



RESOURCE GUIDE

Serving Young Parents

Selected Resources for Young Parents, Practitioners, and Policymakers

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Executive Summary

This guide summarizes and links to resources that may help answer questions common among young parents, the organizations that serve them, and policymakers interested in supporting young parents' success. These groups all have a role to play in addressing young parents' needs. Providing tailored resources to address their needs is critical, because they face particular obstacles to achieving financial stability associated with having the responsibility of caring for a child while transitioning to adulthood.

The questions and resources derived from a technical assistance partnership between the Urban Institute and three partnerships focused on young parent supports as part of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Learn and Earn to Achieve Potential (LEAP) initiative. This partnership highlighted that different stakeholders concerned with addressing young parent needs require different types of resources, including (1) actionable resources young parents can use to address their immediate needs; (2) resources young parent-serving practitioners can use both to increase their capacity for young parent services and to engage young parent clients to address their needs; and (3) resources policymakers can use to inform changes to policy and practice so programs can better serve young parents.

Serving Young Parents

Introduction

This guide compiles resources and insights the Urban Institute collected to support partnerships in the Learn and Earn to Achieve Potential (LEAP) network who were part of a learning cohort focused on enhancing services for young parents. LEAP is an initiative to increase education and employment opportunities for young people who face barriers and challenges in the transition to adulthood. It focuses on young people ages 14 to 25 who are in foster care, involved in the criminal justice system, or experiencing homelessness. The overall LEAP network has nine partnerships in Alaska, Arizona, California, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, and New York.¹ Three partnerships—The Door in New York, Project for Pride in Living in Minnesota, and Nebraska Children and Families Foundation—made serving young parents a key part of their capacity-building agendas. These partnerships had varied approaches and capacities around their young parents' work. They also had varying needs, questions, and areas where they wanted to grow.

Providing tailored resources to address young parents' needs is critical, because they face particular obstacles to achieving financial stability. These obstacles include the interrelated challenges of accessing affordable child care, persisting in higher education while juggling family responsibilities, and obtaining family-sustaining jobs without a degree or credential. These underlying obstacles have meant that the COVID-19 health crisis and resulting economic downturn have particularly threatened the well-being of young parents and their families. And young parents of color face disproportionate challenges because of systemic racism.

Through facilitating the learning cohort, the Urban Institute collected resources on various topics related to serving young parents that may be useful to young parents, practitioners, and policymakers beyond the learning cohort. Our technical assistance partnership highlighted that different stakeholders concerned with addressing young parent needs require different types of resources, including (1) actionable resources young parents can use to address their immediate needs; (2) resources young parent-serving practitioners can use both to increase their capacity for young parent

¹ For more information about LEAP see “Learn and Earn to Achieve Potential,” Annie E. Casey Foundation, accessed June 30, 2022, <https://www.aecf.org/work/economic-opportunity/work-education-and-income/learn-and-earn-to-achieve-potential>.

services and engage young parent clients to address their needs; and (3) resources policymakers can use to inform changes to policy and practice so programs can better serve young parents.

We have curated the resources in this guide and organized them in a question-and-answer format based on key questions each audience may have. Most items in this guide link to external web pages and references.

Resources for Young Parents

What Are Important Health and Birthing Resources for Expecting Young Parents?

INITIAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT PREGNANCY

These may also be useful for expecting parents in developing a list of questions to ask a medical provider.

Your Guide to a Healthy Birth (also available in Spanish)

This pamphlet from New York State outlines what to expect and how to plan for childbirth.

Visit: <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2935.pdf>

Also available in Spanish: <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2952.pdf>

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists—Having a Baby: Frequently Asked Questions

These are introductory questions about pregnancy:

- What are things I can do to help ensure a healthy pregnancy?
- Are there any foods I should avoid?
- How much weight should I gain during pregnancy?
- What vitamins are necessary during pregnancy?
- Should I be taking medications during pregnancy?
- Do teens have any special pregnancy risks?
- What should I know about breastfeeding?

Visit: <https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/having-a-baby>

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists—Pregnancy Choices: Raising the Baby, Adoption, and Abortion

This web page answers early questions people might ask when they find out they are pregnant unexpectedly and want to understand their options.

Visit: <https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/pregnancy-choices-raising-the-baby-adoption-and-abortion>

Planned Parenthood—I think I’m pregnant. Now what?

This web page from Planned Parenthood lays out early pregnancy questions and options.

Visit: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/teens/stds-birth-control-pregnancy/i-think-im-pregnant-now-what>

RESPECTFUL AND BIRTH-CENTERED CARE THAT IS AFFORDABLE OR TAKES MEDICAID

Respectful and birth-centered care emphasizes that the birthing person is an informed and active decisionmaker whose needs and desires are centered throughout the childbirth process.

Respectful Care at Birth

This guide from New York City describes the fundamental elements of respectful care at birth.

Visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/ms/respectful-care-birth-brochure.pdf>

Centering Sites

CenteringPregnancy and CenteringParenting sites are very likely to take Medicaid. This approach focuses on patient-centered care to improve health outcomes for parents and children.

Visit: <https://centeringhealthcare.secure.force.com/WebPortal/LocateCenteringSitePage>

Medicaid Childbirth Support

Medicaid can provide many services around childbirth. For example, young people may want to explore care coordination or care management services for Medicaid recipients. Care coordination tries to ensure that children and adolescents get the right care at the right time in the right setting by bridging systems. Each state has its own care coordination effort. Basic information about Medicaid eligibility for most states is available at [benefits.gov](https://www.benefits.gov).

DOULAS AND ASSESSING DOULA QUALITY

A doula is a trained professional who provides continuous physical, emotional, and informational support to a mother before, during, and shortly after childbirth to help her achieve the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible.

Here are resources for finding a doula:

- [DONA Doula Directory](#)
- [DoulaMatch.net](#)
- [CAPPa Doula and Educator Directory](#)
- [International Childbirth Education Association \(ICEA\) Directory](#)

Considerations for assessing doula quality include the following:

- Certification is not legally required to provide doula care, though some organizations may require it or opt to provide their own trainings.
- A few leading doula certification programs are available (DONA; ToLabor; the Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association, or CAPPa; Childbirth International, or CBI; and the International Childbirth Education Association, or ICEA), and the training differs for each.
- Because training is not standardized, doula preparation can vary significantly across the board. Doulas who are not well trained or do not have substantial experience may not feel well prepared to provide physical support during labor.
- According to Urban experts, understanding how doulas are trained might be a good starting point for evaluating the quality of their services—is certification required? Is there additional in-house training? What does the training include (e.g., attending births, learning about childhood development, practicing labor techniques, providing emotional support, interacting with other health care providers, education on postpartum care and breastfeeding, etc.)?

OTHER HEALTH SUPPORT

A few other health resources and considerations may be helpful to young parents:

- Health insurance plans must provide breastfeeding support (sometimes called lactation consultation), counseling, and equipment (breast pumps and accessories) for the duration of breastfeeding. These services may be provided before and after birth.

- » You will need to ask your health insurance plan how to get covered equipment and services.
 - » States vary in how they cover lactation services through Medicaid. You will need to check with your state about policy and procedures.
- Medicaid will likely also cover a fetal heart monitor and a blood pressure monitor.
 - An increasing number of insurance providers are covering doula services.

KNOWING OPTIONS FOR CONTRACEPTION

Contraception can be an important consideration not only for family planning, but also to protect a person's health after childbirth.

Bedsider

This interactive website allows for side-by-side comparisons of birth control options.

Visit: <https://www.bedsider.org/methods>

Beyond the Pill

This website includes printable flyers in English and Spanish with different contraception options, including emergency contraception.

Visit: <https://beyondthepill.ucsf.edu/educational-materials>

Contraception during Breastfeeding

There are a few special considerations for birth control while breastfeeding. For example, products that do not contain estrogen are preferred during breastfeeding to maintain milk supply.

Visit: <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/drugs/15280-contraception-during-breastfeeding>

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE ADVOCATE FOR THEMSELVES IN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The health care system is complex and can be intimidating. These resources can help young people navigate and advocate for themselves with medical providers and systems.

Youth Empowerment

This web page provides resources for young people, adults, and providers about how to engage young people in medical decisionmaking. Many of these materials assume a traditional parent-teen guardianship, but they may be adapted to the service population.

Visit: <https://www.umhs-adolescenthealth.org/improving-care/youth-empowerment/>

10 Ways Women Can Advocate for Themselves at the Doctor's Office

This list of strategies and associated links may be useful for women navigating the health care system.

Visit: <https://greatist.com/discover/how-women-can-advocate-for-themselves-at-the-doctors>

- Do your research.
 - » **For any health concerns**, visit [MedlinePlus](#), [MyHealthfinder](#), [Mayo Clinic](#), and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#).
 - » **For reproductive health**, visit [The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#) and [Planned Parenthood](#).
 - » **For children**, visit [American Academy of Pediatrics](#).
- Go doctor shopping.
 - » **If you're LGBTQIA+**, use the [GLMA provider directory](#) to find providers committed to maintaining an LGBTQIA+ friendly practice.
 - » **If you're trans**, you can use the [directory from the World Professional Association for Transgender Health \(WPATH\)](#) to find trans-affirming doctors.
 - » **If you're in a larger body**, check out the [Fat Friendly Health Professionals list](#).
 - » **If you're looking for a psychiatrist who offers appointments online**, here's a [guide](#).
- Request accommodations before your appointment.
- Bring notes.
 - » What to include in a medical journal:
 - your symptoms, when they began, and how often they occur;
 - what makes your symptoms worse or better;
 - any factors that might impact your symptoms (such as your diet, medical history, medications you're taking, conditions that run in your family, or significant stressors in your life);
 - questions you want to ask about your symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, additional therapies, and coping tools; and
 - any other concerns you want to address.
- Listen to your body.
- Lean on your support system.
- Do not settle for treatment you're not comfortable with.

- Coordinate your care.
- Get that second opinion.
- File a formal complaint if you feel you have been mistreated.

What Other Resources Can Support Basic Needs for Young Parents with Young Children?

HOME VISITING SERVICES

In a home visiting program, a support person (often a trained nurse, social worker, or early childhood specialist) visits a family's home to help young parents navigate parenthood and provide useful information.

Home Visiting Programs State Fact Sheets

This web page provides fact sheets for each state about how the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program helps children and families get off to a better, healthier start.

Visit: <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/maternal-child-health-initiatives/home-visiting/home-visiting-program-state-fact-sheets>

Healthy Families America

Healthy Families America is an evidence-based voluntary home visiting model designed to provide services to families that begin prenatally, or at birth, through age five. This program will help families with what to expect during pregnancy, labor, and delivery; child development; parenting; basic needs supports and goal-setting; and peer support. This web page includes a directory of programs nationwide.

Visit: <https://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/>

DIAPER BANKS

Diaper banks have free diapers and often other essentials for babies.

National Diaper Bank Network

This is a directory of diaper banks across the US.

Visit: <https://nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/member-directory/>

SHELTER OPTIONS

Many young parent families have unstable housing for various reasons. These resources can help in an emergency.

FindShelter

This resource from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development has a search for shelters, food pantries, health clinics, and clothing resources.

Visit: <https://www.hud.gov/findshelter>

Homeless Shelter Directory and Shelter Listings

These are other national directories of homeless shelters.

Homeless Shelter Directory: <https://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org/>

Shelter Listings: <https://www.shelterlistings.org/>

Women's Shelters

This is a national directory of emergency shelters, transitional housing, domestic violence shelters, and family shelters.

Visit: <https://www.womenshelters.org/>

What Should Young Parents Consider When Selecting a Child Care Provider?

GUIDANCE ON SELECTION

Choosing a child care option can feel overwhelming. These resources can help young parents think about what is important to them.

Starting Your Child Care Search

The web page from Child Care Aware offers step-by-step guidance and links to resources around getting started with the search for child care, including making a list of providers, doing your homework on providers, calling providers, and taking a tour. It also has updates about COVID-19 implications for the search process. Here are the four main steps:

- Get a child care list.
- Do your homework.
- Call providers.

- Take a tour.

Visit: <https://www.childcareaware.org/families/choosing-quality-child-care/starting-child-care-search/>

Selecting a Child Care Program

This series of checklists from Child Care Aware offers things for parents to look for when taking virtual or in-person tours of different types of care providers, including a pandemic safety checklist.

Visit: <https://www.childcareaware.org/families/choosing-quality-child-care/selecting-child-care-program/>

Matching Your Infant's or Toddler's Style to the Right Child Care Setting

This visual from Zero to Three shows how parents can think about matching their child's personal style to a child care setting.

Visit: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/86-matching-your-infant-s-or-toddler-s-style-to-the-right-child-care-setting>

SEARCH AND AFFORDABILITY RESOURCES

These resources can help young parents find out about their child care options and learn about subsidies and other financial supports available in their state.

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

These organizations help families understand their child care options in the area. Each state may also maintain a list of providers.

Visit: <https://www.childcareaware.org/resources/ccrr-search-form/>

Understanding and Finding Child Care

This federal resource includes links to multiple state-specific child care resources, including information on search resources, how to choose quality care, licensing, inspection reports, regulations, criminal background checks, and the afterschool association.

Visit: <https://childcare.gov/state-resources-home>

Get Help Paying for Child Care

Information from ChildCare.gov.

Visit: <https://www.childcare.gov/consumer-education/get-help-paying-for-child-care>

What Are Expected Child Development Milestones?

Many young parents have asked for more information about how to know if their children are developing as expected.

Your Child's Development: Age-Based Tips from Birth to 36 Months

This set of age-based handouts from Zero to Three includes a “what to expect” chart for each age range, frequently asked questions, a research summary (including what it means for parents), and information about common parenting challenges for each age and stage and what parents can do (available in English and Spanish).

Visit: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/your-child-s-development-age-based-tips-from-birth-to-36-months>

What Can Young Parents Do to Support Their Children's Healthy Development?

Parents play the largest role in supporting children's healthy development. The critical role of parent teaching and role modeling emerged prominently in the COVID-19 pandemic, but many of the resources related to the pandemic are also relevant in other times.

Everyday Ways to Support Your Baby's and Toddler's Early Learning

This chart from Zero to Three gives parents some ideas of the many ways they can support their child's early learning through everyday activities (available in English and Spanish).

Visit: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/265-everyday-ways-to-support-your-baby-s-and-toddler-s-early-learning>

Healthy Minds: Nurturing Your Child's Development

This set of age-based handouts from Zero to Three is based on findings from a report from the National Academy of Sciences on child and brain development. The information offered is age-specific, summarizes key findings from the report, and suggests how you might be able to use these key findings to nurture your own child's healthy development (available in English and Spanish).

Visit: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/healthy-minds-nurturing-your-child-s-development>

How to Support Children (and Yourself) during the COVID-19 Outbreak

This web page from the Harvard Center on the Developing Child offers tips and links to resources about

how to support children's healthy development during COVID-19 (available in English and Spanish).

Key strategies include the following:

- Practice “serve and return.”
- Maintain social connections.
- Take a break.

Visit: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/how-to-support-children-and-yourself-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>

Tips for Families: Coronavirus

This series of resources from Zero to Three offers tips for families including age-appropriate responses to common questions, a guide to self-care, and activities for young children experiencing social distancing. Some resources available in Spanish.

Visit: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus>

Resources for Practitioners

How Can Organizational or Program Staff Engage with Young People Who Indicate They Are Pregnant or Parenting?

Organizations may not know how to respond to and support young people who share their pregnancy or parenting status.

FRAMING PREGNANCY THROUGH A STRENGTHS PERSPECTIVE

The Strengths Perspective: Providing Opportunities for Teen Parents and their Families to Succeed

It is important for clinicians, school social workers, and the community to adopt a strengths-based perspective when working with teen parents to cultivate strengths and opportunities for success. This includes the following assumptions:

1. All people, no matter how difficult their situations, possess strengths that can be marshalled to improve the quality of their lives.
2. All environments contain resources that can be utilized for problem solving and life enhancement.

3. The upper limits of a person's capacity to grow and change are unknown.
4. Although potentially devastating, trauma, abuse, illness, and other adversities can be sources of challenge and opportunities for growth.
5. Client motivation is fostered by a consistent emphasis on strength as defined by the client.
6. Empowerment can be conferred by supporting self-efficacy and personal power, choice, control, and commitment.
7. Professionals are not experts on clients' needs but collaborators in empowerment.
8. Discovering clients' strengths requires a process of cooperative exploration by clients and professionals. Topics for exploration include what clients want for their futures and abilities they have shown in the past and present.
9. Focusing on strengths helps practitioners discover clients' abilities and how they have managed to cope and survive, even in the most challenging circumstances. This is empowering for clients and also turns practitioners' attention away from the temptation to blame the victim or otherwise pathologize the situation.

Visit: <https://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/jfs/vol15/iss1/11/>

The article linked above provides specific strategies for practitioners to implement to identify and build strengths among teen parents and their families:

1. Maintain a consistent emphasis on strengths.
2. Empowerment comes from self-efficacy and personal control.
3. Conduct an assessment of teen parents **and their families** that includes how each family member feels about the pregnancy; individual, family, and community resources; how the family has dealt with stress in the past; the current concerns of each family member with respect to the teen pregnancy; and additional strengths and sources of support.
4. Establish support groups.
5. Engage in sports activities.
6. Promote positive youth development.
7. Maintain culturally sensitive practices by providing cultural sensitivity training for staff to increase awareness of client cultural values and beliefs; ensuring that staff members speak the

language of their clients; considering the natural environment as a viable service delivery option; and involving the parents and family members of teen parents in practice.

QUESTIONS TO ASK A YOUNG PERSON WHO IS PREGNANT

Maternal Serum Screening (MSS) Prenatal Screening Guide

This screener asks questions and identifies the purpose and actions to follow based on the responses to the questions for young people who are pregnant.

Here are some questions staff may want to consider asking, in addition to the screener:

1. (Possibly following Q3 on the screener) How would you rate your level of overall satisfaction with the prenatal care you are receiving?
2. (Possibly following Q7 on the screener) What are your plans for childbirth?
 - a. Where do you plan to deliver this baby—a hospital, birth center, at home, or are you unsure?
 - b. When you have this baby, do you hope to have a vaginal birth, cesarean (c-section), or are you unsure?
 - c. (More information about cesarean births can be found [here](#).)
 - d. Do you plan to take something for pain during labor?
 - i. If yes: do you plan to get an epidural?

(More information and resources are available [here](#).)
 - e. Do you plan to have a support person with you during labor?
 - ii. If yes, would that be a doula, spouse/partner/boyfriend, other family member, or someone else (who)?
3. (Possibly following Q11 on the screener) How do you plan to feed your baby in the first few weeks—breastfeed only, formula feed only, both breast and formula feed, or have you not decided yet?
- 4a. (Possibly following Q17 on the screener) Over the past week (7 days), how often have you felt the following things?
 - » Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)
 - » Some or a little of the time (1–2 days)

- » Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3–4 days)
- » Most or all of the time (5–7 days)
 - a. I felt depressed.
 - b. I felt that everything I did was an effort.
 - c. My sleep was restless.
 - d. I was happy.
 - e. I felt lonely.
 - f. People were unfriendly.
 - g. I enjoyed life.
 - h. I felt sad.
 - i. I felt that people disliked me.
 - j. I could not get “going.”

4b. (Following 4a above) Over the last 2 weeks (14 days), how often have you been bothered by the following problems?

- » Not at all
- » Several days
- » Over half the days
- » Nearly every day
 - a. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge.
 - b. Not being able to stop or control worrying.
 - c. Worrying too much about different things.
 - d. Trouble relaxing.
 - e. Being so restless that it’s hard to sit still.
 - f. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable.
 - g. Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen.

5. (Possibly following Q20 on the screener) Do any of these things make it hard for YOU to come to appointments?

- » I do not have a car.
- » The bus or train is hard to use to get to my appointment.
- » I do not have enough money to pay for a ride to the appointment.
- » My work hours make it hard to come to appointments.
- » I do not always have someone I trust to watch my older children.

- » My spouse/partner/boyfriend does not want me to come to appointments.
- » Other reasons (describe).

Staff may also consider a health-related social needs screener such as [this one from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#).

Visit: https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/billers-and-providers/p_mssprenatalscreeningguide.pdf

Can Organizational or Program Staff Administer and Use Child Development Assessments?

According to some experts, the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is the easiest assessment to train staff to administer and can identify children who are not meeting developmental milestones.

Welcome to ASQ

This welcome web page from Ages and Stages Questionnaires provides links to introductory slides on the ASQ, a developmental screening toolkit, and resources for partnering with parents.

Visit: <https://agesandstages.com/landing-page/welcome/>

Tips and Resources for Virtual ASQ Screenings

This web page from Ages and Stages Questionnaires provides step-by-step guidelines and links to resources on administering the ASQ in a virtual environment.

Visit: <https://agesandstages.com/free-resources/articles/tips-and-resources-for-virtual-asq-screenings/>

What Resources Are Available on Wellness, Self-Care, and Isolation Reduction for Young Parents?

We compiled strategies from various sources about supporting young parents' mental health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic, but many of them apply at any time.

- Provide mental health support.
 - » Offer therapy.
 - » Check in regularly to keep open lines of communication—active listening.
 - » Encourage people to communicate feelings—verbally, in writing, and through art.
 - » Give as much certainty as possible.

- Offer parenting and family support.
 - » Organize meal trains.
 - » Provide emergency child care.
 - » Offer virtual lactation consultation.
 - » Check in with the kids.

- Promote healthy self-care.
 - » Help people set priorities, expectations, and boundaries for their many responsibilities.
 - Do this for parents, teachers, workers, students, community leaders, children, siblings, spouses, and teammates.
 - People may have to make trade-offs or give something up.
 - » Strategize how to take 10 minutes a day of alone time.
 - » Encourage uninterrupted sleep, even for a few hours.

- Encourage safe socialization.
 - » Create supportive communities.
 - » Organize “social meal trains”—groups doing Zoom or phone calls.
 - » See if there are ways to offer a physical presence, safely.
 - » Encourage people to contact (call, text, email) three people a day, just to check in.
 - » Offer video games, books, or other family activities.

- Find modes of fulfillment.
 - » Help people give back to the community—perhaps through policy or advocacy work.
 - » Encourage a grateful attitude.

These strategies come from the following sources:

- [How to Tackle Millennial Loneliness](#)
- [COVID-19 Has Taken Away the Village: How New Parents Can Cope](#)
- [Advice for Parents Who Are Feeling Isolated: “Ask for what You Need, Give What You Can”](#)
- [Parent Voice during a Pandemic: Ascend PSP Parent Advisors Share Their Quarantine Stories](#)

What Models Are Available for Engaging Young Fathers?

Many resources for young parents focus on birthing or custodial parents, who are more likely to be mothers. But models and resources are available for young fathers.

PRACTICE MODELS

Responsible Fatherhood Programs and Resources

This web page from the National Fatherhood Initiative provides links to several evidence-based programs for fathers and supporting resources. Many programs that are not specifically focused on young people have resources to reach out to them.

Visit: <https://www.fatherhood.org/programs-and-resources>

Serving Young Fathers in Home Visiting Programs

This brief from the Urban Institute summarizes findings from a qualitative research study that explored the strategies five home visiting programs use to engage fathers, as well as fathers' experiences with home visiting.

Visit: <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/76126/2000539-Serving-Young-Fathers-in-Home-Visiting-Programs-Highlights-from-a-Research-Study.pdf>

OTHER RESOURCES

Fathers at Work Initiative

This final report on the Fathers at Work initiative explains how the national demonstration was designed to help noncustodial fathers with low incomes become more involved in their children's lives. The evaluation found that the initiative, which provided job training, placement, child support, and fatherhood services at community-based organizations, produced benefits for families.

Visit: <https://www.fatherhood.gov/research-and-resources/working-dads-final-report-fathers-work-initiative>

Activities for Dads and Kids

This web page from the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse is a searchable database of resources on activities for fathers to engage in with their children.

Visit: <https://www.fatherhood.gov/for-dads/activities-for-dads-and-kids>

Fatherhood Research and Practice Network (FRPN)

The FRPN offers a series of publications, webinars, and technical assistance materials for researchers and practitioners in the fatherhood field.

Visit: <https://www.frpn.org/>

Parenting Tips for Dads during the COVID-19 Crisis

This pamphlet from Wayne State University provides tips for fathers about how to parent during COVID-19 (available in English and Spanish).

Visit: <https://socialwork.wayne.edu/coronavirus/fathering>

What Are Some Examples of Community Colleges and Other Postsecondary Programs That Provide Support for Student-Parents?

Most young parents have children before they meet their education and career goals. Some colleges are more “family friendly,” meaning they have supports that consider the needs of students with children.

Find Your Way: A Guide to New England Colleges and Universities for Students with Children

This guide catalogs how colleges in the New England region serve student-parents.

Visit: <https://www.wcwonline.org/images/pdf/find-your-way-new-england-wcw.pdf>

Find Your Way: A Guide to Mid-Atlantic Colleges and Universities for Students with Children

This guide catalogs how colleges in the Mid-Atlantic region serve student-parents.

Visit: <https://www.wcwonline.org/images/pdf/find-your-way-mid-atlantic-wcw.pdf>

Family-Friendly Campus Toolkit

This toolkit for colleges identifies practices colleges could implement to better serve student-parents. (You’ll need to sign up to download the toolkit, but that’s just so they can know who is using it. It is free to use.)

Visit: <https://familyfriendlycampus.org/>

Campus Family Housing Database

A searchable national database of colleges that offer family housing on campus, with links to more information.

Visit: <https://www.wcwonline.org/Family-Housing/family-housing-project-database>

What Sources of Funds Could Be Used to Support Young Parents in Education or Training?

These resources could help support the costs of postsecondary education and training.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING SOURCES

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Education and Training Funds

This summary from the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) provides several examples of innovative ways states use TANF dollars to fund academic and support services to help parents and caregivers receiving TANF attain the education and training they need to succeed in the workforce. The page also links to publications that discuss opportunities for states to improve their use of the TANF program to support participant education and training.

Visit: <https://www.clasp.org/tanf-education-and-training-resources/>

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plans

The WIOA state plans include a description of each state's WIOA youth program, including funding for tutoring, supportive services, adult mentoring, dropout recovery, and more. It also provides a description of available youth funds and youth program strategy, design, and eligibility. The plans also describe how funds are to be distributed and leveraged for young people with significant disabilities.

Visit: <https://wioaplans.ed.gov/>

SNAP to Skills (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Employment and Training—E&T)

This Food and Nutrition Service program provides funding to states to support employment goals for SNAP recipients. States set forth their plans in their annual SNAP E&T Plans. States have considerable flexibility to determine which SNAP participants to serve (including whether participation will be voluntary or mandatory), which specific services—or components—to offer, and who will provide the services (the state, community colleges, community-based organizations (CBOs), and/or American Job Centers engaged by the state). Flexible funding is available to meet participant needs through the provision of a 50/50 match to nonfederal program costs. Washington State is a leader in its SNAP to Skills program and use of federal funding.

Visit: <https://snaptoskills.fns.usda.gov/about-snap-skills/what-is-snap-et>

PROMISE PROGRAMS

“Promise” Programs

This database lists “promise” programs that provide college scholarships and the different ways they are constructed.

Visit: <https://www.upjohn.org/promise/>

SCHOLARSHIPS OR FUNDING THAT CAN ENHANCE PELL GRANTS

Scholarships Available for All Kinds of Students

This list of scholarships is for students of diverse backgrounds at various types of institutions.

Visit: <http://www.collegescholarships.org/scholarships/student-specific.htm>

Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) Scholarship Resources

This scholarship resource guide is for Latino high school, college, and graduate students.

Visit: <https://www.maldef.org/resources/scholarship-resources/>

Scholarships for Foster Kids

This web page lists scholarship opportunities for young people formerly in foster care, as well as state-by-state policies to make college affordable for young people aging out of the foster care system.

Visit: <http://www.collegescholarships.org/scholarships/foster.htm>

FinAid

This resource includes information on financial aid for college and tips on how to help ease the burden of college expenses.

Visit: <https://finaid.org/>

What Do Family-Friendly Careers Look Like? What Are Some Intentional Education and Career Pathways to Recommend for Young People?

Not all careers are supportive of the multiple responsibilities of parenthood, especially for young people who come from complex social backgrounds. These resources look not only at salary, but also at other measures of job quality for families.

Work Context—Structural Job Characteristics

This resource looks at individual jobs along a range of “work context” indicators that may relate to family friendliness.

Visit: https://www.onetonline.org/find/descriptor/browse/Work_Context/4.C.3/

Great Place to Work's Best Workplaces for Parents™ 2021

This resource may provide some insights into good employers for parents.

Visit: <https://www.greatplacetowork.com/best-workplaces/parents/2021>

Understanding Good Jobs: A Review of Definitions and Evidence

This report from Urban researchers examines what makes a job “good.”

Visit: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/understanding-good-jobs-review-definitions-and-evidence>

A Most Egalitarian Profession: Pharmacy and the Evolution of a Family Friendly Occupation

Claudia Goldin has done research on egalitarian professions and highlighted pharmacists as one of the most gender egalitarian.

Visit: <https://scholar.harvard.edu/goldin/publications/most-egalitarian-profession-pharmacy-and-evolution-family-friendly-occupation>

Making the Business Case for Employee Well-Being

This resource was written by Urban researchers on why “work-life balance” and good benefits is a good business practice.

Visit: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/making-business-case-employee-well-being>

Chicagoland Workforce Funding Alliance

This web page shares some resources and publications about job quality and employer and workforce system partnerships. For example, the study on stable scheduling ([summarized in Slate](#)) shows the benefits when retail workers can rely on regular schedules.

Visit: <https://chicagoworkforcefunders.org/what-we-are-learning/>

National Fund for Workforce Solutions' Job Quality Initiative

This learning community offers a set of publications about what quality work looks like. The job design framework is a good place to start:

Visit: <https://nationalfund.org/our-solutions/activate-employers-to-make-jobs-better/job-quality-resource-center/>

Resources for Policymakers

What Are Some Models to Facilitate Young Parents' Access to Parental Leave?

Leave can be important for a birthing parent's physical healing, family attachment, and healthy child development. The laws and supports vary widely across states and employers.

State Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Laws

Twelve states and the District of Columbia have or will soon have public paid parental leave. This report summarizes the details of the policies.

Visit: <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-leave/state-paid-family-leave-laws.pdf>

Paid Leave Research

This web page collates the research on public paid leave programs. This [policy brief for Montana](#) may be particularly useful as a reference.

Visit: <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/economic-justice/paid-leave-resources.html>

What Flexibilities Are Possible under TANF to Provide Ongoing Support to Young Adults in Education and Training?

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF, also known as welfare or cash assistance) is a flexible block grant for states that allows them to provide cash support and other employment-supporting services for families with low incomes.

TANF imposes [federal limits](#) on the hours spent on education and training that the state can count toward meeting its [work participation rate](#) (WPR). The following are examples of such limits:

- Young people who are heads of a TANF unit are able to count high school participation or participation in GED classes as work activities only until they reach age 20. In practice, TANF administrators may only be applying this allowance for young people under age 18.

- TANF law limits how many adult recipients in the state can participate in vocational education and have that counted toward the state’s work participation rate (30 percent of those counting toward work participation may be either teen parents or adults engaged in vocational education); TANF recipients are also limited to 12 months of participation in these activities in a lifetime. This means young adults must compete for a limited number of training slots and then may be unable to finish their training program while receiving cash assistance.
- There is no limit to the percentage of people engaged in on-the-job training who may be counted as participating in work; however, on-the-job training is rare for TANF cash assistance recipients.

These restrictions pertain only to what can count toward the WPR—no federal prohibition exists on states allowing TANF recipients to engage in any activity that the state decides to allow. States have [wide discretion](#) to design programs and services.

- While the federal target WPR is 50 percent, many states have an adjusted rate much lower to account for credits for state spending above the federal requirement and caseload reduction, meaning most TANF participants do not need to count toward the WPR. The WPRs for 2020 can be found on [this web page](#)—many states are comfortably meeting the standards.
- States can choose to use state-only funds not included in their state match (maintenance of effort, or MOE) dollars to fund cash assistance to participants and avoid these federal limits entirely.

There may be state-level rules about how education and training may be counted.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AROUND SUPPORTING TANF CLIENTS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- State and local [interventions](#) that have provided longer-term educational opportunities for TANF clients have produced positive outcomes.
- It is [developmentally appropriate](#) for young adults to pursue educational goals well into their twenties, and it is encouraged for young adults with family privilege. The TANF limits on education and training can have the perverse consequence of preventing a young adult with low income from achieving the foundational credentials needed to pursue further educational goals and/or family-sustaining employment.

TANF-SUPPORTED WRAPAROUND SUPPORTS

States have wide ability to shape TANF-funded case management and wraparound supports.

- Tennessee changed rules to make [CCDF child care subsidies](#) equally available to TANF parents as long as they are complying with their Personal Responsibility Plan, which [can include education](#). This is part of the state's [two-generation approach](#) to human services.
- Some promising practices exist around providing specialized services for young people and integrating TANF funds with funding to support training and education for young people through the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in Minnesota](#).
- In 2014, [Minnesota expanded education and training access for cash assistance recipients](#). The state [passed legislation](#) that year to allow TANF (locally known as the Minnesota Family Investment Program) participants unlimited participation in education activities as part of their employment plan. Previously, they had needed to jump through procedural hoops and could be required to participate in other countable work activities. Caseworkers are required to inform participants with a high school credential of the opportunity to participate in postsecondary education or training.
- [Arkansas's Career Pathways Initiative](#) uses TANF funds through the state community college system to fund adult students' nontuition expenses. Results included better graduation rates and postgraduate earnings than participants' peers, as well as a positive ROI.
- Kansas used TANF funds to support clients engaged in five credits of certified nurse aid (CNA) training in partnership with the Kansas Board of Regents as part of the [Accelerating Opportunity Kansas initiative](#).
- New York City [allows](#) four-year college through the [CUNY EDGE](#) program, a partnership with City University of New York (CUNY), along with access to supports like child care and transportation subsidies for TANF recipients. Homework hours are counted toward the work requirement to the maximum extent possible.
- As part of a general reorientation of human services toward career pathways, New York City also has a [YouthPathways career program](#) for young people ages 18 to 24 to receive cash assistance and wraparound supports.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AROUND PROVIDING WRAPAROUND SUPPORTS FOR YOUNG PARENTS RECEIVING TANF

- To successfully make the transition to adulthood, young people require a network of supports that provide stable access to resources to meet their basic needs and opportunities to access quality education and employment. For many, this comes through family and other social networks. Many TANF recipients do not have a stable, private network of supports that can help them navigate and succeed in education and training (especially if they are the first generation of their family to go beyond high school) and need developmentally appropriate administration of supports to make the most of opportunities.
- Substantial evidence shows that coaching that goes beyond compliance can [support economic mobility](#) for people with low incomes.

What Flexibilities Are Possible to Streamline Benefit Access as Young People Cycle among Work, Unemployment Insurance, and TANF?

The flexibility of not having wages or earned income count against benefits is called an “earned income disregard” in TANF. There is no federal constraint on earned income disregards, and the policies that currently disregard income for parenting young people vary by state. [This table](#) from the Urban Institute’s [Welfare Rules Database](#) (table II.A.1) offers an overview of state earned income disregards and shows the wide state-specific policy variation as of 2019. Here are two examples:

- Iowa provides a disregard that includes work-related expenses such as taxes, transportation, meals, and uniforms.
- Kentucky provides a one-time, two-month disregard if the cash assistance recipient becomes newly employed or reports increased wages acquired after approval.

Urban’s [Work Support Strategies](#) evaluation found several strategies that states have used to streamline benefits access, including in TANF, such as

- reducing unnecessary verification requirements and aligning eligibility across public support programs to reduce application burdens, including length of benefit eligibility and auto-enrollment; and
- changing business practices, including updating methods for greeting customers, accepting applications, and processing changes.

This report from the Urban Institute details flexibilities that states implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to make accessing and maintaining TANF benefits feasible under pandemic conditions. These flexibilities included disregarding at least some portion of unemployment benefits; suspending work requirements or removing noncompliance penalties; suspending job search requirements; and changing approaches to state time limits to allow more families to continue to qualify. Some of these flexibilities could be made permanent to allow the program to be more flexible in supporting participant work.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AROUND STABLE CASH ASSISTANCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE MOVING IN AND OUT OF WORK

- TANF recipients are largely workers who cycle on and off public programs and low-wage jobs. This is destabilizing and to plan for the future families need stable sources of support.
- Families receiving cash assistance, like many families with low incomes, will need time and support to make up economic ground lost during the pandemic.

Are There Ways to Help Young Parents Avoid Cliff Effects?

Cliff effects are sharp reductions in public benefits that can compound across programs and occur very quickly when a program participant increases their earnings or work effort.

Cliff Effect Project in Colorado

The Cliff Effect Pilot in Colorado was implemented legislatively. Colorado is a county-administered TANF state, so the participating counties came up with various “formulas” on how to turn the cliff into more of a slope for caregivers who went over the eligibility ceiling (formulas are listed in the appendix of this report). Even with the various formulas, it was hard to completely turn the cliff into a slope without the caregivers more consistently getting increases in pay (rather than, for example, a one-time small increase or sporadic child support income).

- The cliff affected a very small percentage of caregivers; most enrolled in Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) have very low incomes. The state ultimately did not continue the cliff effect pilot and increased the ceiling so that fewer caregivers would reach the cliff. Colorado was mostly exploring this within the legislative or policy pieces of CCCAP, so not really other funding mechanisms. It is not clear how using other funds for paying copays or other care costs would affect eligibility for the subsidies.

Here's more detail on Colorado's strategies:

- First, through proposals from the H.B. 1335 work group, initial income eligibility levels were changed to align with the [self-sufficiency standard](#). This rule change more closely aligns with the lived experiences of families experiencing poverty.
- Second, related to income exit thresholds, Colorado set the ceiling for receiving CCCAP at 85 percent of the [statewide median income](#). Increasing the state median income exit threshold reduces instances of the cliff effect and allows families to remain eligible for child care assistance until they have reached a higher level of self-sufficiency.
- Third, families may only be deemed ineligible for child care subsidies for limited reasons during the 12-month eligibility period. This policy change ensures that children can consistently attend child care and caretakers can be successful in their work or school activities.
- Lastly, Colorado delinked child care needs from caretaker work or education activity schedules, which allows children to attend child care daily.
- Collectively, Colorado's policy changes recognize that stability in early childhood is important for children's healthy development, particularly among those who have experienced adverse early childhood experiences.

Visit: <https://www.bellpolicy.org/2018/03/29/colorado-cliff-effect-pilot-program>

Balancing at the Edge of the Cliff: Experiences and Calculations of Benefit Cliffs, Plateaus, and Trade-Offs

This report summarizes insights from qualitative interviews with current or recent TANF participants about how they experience trade-offs between benefits, taxes, and work. It also reports results from microsimulation modeling of how benefits and taxes respond when income changes. The report includes 2018 data from Colorado, Minnesota, and New York. The report includes policy recommendations to reduce cliffs, including the following:

- Benefits could not drop so quickly after an increase in earnings or a grace period could be offered for families to stabilize their new employment situation.
- Benefit program staff could help program participants effectively use programs, including understanding the interactions between work, benefits, and taxes. The government could also create public resources to help people better understand program interactions, such as an online calculator, or simplify the rules and interactions among public assistance programs and the tax system.

- Benefit amounts could increase to better fill the gap between earnings and the cost of meeting basic needs. If some supports, especially related to housing and child care, could be universal, it would provide certainty and stability that may help parents feel more confident fully transitioning off public assistance.
- The labor market could reduce barriers to parents getting well-paid, quality jobs and compensate workers at higher wages.
- The government could pay some or all tax credits monthly. This would allow families to include them in their regular budgets, making drops in benefits less severe.

Visit: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/balancing-edge-cliff>

What Resources Are There to Offset Child Care Copays for Young Parents in School Receiving Child Care Subsidies?

Many child care subsidy programs require parents to pay some amount as a copay for services.

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Fact Sheet

The SSBG could be used to offset child care copays, as well as other costs associated with publicly subsidized care.

Visit: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/fact-sheet/ssbg-fact-sheet>

Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Family Copayment Contribution

The state CCDF could explore waiving copayment increases for students. One issue to be aware of is that depending on how steep the sliding fee scale is, it could result in a pretty big shock after they get out of school and lose the special treatment. It may make sense to phase it out gradually after the students graduate so that they do not suddenly face a large increase.

Visit: <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/ccdf-fundamentals/family-copayment-contribution>

Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program (CCAMPIS) Awards

CCAMPIS grants can support the costs of child care for parenting students. The amount of CCAMPIS grant awards and the overall allocation to the program has increased in recent years.

Visit: <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/campisp/awards.html>

For Unemployed Parents, Child Care Remains a Question Mark

This blog post from the Urban Institute explores data on challenges that unemployed parents are facing

around child care. It includes suggestions for states around providing care through CCDF for unemployed parents who are looking for work.

Visit: <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/unemployed-parents-child-care-remains-question-mark>

Bridging the Gap Initiative

This is an Urban Institute initiative focused on supporting the child care needs of parents in education and training. Urban examined the systems, policies, and practices that affect access to child care for parents with low incomes who are seeking education and training to improve their skills and job prospects. Here are some relevant publications:

- “Framework to Help States Facilitate Access to Child Care for Parents with Low Incomes in Need of Education and Training”
- Challenges and opportunities in *Supporting the Child care and Workforce Development Needs of Families on TANF*
- Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) state eligibility policies and services for families in education and training; see also the executive summary

Visit: <https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/cross-center-initiatives/building-americas-workforce/projects/bridging-gap>

How Can Colleges and Partners Better Support Students with Children?

These resources may be useful for institutions and partners who want to improve supports for student-parents.

In Support of Intergenerational Learning: The Two-Generation Classroom as an Approach for Postsecondary Pedagogy

This report describes how a college can effectively educate student-parents *and their children* through an intergenerational pedagogy:

The Two-Generation Classroom is an approach to teaching and learning offered within the general education core to facilitate parent/child intergenerational learning, intentionally designed for and targeting student parents with young children (although non-parenting students may also enroll with a sibling, friend, or other child that they care for). Using hybrid learning designs that allow students to complete “adult” oriented assignments outside of class time, using weekly classroom time for two-generational integrated arts teaching/learning activities, and including a weekly “family homework” assignment, the Two-Generation Classroom approach aims to address and reduce inequity in college access and success for

student parents, while ensuring excellence and rigor in the curricula through targeted learning objectives, and differentiated learning and engagement outcomes for adult and child.

Visit: <https://www.wcwoonline.org/images/pdf/in-support-of-intergenerational-learning-two-generation-classroom-approach-publication-autumn-green.pdf>

Aspen Ascend Postsecondary Success for Parents Initiative

This effort from the Aspen institute includes a set of national leaders on student-parent issues, a blog for student-parent leaders, and various funding opportunities that also highlight higher education institutions doing good things in the student-parent space.

Visit: <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/postsecondary-success-for-parents/>

Ohio State University Student Parent Support Symposium

This annual workshop highlights student-parent issues and opportunities in higher education. The website includes recordings and materials from past symposia.

Visit: <https://odi.osu.edu/national-student-parent-support-symposium>

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