



Chaer Robert, Coordinator
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
789 Sherman St #300
Denver, CO 80203
303-573-5669 x307
www.cclponline.org/skills2compete
@skill2competeco

Child Care for Education and Skills Training

Compared to their non-parent peers, millennial parents (age 18-34) nationally are:

- More likely to live in poverty
- More likely to be working
- More likely to work nights
- More likely to go to school at night
- More likely to have a BA
- Spend about 1/3 less time on education each day
- Have less financial support from their families
- Take longer to graduate (only 1/4th graduate within 6 years compared to 65% of nonparents)
- Have more debt when they graduate (25% more debt for a B.A.)



--- *Find Time: Millennial Parents, Poverty and Rising Costs*
Konrad Mugglestone, Young Invincibles, May 2015

We all recognize that education and skills training are necessary tools for realizing one's full economic potential. For mothers of children under six who don't have a high school diploma, 66% live below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). For mothers of children under six with a B.A., however, only 11% live below 200% of the FPL.

Nationally, 26% of post-secondary students are parents, a little known fact. A frequent challenge for low income students with young children, however, is finding and paying for safe child care so they can attend classes. They may not know that resources exist. Indeed, education and training providers also may not know what resources exist, expecting students to make their own arrangements.

Resources for child care for education and skills training are a patchwork of federal, state, foundation, private and other resources. Too often these available resources are not aligned with the unique needs of each parent. Parents often require evening, night, weekend and part time care in order to accommodate their work and class schedules.

Resources for child care include CCCAP, TANF, CCAMPUS, Strengthen Families Initiative, (Federal) WIOA, SNAP E & T, and foundation and private donors. However, only a fraction of parents are served through these programs and the patchwork of varying resources at various schools can be difficult to discover and navigate.

Meanwhile, employers in Colorado are experiencing a shortage of workers who are trained to the middle skill level- i.e. those who have some post-secondary education, but not necessarily a 4 year degree. Relying on new high school graduates alone is insufficient to fill the workforce system's demands; current workers need to add skills to meet current need.

Nationally, only 12% of available jobs are open to those who lack a high school diploma. (*Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020*, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2014). With over 9% of Colorado adults lacking a high school diploma, there is a clear need to foster accessible education and skills training opportunities so that these individuals can find and sustain meaningful employment. Successful creation of such opportunities will allow every Coloradan to reach their full potential and contribute back to their communities.

Challenges facing State Departments:

The Colorado Child Care Assistance Program funding is maxed out. Will its budget be increased? How would waiting lists affect access to education and training?

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Single parents, long term TANF recipients, and those with lower levels of literacy are supposed to be prioritized for services according to the federal law and regulations and our state plan. Those individuals are more likely to need support services such as child care to succeed in completion of training, but our research and inquiries have shown that WIOA support services dollars are very limited.

The Colorado Department of Human Services is promoting a two generation approach to poverty related issues. This approach warrants working with the parents of children in child care to advance their education and training and vice versa.

The Colorado Department on Education- While focused on the K-12 student, CDE includes not only teen parents but adults in WIOA funded Title II Adult Education. Child care is not a permitted use of Title II funds and yet many in the adult education program are parents. Prohibiting young parents from utilizing Title II funds for child care is detrimental to the goal of helping them reach their full economic potential through education and training.

The Colorado Department of Higher Education has concrete goals on credential attainment and graduation rates as well as the percentage of students who graduate within 6 years. It is critical that student parents successfully complete their education in order for CDE to meet its goals. Online education may play a role in expanding educational opportunities for parents of young children, but for parents whom must attend classes in person, affordable child care is a necessary component of completing their education.

Proposal

We propose a one year task force of the four state departments with overview of the above issues , as well as community organizations and parents themselves.

Goals of Proposed Task Force:

1. Identify resources so community stakeholders and state officials can work together to serve student parents of young children in education and skill acquisition, as well as clearly identify existing gaps.
2. Identify best practices of employers promoting and funding access to education and training for parents of young children.
3. Identify and streamline processes internally and across departments to ensure that a need for child care does not hinder a person's ability to reach their full potential through education and skills training.
4. Identify any needed legislation.