Expanding Childcare Access for Student Parents in Maryland

Capstone Project at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy
In Partnership with the Maryland Commission for Women

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April 24, 2026

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Abstract
This report is about childcare access for student parents in Maryland, with a focus on the barriers that student parents face in accessing childcare and policies and strategies that the state of Maryland, in partnership with public institutions of higher education, can implement to improve childcare access for this population. Through a literature review and interviews with current student parents and staff that work directly with student parents at public institutions of higher education in Maryland, I identify high costs, irregular schedules, limited slots, and a lack of integration within the institution and higher education system as the primary barriers to childcare access for student parents. I explore other state and institution-level policies, including drop-in childcare, Head Start partnerships, data collection, direct funding, and institution/higher education system coordination through three case studies and evaluate these policies based on a childcare access framework and their financial impact for the state. Finally, I recommend that the state of Maryland require institutions to collect data on student parent status, coordinate resources and services for student parents through the Maryland Higher Education Commission and individual institutions, and create pilot programs for drop-in childcare and direct funding.

Introduction

Student parents are a largely invisible population in higher education. Despite making up approximately 18% of the undergraduate student population and 28% of the graduate student population nationally, their needs receive insufficient attention and funding (Anderson et al., 2024). Nationally, student parents are also more likely to be women (74%), people of color (55%), have incomes below the federal poverty line (35%), and be and older than non-parenting students, with an average age of 35 (Dundar, 2024). There is currently no institution-level data collected on student parents in Maryland, so we do not have a clear idea of how many student parents exist in Maryland, their demographics, where in the state they are located, or their outcomes. However, based on national statistics, it is estimated that there are about 44,000 undergraduate student parents and 32,500 graduate student parents in Maryland (Baker, 2026).

Student parents have a lot to juggle between school, work, and raising their children. By pursuing higher education, they are making an investment in their family's future in hopes of increasing their earnings and providing for their children. Mothers who return to school increase their average earnings by $2,734 per year, while mothers who complete their degree increase their average earnings by $8,934 per year, compared to mothers who did not reenroll in school (Anderson, 2022). Attaining higher education also positively impacts the future educational attainment of children of student parents. Children of student parents that completed their degree are 38% more likely to earn a college degree themselves. In addition to these individual benefits, investing in student parents has broader economic implications through an expanded tax base and increased number of educated professionals, including those in essential jobs like teachers, healthcare workers, scientists, engineers, and lawyers. A study of three policy options for student parents in Virginia – a comprehensive student parents support program, grant aid, and expanding on-campus childcare – found that all three programs would generate a positive return on investment through increased tax revenue and savings from public benefits programs, yielding $5.36, $1.73, and $1.24 per dollar spent, respectively (Hicks and Anderson, 2024).

Although the individual and societal benefits of higher education for student parents are promising, access to childcare is a major barrier for student parents to pursue and complete higher education. For all parents, not just student parents, childcare has become increasingly unaffordable and inaccessible. In Maryland, the average annual cost of childcare for one child is $19,877.50 and the state faces a childcare gap of 16.2 percent, which indicates that demand for childcare slots exceeds the supply (*National and State Child Care Data Overview*, 2026). On top of these challenges, student parents also must pay for tuition and other educational expenses, all while having less time to work and fewer high-wage employment options while they are earning their degree.

Investing in childcare has the potential to increase student parents' educational attainment. Adams et al. (2022) find that access to campus-based childcare is associated with a 20 percentage point increase in the probability of graduating within six years. Similarly, student parents who were able to access Childcare Access Means Parents in Schools (CCAMPIS) subsidies at a community college in New York had retention rates 20-30 percent higher and graduation rates 26 percent higher than their peers (Elkin, 2025). Additionally, some parents may want to return to school, but are limited by childcare access, and investing in more childcare programs for student parents could close that gap.

In this report, I seek to highlight the obstacles that student parents face in accessing childcare and explore policies that can help them access this essential service. My research question is twofold: a) What barriers do student parents face in accessing childcare? and b) What policies and strategies can the state of Maryland, in partnership with institutions higher education, implement to improve access to childcare for this population?

Impact of Childcare Inaccessibility on Women

The Maryland Commission for Women (MCW) is a state advisory board whose purpose is to "identify areas in our systems of laws, policies, practices, programs and procedures that impact women or girls disparately, and then to advocate strategies for addressing those concerns and making our community more equitable and inclusive" (*About the Commission*). One of their policy priorities is childcare, which disproportionately burdens women and can affect their labor force participation, educational attainment, and financial situation. They are interested in what options student parents have for childcare at public institutions of higher education in Maryland, if they face any barriers to accessing childcare, what types of support schools currently offer, and strategies or lessons from other states that Maryland could implement.

Mothers, fathers, and student parents of other gender identities alike are all faced with the challenge of identifying a childcare arrangement for their family. However, the majority of student parents are women, making this issue particularly salient for women. Nationally, 74% of student parents are women, compared to 54% of non-parenting students (Dundar, 2024). Additionally, since women have historically assumed caregiving responsibilities for their children, they are more likely to be on the margin of leaving the workforce or their higher education program to care for their children. Policies that improve access to childcare for student parents have the potential to advance the financial and educational position of women and make the state of Maryland more equitable and inclusive.

Literature Review

<u>How to Define Childcare "Access"</u>

It is first important to define "access" to childcare. This definition informs both parts of my research question about barriers to accessing childcare and policy recommendations to improve childcare access for student parents. Researchers at Child Trends created a childcare access framework that includes four dimensions: meets parents' needs, reasonable effort, supports child's development, and affordability (Hirilall et al., 2024). Within these four dimensions, there are also eight constructs that they use as indicators to assess alignment between families' preferences for childcare and their current childcare arrangements. The “meets parents’ needs” dimension includes the availability of instruction in the family’s home language, non-traditional care times (flexible scheduling or extended hours), and alignment with family beliefs, customs, and ways. The “reasonable effort” dimension includes transportation and provider type preference. The “supports child’s development” dimension includes the child’s learning and development, which encompasses the quality of instruction. Finally, the “affordability” dimension includes whether the cost of childcare is within the family’s budget and the availability of financial aid or subsidies. These dimensions and constructs can be combined with the supply of childcare slots to fully assess “access”.

This framework provides a comprehensive definition of childcare access that includes multiple factors that are important to families when making childcare arrangements. The relative importance of each of these factors differs depending on the family and their circumstances. I will apply this framework to evaluate the policy solutions that the state of Maryland and institutions of higher education can implement to improve access based on these dimensions.

What Types of Childcare Arrangements Student Parents Use

Existing research on what types of childcare arrangements student parents utilize and what factors drive their decisions can be useful in assessing preferences, supply of childcare, and barriers to certain types of childcare arrangements. Johns et al. (2023) surveyed 65 undergraduate students who are current or former teen parents at colleges and universities across the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia (DMV) area about their current childcare arrangements. They found that the most common childcare arrangements used by respondents were family (66%), the child’s other parent (52%), and childcare centers (25%). Of the student parents that were surveyed, only 8% could confirm that campus-based child care was available at their institution and none of them used it because of factors such as the high cost, lack of slots, and the centers’ inability to serve infants and toddlers.

In a similar study on the national level, Lewis and Haynes (2020) surveyed student parents from 147 different colleges and universities across the country about their experience as a student parent, childcare arrangements, and institutional policies. They found that the most common childcare arrangements among respondents were a family member or friend (40%), community-based centers (22%), and other (21%). Only 12% used home-based providers, 8% used campus-based providers, 7% used drop-in care and 2% used a nanny. Additionally, respondents indicated that cost was the most influential factor in their choice of type of childcare. Because this was a national study, their findings may be more generalizable than Johns et al. (2023), but both studies provide evidence that care from a family member or friend is the most common childcare arrangement, followed by center-based childcare. Both studies also highlight the lack of campus-based childcare centers and low take-up rate of this option.

In addition to identifying which types of childcare arrangements student parents use, it is also important to understand the factors that influence their decisions. Navarro-Cruz et al. (2023) interviewed student parents at a 4-year university in the Western U.S. to determine how student parents choose their childcare arrangements. They use an accommodation model to guide their research, which emphasizes that the process of finding childcare is about "accommodations", not "choices" because decisions are not always fully informed and depend on the individual's social and educational context. They found that childcare accommodations were influenced by respondents' class and work schedules, family financial resources, access to subsidized childcare, family beliefs and preferences, proximity to home or school, availability of slots, hours of care, and social networks. This study provides important insight into the factors that influence childcare decisions for student parents, but may not be generalizable to Maryland because they only interviewed students at one 4-year university in the Western United States, so there may be a different cultural context, childcare market, and demographic makeup of students.

Literature on the types of childcare arrangements that student parents use and the factors that influence these decisions reveal that family and friends and center-based childcare are the two most common childcare arrangements that student parents use, and their decisions are influenced by factors including cost, schedules, access to childcare subsidies, family beliefs and preferences, location, and supply of childcare. These findings suggest that although care from family and friends is the most common type of childcare arrangement among student parents, policy solutions should be tailored towards student parents who do not have family or friends that are able to watch their children and need more formal childcare (i.e. center-based, campus, and drop-in childcare).

<u>Barriers to Accessing Childcare</u>

Defining childcare "access" and exploring which types of childcare arrangements student parents use, as well as the factors that influence their decisions, are important first steps before I can identify barriers to accessing childcare for student parents. This section focuses on literature about barriers that student parents face in accessing childcare in order to answer the first part of my research question.

It is first important to get a general sense of the barriers that student parents face in accessing childcare. Adams et al. (2016) interviewed staff at programs that serve student parents in order to identify barriers to accessing childcare. They identified complex childcare needs and schedules, transportation, inadequate information about childcare options, unaffordable care, inadequate public funding, inadequate supply of care, and policy and systems design as common challenges that student parents face in accessing childcare. This study adds an interesting perspective to the conversation about barriers to childcare access because they interviewed the program practitioners instead of student parents themselves. Since these organizations work with many student parents, their perspective about the broader challenges and strategies may be more comprehensive but could lack details about the lived experience of student parents.

The high cost of childcare is a major barrier for many parents, not just students, but student parents are faced with the additional burden of paying for their education at the same time as childcare. Williams et al. (2022) calculate the affordability gap, or how much money the average student parent must come up with, after grants, scholarships, and working 10 hours a week at minimum wage, to cover the cost of higher education, including childcare. They find that there is no state where a student parent can work 10 hours a week at minimum wage and afford both tuition and childcare at a public college or university. In Maryland, the affordability gap is $22,342 per year for center-based childcare and $16,966 per year for home-based childcare. This report provides evidence that the cost of childcare for student parents is a major barrier to pursuing higher education and that it is unattainable for many student parents to pay for their degree and childcare, even while working and with the help of scholarships and grants.

Several other studies have focused specifically on barriers to accessing campus-based childcare. Miller et al. (2011) conducted a literature review, interviewed campus childcare experts and program administrators, and analyzed data from the National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers and the Department of Education. They identified inadequate supply of campus childcare, long wait lists, limited infant and toddler slots, and the lack of evening and weekend care as the most important barriers to accessing campus-based childcare. This study takes place on the national level, so it is useful in providing a broad overview of the supply and characteristics of campus-based childcare centers, as well as barriers to accessing this type of childcare.

In addition to nationwide studies, it is also useful to look at studies on campus-based childcare on the university-level. Dayne et al. (2021) surveyed 786 student parents at a California State University campus to learn about their childcare needs, barriers to the use of campus childcare, and institutional support. The university offers on campus-childcare and student-parents receive priority registration and flexible block scheduling, but student parents that were surveyed reported long wait lists, high costs compared to off-campus childcare options, and inadequate hours. They also noted that many students only learned about the on-campus childcare option after they started attending school and wished that the university was more proactive with sharing resources with student parents. This study takes place at a public university in California in the largest public university system in both the state and the country. Some of these findings may be broadly applicable to student parents in Maryland and reflect common challenges and barriers, but some may be influenced by the university scale and demographics.

The number of campus-based child care centers has been slowly declining over the past few decades and as summarized above, there are many barriers to accessing this type of care, including long wait lists, inadequate hours, and limited slots, especially for infants and toddlers. However, their location on campus and integration within the college or university provides an opportunity for policymakers to make improvements and investments into this type of childcare to make it a more accessible option for student parents. I will look specifically at the characteristics of campus-based childcare centers in Maryland later in this report.

Common themes across the literature on barriers to accessing childcare for student parents include the high cost of childcare, irregular schedules for student parents and misalignment with hours of operation for childcare centers, the limited supply of childcare slots, especially for infants and toddlers, and the lack of integration of childcare services within the university. I will explore these barriers further in the analysis of barriers section of the report.

Policy Recommendations

The literature on policy recommendations and strategies addresses many of these barriers identified in the previous section. Nzau et al. (2025) partnered with 10 community colleges across the country who either currently offer childcare services to student parents or who are interested in expanding their support services for student parents to compare their approaches and provide policy recommendations for community colleges to improve access to childcare for student parents. Through site visits and interviews with college leadership, staff, and student parents, they describe how each college approaches the design and funding of their childcare center, but emphasize that there is no one size fits all solution for childcare for student parents. They provide recommendations for community colleges to improve childcare access for parenting student based on their research, including integrating childcare into strategic plans, diversifying the types of childcare arrangements offered, collecting data to identify and support parenting students, integrating childcare coordination with campus support services, and tapping into diverse funding streams. This study only included community colleges, but some of these recommendations may be applicable to 4-year universities as well.

Davis and Baker (2025) provide state and federal policy recommendations to address the childcare needs of student parents that are informed by the same study of 10 community colleges from the Nzau et al. (2025) study. On the state level, they first recommend coordinating child care provision in higher education, which includes financial and logistic support from state higher education agencies, incentivizing colleges to open and operate childcare centers, and designating staff to serve as a liaison between student parents and campus childcare resources. They also recommend that states provide more flexibility in their state Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) programs and prioritize student parents to receive childcare subsidies. Palmer (2024) highlights Georgia, Oregon, and Washington as states that have amended their state CCDF guidelines to consider student parents as a priority group, eliminate the work hours requirement for student parents, and broaden the definition of “approved educational activity” for eligibility to include the pursuit of an associate’s degree or and part-time students.

Additionally, Davis and Baker (2025) recommend that states mandate data collection on student parent status, which is recommended in many of the other reports in this literature review as well

(Lewis and Haynes, 2020; Johns et al., 2023; Williams, et al., 2022). Minnesota and Illinois are examples of two states that have recently passed legislation that require public institutions of higher education in the state to collect data on students' parental status in order to identify the number of student parents at each institution and better understand their needs (Palmer, 2024). Other state recommendations they provide include offering guidance and licensure flexibility to public colleges and universities that want to provide campus-based childcare, facilitating partnerships between colleges and child care resource and referral networks, funding state postsecondary child care grant programs, and connecting state pre-K and afterschool programs with colleges.

On the federal level, Davis and Baker (2025) recommend that the federal government increase funding for the Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools (CCAMPIS) grant program and simplify the application process for colleges and universities, which is another recommendation that appears in many other reports (Williams et al., 2022; Miller et al., 2011, Johns et al., 2023). They also recommend increasing CCBDG funding for state CCDF programs. Additionally, Palmer (2024) highlights a new partnership between the National Head Start Association and the Association of Community College Trustees, which could bring Head Start programs to community colleges campuses using existing federal funding.

Literature on strategies and policies to improve childcare access for student parents identified mandating data collection on student parents, increasing federal and state funding for childcare subsidies for student parents, partnerships between existing early childhood programs and colleges, and coordinating childcare services within the state higher education agency and colleges and universities as potential policy solutions. I will further explore these ideas in the case studies section of this report, where I will focus on a few states, colleges, and universities that have implemented policies to help student parents access childcare.

Methods

I used a mixed-methodology approach to answer the two research questions: a) What barriers do student parents face in accessing childcare? and b) What policies and strategies can the state of Maryland, in partnership with institutions higher education, implement to improve access to childcare for this population?

Barriers to Accessing Childcare

The first step to determine the barriers that student parents face in accessing childcare is to review the literature on this topic. Based on the local, state, and national studies on barriers to accessing childcare for student parents from the literature review, I identified and summarized the common barriers to childcare access faced by student parents and include more information about each one.

In addition to identifying barriers to accessing childcare through the literature review, I also conducted interviews with student parents at public colleges and universities in Maryland. These interviews allowed me to connect with the population that is directly impacted by this issue and corroborate the findings from the literature review, as well as identify any specific local barriers that student parents in Maryland face. The interviews include open ended questions about student parents' childcare arrangements, perceptions of support from their institution, and personal experience with barriers to accessing childcare. I interviewed 3 student parents at two public institutions in the state, which were identified through my social and professional networks and by reaching out to institution staff who work directly with student parents. I intended to interview student parents at a variety of public colleges and universities across the state, including 4-year colleges and community colleges, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and predominantly white institutions (PWIs), and small and large schools, but was limited by my connections. This is not a representative sample of student parents in Maryland, but their insights still provide helpful anecdotal evidence about barriers to accessing childcare. Any personally identifying information about the students remains confidential.

I supplemented my interviews with student parents with interviews with staff who work directly with student parents (e.g. CCAMPIS advisor, student affairs, advising, etc.), who provided insights into the overall patterns related to childcare access for student parents that they have observed through their work.

<u>Policy Recommendations and Strategies to Improve Childcare Access</u>
In order to contextualize the policy recommendations, I first provided some background on the policies that are available to helps students parents in Maryland access childcare at the federal, state, and institution levels. This involved researching and summarizing federal, state, and institution policies based on agency websites, legislation, and institution websites.

I also examined campus-based childcare options for student parents by conducting a scan of campus-based childcare centers at public institutions in Maryland. I surveyed the existing centers about their characteristics, including the hours of operation, ages accepted, number of slots, tuition rate, whether they offer any scholarships for student parents, what percentage of the parents served by the center are students at the affiliated university, and whether they employ students at the center. I reached out to campus-based childcare centers through email and sent them a confidential survey to ensure anonymity of the staff.

Next, I explored policies at other institutions and states through case studies, which were chosen based on their similarity to Maryland, type and variety of policies provided, and success of the programs. Information about the case studies was gathered through institution and state websites and interviews with program administrators.

I then evaluated the policy options from the case studies based on the Child Trends Access Framework identified in the literature review, the financial impact for the state, whether they address the barriers to childcare access for student parents, and their political feasibility. Finally, I provided policy recommendations on the state level to the Maryland Commission for Women, which were informed by the evaluation of the policy options.

Analysis: Barriers to Accessing Childcare

Findings from the Literature Review

I identified four common barriers to childcare access for student parents in the literature review: high costs, irregular schedules, limited slots, especially for infants and toddlers, and a lack of integration within the institution/higher education system. In this section, I will include more information about each one.

High Costs

The first barrier to childcare access for student parents is the high cost of childcare. High childcare costs are not unique to student parents, they affect all types of parents looking for childcare, but student parents are faced with these extreme costs at the same time that they are trying to pay for their education and usually not earning much income.

The average annual cost of childcare for one child is Maryland is $19,877.50, which is more expensive than in-state tuition at every public college and university in Maryland (*National and State Child Care Data Overview*, 2026). Childcare tuition in Maryland is also higher than the national average annual cost of childcare per child of $13,218. Williams et al. (2022) calculated the affordability gap, or how much money the average student parent must come up with, after grants, scholarships, and working 10 hours a week at minimum wage, to cover the cost of higher education, including childcare and found that it was $22,342 per year in Maryland for center-based care, which is higher than the national average of $19,298.

Irregular Schedules

Another barrier is the irregular class schedules that student parents have, which don't typically align with the "traditional" hours that most childcare providers are open. Student parents may need to take early morning or evening classes, or in the case students studying to become healthcare professionals, complete clinical rotations, which generally isn't aligned with when childcare is available.

In addition to needing more morning or evening hours, student parents may not need full-time childcare five days a week. Many students, especially those who commute to campus, try to stack their classes and other commitments on a few days of the week in order to reduce the time spent commuting and make their schedule easier to manage. Student parents may only need childcare 2 or 3 days of the week while they are in class, but not all childcare arrangements offer part-time care.

Limited Slots

Even if student parents are able to find a childcare arrangement within their budget that fits their schedule, childcare slots are in limited supply, especially for infants and toddlers. This is part of a national trend and early childhood systems-level issue that reflects the high cost of operating childcare centers, early educator staffing shortages, lower teacher to child ratios for younger children, and a lack of public investment in the issue. This is another barrier that affects all types of parents, not just students, but it makes it harder for student parents to enroll in formal childcare programs. Limited slots can create long waitlists that parents have to get on months or even years in advance, which can be extremely frustrating.

The Bipartisan Policy Center estimates that the number of children ages 5 and under needing childcare in Maryland is 305,210, while there are only 255,490 slots, leading to a childcare gap of 49,430 slots, or 16.2% (*National and State Child Care Data Overview*, 2026).

Lack of Integration Within the Institution/Higher Education System

The final barrier identified in the literature review is the lack of integration of childcare resources and programs within the institution or broader higher education system. Very few institutions have a dedicated office, staff member, or even a website with childcare resources to help student parents access information about and assistance with childcare.

<u>Interviews With Student Parents and Institution Staff</u>

Interviews With Student Parents

I interviewed three student parents at two different institutions across the state of Maryland in order to learn more about their lived experience with accessing childcare and the barriers that they faced. These interviewees were identified through personal connections and referrals from staff that work with student parents. This is not a representative sample of student parents across the state, but their experience and insights provide anecdotal evidence about childcare access for student parents in Maryland. Personally identifiable information about these students, including their institutions, remains confidential.

I asked the student parents that I interviewed the following questions:

1. Tell me about the childcare arrangement that you currently use.
2. What factors influenced your decision about your childcare arrangement?
3. What are the biggest barriers to accessing childcare that you have faced/are facing?
4. Does your institution offer any programs, support services, or referrals for student parents to help with childcare access?
5. What policies (on the state or institution level) would have helped you access childcare?

The first student parent I interviewed is a graduate student at a 4-year university. They have one child and they are able to take classes and work remotely for the most part, so they are the primary caretaker of their child. When they have to be on campus, they rely on family who live nearby to watch their child. This arrangement was influenced by logistics, desire to stay home with their child, and cost. They noted that they looked at the campus-based childcare center at their institution but could not find any information online about the cost and noticed the lack of infant slots. They also noticed the lack of institution-level resources about childcare, but noted that their professors, classmates, and department were very supportive of student parents. They suggested more formal channels of information sharing, such as a babysitting listserv, priority placement and scholarships for student parents at campus-based childcare centers, and dedicated study rooms with play areas for children.

The second student parent I interviewed is an undergraduate student at a community college. They have three children, one of them is young enough for childcare and the other two are older. They are able to use CCAMPIS grants and the Maryland Childcare Scholarship program to pay for childcare for their child at a center near their home. The primary barrier to childcare that they faced was high cost, but the CCAMPIS grant and Maryland Childcare Scholarship made it so that they could afford to send their child to childcare, which they expressed immense gratitude for and said that they would not have been able to go back to school without it. Their institution has a lot of resources for student parents, including the CCAMPIS grants, a student parent program, scholarships, emergency funding, a community space with a playroom, and a market on campus where students can pick up free food, diapers, wipes, formula, and other essential supplies. They feel extremely lucky to have these resources and very well supported by their institution, which allows them to focus on their education without worrying about other stressors. They support the idea of a drop-in childcare program on campus and said that it would be helpful for student parents to have childcare while they are on campus for classes, particularly in the evenings, and would give them peace of mind knowing that their children were close by. They also thought it would be beneficial for students studying early childhood education to gain experience working with young children.

The third student parent I interviewed is also an undergraduate student at a community college. They one child, and they are also able to use CCAMPIS grants to pay for childcare at a center near their home. They attend the same institution as the second student parent I interviewed, so they are also able to access the same resources offered by their institution, which they were also very grateful for. They are able to take most of their classes online, which gives them more flexibility and said that it would be much harder for student parents who had to be on campus more, particularly for evening classes. The primary barrier they faced in accessing childcare was financial, and they took on more classes this semester and worked as many hours as possible to finish their degree quicker and for childcare and their family's other expenses. They said that they would like other institutions to look for and seek to understand student parents on their campuses, coordinate their services, and offer childcare scholarships and more resources like their institution so that more student parents can finish their education.

Generally, all three student parents faced cost and information barriers related to childcare. The high cost of childcare influenced their decisions about which childcare arrangements to use and made it difficult to access more formal childcare arrangements. The student parents that were able to access childcare resources like scholarships, space and community on campus, and essential supplies, were extremely grateful for the support and were disappointed to hear that there weren't more institutions doing the same things. It was clear that support from the institution made a massive difference in student parents' stress levels, educational performance, and feelings of belonging.

Interviews With College and University Staff
Additionally, I supplemented these interviews with interviews with staff who work directly with student parents at three other institutions, who were able to share more about the general patterns and themes surrounding barriers to childcare access that they have observed through their work with many student parents.

I asked them the following questions:

1. What are the most commonly used childcare arrangements among the students that you work with?
2. What support services for student parents does your institution offer?
3. What are the main barriers to childcare access for student parents that you have observed through your work?
4. What ideas do you have for policies and programs to better support student parents with childcare access?

All three staff members shared that most student parents tended to use more informal childcare arrangements, such as family, friend, and neighbor care when they needed someone to watch their children during class or other on-campus commitments. However, some student parents are able to access more formal childcare arrangements, particularly with the help of childcare subsidy programs like the Maryland Childcare Scholarship program and CCAMPIS grants. Two of their institutions have campus-based childcare centers, the third one previously did but it recently closed due to funding challenges. They all also have lactation rooms, which provides a private space for mothers to breastfeed or pump. Two of the institutions are CCAMPIS grantees, which allows them to issue CCAMPIS scholarships and employ a CCAMPIS advisor. Both CCAMPIS institutions also have a basic needs hub, where students can receive free diapers, formula, and wipes, in addition to food and other essential items. Both CCAMPIS institutions also have family study rooms where student parents can bring their children to play while they study and get work done.

They all noted high costs, long waitlists for childcare at centers, and irregular schedules as the primary barriers for student parents to access childcare. They also emphasized the need to break the stigma surrounding parenting students and desire to make the campus community more welcoming and flexible for student parents.

Some policies that they supported included drop-in childcare on campus, more part-time options and broader age ranges for campus-based centers, partnerships across offices that work with student parents within the institution, more family-friendly language across campus and acknowledgement that student parents are a part of the institution, integration of childcare services through the financial aid process, requiring schools to collect data on student parents, and direct funding for childcare with no strings attached. One advisor also commented on Title IX, which protects pregnant and parenting students against discrimination, but could, in their opinion be expanded to be more holistic of student parent experience.

Analysis: Policy Recommendations and Strategies to Improve Childcare Access

Summary of Current Childcare Programs Available to Student Parents in Maryland

It is first useful to examine current childcare programs that are available to student parents in Maryland. In this section, I will identify and summarize the current federal, state, and institution-level childcare programs that are available to student parents in Maryland, which will help provide context for the policy recommendations.

CCAMPIS Federal Grant

First, the Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools (CCAMPIS) program is a federal grant awarded to institutions to support "the participation of low-income parents in postsecondary education through the provision of campus-based childcare services" (*Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools Program*, 2025). Institutions are eligible to apply for CCAMPIS funding if the total amount of all federal Pell grant funds awarded to students enrolled at the institution for the previous fiscal year is greater than or equal to $350,000 and in 2023, the average CCAMPIS award was $317,108. Institutions can use CCAMPIS funding for direct child care services or to contract for the provision of child care services (on or off-campus, as long as the center is accredited), before and after school services (aka. wraparound care), staff positions to assist student parents with navigating child care services, and other support services related to child care access such as workshops and supplies (Edgerton, 2023)

Although the CCAMPIS program can be extremely helpful for student parents who are able to access it, it lacks flexibility and is not universally available. In order to receive CCAMPIS childcare subsidies and support services, students must be Pell grant eligible, in addition to any institution-specific requirements such as GPA or credit requirements. Additionally, student parents are not able to receive CCAMPIS funding directly and it must instead go through their accredited childcare provider, which limits more informal childcare avenues such as babysitters or family, friend, or neighbor (FFN) care. Because the grant is awarded to institutions, not individuals, student parents can only access CCAMPIS funding if their school is awarded a grant, which limits the proportion of students who are able to participate. Six institutions in Maryland – Bowie State University, Frederick Community College, Hagerstown Community College, Howard Community College, Towson University, and Wor-Wic Community College – were awarded CCAMPIS grants in the most recent grant cycle (*Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools Program*, 2025).

In addition, funding for CCAMPIS may not be sustainable. CCAMPIS grants are based on a four-year cycle and provide funding through the federal fiscal year from October 1 to September

30 for each of the four years of the award. However, the most recent grant application period was in 2023 (for grants lasting through the September 30, 2028) and the Department of Education did not reopen grant applications in 2024 or 2025. The program was eliminated in President Trump's FY26 budget proposal based on the logic that "subsidizing child care for parents in college is unaffordable and duplicative", but it was included in the final FY26 appropriations legislation, which was signed by the president (Vought, 2025). However, the program is still under threat moving forward.

Federal and State Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit

Additionally, the federal government and the state of Maryland both offer a version of the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC), a tax credit that helps working parents offset the cost of childcare expenses. For the 2025 tax year, the federal CDCTC is equal to 20-35% (credit rate phases down as income increases) of a taxpayer's childcare expenses, which are capped at $3,000 for one dependent child and $6,000 for two or more dependent children (*The Ins and Outs of the CDCTC*, 2026). It is also important to note that this credit is not refundable, so it can only reduce a taxpayer's tax liability – if the amount of the credit is larger than someone's tax liability, they will not be refunded the difference. Additionally, childcare expenses cannot exceed earned income for the purposes of the calculation of the credit, although there is an exception for full-time students (*Topic no. 602*, 2026). This means that the maximum value of the CDCTC is $600 for taxpayers with one dependent child and $1,200 for taxpayers with two or more dependent children. The federal CDCTC was permanently expanded under the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act", which will increase the maximum credit percentage to 50% starting in the 2026 tax year, making the maximum value of the credit $1,050 for taxpayers with one dependent child and $2,100 for taxpayers with two or more dependent children (Crandall-Hollick, 2025).

Maryland's CDCTC is equal to the lesser of 32% of the federal CDCTC or the state income tax and the credit percentage decreases as income increases (*MD Code, Tax—General, § 10-716. Child and dependent care tax credit*). It is refundable for taxpayers with an adjusted gross income below $50,000 or $75,000 for individual or married filers, respectively.

While these tax credits provide some financial assistance for eligible families, their value is relatively small compared to the average annual cost of childcare, which was $19,877.50 in Maryland in 2025 (*National and State Child Care Data Overview*, 2026). Additionally, since the federal CDCTC is nonrefundable, it favors higher earners who are more likely to have tax liability.

Head Start

Head Start is a federal childcare program that provides free childcare and other family support services to low-income children and their families (*Head Start Services*, 2025). Head Start preschool is available for children ages 3 to 5, and Early Head Start is available for children ages birth to three, as well as expectant families. Head Start programs can be delivered in center-based, home-based, or family child care settings, which gives families flexibility with their childcare arrangement. Families are eligible for Head Start if they have incomes at or below the federal poverty line or receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) services. Head Start is federally funded through the Department of Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, but is administered locally through schools, nonprofits, and other community organizations. Currently, there are 163 Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Maryland that serve 7,330 children (*Head Start Program Facts*, 2025; *Maryland Child Care Mapping)*

Student parents may be able to access Head Start program if they are eligible and there is a program near their home or school. The Kids on Campus project brings together the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) and the National Head Start Association (NHSA) to increase the number of Head Start programs on community college campuses (*Community & Technical College Campuses*, 2024). Howard Community College is the only college in Maryland with a Head Start program co-located at their campus-based childcare center, but Allegany College also has a Head Start program operated by the Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission that is adjacent to their Cumberland campus, which many students take advantage of (*Off Campus Childcare Services*). Coppin State University's campus childcare center is an Early Head Start program as well (*Child Development Center of Goodwill*).

Maryland Child Care Scholarship Program

The Maryland Childcare Scholarship (CCS) program provides childcare subsidies to help eligible families pay for childcare. Funding for this program comes from federal discretionary funding from the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCBDG), as well as mandatory and matching Child Care Entitlement to States (CCES) funding, which is combined into a block grant for states called the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) (Daugherty, 2025). CCDF is managed at the federal level through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, but is administered through a state "lead agency" that is able to design their own childcare subsidy program that complies with federal eligibility and quality guidelines, as well as any additional state guidelines they decide to add.

In Maryland, the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Early Childhood is the "lead agency" that administers CCDF funding through the Maryland CCS program (*Child Care Scholarship Program*). To be eligible for the Maryland CCS, all parents in the household must be Maryland resident who are working or in an approved training program or school, meet the income guidelines or receive TCA or SNAP, provide proof of identify for all household members, and their children needing care must be U.S. citizens. Child care scholarships are paid directly to the child care provider and are based on a state scholarship rate, which is determined by a state market rate study, the region, type of childcare provider, and age of the child. Families are also required to pay a family co-payment, which is determined by family income and number of children, as well as any remaining amount not covered by the scholarship rate. Additionally, these scholarships can only be used at childcare providers that participate in the Maryland EXCELS program, the state quality ratings program.

Typically, child care scholarships would be available to student parents in Maryland, but the Maryland CCS program has been on a temporary freeze since May 1, 2025, and has not issued any new scholarships to families (*Child Care Scholarship Enrollment Freeze*). According to the Maryland State Department of Education Division of Early Childhood website, the freeze is due to a huge increase in demand for the program and a lack of resources to support this increase, meaning that the program has reached it "maximum budget capacity". Families with existing child care scholarships will continue to receive them, but new families that are eligible for the program will be placed on a waitlist until more money is appropriated for the program.

Scan of Campus-Based Childcare Centers

In addition to the various federal and state childcare programs available to student parents, some individual institutions in Maryland have implemented policies to support student parents. Many institutions have campus-based childcare centers that are conveniently located on campus and open to college students, faculty, staff, and sometimes community members. While campus-based centers provide an incredible opportunity to serve student parents, they are often underutilized by student parents due to high costs, limited slots, and misalignment with schedules.

I first conducted a scan of public institutions of higher education in Maryland to determine which schools currently offer campus-based childcare centers (See Appendix A). This information was gathered through research on institutions' websites, communication with staff at individual schools, and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) survey from the National Center for Education Statistics, which includes a question about whether the school has a campus-based childcare center.

Currently, half (14 out of 28) of public institutions of higher education in Maryland have campus-based childcare centers, which includes 8 community colleges and 6 four-year universities.[1] Additionally, 4 institutions previously had a campus-based childcare center, but it is now closed, primarily due to funding constraints. This follows a national trend of campus-based childcare centers closing, particularly after the pandemic. Nationally, the number of institutions who reported having on-campus childcare decreased by 24% between 2012 and 2021 (Miller, 2023).

Next, I was interested in the characteristics of the existing campus-based childcare centers at public institutions in Maryland in order to evaluate how accessible they are for student parents. I sent out a survey to each of the campus childcare centers that I previously identified and asked

[1] I did not include the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science in my scan because it is a non-degree granting research institution and only offers graduate studies through joint programs with other USM institutions. I also did not include the University of Maryland Global Campus because it is an online model. Neither institution has a campus-based childcare center.

them about the characteristics of the center, including the hours of operation, ages accepted, number of slots, tuition rate, whether they offer any scholarships for student parents, what percentage of the parents served by the center are students at the affiliated university, and whether they employ students at the center. I received 6 responses out of the 14 centers that were sent the survey. For those who didn't respond to the survey, I filled in as much information as I could find from each center's website. This information is summarized in Appendix B.

Generally, I found that many campus-based childcare centers are making efforts to support student parents through tuition discounts and flexible schedule options. Tuition is expensive at these centers, but it is also extremely expensive to operate a childcare center and many centers are struggling to remain financially viable and stay open. About half of the campus-based childcare centers accept infants and toddlers, the rest are primarily for children ages 2 to 5 years. Many centers also accept Maryland CCS, which is helpful for parents who are able to access the program. A few programs also employ students, which is beneficial for staffing and for them to gain early childhood education experience.

Other Institution-Level Policies

In addition to having campus-based childcare centers, some individual institutions offer other programs and resources to support student parents, including family study rooms, childcare referral services, lactation rooms, and CCAMPIS grants.

One of the main takeaways from my interviews with staff members who work with student parents is that the ability to drive action on the institution level depends on if there is a champion for student parents – this could be a CCAMPIS advisor, a current or former student parent, or someone who interacts with student parents regularly in their work. Without a dedicated champion to advocate for student parents, their needs often go ignored by the institution.

Although these existing federal, state, and institution-level programs are a great start, many of them face funding uncertainty, are not broadly available, and are insufficient to meet the needs of student parents. Further policy action at the state level is necessary to meet the specific needs of student parents at public colleges and universities in Maryland.

<u>Case Studies</u>

Maryland can draw inspiration from other institutions and states that have implemented creative policies to help student parents access childcare. This section includes three case studies: Mount Wachusett Community College in Massachusetts, the University of Wisconsin, and the state of Minnesota, which provide examples of various policies to help student parents access childcare and represent different levels of governance (i.e. community college, state flagship university, and state-level). Maryland is the most comparable to Massachusetts in terms of size, geographic location, political affiliation, and demographics, but it is also similar to Wisconsin and Minnesota. Notably, Maryland is more racially diverse than all three states.

1) Mount Wachusett Community College

Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) is a small community college with under 5,000 students in Gardner, Massachusetts. They offer a wide variety of associate degree and certificate programs in subjects including engineering, healthcare, education, computer science, and business. Information about their programs for student parents was obtained through an interview with Ann Reynolds, the CCAMPIS Advisor at Mount Wachusett Community College.

The first program that has historically been available for students at MWCC is CCAMPIS grants. Pell-grant eligible students could apply for CCAMPIS subsidies to use at a licensed child care provider or for public schools' before and after care programs. However, MWCC's CCAMPIS grant expired on September 30, 2025 and they were not able to reapply for funding as the grant applications did not reopen in 2025. Reynolds was able to secure funding from the college for the rest of the 2025-2026 academic year for students who were receiving CCAMPIS subsidies before they expired, but funding for future years is still up in the air.

Additionally, MWCC offers a drop-in childcare program called Child Watch. This program is ideal for student parents who need short-term, flexible childcare in order to attend class and meetings or need backup childcare in case of school closures, breaks, or last-minute emergencies. This program is only available for MWCC students, not staff, faculty, or community members, and it is completely free. They accept children ages 10 months to 13 years and parents can either schedule their slots in advance or drop in day of, as long as they have filled out the paperwork and attended the orientation. The program is held in a previously unused room in a building on campus and is staffed by work-study students. Over time, they were able to expand to a larger room in the building and hire more work-study students. They also recently hired a full time Child Watch manager to oversee scheduling, staff, and to be able to take in more children. In addition, they have a "community closet" in the space, where student parents are able to access resources like diapers, clothing, school, supplies, books, crafts, and birthday supplies. The program is not an officially licensed childcare center, so parents do have to stay on campus and be available to come back to change their child's diaper. Reynolds worked with the college legal counsel to figure out liability and licensing concerns and was able to model the program based on the campus fitness center's drop-in childcare program.

Another creative option that MWCC uses is "Friends, Family, and Neighbor Dollars". This idea started during the pandemic when childcare providers and schools were shut down, and the school realized that they needed to switch gears to help student parents stay in school. CCAMPIS program officers allowed MWCC and the nearby UMass Amherst to use CCAMPIS funds to pay for family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) care for one year. This is a more informal childcare option, but it is widely utilized by parents, and this program allowed them to compensate their family or friends for their time. After the temporary CCAMPIS approval, Reynolds worked with college administrators to use emergency funding for FFN dollars for the next year, and then later, she received a small budget to support this program for about 6 or 7 students to pay a family member, friend, or trusted neighbor $15 an hour to care for their child(ren).

Finally, they have a campus-based childcare center, the Garrison Center for Early Childhood Education, that uses Head Start funding to offer free preschool for children ages 3-5. Head Start programs must be administered through an authorized organization, so the Head Start program at the Garrison Center for Early Childhood is managed by Making Opportunities Count, Inc., a local nonprofit. Families who are eligible for Head Start receive free childcare at the Garrison Center for Early Childhood from 9am-1pm, but children must attend the full day. Families must pay out of pocket for the rest of the day or use CCAMPIS grants (when they were previously offered), state vouchers, or contracted slots – a process known as "blending and braiding" funding. In addition, early childhood education students are able to complete classroom observations at the Garrison Center for Early Childhood, which provides an additional benefit for the institution.

2) The University of Wisconsin, Madison

The University of Wisconsin, Madison (UW-Madison) is the state flagship university of Wisconsin, located in the state's capital, with over 50,000 students. Information about their programs for student parents was obtained through the website for the Office of Child Care and Family Resources and emails with program staff.

The first resource available to student parents at UW-Madison is the Office of Child Care and Family Resources, a coordinated office within the university that is dedicated to expanding access to high quality childcare programs so that UW-Madison families can succeed academically and professionally (*Office of Child Care and Family Resources*). They offer a variety of services, including financial support for child care costs, parent classes and events, early childhood professional development and grants, and a list and map of child care centers near campus, including UW-Madison campus childcare centers, UW-Madison network child care centers, family child care programs, back-up care, and school aged care.

All of the other resources related to child care and family resources at the university, including resources about finding childcare, university policies, lactation spaces on campus, student parent organizations, and newsletters, are centrally located on the office's website, which makes it easy for student parents to find information about what support services are available to them.

One of the programs offered by the Office of Child Care and Family Resources is the Child Care Tuition Assistance Program, which is a scholarship to help UW-Madison student parents cover the cost of childcare expenses. Eligibility for CCTAP is based on enrollment status, credit load, income, and duration of childcare. Once their application is approved, student parents will receive an award amount for the semester and must agree on a payment plan with their provider to cover the remaining balance. Similar to state CCDF programs, the CCTAP award is paid directly to a licensed childcare provider and does not go through the parent(s).

Another program that they offer is KidsKare hourly childcare, which is a drop-in childcare program available to UW-Madison students, faculty, and staff. Their website states that "hourly/back-up care is a good option for unexpected, short-term, or occasional child care needs", such as when a family's regular childcare provider is ill or unavailable or if they need additional hours of childcare to meet the needs of work or family (*KidsKare: Hourly/Back-Up Care*). They partner with a licensed child care facility, Little Chicks Learning Academy, to administer the KidsKare program, and they serve children ages 6 weeks through 4 years. KidsKare is free for UW-Madison CCTAP-eligible student parents for up to 50 hours each semester, $5 per hour for non-CCTAP eligible student parents for up to 50 hours per semester, and $5 per hour for faculty and staff parents for up to 30 hours per semester in the fall and spring semesters only (student parents are able to continue to use this service through the summer). After the allotted KidsKare hours are used, parents may continue to pay for additional hours at the regular hourly rate ($12-14 per hour). Parents must apply and be approved for the program and make reservations in advance in order to use the services.

3) Minnesota

The final case study is the state of Minnesota, whose legislature has passed multiple pieces of legislation to support student parents in the state. Minnesota is one of five states (others include California, Illinois, Oregon, and Texas) that have passed legislation requiring public institutions of higher education in the state to collect data on the parenting status of their students in order to improve support services and resources. The Minnesota legislature passed HF 4024 in 2024, which requires institutions of higher education to establish a process for collecting data on the parenting status of each enrolled student by 2026 (HF 4024, 2024). This will help institutions and the Office of Higher Education identify the number and demographics of parenting students on their campuses and develop policies to better support them.

HF 4024 also required institutions of higher education in Minnesota to designate at least one employee to act as a college navigator for parenting students. The navigator must provide students with information about support services and other resources available to students at the institution, including parenting and childcare resources. Both of these policies are a step towards increased coordination regarding childcare access for student parents at the institution and state levels.

In addition, Minnesota has two state grant programs dedicated to supporting student parents: the Postsecondary Child Care Grant and Student Parent Supports Initiative. Both grants are managed by Minnesota Office of Higher Education. The Postsecondary Child Care Grant is awarded directly to student parents to help offset the cost of existing out-of-pocket childcare expenses (*Postsecondary Child Care Grant*, 2025). Institutions of higher education must opt in to the program in order for student parents who attend to be eligible for the grant, and the majority of institutions in the state have opted in. The grant is awarded and administered by campus financial aid offices. Student parents can apply online and eligibility is based on enrollment status, academic standing, the childcare schedule, the student's student aid index, and any other child care assistance that the student parent receives. The maximum award amount is $6,500 per eligible child per 9-month academic year.

The Student Parent Supports Initiative is an institution-level grant for postsecondary institutions, professional organizations, and community-based organizations to develop and implement services and programs to support student parents across the state (*Student Parent Support Initiative*, 2025). Eligible services include costs related to the startup of on-campus childcare, program development, evaluation and data collection, scholarships, direct financial assistance for childcare expenses, and basic needs support. The Student Parent Supports Initiative follows a similar model to the federal CCAMPIS grant, so it does not go directly to student parents, but they are able to benefit if their institution or a neighboring organization is awarded the funding. In FY24, there were 12 grantees.

Evaluation of Policy Options

In this section, I will evaluate the policy options from the case studies based on the following criteria in order to inform the policy recommendations:

a) The Child Trends access framework identified in the literature review, which includes four dimensions:
    i. Meets parents' needs
    ii. Reasonable effort
    iii. Supports child's development
    iv. Affordability
b) The financial impact for the state, which includes potential funding sources, such as federal, state, local, and private funding, based on the examples from the case studies. Additionally, I provide cost estimates where information is available. While the cost of these options varies and may be substantial, there are also numerous potential benefits, including boosting retention and graduation rates, attracting more diverse types of students, and creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment for student parents.
c) Whether the policy addresses the barriers to childcare access for student parents identified earlier in the report: high costs, irregular schedules, limited slots, and lack of integration within the institution/higher education system.

d) The political feasibility of the policy, considering Maryland's political context.

The policies from the case studies generally fall into five buckets: drop-in childcare, Head Start partnerships, mandating data collection, direct funding, and coordination at the institution and/or higher education system level.

1. *Drop-In Childcare*

   The first category of policies is drop-in childcare, which refers to hourly childcare that parents can use for short durations, including during class, meetings, in case of last-minute emergencies, or when regular childcare arrangements fall through. Examples include the Child Watch program at MWCC and KidsKare at UW-Madison.

   a) Access Framework

      i. Meets parents' needs: Drop-in childcare is one of the policy options that provides the most flexibility for parents. Due to the nature of students' class schedules and other commitments, student parents may not need full-time childcare, 5 days a week. This option addresses the barrier of irregular schedules and allows them to utilize childcare on a short-term, as needed basis. For example, the MWCC Child Watch program caters to their students' schedules opens at 7:45am in order for parents to be able to make it to an 8am class. KidsKare is open from 9am-4pm M-F and most Saturdays during the fall and spring semesters, which provides additional flexibility. If drop-in childcare programs were open during evening hours, it would provide additional flexibility for students who take classes in the evening, but that may be limited by available staff.

ii. Reasonable effort: Drop-in childcare is conveniently located on campus (ex. Child Watch is located in an unused room in a building on MWCC's campus) or nearby (ex. KidsKare is located at a third party provider in Madison), which makes it easy for student parents to drop their child(ren) off while they are on campus for classes or other commitments. There are some administrative burdens for parents, including waivers and other paperwork, attending an orientation, and scheduling slots in advance, but these steps are typical of other formal childcare arrangements and are necessary for the program to run smoothly on the school/provider's side.

iii. Supports child' development: If the drop-in childcare program is through a third-party provider, like with the KidsKare program, the center is licensed and accredited, which ensures that they follow state safety and quality guidelines. When the school operates the drop-in childcare program, like with the Child Watch program, it may or may not be a licensed childcare facility. However, the school can take steps to ensure that the program supports early childhood development. For example, at Child Watch, they hired a manager who was a former early childhood teacher with years of experience, hire early childhood work study students to staff the center, who are taking courses on child development, and follow state safety guidelines, including teacher-child ratios.

iv. Affordability: This option is extremely affordable – in both of the examples, it is free of cost to student parents (with a cap of 50 hours per semester at KidsKare). Based on available funding, schools could choose to implement a sliding scale or co-pay, but it is important to keep the rates fairly low in order for this model to truly be accessible.

b) Financial Impact

i. The Child Watch drop-in childcare program at MWCC has been funded through a mix of CCAMPIS funding and local grants, with recent funding from the college to supplement the loss of CCAMPIS funding. The program is staffed by federal work study students, which reduces labor costs by tapping into a federal funding stream. The KidsKare drop-in childcare program at UW-Madison is a program of the Office of Child Care and Family Resources, which is funded through a mix of funding from the university, private donors, and previously federal CCAMPIS grants.

   ii. Using a combination of funding sources for drop-in childcare, including local grants, university funding, private funding federal CCAMPIS grants (if they reopen) seems appropriate in order to make these programs successful. Staffing the program with federal work study students is also an innovative way to cut costs and help students studying early childhood education gain hands on experience. This is also a great opportunity for public-private partnerships between the state and private donors or organizations.

c) Addresses Barriers

   i. Drop-in childcare directly addresses the high costs barrier by providing a free (or low-cost) childcare program for student parents on or nearby campus, the irregular schedules barrier by providing a flexible hourly childcare option that works with a variety of different class schedules, and the limited slots barrier by creating a new childcare program exclusively for student parents to use at a convenient location.

d) Political Feasibility

   i. This option may be less politically feasible because it requires more funding and there may be concerns about liability, licensing, and space.

Staff at several schools in Maryland expressed interest in drop-in childcare during our interviews but faced legal barriers and liability concerns from administrators. Reynolds worked with MWCC's legal counsel to address liability concerns, and they were able to model the program on the drop-in childcare program at the campus gym. Additionally, they require parents to attend and orientation, sign a waiver, and stay on campus while their children are being cared for. UW-Madison contracts with a third-party provider, which solves some of the legal concerns from the school. Schools in Maryland that are interested in implementing drop-in childcare will have to receive approval from their school's legal counsel and understand Maryland childcare licensure requirements (and exemptions) in order to implement a successful drop-in childcare program.

2. *Head Start Partnerships with Campus-Based Centers*

The next policy is partnerships between Head Start and campus-based childcare centers. MWCC's Garrison Center for Early Childhood is an example of this policy in action.

a) Access Framework

   i. Meets parents' needs: Because Head Start programs are administered on the local level, they are designed to according to community needs based on a community assessment, which would help tailor the program to meet the needs of student parents and the larger campus community (*Head Start Services*, 2025). Head Start can be full-time or part-time, depending on the location and funding.

   ii. Reasonable effort: Partnerships between Head Start and campus-based childcare centers would provide families with access to high-quality childcare on campus, which is convenient for student parents to use while they are attending classes, studying, or working.

   iii. Supports child's development: Head Start programs are designed to support child development through research-based, developmentally appropriate curricula. Head Start programs have been linked to improved literacy rates, social and emotional growth, and later in life educational attainment (*Head Start's Impact*). Head Start also provides developmental, behavioral, and health screenings for children enrolled in the program.

   iv. Affordability: Head Start is free for eligible families, who have incomes at or below the federal poverty line or receive TANF, SSI, or SNAP. This program is targeted more towards low-income families, so families who do not meet these eligibility guidelines are not able to access the program and would have to explore other options. If Head Start does not cover the full day, parents may be expected to pay for the remaining hours out of pocket.

b) Financial Impact

   i. Many campus-based centers have closed due to funding constraints, so this would be a more sustainable source of funding. Additionally, Head Start is an existing federal program, so there would be no additional cost to the state. Because Head Start grantees can also be community organizations, this also provides an opportunity for public-private partnerships.

c) Addresses Barriers

   i. This policy addresses the high costs barrier by providing a free childcare option for eligible student parents and the limited slots barrier by creating a new childcare option on campus with a more sustainable funding stream.

d) Political Feasibility

   i. This policy would likely be politically feasible because it leverages federal funding and encourages innovative public-private partnerships, which takes more of the financial burden off of the state.

3. Mandating Data Collection

a) Access Framework

i. Meets parents' needs: This policy does not directly help student parents access childcare, but the data may be used to identify student parents on campus and design childcare programs and resources that directly meet their needs.
ii. Reasonable effort: It would be fairly easy to collect data on student parents by adding additional questions on the students' college and/or financial aid applications. The school and state higher education agency will need to implement privacy controls, but this data should be treated similarly to other sensitive demographic data and secured appropriately. Collecting this data would allow schools to identify student parents and connect them with resources related to childcare and other needs.
iii. Supports child's development: This policy does not directly support child development, but may facilitate connections with programs that support child development for children of student parents in the long run if the data is used to create childcare programs for student parents.
iv. Affordability: This policy does not directly assist parents with childcare costs. However, in the long run, schools may recognize the prevalence and needs of student parents on their campuses and create programs to helps student parents with childcare costs.

b) Financial Impact
i. H0006/SB420 passed in the 2026 MGA session and is now awaiting the governor's signature. This bill would require the Maryland Higher Education Commission to collect data on the parenting status of students from each public institution of higher education in the state. The Department of Legislative Services' fiscal and policy note for the bill estimates that it would cost $48,839 in FY27 to collect the required data at public colleges and universities across the state, which reflects the cost of hiring one "contractual half-time Staff Specialist II to develop statewide data collection protocols (including data privacy), provide technical assistance to 29 institutions, and prepare the mandated annual reports" (Heo, 2026). They also estimate a $9,000 cost in FY28, which reflects "annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses for the regular positions; the contractual position is only assumed to be needed through September 1, 2027, when the report is submitted to MHEC."

c) Addresses Barriers
i. This policy does not directly address any of the barriers to childcare access for student parents, but the data could be used to identify the student parent population on each campus and develop policies and programs that directly address the barriers.

d) Political Feasibility

i. HB006/SB420 just passed in the Maryland General Assembly. This was the third year that similar legislation was introduced, and advocates were able to push it across the finish line this year by creating a strong coalition and addressing concerns identified in prior years.

4. *Direct Funding: Grants, Childcare Tuition Assistance, etc.*

The next category of policies is direct funding, which includes grants and childcare tuition assistance programs. Examples include Minnesota's Postsecondary Child Care and Student Parent Supports Initiative Grants, UW-Madison's Childcare Tuition Assistance Program, and MWCC's Family Friend and Neighbor dollars.

a) Access Framework

i. Meets parents' needs: This is one of the most flexible policy options that can meet parents' needs because it provides direct financial assistance to help parents pay for their existing childcare arrangement or use a new childcare arrangement. Certain programs have specific eligibility requirements or types of care allowed, but this option generally gives parents autonomy to decide which childcare option works best for their family and provides funding to help them better afford it.

ii. Reasonable effort: Unless there are specific guidelines for which types of childcare arrangements are covered, direct funding allows parents to choose providers that work best for their family and are close to their home or campus.

iii. Supports child's development: Certain direct funding programs require that the child attend a licensed childcare provider, but programs like MWCC's FFN dollars allow them to pay trusted family, friends, or neighbors, which may not support the child's development to the same standard as a licensed early childhood center, but may meet the parents' needs better.

iv. Affordability: Direct funding greatly improves the affordability of childcare for student parents by subsidizing their existing childcare arrangements or allowing them to start using a childcare arrangement so that they can attend school.

b) Financial Impact

i. Funding sources for this policy option vary. Minnesota's programs are supported by state-appropriated funds. UW-Madison uses a mix of university, private, and (previously) CCAMPIS funding. MWCC's program was funded through CCAMPIS, and then replaced with funding from the college once they lost CCAMPIS funding.

        ii. Funding for this option is flexible and could come from multiple different sources, but it is important to find a sustainable funding stream so that student parents can rely on the funding as they make long-term childcare arrangements. This option may be more expensive and less politically feasible, depending on the size of the program and requirements.

    c) Addresses Barriers
        i. This policy directly addresses the high costs barrier to childcare access by providing financial assistance to help student parents afford childcare.
    d) Political Feasibility
        i. Considering Maryland's constrained budget, creating a new program to address childcare costs for student parents requires additional funding, which may not be politically feasible.

5. *Institution/Higher Education System Coordination*

The final category of policies is coordination on the institution or higher education system level. This can encompass a wide variety of options, including creating a website about resources for student parents, hiring a dedicated staff member to assist student parents, or establishing an office for childcare and family resources. UW-Madison' Office of Child Care and Family Resources is an example of institution-level coordination of childcare resources.

    a) Access Framework
        i. Meets parents' needs: Although this set of policies does not directly provide childcare for student parents, it provides them with a wide variety of resources about childcare and other related resources such as lactation spaces, university policies for pregnant and parenting students, food and basic needs assistance. This helps to meet student parents' childcare needs and equip them with other resources to succeed academically and personally.
        ii. Reasonable effort: Increased coordination gathers all of the resources about childcare in one place, which makes it much easier for student parents to learn about their options and feel supported.
        iii. Supports child's development: This policy does not directly support child development but may facilitate connections with programs that support child development for children of student parents.
        iv. Affordability: This policy does not directly assist parents with childcare costs, but providing resources, referral services, and/or dedicated staff members may help student parents connect with programs that reduce their childcare costs.
    b) Financial Impact

i. Wisconsin's Office of Childcare and Family Resources is funded through a combination of university funding, private donors, and (previously) CCAMPIS funding.

ii. For the state of Maryland, funding for institution and/or university system coordination of resources for student parents would likely come from the institution (through tuition, fees, grants, donations) or state appropriations. The cost of this option depends on the scale: it could look like creating a website for the institution, USM, or MHEC, hiring a coordinator, or establishing an office for family and childcare resources.

c) Addresses Barriers

i. This policy directly addresses the lack of integration within the institution/university system barrier to childcare access centralizing information about childcare at institutions of higher education, fostering partnerships between institutions and childcare programs, and/or requiring institutions to provide certain resources for student parents.

d) Political Feasibility

i. This policy seems politically feasible because MHEC has expressed interest in supporting student parents and this would require little to no additional funding from the state.

Final Policy Recommendations

1) Mandate Data Collection on Student Parents

First, I recommend that the state of Maryland passes legislation that requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to collect data on the parenting status of students from each public institution of higher education in the state. Data collection is necessary for institutions and MHEC to get a sense of what the student parent population looks like on each campus. Some schools may have more student parents than others and tracking this information would allow the state to concentrate their limited resources towards schools with the highest concentration of student parents.

Data collection on student parent status underpins all of the other policy recommendations relating to childcare access for student parents. If the state and individual IHEs do not know how many student parents are on their campus and who they are, it makes it extremely difficult to assist them with their childcare needs. While many institutions assume that only a small percentage of their student population are students, data collection often reveals that the number is larger than they think and makes student parents visible to them (Carr et al., 2023). This policy does not directly provide childcare services to student parents, but it is an important first step in identifying the student parent population on campuses, which can help institutions tailor any additional policies such as campus-based childcare or direct funding towards the needs of their student parent population.

The Maryland General Assembly passed HB006/SB420 on April 13th, 2026, and it is awaiting the governor's signature before it becomes law (*Legislation – SB0420*, 2026). This bill requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission to collect data from every public institution of higher education in the state on the parenting status of their students and develop a plan for parenting and pregnant students that includes resources and referrals about government assistance programs, adoption services, institutional accommodations, and healthcare service providers by October 1, 2026. MHEC must also report the summarized data on student parents at public institutions across the state to specified committees in the Maryland General Assembly by September 1, 2027.

It is also important to think about how data collection would be implemented. Under HB006/SB420, MHEC will hire a contractual staff person to "develop statewide data collection protocols (including data privacy), provide technical assistance to 29 institutions, and prepare the mandated annual reports" (Heo, 2026). This person will create a set of guidelines for data collection and instruct staff at individual institutions, which will create a cohesive strategy for collecting data on student parents across the state. Details of the plan have not been developed yet, but it may make sense to streamline data collection on student parent status through admissions, financial aid, or academic advising. As with all other demographic data on students, MHEC should maintain high standards of privacy to ensure that student parents' sensitive information is protected.

Maryland could also look to other states that have implemented policies requiring institutions of higher education to collect data on student parent status for inspiration, including Minnesota, Illinois, California, Oregon, and Texas. Many systems-level applications, including the nationwide Common Application, Cal State Apply for the California State University System, CCCApply for California community colleges, ApplyTexas for public colleges and universities across Texas, and the City Colleges of Chicago central application all include questions on student parent status (Sick and Anderson, 2025). Collecting data during the application process, or during enrollment or course registration processes, streamlines data collection into existing touchpoints for students, making the data collection process simpler. This method is recommended over other data collection methods like surveys, which are associated with lower response rates. However, surveys could be used to supplement the primary data collection method to gather more frequent data and other supplemental information.

2) *Coordination of Resources and Services for Student Parents Within the MHEC and Individual Institutions*

The next policy recommendation relates to increased coordination of resources for student parents at the state agency and institution levels. This policy recommendation directly addresses the lack of integration within the institution/higher education system barrier to childcare access. Because there is no coordination for resources for student parents at the MHEC level, there are huge disparities in childcare resources depending on the institution, which is not equitable for student parents across the state who happen to attend institutions without childcare resources. System level coordination would ensure that there would at least be a minimum standard for all institutions of higher education, and then individual institutions can choose to provide more resources if they would like.

This recommendation is more flexible depending on MHEC's goals and financial constraints, so there are multiple policy options to consider:

a. Coordination of Resources and Sharing Information

The first policy under this category is requiring institutions to provide specific services or information related to childcare resources for student parents. HB006/SB420 would require all public institutions of higher education in the state to adopt a plan for pregnant and parenting students that includes referrals to on-campus or off-campus services, including the Maryland Childcare Scholarship Program and "any other programs, scholarships, or subsidies for pregnant and parenting students". Outside of childcare, the plans also must include information about institutional accommodations for pregnant and parenting students and resource and referral services related to WIC, health insurance, healthcare service providers, and adoption services. Institutions must post their plans on their websites by October 1, 2026. Twenty-one of the public institutions in Maryland already have a website that lists the childcare resources available to student parents at their institution and in the surrounding community, so this would hopefully be a relatively low-lift task.

Outside of this plan, coordination of resources and services could also look like requiring the institution to designate an employee to provide student parents with information about childcare services and other resources, in addition to listing them on their website as part of their plans for pregnant and parenting students. Similar to Minnesota's "college navigator" model, this could be done through one person, or with shared responsibilities across multiple staff members who are already touchpoints for student parents like in offices for academic advising, financial aid, or student success. This is a way to ensure that existing resources are being optimized to support student parents in the most efficient way.

b. Developing Partnerships

Another policy under this category involves developing partnerships between institutions and early childhood programs. In order to encourage more partnerships with Head Start and campus-based childcare centers, MHEC could acting as a liaison between Head Start programs and institutions of higher education. In practice, this could include spreading information about the Kids on Campus initiative, providing guidance to community colleges about applying, or creating a FAQ sheet for interested institutions and Head Start programs/organizations. By developing partnerships between Head Start program and college campuses, this policy would address the high costs barrier by providing free childcare for student parents who qualify and the lack of slots barrier if a new childcare option became available to student parents.

c. Convening Stakeholders

MHEC could also convene stakeholders, including student parents, childcare providers, early childhood education policy professionals, and college and university administrators for roundtable discussions about policy solutions, best practices, and developing guidelines for institutions related to childcare programs for student parents. After developing guidelines and recommendations based on stakeholder input, they could also host information sessions about different ideas for student parent childcare programs, including drop-in childcare, direct funding, and Head Start partnerships to educate institutions and providers that are interested in developing their own policies.

3) *Pilot Programs for Drop-In Childcare and Direct Funding*

Finally, I recommend that the state creates pilot programs for drop-in childcare and direct childcare funding. Both policies provide flexibility for student parents' childcare needs and directly address the barriers to childcare access identified earlier in this report. Pilot programs are a lower-cost way of implementing drop-in childcare and direct funding programs and provide an opportunity to see how they would look in practice and test their effectiveness in helping student parents access childcare. This recommendation would require the Maryland General Assembly to pass legislation creating these pilot programs, which may be less politically feasible than the other options, but it would more directly help student parents access childcare services.

a. Drop-In Childcare

Drop-in childcare is an institution-level policy that creates an on-campus childcare option for student parents with flexible hours at little to no cost to them. Through a statewide pilot program, this model could be piloted at a few institutions that are interested in adding drop-in childcare. MHEC could create a set of guidelines for piloting drop-in childcare, which can be informed by stakeholders, including student parents, college/university administrators and staff, early childhood educators, and representatives from other institutions that have created drop-in childcare programs. MHEC could also provide technical assistance to help institutions with any questions or concerns regarding implementation. MHEC may also be able to work the Office of the Attorney General of Maryland to address questions about liability and create a set of legal practices for institutions to follow, as well as the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Early Childhood to address licensing questions for drop-in childcare centers.

MHEC can provide general guidelines and requirements for the pilot program, while also allowing some flexibility to tailor the drop-in childcare program to the needs of the student parent population on each campus and the goals and constraints of the institution. For example, the institution can either dedicate a space on campus to the drop-in childcare program or contract with a third-party provider at a facility near campus, depending on their capacity and preference. They can also decide what ages will be accepted at the center, the hours it will be open, and how it will be staffed. The Maryland pilot program can draw inspiration from other institutions that have implemented drop-in childcare, including MWCC's Child Watch program and UW-Madison's KidsKare program.

b. Direct Funding

In addition to a drop-in childcare pilot program, I also recommend that the state creates a pilot program for direct funding for childcare costs for student parents. Direct funding does not directly provide a childcare arrangement, but it assists student parents financially with the cost of childcare. Similar to the Maryland Childcare Scholarship program, direct funding would provide financial assistance for the cost of childcare for the children of student parents, paid either directly to the provider or to the student parents, depending on the program design. Similar to the drop-in childcare pilot program, MHEC could convene stakeholders to weigh in on the program design, create guidelines for the pilot program, administer the funding, and provide technical assistance to recipients. They can also look to other examples of direct funding, including Minnesota's Postsecondary Child Care and Student Parent Supports Initiative Grants, UW-Madison's Childcare Tuition Assistance Program, and MWCC's Family Friend and Neighbor dollars in order to inform decisions about payment processes, eligibility requirements, and types of allowable childcare arrangements. Maryland could also consider a tax credit to provide direct funding for childcare costs for student parents as an alternative to a spending program, either through an expansion of the state CDCTC or creation of a new tax credit specifically for student parents.

A pilot program for direct funding would target the need for childcare assistance for the specific population of student parents, which makes it different than other programs like the Maryland Childcare Scholarship Program. Student parents have different childcare needs than other types of parents and creating a direct funding program exclusively for student parents would ensure that they are a priority group for childcare funding. Additionally, since the Maryland Childcare Scholarship program is currently frozen, student parents are not able to access new childcare scholarships through it.

All pilot program sites for both drop-in childcare and direct funding programs would collect data on outcomes of interest, such as the number of student parents served by the program, their GPA, and retention rate in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Student parents who participate could also fill out a survey about their experience in the pilot program, including their satisfaction with the childcare arrangement, personal financial impact of the program, effect on their academic life, and sense of belonging on campus. Data on the outcomes could be used in program evaluations of the pilots to determine if they are effective in increasing access to childcare for student parents and boosting retention in higher education among this population. If these pilot programs are helpful for student parents and the data is promising, it could help build the case for additional investment through evidence-based policymaking.

Although pilot programs for drop-in childcare and direct funding would require greater investment from the state, they also have the greatest potential impact for student parents. Based on the evaluation of the policies from the case studies using the Child Trends access framework, drop-in childcare and direct funding provide the most flexibility to meet the needs of student parents. Both programs also address the barriers to childcare access identified earlier. Drop-in childcare directly addresses the irregular schedules barrier by providing hourly and backup childcare as opposed to “traditional” childcare during working hours, 5 days a week, the affordability barrier by creating a free or low-cost drop-in childcare option, and the lack of slots barrier by creating a new childcare program on campus with more childcare slots specifically for student parents. Direct funding addresses the affordability barrier by offsetting the cost of childcare for student parents, freeing up more room in their budget for tuition and other essential expenses.

<table>
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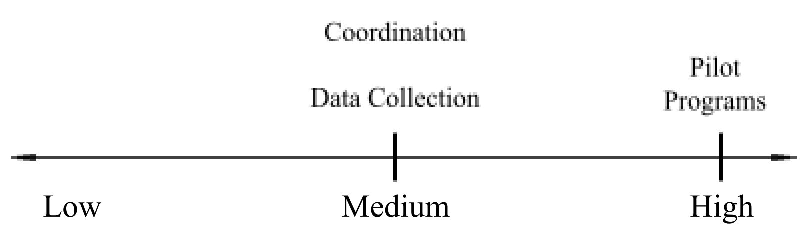
<tr><td>Access Framework</td><td>
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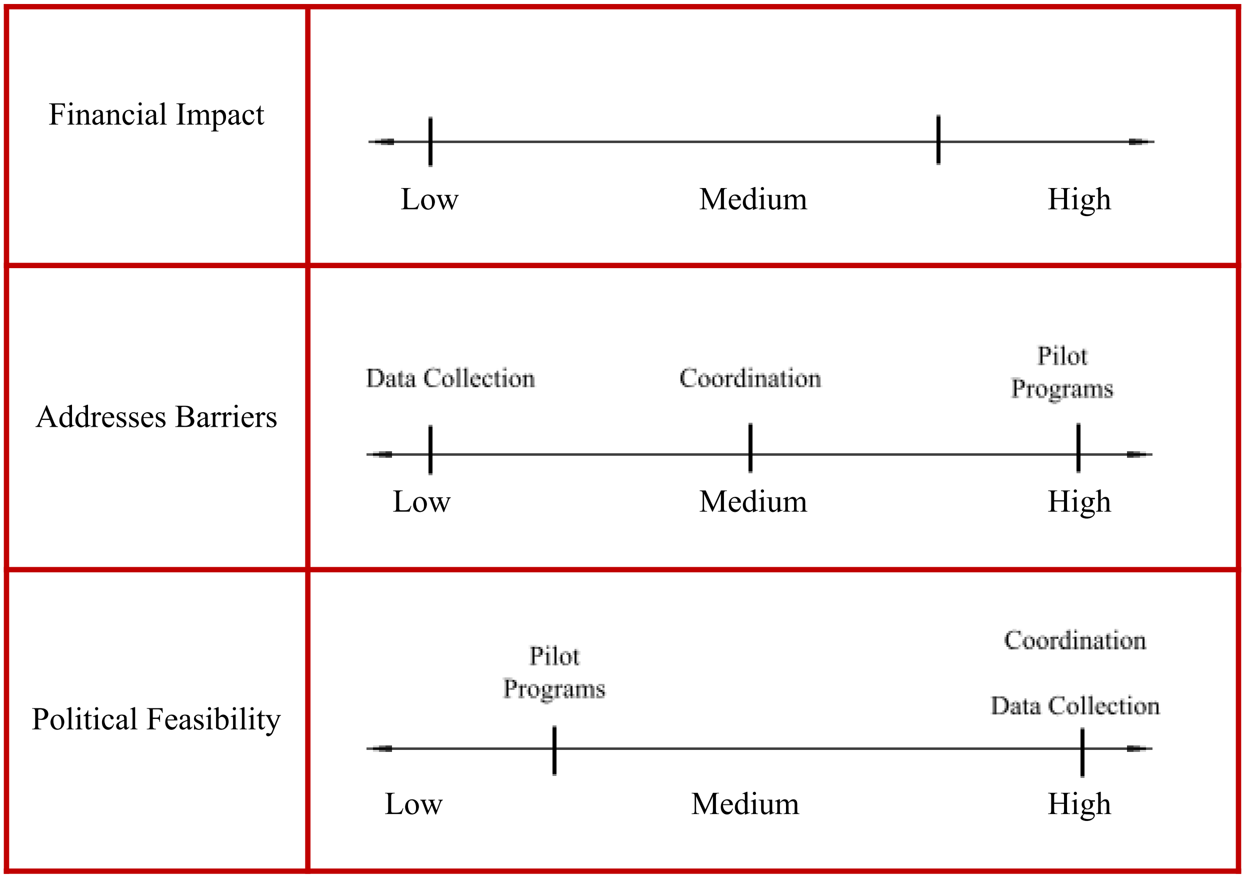

Conclusion
Access to childcare is critical for student parents to be able to pursue and complete higher education, which is beneficial both for their families and the greater economy. This report explored the barriers to childcare access for student parents and policy recommendations for the state of Maryland to promote greater access to childcare so that student parents can focus on their education without having to worry about their childcare needs.

Through a literature review and interviews with student parents and college and university staff, I found that the primary barriers to childcare access for student parents are high costs, irregular schedules, limited slots, and lack of integration within the institution/higher education system. I researched existing policies available for student parents in Maryland, including CCAMPIS, federal and state CDCTCs, Head Start, and Maryland CCS, but found that they were insufficient to meet the needs of student parents, especially because they are not all widely available throughout the state and face funding uncertainty. Additionally, I conducted a scan on campus-based childcare centers and surveyed the institutions with campus-based childcare centers to learn more about their characteristics, with the main takeaway being that many campus-based childcare centers are making efforts to make their programs accessible for student parents through tuition discounts and flexible scheduling, but the general lack of slots, high costs, and schedules make this option less accessible. Next, I completed three case studies of other institutions and states that are similar to Maryland that have implemented programs and policies to help student parents access childcare. Through these case studies, I identified five categories of policies to help student parents access childcare: 1) Drop-in childcare, 2) Head Start partnerships with campus-based centers, 3) Data collection, 4) Direct funding, and 5) Institution/Higher Education system coordination. I then evaluated these policies based on the Child Trends access framework, their financial impact for the state, whether they address the barriers identified earlier, and their political feasibility in Maryland. Based on this evaluation, I presented three policy recommendations for the state of Maryland: 1) Mandate data collection on student parents, 2) Coordination of resources and services for student parents, and 3) Pilot programs for drop-in childcare and direct funding.

In addition to being a hardworking group of individuals who are investing in their families' future, student parents will provide a return on investment for the state. Providing them with resources now so that they can be self-sufficient in the near future and contribute to the state's economy will benefit Maryland in the long run through a more educated population and expanded tax base. I urge policymakers to prioritize the childcare needs of student parents by identifying them through data collection in order to target resources, increasing coordination and information sharing through the MHEC to promote more institution-level policies, and creating pilot programs for drop-in childcare and direct funding that address the barriers to childcare that they currently face.

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Appendix A: A list of the public institutions of higher education in Maryland and whether they have a campus-based childcare center

Community Colleges			
Institution	Yes, there is a campus-based childcare center at this institution.	No, there is not a campus-based childcare center at this institution.	There was previously a campus-based childcare center at this institution, but it has since closed.
Allegany College of Maryland	✓		
Anne Arundel Community College			✓
Baltimore City Community College			✓
Carroll Community College	✓		
Cecil College		✓	
Chesapeake College			✓
College of Southern Maryland			✓
Community College of Baltimore County	✓		
Frederick Community College			✓
Garrett College		✓	
Hagerstown Community College	✓		

Harford Community College	✓		
Howard Community College	✓		
Montgomery College	✓		
Prince George's Community College		✓	
Wor-Wic Community College	✓		

Four-Year Colleges and Universities

Institution	Yes, there is a campus-based childcare center at this institution.	No, there is not a campus-based childcare center at this institution.	There was previously a campus-based childcare center at this institution, but it has since closed.
Bowie State University		✓	
Coppin State University	✓		
Frostburg State University		✓	
Morgan State University		✓	
Salisbury University		✓	
St. Mary's College of Maryland		✓	

Towson University	✓		
University of Baltimore		✓	
University of Maryland, Eastern Shore (UMES)	✓		
University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)	✓		
University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC)	✓		
University of Maryland, College Park	✓		

Appendix B: Characteristics of Campus-Based Childcare Centers

Four-Year Colleges and Universities

Institution	Name of Center	Hours of Operation	Ages Accepted	Number of Slots	Tuition Rate	Discounts for Student Parents?	% of Student Parents Served by Center	Employs Students?	Officially Affiliated with IHE?
Allegany College of Maryland	HRDC Allegany College Head Start	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No, Head Start Center adjacent to campus run through Allegany County HRDC
Carroll Community College	Littlest Learners Child Development Center	7:00am-6 :00pm Offer half day and full day options, 1-5 days per week	2-5 years	50 total 2's: 12 per day 3's: 18 per day 4's: 20 per day	$71-214 per week depending on full vs half day, number of days/week, and student status Full fee schedule	Yes, 18-22% discount depending on full vs. half day and number of days/week	Less than 25%	Yes	Yes
Community College of Baltimore County	Sanbridge Early Learning Center at CCBC Catonsville	Their website says that they are opens 24/7, which includes	6 weeks – 5 years	-	-	-	-	-	No

(Catonsville Campus)		drop-in, weekend, and evening care.							
Hagerstown Community College	Charlotte's Nexus Childcare	6:30am-6:00pm	6 weeks-5 years	-	-	Discounts for HCC students and staff. Accepts Maryland CCS.	-	-	Unclear
Harford Community College	Harford Community College Early Learning Center	Full day and half day options 2-5 days per week	2-5 years	-	-	"Affordable tuition with discounts for HCC students/ staff"	-	-	Yes
Howard Community College	The Children's Learning Center	-	6 weeks – school age	-	-	-	-	-	Yes, partner with the Community Action Council of Howard County
Montgomery College	Center for Early Education Lab School	8:00am-5:30pm 2, 3, and 5 day options	3-5 years	-	MC Students: 2 days: $120/week 3 days: $163/week	33% discount for Montgomery College students (2,	-	-	Yes

					5 days: $237/week	3, and 5 day options)			
Wor-Wic Community College	Wor-Wic Community College Child Development Center	7:30am-5:00pm	2-5 years	64	2's: $205/week 3-5 years: $185/week	Tuition discounts for students. Students also get priority enrollment.	Over 75%	Yes	Yes
Coppin State University	Coppin State University Early Head Start Center of Goodwill	8:30am-3:00pm	6 weeks – 3 years	-	Free for Baltimore City residents with children ages 6 weeks – 3 years who receive SNAP benefits and have incomes at or below the FPL	-	-	-	Yes, partner with Goodwill of the Chesapeake
Towson University	Towson University Child Care Center	7:30am-5:30pm	2-4 years	100	Full time: $310 per week Part time: $195 per week	Accepts CCAMPIS grants and Maryland CCS.	Less than 25%	Yes	Yes
					Infants-2 years:				

University of Maryland, Eastern Shore	UMES Child & Family Development Center	8:00am-5:00pm	6 weeks – school age	63	$275 per week 2 years and up: $205 per week Before and after school care: $60 per week	No	25-50 %	Yes	Yes
University of Maryland, Baltimore	Downtown Baltimore Child Care	7:30am-6:00pm Offer 5, 3, and 2 days/ week options	12 weeks – pre-K	-	Infants-2 years: $2,450/ month 2-3 years: $2,234/ month 3 years and up: $1,860/ month Full fee schedule (with more info about part time rates)	Accepts Maryland CCS. Also has a DBCC scholarship based on income.	-	-	Unclear

UMBC	Y Preschool at UMBC	7:00am-6:00pm 2-5 days per week	2-5 years	-	-	Accepts Maryland CCS.	-	-	Yes, partner with the YMCA of Central Maryland
University of Maryland, College Park	Center for Young Children	8:30am-5:30pm	3-6 years (through kindergarten)	108 total Kindergarten: 18 Preschool: 90	$15,000 for academic year (late August to early June), 8:30am-4:30pm. Additional $1250 per year for extended day (4:30-5:30 pm) Six week summer camp for $2750 (8:30am-5:30pm)	Previously had income-based tuition, but became unaffordable. Now accepts Maryland CCS.	Less than 25%	Yes	Yes
					Full-time tuition ranges	Discounted tuition for all UMD full time staff,			

UMD, College Park	University of Maryland Child Development Center	7:00am-6 :00pm	6 weeks-5 years	120	between $1,719-$2, 549 /month, depending on a child's age	faculty, and students. Scholarships available based on income for all families	25-50 %	Yes	Yes, partner with Bright Horizons

Note: Information from highlighted centers was obtained through the survey. Centers who are not highlighted did not respond to the survey, so any information about them was obtained through the center's website.