. We encourage you to reach out to us with any questions or new resources you come across. Please email federal-ppcoalition@nwlc.org.

This toolkit includes:

- [1\) Talking Points](#)
- [2\) Key Legislative Priorities](#)
- [3\) State Laws Supporting Pregnant, Postpartum, and Parenting Students](#)
- [4\) Examples of Student-Parent Advocacy](#)
- [5\) Model Bill Language](#)

In addition to what is provided in this toolkit, the coalition has drafted model legislative language to help lawmakers and advocates craft policies to support students. The model bill language is designed to be modified to fit the unique needs of a particular state or population. To discuss the model legislative language, please email federal-ppcoalition@nwlc.org.

¹ Jessica Lee and Westley Shaw, *Abandoned Priorities and Cases in Limbo: An Analysis of Title IX Enforcement in the First Year of Trump's Second Term* (San Francisco: Center for WorkLife Law, University of California College of the Law, San Francisco, January 2026), <https://worklifelaw.org/wp-content/uploads/Abandoned-Priorities-and-Cases-in-Limbo.pdf>.

1) Talking Points

There are millions of pregnant and parenting students in the United States, including in middle and high schools as well as career and technical, undergraduate, and graduate educational programs. These students are highly motivated, and their success benefits not only them, but also their children, their school communities, and the local, state, and national economy. Without strong policies to support them, pregnant, postpartum, and parenting students face particular obstacles to graduation.

State and local protections provide reliable protection and guidance to students and educational institutions, especially where protections at the federal level may fall short. Instituting supportive policies is a win-win for students and schools alike. It is crucial for state and local policymakers and educational institutions to take action to support pregnant and parenting students. To-date, several states have enacted laws intended to support this population, with more considering their own legislation.

Who are Pregnant and Parenting Students?

- In undergraduate programs, there are more than 3.1 million students who are also parents—making about one in five college students a parenting student.²
- Over one in four graduate students are parents, totaling roughly one million students.³
- Each year, tens of thousands of middle and high school aged students become pregnant and/or give birth.⁴
- While the number of pregnant students is likely far higher, there are at least 180,000 pregnant students in the United States (elementary to graduate school) each academic semester who continue their pregnancies to term.⁵
- Collecting data on student parents would paint a full picture of how many and who they are. However, data collection about this population has been limited, siloed, or nonexistent—rendering it all the more important to increase and improve data collection to inform policymaking. This need is especially urgent in light of recent changes to federal education data collection tools—policymakers will no longer be able to rely on federal student aid data to establish a rough estimate of student parents or their demographics.⁶

² Alyssa Stefanese Yates, *Student-Parent Data: What We Know, What We Don't, and How to Find Out* (2024), <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Student-Parent-Data.pdf>; SPARK, *Who Are Undergraduates with Dependent Children?* (September 2024), <https://studentparentaction.org/assets/r-file/Who-Are-Undergraduates-with-Dependent-Children.pdf>.

³ Theresa Anderson et al., *Graduate Student Parents* (SPARK Collaborative, 2024), https://studentparentaction.org/assets/r-file/4-Graduate-Student-Parents_final.pdf.

⁴ Michelle Osterman et al., *Births: Final Data for 2022*. National Vital Statistics Reports, vol. 73, no. 2. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr73/nvsr73-02.pdf>

⁵ See Theresa Anderson et al., “The New Title IX Regulations Will Help More Than 180,000 Pregnant Students Every Semester and Millions of Parenting Students Long Term,” *Urban Institute*, April 19, 2024, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/new-title-ix-regulations-will-help-more-180000-pregnant-students-every-semester> (noting that 180,000 is an undercount because students who terminate or lose their pregnancies, leave their education program during pregnancy, or do not claim their babies as dependent children are not captured).

⁶ Theresa Anderson, “Colleges Will Need New Data Collection Efforts to Identify Parenting Students after Changes to Financial Aid Forms,” *Urban Institute*, August 12, 2024, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/colleges-will-need-new-data-collection-efforts-identify-parenting-students-after-changes>.

Why is Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Students an Economic Necessity?

- Student parents face significant financial burdens that tend to be greater than those of students without children, including juggling expenses for health care, child care and housing, in addition to existing educational expenses like tuition.
- In a 2021 study by Trellis Strategies, two-thirds of postsecondary student parents report that they would be unable to afford an unexpected \$500 expense, and 80 percent say that they have run out of money at least once in the previous nine months.⁷
 - The majority of student parents surveyed indicated worries about being able to pay both their monthly expenses and their tuition.⁸
- One 2023 survey of thousands of undergraduate students revealed that 67% of student-parents surveyed faced housing insecurity and 14% had been unhoused in the last year.⁹
- Investing in student parents benefits more than just their immediate families; student parents are vital contributors to economic and social health at the state and local levels. The majority of student parents are employed in addition to attending school.¹⁰
- Studies have shown that increasing graduation rates of student parents can result in a significant positive return on investment to taxpayers.¹¹ Student parents who are able to meet their educational goals can earn higher incomes and contribute to their local economies. A study of these interventions in Virginia found that investments in comprehensive student parent support programs, including grant aid and expanded on-campus child care that helped students maintain their studies and graduate, resulted in saving as much as \$5 in state funds for every \$1 spent.¹²

How Does Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Students Keep Children Safe and Thriving?

- Millions of children are the child of a student parent and approximately 43% of children in the U.S. were born to parents under 25.¹³
- Parenting students face higher rates of basic needs insecurity than non-parenting students.
 - A recent survey found 52% of parenting students experienced food insecurity, compared with 37% of non-parenting students surveyed.¹⁴
- Parenting students also face high risks of housing insecurity and homelessness. According to New America's analysis of NPSAS data (National Postsecondary Student Aid Study), almost

⁷ Trellis Strategies, *Navigating College and Parenting* (2023), https://www.trellisstrategies.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2023/10/Navigating-College-and-Parenting.pdf.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, "2023–2024 Student Basic Needs Survey Report," <https://hope.temple.edu/research/hope-center-basic-needs-survey/2023-2024-student-basic-needs-survey-report>.

¹⁰ Student Parent Action Network (SPARK), *The Financial Well-Being of Parents Pursuing Postsecondary Education*, <https://studentparentaction.org/assets/r-file/The-Financial-Well-Being-of-Parents-Pursuing-Postsecondary-Education.pdf>.

¹¹ Institute for Women's Policy Research, *Investing in Single Mothers' Higher Education* (state report series), <https://iwpr.org/investing-in-single-mothers-higher-education-state/>.

¹² Urban Institute, *Taxpayer Benefits of Supporting Student Parents* (2024), <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/Taxpayer-Benefits-of-Supporting-Student-Parents.pdf>.

¹³ Urban Institute, *Supporting Young Parents as They Advance Their Education and Careers* (2019), https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/101120/supporting_young_parents_as_they_advance_their_education_and_careers_1.pdf.

¹⁴ Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, "2023–2024 Student Basic Needs Survey Report," <https://hope.temple.edu/research/hope-center-basic-needs-survey/2023-2024-student-basic-needs-survey-report>.

seven percent of parenting students—over 213,900 families—are experiencing homelessness.¹⁵ Supporting pregnant and parenting students helps children have access to safe housing.

- Research shows that children growing up in unstable housing conditions may face developmental delays and are less likely to graduate from high school, fueling a cycle of instability that can affect their future opportunities.¹⁶
- Children of parents who completed college after stopping out—temporarily pausing their pursuit of a degree or credentials—were more likely to obtain a high school diploma or college degree, and earned more income.¹⁷
- By providing the right support for student parents and their children, states can foster multigenerational change that benefits parents, children, and the broader economy.¹⁸ Parents who are able to complete a college degree have, on average, nearly double the incomes of parents without a college degree, and increases in a parents' income when their child is young have in turn been associated with meaningful increases in a child's future earnings.¹⁹
- Based on existing data and insights gathered from the experiences of student parents, we know that they face significant challenges related to college affordability, financial aid options, and demanding schedules due to balancing childcare, school, and work responsibilities. By increasing support and resources to address these challenges, we can help ensure parents with young families have the infrastructure to set them up for success. When parents succeed, their children flourish as well.

Why are Specific, Tailored Policies Necessary?

- All students need robust support, but for pregnant and parenting students, it is crucial to have tailored resources and protections that specifically address their needs and barriers to success.
- Addressing nonacademic barriers such as investment in health care, child care, housing, food, and other basic needs provides pregnant and parenting students the support they need to persist and complete their postsecondary education. Fifty-nine percent of community college caregivers who dropped out of college cited child care as a reason.²⁰
- Supports tailored to the needs of pregnant and parenting students will also improve outcomes for other student populations, such as veterans and first generation students, who are disproportionately likely to be parents.
- Intersectional identities may exacerbate the obstacles faced by pregnant and parenting students. This financial challenge stems, at least in part, from wealth and income gaps due to historic and systemic racism and gender-based discrimination.
- As young people across the country lose access to the full range of reproductive health care, fewer students will be able to control their reproductive futures. While protections that ensure that

¹⁵ Ivy Love et al., *We Shouldn't Have to Choose Between Maintaining and Bettering Our Lives: An Analysis of Older and Parenting College Students*, New America (Nov. 2, 2023), <https://www.newamerica.org/insights/we-shouldnt-have-to-choose-between-maintaining-and-bettering-our-lives-an-analysis-of-older-and-parenting-college-students>.

¹⁶ <https://www.newamerica.org/insights/the-harsh-reality-of-parenting-student-homelessness/>

¹⁷ Urban Institute, *What If Mom Went Back to School?* (2022), <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/What%20If%20Mom%20Went%20Back%20to%20School.pdf>.

¹⁸ Ascend at the Aspen Institute, *Making Tomorrow Better Together: Process, Outcomes, and Measures for 2Gen Organizational Change*, <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/resources/making-tomorrow-better-together-process-outcomes-and-measures-for-2gen-organizational-change>.

¹⁹ <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/2gen-approach/>

²⁰ Sophie Nguyen and Olivia Cheche, "Enrollment Improved, but Challenges Remain," New America (Feb. 7, 2024), <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/enrollment-improve-but-challenges-remain>.

every pregnant and parenting student has the necessary support to complete their education are long overdue – they are particularly urgent now given the deteriorating reproductive health care landscape.

- Studies show that access to comprehensive reproductive care, including abortion care, improves economic and educational outcomes for women.²¹ One study found that women in areas with less restrictive abortion laws had higher graduation rates, higher incomes, and more economic stability.²²

²¹ See e.g., Diana Greene Foster et al., “Socioeconomic Outcomes of Women Who Receive and Women Who Are Denied Wanted Abortions in the United States,” *American Journal of Public Health* 2018 Mar;108(3):407-413, doi: [10.2105/AJPH.2017.304247](https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2017.304247).

²² Keith Hamm, “Abortion Access Linked to Future Economic and Educational Success,” *The Current*, University of California, Santa Barbara, November 18, 2024, <https://news.ucsb.edu/2024/021678/abortion-access-linked-future-economic-and-educational-success>.

2) **Key Legislative Priorities**

Legislation to support pregnant and parenting students can take several forms. Below are brief descriptions of a few key priority areas for legislative solutions.

Collect Data on Pregnant and Parenting Students

- Without robust and credible data on pregnant and parenting students, it is challenging for schools, institutions, agencies, and states to support their success. By counting pregnant, postpartum, and parenting students, we can better allocate resources to support them, measure the success of programs, and identify barriers to degree completion.
 - When designing these data collection policies, it is critical to establish safeguards to prevent discrimination, harassment, or targeting of pregnant students, including those who choose to terminate their pregnancies, especially in states that are hostile to abortion.²³
- Data collection at the institutional level could be used to identify regional differences, disparities in programs of study, and specific resource or service needs among student parents. It can also help relevant entities gain a better understanding of student parents' specific priorities and needs, as well as better details about their lives, size of their families, financial obligations, and degree completion. Surveys are powerful tools that can be used to better understand the student parent experience and provide the targeted support they need.²⁴
 - When possible, data collection should be able to be disaggregated to better represent the distinct needs of student parents with intersecting identities. To fully capture the experiences and needs of the student parent populations, data collection should be cross-tabulated by sex, age, race/ethnicity, English learner status, native language, socioeconomic status, and disability status, among others.
- States should consider options including:
 - Legislating requirements for state institutions of higher education to collect detailed demographic information on their student population, including questions specific to parental status.
 - Requiring and facilitating state cabinet agencies and other state entities to design and implement mechanisms to collect and analyze this information about students throughout the state. This must be done with robust safeguards to protect the privacy and identities of pregnant students and their teachers, administrators, and staff.

Ban Discrimination Against Pregnant and Postpartum Students

- Although Title IX protects pregnant students and those with pregnancy-related conditions from discrimination in educational programs that receive federal funding, there has been significant turmoil surrounding federal protections given changes in Title IX regulations between administrations. Additional clarity for pregnant and postpartum students would help ensure their continued and equitable access to education.

²³ For example, in states with laws that criminalize abortion, or threaten anyone who assists someone in accessing abortion care, students, staff, administrators, are all put at risk, despite existing Title IX protections.

²⁴ Ewaoluwa Obatuase, Theresa Anderson, and Stephanie Baker, "Debunking Myths on Student-Parent Data Collection," *New America*, February 2026, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/debunking-myths-on-student-parent-data-collection>.

- In 2024, the Biden Administration promulgated a new rule under Title IX, clarifying protections for pregnant and parenting students by requiring schools to give notice of their Title IX rights and detailing the broad scope of discrimination based on pregnancy, leaves of absences, and accommodations. However, that rule was challenged and vacated, returning the Office for Civil Rights back to prior enforcing regulations.²⁵
 - In addition, the Trump administration’s significant reduction of staff and closure of regional offices within the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR), affects how these protections will be enforced as OCR has fewer resources to adequately investigate discrimination complaints.²⁶
- Unfortunately, due to the failure to enforce Title IX and the lack of clarity around its existing protections, pregnant and postpartum students still commonly face discrimination—including lack of accommodations, policies that penalize them for taking time off to recover from birth or for meeting their health needs, and harassment and bullying from educators and school administrators—often without any remedy from the federal government for violations of their Title IX rights.²⁷
 - Non-Accommodation is particularly prevalent for pregnancy-related conditions not explicitly listed in prior Title IX regulations, like fertility care, post-partum mood disorder, and lactation.
- These behaviors unlawfully create a hostile environment that prevents pregnant and parenting students from fully participating in educational programs and activities and can lead to isolation and exclusion, feelings of failure, and pressure to leave school.²⁸
- Strong state protections are crucial to ensure pregnant and postpartum students have clear legal rights under state law to be free from discrimination and to access necessary accommodations, with clear enforcement mechanisms, and also so that educational institutions have reliable guidance on how to comply with their legal obligations.

Ban Discrimination Against Student Parents

- It is imperative that discrimination based on parental, family, or marital status in education be prohibited. Currently, Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of pregnancy or related conditions and discriminatory treatment based on a student’s parental or family status, if that differential treatment is based on sex.²⁹
- Student parents often face hostility and discriminatory grade penalties when they ask for assistance as simple as permission to miss class to attend to their hospitalized child, or permission to take an externship closer to childcare.³⁰
- Because it is challenging to prove that discrimination against a parent is caused by sex discrimination, policymakers should ban discrimination on the basis of familial status, including

²⁵ Litigation is ongoing as organizations committed to supporting pregnant and parenting students attempt to restore the 2024 rule protections. <https://nwlc.org/resource/students-title-ix-rights-without-2024-biden-rule>.

²⁶ ProPublica, “Education Department Civil Rights Division Eroded by Massive Layoffs,” <https://www.propublica.org/article/education-department-civil-rights-division-eroded-by-massive-layoffs>.

²⁷ National Women’s Law Center, “NWLC Urges Lawmakers to Oppose Pregnant Students’ Rights Act,” <https://nwlc.org/resource/nwlc-urges-lawmakers-to-oppose-pregnant-students-rights-act>.

²⁸ National Women’s Law Center, *Let Her Learn: Stopping Pushout for Girls Who Are Pregnant or Parenting* (2017), https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Final_nwlc_Gates_PregParenting.pdf.

²⁹ <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Biden-Title-IX-Rule-Chart-6.12.24-vF.pdf>

³⁰ *Id.*

caregiver status, in order to more fully protect students who may be harmed by gender stereotypes related to caregiving, including expectant non-birthing parents, students who are perceived to be parents, and caregivers who are not parents.³¹

Provide Accommodations for Lactating Students

- While Title IX protects lactating students from discrimination, the 1975 regulations do not provide the detailed guidance that educational institutions need to ensure they support lactating students. Providing adequate accommodations to lactating students removes one barrier for them to complete their education and supports students' health and familial needs.
- For schools without an existing lactation space, the cost of creating such a space is minimal. At a minimum, the lactation space should be private, sanitary, and equipped with a flat surface and chair and in reasonable proximity to running water and an electrical outlet. Lactating students also need access to refrigeration or, at minimum, a secure location to store a cooler.
- Students should also be accommodated for lactation breaks during classes and exams as a medical necessity, and not penalized for time missed during the school day to express milk or nurse.
- Failing to provide adequate accommodations for lactating individuals can lead to serious negative health outcomes, including mastitis, pain, and a decline in milk production that could impact the student's ability to continue lactating.³²
- Employers, including educational institutions, are already required to provide lactation accommodations for covered employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers (PUMP) Act,³³ meaning schools should already have spaces on-site that could be made available to students.

Help Students Reach Available Resources and Services

- In addition to school and campus programs, many non-profit organizations and state or local programs are available to assist student parents with meeting their basic needs and achieving their educational goals. Unfortunately, these resources and services are often underfunded, difficult to find, and can be complex to understand—especially in light of the exceptional strains on student parents' time. Younger student parents are in need of the highest levels of support, as it is often challenging for them to navigate health and social care systems independently.
 - At a minimum, schools should provide students with a list of available resources in their community including academic advising, child care (including child care subsidy and assistance programs), housing (including housing subsidies and utility assistance programs), food assistance, public benefits at the state and federal level and how to apply, health care services, health insurance and financial support for accessing health care, mental health supports, transportation benefits, mentoring, and more.
- Integrating resources to better streamline supportive services can mitigate the time burden that student parents face to locate these supports, and would reduce their need to request such

³¹ Rainesford Stauffer, "Cradle to College: Stigma and Stereotypes About Teen Parents Fail to Capture Reality," *Teen Vogue*, March 22, 2022, <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/cradle-to-college-part-2>.

³² U.S. Dep't of Labor, Wage & Hour Div., Reasonable Break Time for Nursing Mothers, 75 Fed. Reg. 80073, 80075 (Dec. 21, 2010).

³³ 29 U.S.C. § 218d.

services. For example, schools can create student-parent specific listservs or online hubs where students can connect with tutoring, career counseling, or basic needs supports. Information regarding these hubs or listservs should be provided at targeted orientation programs.

- These resources should also be easy to access and available outside of business hours. Overly burdensome administrative procedures could disincentivize students seeking these supports in the first place.
- Institutions can aid student parents in accessing pre-existing services, by helping students navigate resources either through staff or even a webpage. Providing on-site resource navigation on campus or at school is a best practice for helping student parents make the most out of their potential—and helping publicly-funded supports be as effective and efficient as possible.

Include Student Parents in Housing Supports

- Housing instability makes it harder for pregnant and parenting students to complete their K-12 and postsecondary education.³⁴ At the postsecondary level, approximately 38 percent of parenting students who were never threatened with eviction completed a bachelor's degree, compared with 60 percent of nonparents who were never threatened with eviction. For parenting students who were threatened with eviction, the graduation rate dropped to 15 percent, compared to 51 percent of nonparents who were threatened with eviction.
- At the K-12 level, pregnant and parenting students face similar challenges due to restrictions at homeless shelters, and bed shortages. With limited options, pregnant and parenting girls reported being less likely to live with their parents and more likely to be unhoused or living with another family.³⁵
 - Pregnant and parenting students who are minors face difficulty renting housing or finding emergency housing options because of age requirements. Pregnant and parenting youth in foster care also face unique challenges due to lack of stable and consistent housing, mistreatment from their caregivers, and separation from their more familiar support systems.³⁶
- Pregnant and parenting students need access to safe and affordable housing to succeed in school. States can address the housing needs of pregnant and parenting students by directing resources to supportive housing programs and public housing authorities.
 - Revising restrictive policies on age requirements will also help those under 18 have access to more affordable housing options.
 - Institutions can help reduce housing insecurity by establishing emergency aid funds for rental assistance and providing case management services.
- Overall, states must increase investments in affordable housing and make it easier for students and families to access housing assistance. Lack of access to affordable housing undermines the

³⁴ New America, "What Happens When Student Parents Are Threatened with Eviction?"

<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/briefs/what-happens-student-parents-threatened-with-eviction>.

³⁵ National Women's Law Center, *Let Her Learn: Stopping School Pushout for Girls who are Pregnant or Parenting* (2017), https://nwl.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Final_nwlc_Gates_PregParenting.pdf. Girls who are pregnant or parenting were less likely than girls overall to report that they lived with their parents and more likely to report that they have been unhoused, lived with another family, or stayed with another family, and report that not having permanent housing was a barrier to going to school.

³⁶ National Women's Law Center, *Best Practices: Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Students in Middle Schools and High Schools* (2024), https://nwl.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/v2_singlepgs_nwlc_BestPracticesReport_PPS.pdf.

health, education, nutrition, and employment of all people, but especially parents and their children.

Include Student Parents in Child Care Supports

- Policymakers should increase overall investments in child care, to expand access to child care assistance and improve the quality and supply of child care. Without growing the total amount of assistance available for families, states will force student parents to compete with other families for already limited assistance.
- In addition, policymakers should create and expand policies specifically targeted to support student parents, like programs that provide or subsidize child care for postsecondary students, and support the eligibility of student parents to participate in broader state-led child care programs by including pursuit of postsecondary degrees as a qualifying activity.
 - States should prioritize student parents—and the provision of on-campus child care for students—within federally-funded child care programs, including the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF).
- Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidies can support parents enrolled in education or training programs; however, only an estimated 13 percent of postsecondary student parents receive CCDF assistance.³⁷
 - States can streamline access by allocating grant or contract funds directly to public college systems to support care for low-income students, as New York has done through CCDF allocations to the State University of New York and City University of New York systems.³⁸ States can also prioritize student parents for subsidies, as Georgia has done.³⁹
- State postsecondary child care grants or subsidies can help fill gaps for students who cannot access CCDF or Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) subsidies.⁴⁰

³⁷ For more on how state choices about work requirements, limiting academic programs of study, time limits on receipt of benefits, and academic progress requirements can restrict access for parents enrolled in postsecondary education. Hope Center / Temple University, “State-by-State Choices: A National Landscape Analysis of Postsecondary Eligibility Restrictions and Opportunities (SNAP, CCDF, TANF),” <https://hope.temple.edu/state-state-choices-national-landscape-analysis-postsecondary-eligibility-restrictions-opportunities-snap-ccdf-tanf/child-care-development-fund-ccdf-higher-education>. Limited funding for CCDF also impacts access for parenting students as it does for the general population of income-eligible families. First Five Years Fund, “2025 State Fact Sheets,” <https://www.ffyf.org/2025-state-fact-sheets/>.

³⁸ New America, “What States Can Do to Help College Students Get Child Care Support,” <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/what-states-can-do-to-help-college-students-get-child-care-support>.

³⁹ Georgia prioritizes student parents as a population for CCDF subsidy receipt and piloted placing consultants at three Technical College System of Georgia campuses to help parenting students apply for subsidies and connect to other services. Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, *CAPS Student Parent 2Gen Pilot: Theory of Change*, https://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/CAPS_StudentParent_2GenPilot_TheoryofChange.pdf. However, it is worth noting that Georgia overall has quite limited access to child care assistance. Increasing overall benefits will help student parents and non-student parents alike.

⁴⁰ Few eligible postsecondary students can access federal CCAMPIS grants. New America, “Unlocking the Full Potential of CCAMPIS for Student Parents,” <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/unlocking-the-full-potential-of-ccampis-for-student-parents>.

- Several states offer examples of postsecondary child care grants; for example, Minnesota’s [Postsecondary Child Care Grant](#) is open to income-eligible undergraduate and graduate students.⁴¹
- States can coordinate support for colleges that provide on-campus care and other child care services (like CCAMPIS) for parenting students through a designated role in a state higher education agency or public system of higher education.
 - Louisiana’s Board of Regents offers an example, with a coordinator who helps find and secure grants to support early learning centers on campuses, liaises between the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Department of Education, convenes campus based child care staff and provides professional development. The coordinator also serves as a match maker between college facilities and local child care providers who need space to offer care.⁴²
- States can invest in policies and programs that increase provider stability and improve educator recruitment and retention, such as increasing payment rates, providing stabilization or start-up grants, wage supplements, or categorical eligibility for child care providers. These efforts can boost the overall supply of child care,⁴³ allowing student parents to access reliable, high quality child care that meets their needs.

⁴¹ New America, “States Should Invest in Postsecondary Child Care Grants,” <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/states-should-invest-in-postsecondary-child-care-grants>.

⁴² Richard David Jr., and Stephanie Baker, *Policy Agenda: Improving Child Care Access for Parenting Students, State Recommendations*, New America (Oct. 9, 2025), <https://www.newamerica.org/insights/policy-agenda-improving-child-care-access-for-parenting-students/state-recommendations>.

⁴³ Sarah Prendergast and Gina Adams, “Increasing Child Care Supply Will Take Investment—Not Deregulation,” *Urban Wire*, Urban Institute, March 14, 2025, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/increasing-child-care-supply-will-take-investment-not-deregulation>.

3) State Laws Supporting Pregnant, Postpartum, and Parenting Students

The following is a list of enacted state laws that support pregnant and parenting students, with a focus on the priority legislation topics⁴⁴ discussed above. This list is reflective of what has currently been enacted in state law, but there may be places where these laws are underinclusive or fall short of the strongest protections for pregnant and parenting students. More detailed recommendations on best practices policy language are available upon request. Reach out to federal-ppscoalition@nwlc.org for more information.

Arkansas

- Lactation Accommodation (K-12): [Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-719\(b\)\(4\)\(A\)](#)

California

- Priority Registration, Resource Navigation (Higher Ed): [AB 2881 \(2022\)](#)
- Antidiscrimination, Parental Leave, Pregnancy Accommodation (Graduate School): [AB 2350 \(2014\)](#)
- Data Collection and Financial Aid (Higher Ed): [AB 2458 \(2024\)](#)
- Lactation Accommodation (K-12): [CA Ed. Code § 222](#)
- Lactation Accommodation (Higher Ed): [CA Ed. Code §66271.9](#)

Illinois

- Data Collection (Higher Ed): [110 ILCS 149](#)
- Lactation Accommodation (K-12): [Ill. Rev. Stat. Ch.105 §5/34-18.53](#)
- Lactation Accommodation (Higher Ed): [Ill. Rev. Stat. Ch.105 §5/10-20.60](#)

Louisiana

- Lactation Accommodation and Flexible Attendance (K-12): [La. Stat. Tit. 17 §221.8](#)

Maryland

- Resource Navigation, Priority Registration, and Flexible Attendance (Higher Ed): [MD HB840 \(2025\)](#)
- Lactation Accommodation (K-12): [MD Educ. Code §4-139\(c\)](#)
- Flexible Attendance (K-12): [MD. Educ. Code §7-301.1](#)

Michigan

- Resource Navigation (Higher Ed): [SB 477 \(2023\)](#)

Minnesota

- Antidiscrimination, Priority Registration, General Supports (Higher Ed): [§135A.1582 \(2024\)](#)
- Resource Navigation and Data Collection (Higher Ed): [§ 135A.1581 \(2024\)](#)

Missouri

- Lactation Accommodation (K-12): [Mo. Rev. Stat. §160.995](#)

⁴⁴ For a more detailed discussion of excused absences for pregnant and parenting students, please see this report: National Women's Law Center, *Excused Absences Report* (2023), <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/ExcusedAbsenceReport.pdf>.

Nebraska

- Lactation Accommodation (K-12): [Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-2,149](#)

New Mexico

- Flexible Attendance (K-12): [NM Stat. §22-12A-9\(B\)\(1\)\(2\) \(2021\)](#)

Oregon

- Data Collection (Higher Ed): [SB 564 \(2021\)](#)

Texas

- Data Collection (Higher Ed): [§ 51.9357](#)
- Reasonable Accommodations, Flexible Attendance, Resource Navigation (Higher Ed): [§ 51.982](#)
- Priority Registration (Higher Ed): [§ 51.983](#)

Virginia

- Lactation Accommodation (K-12): [VA Code Ann §22.1-79.6](#)
- Data Collection (Higher Ed): [HB427 \(2026\)](#) (Virginia Code § 23.1-203)

West Virginia

- Flexible Attendance (K-12): [§18-34-1 \(2024\)](#)

4) Examples of Student-Parent Advocacy

Efforts to advance legislation supporting pregnant, parenting, and postpartum students is helped when lawmakers can hear directly from the students themselves. Below is a sampling of advocacy where the voices and experiences of students has been incorporated. If you would like more resources, we encourage you to explore the SPARK Collaborative Resource Library.⁴⁵

Blog Posts

- [Parent Voices at the Center](#) - Ascend at the Aspen Institute
- [On the Rise Series: Harnessing Your Advocacy](#) - Ascend at the Aspen Institute
- [First Generation Stories — Meet Karen Escobar](#) - Generation Hope
- [Invest In More Housing For Hardworking College Students With Kids](#) - EdSource
- [Advocates Amplified Spotlight: My Path From Incarceration To Uc Davis Graduate As A Student Parent](#) - The California Alliance for Student Parent Success
- [Addressing Racial Inequities Faced by Black Parenting Students in Higher Education](#) - New America
- [Acknowledging the Identities and Intersectionalities of Student Parents](#) - New America
- [Cultivating a Safe and Inclusive Space for Pregnant and Parenting Students](#) - New America

Legislative Testimony⁴⁶

- [Student Parent Krystle Pale Provides Testimony for California's GAINS for Student Parents Act \(AB 2458\)](#)

⁴⁵ Student Parent Action Network (SPARK), Resource Library, <https://studentparentaction.org/resources/resource-library>.

⁴⁶ If you would like examples of legislative testimony from policy or advocacy organizations, please contact federal-ppscoalition@nwlc.org. We also encourage you to share examples of effective student advocacy and legislative testimony.

5) Model Bill Language [Separately provided from toolkit]

Model legislative language to help draft state laws to support pregnant, postpartum, and parenting students will be available. Members of the Coalition for Pregnant and Parenting Students Advocacy are happy to help craft laws to support students around the country. To discuss the model legislative language, please reach out to federal-ppscoalition@nwlc.org.