



SYSTEM WEBINAR SUMMARY: Student Parent Success (September 2025)

This [webinar](#) focused on ways to support the success of parenting students attending our colleges. Guest presenters included A.J. Johnson of California Competes, Theresa Anderson of the Urban Institute, Johanna Aleman of San Diego Mesa College, and Joia Miller, a student at Mt. San Jacinto College.

What are the Needs and Experiences of Student Parents?

- Nationally, nearly 1 in 5 students are parents, and they are more likely to attend community college. The CCC system identified over 230,000 enrolled in our colleges.
- These students are more likely to attend part-time and to be re-enrolled after previous educational experience. About half have a child under age 6, likely requiring childcare.
- Student parents face similar challenges to other students but may experience some needs more acutely. These [include](#) food and housing, mental health support, and financial concerns. In addition, they need access to childcare and support with balancing family obligations with work and academic responsibilities.
- Student parents report particular [challenges](#) with accessing affordable childcare and basic needs services.

How are the State and the CCC Responding to Those Needs?

- Some CCC student support programs provide services relevant to student parents, including Basic Needs Centers (referrals to childcare and public benefits programs), CalWORKS (job placement, childcare), and CARE (support EOPS students with children).
- Financial Aid offices can help students access emergency aid and navigate the Dependent Care Allowance, which allows students to request an increase to their Cost of Attendance (COA) to include dependent care expenses.
- [AB 2458](#), the GAINS for Student Parents Act, seeks to support these students with access to financial aid, public benefits programs, and other resources. It requires the development of a COA adjustment policy to account for the higher costs faced by student parents, better outreach and communication to students about requesting such adjustment, and better data collection and reporting on parenting students.

- Individual colleges are finding ways to improve their services for parenting students. San Diego Mesa College has participated in Generation Hope's [FamilyU](#) cohort and the Urban Institute's [Data-to-Action Campaign for Parenting Students](#). These programs have helped the college create better collaboration across departments to support student parents. The college has created a [Family Resource Center](#) as a welcoming place for students and their children.

What is the California Student Parent Alliance?

- The [initiative](#) is administered by California Competes and EdTrust West, and works to support student parents through [research](#), policy advocacy, capacity building, and community engagement.
- The Alliance is focusing on strengthening financial aid to cover student parents' true college costs; providing sufficient affordable childcare options; meeting housing needs; advancing family-serving institutional policies and practices; and collecting and using data to improve outcomes for student parents.
- The Alliance operates a [community of practice](#) to provide technical assistance, stipends, and opportunities for collaboration to participating institutions.

How Can Colleges Improve Their Support of Parenting Students?

- [HR 62](#) designated September as Student Parent Month. Colleges can support the effort through welcome events for student parents, social media posts, and hosting "[bring your kids to college](#)" days.
- Review the [fact sheet](#), Chancellor's Office guidance [memo](#), [webinar](#), and other [resources](#) to support GAINS Act implementation, which will help students maximize their financial aid with a Cost of Attendance adjustment.
- Improve college [websites](#) to provide better guidance and support to these students (see links to [examples](#)).
- Clarify process for students to [appeal](#) the Cost of Attendance calculation to account for their real costs.
- Help students identify sources of support through the [public benefits finder](#).
- Work across college departments to better identify student parents and improve data collection and dissemination.
- Join the [California Student Parent Alliance](#) or sign up for its news and updates.
- Review reports and other materials related to the Urban Institute's [Student-Parent Families at the Center](#) project and its [Data-to-Action Campaign](#).
- Attend the California Student Parent [Summit](#), September 9-10, 2025, which will include sessions on supporting student parents and implementing the GAINS Act.

- Attend the California Higher Education Basic Needs Alliance [Summit](#), February 10-11, 2026.