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**Opinion Article** 

# An Evaluation of Student Scheduled Child Care Programs on Parents' Educational Goals

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### **DESCRIPTION**

The goal of this study is to see if a Student scheduled Child Care (SSCC) programmer had any impact on the families of students achieving their higher education goals at a college in the United States' southwest region. Most college and university officials are concerned about student completion rates. According to a Gates Foundation study, more than three-quarters of former students believe they would have graduated if their college or institution had provided child care. This correlational and descriptive research study looked at how student families felt about the connection between accomplishing their educational goals and using the college's child care programmer. This project's findings may contribute to a broader discussion among schools and universities about how to best retain student families by satisfying their child care needs.

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE AND LAB SCHOOL (CDCLS)

During the summer semester of 2008, the Child Development Centre and Lab School (CDCLS) of a college in a major metropolis in the United States provided student-scheduled child care to the campus community. The pilot programmer was developed to assist student parents with their child care needs by providing low-cost, high-quality child care as determined by state licensure (OKDHS, 2013) and national accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2012). The head of this college stated in an interview that

the programmer was inspired by interactions with students. He had simply asked the students what they would change about the college if they were president, and one of the most common responses was the availability of reliable, inexpensive, and high-quality child care. A student previously told the university president that they were one failed babysitter away from dropping out of college.

The programmer is for children aged six weeks to eight years old and is now in its eighth year. Student parents are college students who have custody of minor children and are enrolled in credit-bearing coursework. Single parents, parents with deployed spouses serving in the US military and family members with custody of small children are among the student parents in the programmer. Parents of students enroll their children and secure a seat for them that correspond to their full class calendar. When caring for young children, a pre-enrolment process provides the lab school with all of the information required by state licensing and national accreditation bodies. The lab school, which originated on the college's main campus and is now located one mile north of it on college property, serves both the college and the surrounding community. A lab school is often a functioning school that serves both the educational and mentoring needs of pre-service teachers. The lab school can schedule degree-seeking students from nearby colleges and universities who are required to observe in classes of young children now that full-time and Studentscheduled Child Care programmer children are enrolled.

Three local universities, three community colleges, the

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Department of Human Services, area child development centers, and professional development centers for early education all visit the lab school in this study. At the lab school, students from the fields of early childhood education, elementary education, allied health, nursing, psychology, and sociology perform laboratories and/or observe others. Student parents can enroll their children for as many session times as they need; this option allows families to pay for only the child care they require while they are in class, thus reducing the overall child care cost.

### **COLLEGE RETENTION TRENDS**

On most college and university campuses in the United States, student retention is a major concern. Every year, colleges and universities spend millions of dollars to keep their student lists. President Barack Obama and his administration have expressed national concern about the country's deteriorating educational system. President Barack Obama, like a number of previous US presidents, believes that education is the key to a rising nation's economic development. With community colleges accounting for the majority of higher education in the United States, President Obama has challenged these schools to raise the number of graduates by five million by the year 2020.

Although some students may not fully comprehend the emotional consequences of dropping out of college, the majority of students would agree that having a college credential has some financial benefits. According to a recent study, an employee with a college degree will have continuously quadrupled the income of a wage earner who did not graduate from an institution of higher education throughout the course of their lifetime. According to Georgetown University's Centre for Education and the Workforce, present and new firms in the United States will require an estimated twenty-two million new college educated employees by 2018. This means that a minimum of an Associate's degree is required for 63% of occupations in the United States. According to Georgetown University analysts, the United States will fall short of this objective by three million employees at the current pace of college graduation. The current presidential administration is willing to invest roughly \$12 billion in higher education reform, beginning with community colleges.

Despite the fact that college enrolment has been gradually increasing in recent years, with almost two and a half million students predicted to enroll by 2015, a large number of these students will not graduate. In the United States, only about 60% of students who begin a college career complete their degree. The present downward trend in retention is not exclusive to community colleges. According to previous studies, a number of universities with outstanding research programmers and postgraduate degrees struggle to retain their students. Between the first and sophomore years of college, a survey of four-year colleges found a 22% reduction in retention.

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