

Educational level: *Universities, large employers* | **Beneficiaries:** *Students, faculty, and staff*

Background

Students and employees with children face challenges making child care arrangements while they are at class or work. "Parents of dependent children make up nearly a quarter (3.9 million) of the undergraduate students in the United States"¹; however, the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) estimates that "only 5 percent of the child care needed by student parents is supplied at on-campus child care centers."¹

Description

Some countries have allocated resources to subsidize the cost of child care for student-parents. In the US, the Higher Education Act of 1965 was amended in 1998 to authorize the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program,² which "supports the participation of low-income parents in postsecondary education through the provision of campus-based child care service."³ Higher education institutions that have awarded at least \$350,000 in certain types of federal grants during the previous year are eligible to apply for CCAMPIS funds, which may be used to support or establish on-campus infant/toddler/child care, subsidize students' costs for child care, or conduct programs for parents or staff development.² CCAMPIS grants can be awarded for up to four years.⁴ The funding level for the program has varied over the years. Although the program has received approximately \$16 million every year since 2003, the number of projects conducted under the program has decreased from 342 in 2003-2004 to 155 in 2010-2011.^{2,5}

Other countries have made child care a requirement of large employers. Cambodia's national labor laws state that "enterprises with at least 100 women are required to provide day-care centers or pay child-care fees...."⁶

Results

Reviewers rated this practice as featuring the following gender transformative characteristics:

- Transform family, school, and/or work arrangements so that women are not economically or socially penalized/disadvantaged for caregiving (*critical criterion*)
- Change or attempt to change an imbalance of power or otherwise level the playing field (*critical criterion*)
- Challenge and change common discriminatory gender beliefs or norms (*critical criterion*)
- Introduce, make use of, or further the (existing) legal protections for women.

This practice has the potential to transform arrangements for students and employees who have child care responsibilities. By introducing legal protections (Cambodia) and financial resources (US CCAMPIS program) into national legislative structures, child care-related legislation legitimizes caregiving in the education setting.

Limited data on this practice's effects are available. As of 2007, US Department of Education program data indicated that 24-25% of parents at two- and four-year institutions who received CCAMPIS-funded child care services graduated with a degree or certificate at the same institution, transferred to a four-year institution within three years of enrolling, or received a bachelor's degree at the same institution within six years of enrolling.⁷ In addition, of institutions providing data, 63% of parents at two-year institutions and 69% of parents at four-year institutions who received CCAMPIS-funded child care services were able to remain enrolled for at least one academic year at the same institution ("persistence rate"). There was no information, however, on whether these data represent an increase or decrease from the period before CCAMPIS funds were introduced. In addition, a qualitative study found that child care experts and program directors who were interviewed believe that CCAMPIS has a positive effect on students' ability to stay in school. One respondent said that "[m]ore parents who could otherwise not go to school were able to go to school. They stayed in school longer. They had better grades compared to the general cohorts of their respective colleges. There was a better integration of the parent into college life by having their child there with them, cared for and safe, providing peace of mind and the ability to focus and concentrate knowing that their children were in a safe environment near to them."¹

Implementation lessons learned

In designing programs like the CCAMPIS grants, administrators should consider the eligibility criteria for awarding grants. CCAMPIS does not proportionally respond to student parent needs since "CCAMPIS funds are not allocated based on the number of parents at an institution who need assistance."¹ Because funds are based on the level of federal needs-based grants disbursed at an institution, community colleges generally do not disburse as much as do four-year institutions, as tuition is lower. Thus, "[d]espite having a higher proportion of student parents than four-year institutions, community colleges are eligible for less CCAMPIS funding."¹ In addition, program planners should conduct awareness-raising to ensure that eligible institutions take advantage of the funding opportunity.

Summary conclusions

Child care-related legislation has gender transformative potential for any setting, including the PSE setting. Although this practice is implemented by higher-level authorities beyond preservice education and other higher education institutions, it has important implications for other types of gender transformative practices (such as child care) that preservice education institutions offer, as well as for the legal structures that facilitate institutions to level the playing field for student-parents and working parents.

Reference(s) and source(s)

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