

The Child Care Needs Survey Findings and Recommendations

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February 22, 200

Executive Summary

The Child Care Needs Survey Findings and Recommendations

I think that it is crucial to the success of any student parent. Having a safe, affordable, quality setting for your child is paramount to any other pressures put on the student. If a student can be assisted in this manner it greatly increases their chances of completing their degree and providing for the future of their children. (An undergraduate student mother of a 3 year old)

The Child Care Needs Survey was developed in order to assess the levels of need for affordable quality child care by Eastern Michigan University student parents. Eastern Michigan University has a diverse student population, including a significant proportion of non-traditional students who are predominantly female single heads of households living at or below the poverty line. Child care has emerged as a critical area of need in higher education institutions across the country, and particularly at Eastern Michigan University where non-traditional, first-generation college students struggle to attain a post-secondary education as the one pathway out of poverty. This Survey was designed to explore the perceptions of EMU student parents, their child care needs, and their concerns.

Profile of Respondents

- A total of 479 respondents
- 56% are full time students
- 74% are undergraduate students
- 24% are graduate students
- 87% are women
- 67% are Caucasian
- 24% are African American
- 45% are single parents
- 48% have children 2 or younger
- 32% have children ages 3-5
- 21% have children ages 6-10
- 43% have monthly income of less than \$1100
- 24% pay monthly child care costs of \$400 or over
- 85% work (off campus, on campus, work study)

Highlights of Findings

Unaffordable Child Care Costs and Poor Quality Care

It is hard to find quality child care that is also affordable!! I would like to put my son in a day care center, but the price is too high...The group daycare he is in now is very inexpensive but I am very unsatisfied with the quality of care. I work 40 hours per week and take classes 3 nights a week (2 nights in the coming winter term)... and it is hard to make ends meet! I make too much money to qualify for FIA child care assistance, especially when they do not recognize the fact that I need extra evening care so I can complete my education. (A part-time single student mother)

- 74% had difficulty finding affordable and satisfactory child care
- 27% reported that children lived with a friend or relative for a period of time.
- 44% are in need of a child care subsidy
- 39% have their children in licensed child care

The Academic Costs: The Impact on Student Parents

I had to withdraw from the fall semester. My grandmother was watching my child for me and she became ill and therefore I had no one else to watch him... my financial aid that I was awarded for the Winter semester has been cancelled. I am currently on probation for an entire year. (A freshman student mother supporting herself and her infant son on less than \$600 a month)

- 80% report limited time to study
- 46% have failed to complete an assignment
- 15% have failed at least one class
- 18% have had to drop out of school at some point
- 55% have been hindered in completing their degrees

Diverse Child Care Needs: Expanded Coverage and Flexible Hours

I have missed classes, brought my children to class and been late to class (an hour or so) due to the lack of child care. Especially at night. We had relative care, but that did not work out. I have scheduled my classes to make as little child care time as possible and have not been able to do adequate research because of the lack of child care... I know that I would have finished my degree much sooner ... had I been able to have child care assistance. The 'affordable' child care is very often substandard. We just happened to luck out with a friend of my oldest son's mother who does child care. She only goes until five pm, so I will have to leave a class early on Wednesdays to pick him up. (A married senior with school-age children)

- 44% need infant and toddler child care
- 74% need care for children 5 and under
- 31% need care for children over 5
- 38% need care for school age children during school breaks
- 63% need late afternoon/evening care
- 16% have used the Children's Institute

Recommendations

Affordable, High Quality Child Care Should Be Available To All Student Parents

- Establish a Child Care Scholarship Fund to insure that all student parents have the same rights to post-secondary education as all Eastern Michigan University students
- Implement a sliding scale that makes child care affordable for all student parents, including those with the lowest incomes
- Increase Financial Aid grants for low-income student parents to incorporate child care costs
- Establish a Campus Child Care Information and Referral Service
- Expand hours and flexibility of child care on campus to meet the needs of working parents and evening/weekend students
- Address the significant need for provision of infant care by expanding on campus infant care services, and creating special subsidies for students to locate high-quality community-based infant care



**The Child Care Needs Survey
Findings and Recommendations**

The Child Care Needs Survey was developed in order to assess the levels of need for affordable quality child care by Eastern Michigan University student parents. As Eastern Michigan University is a metropolitan campus with diverse student constituencies, including a significant proportion of non-traditional students who are predominantly female, a concerted effort was made to explore the particular needs of student mothers, many of whom are single heads of households living at or below the poverty line.

Eastern Michigan University has a long history of serving a diverse and non-traditional population of students. It has the highest percentage of women students of all Michigan universities as well as in the Mid American Conference. With a high concentration of non-traditional students, specialized and responsive support services are necessary to enhance student retention and graduation rates among adult learners. One of the acute needs of non-traditional women students is access to affordable, high quality child care.

Child Care Needs and Low Income Student Parents – A Brief Overview

The academic literature in higher education consistently cites child care as a barrier for non-traditional female students (Gittell, 1996; Institute for Women's Policy Research, 1998), many of whom are struggling to exit poverty through access to post-secondary education. Nationally, single mother families constitute 82% of single parent families, almost half of whom are living in poverty. Yet research on the access of the poor to higher education has neglected the particular dilemmas and burdens of this population (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996). For single mother households post-secondary education offers one of the few exits out of poverty and is necessary to mitigate gender and racial discrimination in the job market, particularly as women need a college degree to earn the same amount as men with only a high school education (Institute for Women's Policy Research, n.d.). There is also growing evidence that the 1996 Welfare-to-Work legislation has driven many low-income single mothers out of post-secondary education. The Michigan House Standing Committee on Colleges and Universities concluded in 1998 that recent changes in the welfare system in Michigan had a negative

effect on single parent enrollment in college, and downward state enrollment trends mirror national trends (Kahn & Polakow 2000; Kaufmann, et al., 2000).

Access to quality child care also constitutes an ongoing barrier for low-income student parents. Recent national reports on child care have documented unsafe, unsanitary centers, poor quality care, lack of regulation, closed access and chronic unavailability to low-income families particularly infants and toddlers (Sherman et al., 1998). In 2000, a Michigan child care audit documented that large numbers of young children in poverty are being placed in informal unlicensed child care settings with abusive and dangerous providers (Michigan Office of the Auditor General, 2000). State child care subsidies are low, often covering only 50% of the full cost of care, which ranges from \$500-900 per month for a toddler in Washtenaw County and \$400-825 in Livingston County, at high quality licensed settings. The lack of access to affordable quality care threatens family stability as mothers experience acute stress which frequently undermines academic success. Conversely, the positive outcomes of child care have been extensively documented: high quality child care leads to increased cognitive and social competence (Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, 1999; Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 1997), and is predictive of academic success for both children and for their mothers in post-secondary education (Gittell, Gross, & Holdoway, 1993).

Rationale for Survey at Eastern Michigan University

Child care has emerged as a critical area of need in higher education institutions across the country (Gittell, 1996), and assumes a particular urgency here “at home ” where many at Eastern Michigan University are non-traditional first-generation college students struggling to attain a post-secondary education as the one sure pathway out of poverty.

At Eastern Michigan University, informal reports from faculty who teach student parents, particularly low-income student mothers, as well as administrators and staff at the Office of Financial Aid, the Children’s Institute and the Women’s Center all point to unmet child care needs, with frequent crises precipitated in student parents’ lives when child care is inaccessible. In order to assess the level of need and investigate the scope of

the problem at Eastern Michigan University, the Child Care Needs Survey was initiated. The Survey was designed to explore the perceptions of EMU student parents, their child care needs, and their concerns.

Methodology

The child care needs survey was developed in collaboration with the Applied Research Center at the Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Communities, with input from student parents, the Children's Institute and the Office of Financial Aid. The survey began with a "qualifying" item that asked if the respondent had any children under 18 who lived with them. The respondents were instructed to continue the survey only if the answer to this question was "yes." The survey consisted of another 29 closed-ended questions and two open-ended questions. Questions were designed to discern information about the respondents' current child care arrangements, child care needs, and their history of child care experiences, as well as general demographic information. To encourage candor, respondents were guaranteed anonymity. The survey was made available on-line through a link on EMU'S home page on December 15th 2001, and paper copies of the survey were mailed on January 4th 2002 to students with dependents receiving financial aid, and distributed at key campus sites. Respondents who received surveys by mail were provided with a pre-paid envelope to return the survey. Responses were collected until February 4th 2002. Respondents were eligible for a drawing to win a Barnes & Noble \$100 gift certificate. To enter the respondent either sent an e-mail or returned a form with his/her name and phone number. In both cases names and telephone numbers were kept separate from the survey data to maintain the anonymity of the survey responses.

One hundred seventeen (117) qualified respondents returned completed paper surveys and 362 completed qualified online surveys for a total of 479 respondents. The survey had a high response rate of 479 demographically diverse students, representing both graduates and undergraduates. Please see attached graphs for further demographic description of the sample.

Profile of Respondents

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Findings

Unaffordable Child Care Costs and Poor Quality Care

- 74% had difficulty finding affordable and satisfactory child care
- 27% reported that children lived with a friend or relative for a period of time
- 44% are in need of a child care subsidy
- 39% have their children in licensed child care facilities
- 43% have monthly income of less than \$1100
- 24% pay monthly child care costs of \$400 or over.

Students referred repeatedly to their difficulties accessing affordable child care that was both safe and of acceptable quality. The majority of student who experienced acute stress related to child care costs and quality were single student mothers, working and earning less than \$1100 per month. The following “snapshots” capture the multiple obstacles they confront, with few if any supports on Campus.

Students in Poverty: Coping with Child Care Costs

One senior, a single parent, describes how she juggles the budget to pay her bills, oftentimes sacrificing her academic needs:

Many times I have to take time off work, school, or both to stay at home for lack of a babysitter. Also I have found it hard to pay bills due to my child care bills. Most of the time, I use the financial aid, gifts, scholarships and loans just to pay off child care which sometimes means I am not able to buy books that I need for class...

Another single mother, in her senior year, is only able to attend school part-time as she struggles to locate affordable child care for her two children, an infant and a preschooler, while attempting to make ends meet on a monthly income of \$600-849:

Child care costs are extremely expensive. I get a paycheck only to pay for their child care. It's hard to find classes that work around people who are single parents, have jobs during the day or night, and have child care problems.

A freshman student, new to the campus and subsisting on a monthly income of less than \$600 per month, encounters great difficulty finding child care for her young daughter:

I'm new here at EMU and finding quality affordable child care is impossible especially when all you have is work-study. I sometimes even resort to bringing my child to class so that I am sure she is safe...

A senior describes her situation as a single mother with a 5-year-old son:

I can't afford to spend anything on child care; therefore if I can't find a way to finagle child care for free he has to come to class with me. Very stressful!

A part-time junior, divorced, and receiving no support from her former spouse, currently subsists on a minimal income with three school-age children. She receives no child care subsidy and pays between \$150-200 a month in school-age child care costs, stating:

I am unable to study properly due to lack of affordable daycare on the budget that I have. I make \$1000 in take home pay per month and my rent is \$606 a month.

One graduate student, living in poverty with a monthly income of less than \$849 per month, struggles to cope with her kindergarten son's child care needs:

My son takes the bus to school, and on the days when the bus is off of schedule, he misses the bus, and then I have to take extra time to get him to school which is a half-hour away from where I live. Also, on the days that he doesn't have school, I have to call off work and miss class to stay at home with him. My son attends a half-day kindergarten school, so I have difficulty in fitting in work and school during the time he is at school. And just making ends meet with the little money I have coming into my home, sometimes it becomes very hard for me to cope.

Parental Stress and Poor Quality Child Care

Student mothers caught between cost and acute child care needs, experience constant stress and anxiety about their children's experiences in poor quality child care environments. One student mother, a junior, works 40 hours a week, yet reports a monthly income of less than \$850. Despite receiving an FIA child care subsidy she can only afford an unlicensed setting where:

The children do not learn anything and the child care consists of just watching them...they are mostly alone with a caretaker or with other children their age in a home. No education occurs.

Another junior, also a single parent works full-time off campus and attends school part-time earning over \$1100 a month but still cannot secure affordable child care for her toddler:

It is hard to find quality child care that is also affordable!! I would like to put my son in a day care center, but the price is too high...The group daycare he is in now is very inexpensive but I am very unsatisfied with the quality of care. I work 40 hours per week and take classes 3 nights a week (2 nights in the coming winter term)... and it is hard to make ends meet! I make too much money to qualify for FIA child care assistance, especially when they do not recognize the fact that I need extra evening care so I can complete my education

Some students describe actual fears for the physical safety of their children in cheap child care settings that are unsafe. One student describes a situation where both her children's safety was compromised stating:

...they have both been injured ...and I wasn't informed of the injury or the circumstances.

A single parent and full-time sophomore, has encountered major problems accessing safe, affordable quality care, her schoolwork has suffered and she has been placed on academic probation. Denied an FIA child care subsidy, despite working 20 hours a week and earning less than \$600 per month, she currently pays \$150-199 in child care costs for her infant in an unsafe, unlicensed day care home, where she writes,

My son was in a day care for twelve hours a week and he came home with bite marks all the time. I found other children using his blanket and bottle...

Another full-time sophomore in a two-parent family partially supported by her grandfather has encountered numerous academic problems (failing classes and limited study time) due to her inability to find satisfactory child care, and was forced to pull her child out of a poor quality center and rely temporarily on relatives:

The biggest problem is the cost. (At the center) another problem was other children abusing my child and the staff was unable to make it stop. I didn't feel comfortable leaving her there any longer. Other places I looked into were too expensive so I decided to pull her out and keep her home

The Academic Costs: The Impact on Student Parents

- 80% report limited time to study
- 46% failed to complete an assignment
- 15% failed at least one class
- 18% had to drop out of school at some point
- 55% were hindered in completing their degrees

A single parent and part-time undergraduate has two children in need of care: one an infant, the other a young school-age child. While she works off-campus 35 hours a week, she has a monthly income of less than \$1100. Her academic progress is impaired and she reports taking incompletes and failing classes as she commutes and juggles child care:

I commute from Detroit, and have to leave my 2 children with relatives. Sometimes I have to miss a class if I can't find someone to keep my children...

Another single mother of an infant, had to drop out of school as a junior due to child care problems. She, too, has a very low income \$600-849 a month, and despite working 25 hours a week does not receive a child care subsidy. She describes her difficulty in finding child care close to campus and now relies on relatives, friends, and babysitters:

Right now I take her to classes with me and have a friend or relative wait outside if she gets fussy. This is expensive, distracting and difficult. This 18-month cut-off (at EMU Children's Institute) has been a huge limitation in my ability to go back to school.

A junior, a single parent of a preschooler, receives a partial child care scholarship, but still has to work full-time to cover child care expenses with consequent costs to her academic progress:

Working full-time as a single parent does not allow for much study time. I would like to be able to go to school full-time and work less hours but with the cost of child care this is not permissible...There should be some type of funding for students so that they are not consumed with child care costs.

One senior, a single mother of a toddler, describes the unreliable financial support from her child's father and the precariousness of her academic progress:

My whole education relies in my son's father's hands. He has let me down a few times and left it up to me to come up with the couple hundred dollars for child care. If I couldn't I would have to drop out of school.

A freshman, living in poverty, with less than \$600 per month to provide for herself and her infant daughter, works 28 hours a week but could not cope with the demands of child care and school:

I had to withdraw from the fall semester. My grandmother was watching my child for me and she became ill and therefore I had no one else to watch him...my financial aid that I was awarded for the winter semester has been cancelled. I am currently on probation for an entire year.

Diverse Child Care Needs: Expanded Coverage and Flexible Hours

- 44% need infant and toddler child care
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- 38% need care for school-age children during school vacation
- 63% need late afternoon/evening care
- 16% have used the Children's Institute

Students in two-parent and single parent families expressed the need for subsidized, expanded child care services, and late afternoon, evening, and weekend care. Both undergraduate and graduate students consistently voiced strong demands for affordable child care for infants, preschool, and school-age children with flexible hours that could accommodate course schedules. Many expressed their frustrations about how unmet child care needs compromised their academic programs.

An undergraduate student on academic probation writes:

I feel the university should offer quality, affordable day care with flexibility to fit a parent's class schedule. It might even benefit many parents to have an after

school program for older children. I have talked to many young women who drop out of Eastern after finding out they are pregnant. I think they would be more likely to stay if they knew there was an excellent, affordable day care option right on campus.

A married student in her senior year, attends school part-time, while balancing her schedule around her school-age children and describes her makeshift child care plans:

I have missed classes, brought my children to class and been late to class (an hour or so) due to the lack of child care. Especially at night. We had relative care, but that did not work out. I have scheduled my classes to make as little child care time as possible and have not been able to do adequate research because of the lack of child care...I know that I would have finished my degree much sooner ...had I been able to have child care assistance. The 'affordable' child care is very often substandard. We just happened to luck out with a friend of my oldest son's mother who does child care. She only goes until five pm, so I will have to leave a class early on Wednesdays to pick him up.

A senior, with a preschooler and infant, describes her scheduling problems and recommendations:

Because of my husband's work schedule and the lack of child care options in the evening, I cannot currently take any classes after 4:00 pm, and since I work full-time during the day it has been very hard for me to find classes that I can take...(Recommendations include) having evening and saturday child care available. Also, having a flexible or drop-in schedule where parents can bring their children in to attend class if needed.

Graduate students articulated similar frustrations, with one graduate student mother saying,

Do not ignore the evening students. We have no options at this point. Communicate the options to students. I have never received any communication regarding child care options at EMU.

Another graduate student who commutes from Flint writes “provide child care for parents attending class on Saturdays.” A graduate single mother of school-age children expresses her dissatisfaction with her limited options:

Without child care, I could not even attend college. Having my mother watch my children is cheap, but she is not my first choice in someone to watch my children. She is harsh and restrictive, but at least she is willing to watch them while I go to school...(Child care should be) more widely available. Kids over the age of 10 need to be monitored also ...

Another graduate student expresses similar concerns:

EMU does not accommodate for evening daycare facilities. This has caused me to skip a few classes if my babysitter is unavailable, or I have had to bring my daughter to class. I can't understand how EMU does not offer graduate classes during the day when the day care is available, and does not offer day care to evening graduate students who are typically older and may need this. I do not feel it is right for students to pay for added services included in the tuition bill when most graduate students do not take advantage of them, and yet one of the primary concerns of single parents is the availability of day care services. I would like to see this service available during evening classes from 6-9:30 for graduate students.

For those parents who wanted to, but were unable to send their children to the Children's Institute (only 16% of student parents enrolled their children), strong concerns were expressed about time slots, lack of infant care for children under 18 months, and inaccessibility due to cost. A commuting student expresses her frustration saying,

Eastern's child care services only take children over the age of 18 months, which makes it difficult for student parents who have younger children and who commute. I ... would like to bring my children with me to campus but my son is under 18 months. Also only one of us, my husband and I, can afford to go to college at a time; so it is taking us longer to finish our degrees.

A full-time junior, who relies on her parents to pay for child care, writes:

The Children's Institute is just too expensive for quality care...Eastern (should) make child care subsidies available to ALL student parents.

Another junior with a preschooler expresses her frustration because she was unable to send her daughter to the Children's Institute:

...When I applied for my daughter I was unable to get her in because of my schedule. I was told to take earlier classes. I shouldn't have to work around their schedule. I found that the prices at EMU weren't that much cheaper than other places. As students we should be able to have affordable child care at the times we need. People shouldn't be turned away or told to rearrange their schedules. Because of the high costs I have had to look elsewhere for child care.

Another student parent, whose child does attend the Children's Institute, expresses similar concerns about costs and scheduling of classes:

It is hard for me to arrange my classes to fit between their designated time slots without having to jump to the cost of having to pay for a full day of day care.

There should also be a greater difference in the charge the Children's Institute charges for students and non-students for child care.

Students in the Sha dows

Student parents who responded to the open-ended questions on the Survey (Questions 29 and 31) were predominantly women and they articulated a sense of alienation from the Campus, feeling marginalized because of their non-traditional student status, and oftentimes angry that they were Eastern Michigan University's 'shadow students,' whose academic needs were unmet and their educational aspirations thwarted. They described a Campus climate indifferent to their distinctive and gendered needs as student mothers and felt that they received little or no support for the multiple responsibilities they faced juggling school, work, and child care often on very limited budgets. Some student parents encountered such acute child care problems that they found it necessary to live apart from their own children in order to complete school. Over a quarter of respondents (27%) reported that they had a child live with a friend or relative for a period of time. Overall, the open-ended narratives responses revealed a pervasive sense of exclusion from a learning community, coupled with frustration about obstructed academic progress

A senior, working 45 hours a week and attending school part-time writes of her frustrations accessing affordable child care for her toddler as she now faces academic probation:

...someone should want to see student parents move ahead in this world not everyone these days gets through school in four years from 18-22 with mom and dad's help. A lot of students pay and make there own way...we ALL need some assistance...I almost feel like we are left out of the university, like we don't matter 'cause we don't fit the prime target demographic for the university.

One full-time junior, a single mother of five children (two of whom are under 6) is employed off campus, yet makes less than \$1100 for her family of six. She has had innumerable problems locating child care and school-age care for her children and her school work has suffered, as she has missed classes, failed to complete assignments, and has limited time to study. She writes:

I have no idea where to turn for help...I am highly discouraged...

A senior with two small children expresses her frustration in terms of delayed degree completion as she juggles work, child care and required courses:

... EMU is not just a school attended by the typical 18-22 year old, living on campus. You have MANY non-traditional students and very limited amenities for those students. If EMU had child care available in the evenings I could have been finished with my degree a year ago...

A graduate single parent with two children under the age of four, earning less than \$850 a month asks:

Does EMU even care about its students let alone the children of its students? My experience has been that the staff has no concern for the student population and has no care if they fail or succeed in their endeavors at EMU. The bottom line is the all mighty dollar...

Lack of information about child care and options available to students in need of financial aid exacerbate frustrations. Eighty two percent of student parents in the survey did not know that child care costs may be included in one's student aid budget.

One junior, a single mother of a toddler writes:

If child care costs can be figured into financial aid calculations, why have I never heard this before?? This information should be made available to student parents (especially single ones) upon receipt of SAR by the financial aid office!!!!

A graduate student single parent of a preschool child writes:

Eastern has done a horrendous job of assisting and educating students with children on resources that can assist them with their child care needs. There are no referral services on campus for after normal hours child care providers...Recognize and correct the fact that Eastern is not utilizing 'our' student fees in ways that benefit our population on campus. Eastern should be compelled to operate in a more equitable manner, when it comes to the unrecognized population of students with children...

The collage of “snapshots” of Eastern Michigan University student parents convey a composite picture of extreme need, daily struggles negotiating the terrain of school and child care, with large numbers of students subsisting on budgets less than half the federal poverty line for their family size. Students who are struggling to stay afloat juggling their children's needs for quality child care with their meager budgets and academic demands frequently find themselves on a downward academic spiral—no time to study, missed classes, incompletes, academic probation, and dropping out of school. It is clear that student parents are a non-traditional student constituency with unique needs, and that they currently exist as shadow students on the margins of campus life.

One student eloquently points to the essential ingredients for success of this non-traditional student constituency:

I think that it is crucial to the success of any student parent. Having a safe, affordable, quality setting for your child is paramount to any other pressures put on the student. If a student can be assisted in this manner it greatly increases their chances of completing their degree and providing for the future of their children.

Recommendations

Lack of affordable child care takes its toll on student parent families and the University community. The 479 participants in this survey clearly expressed concerns about their inability to afford good child care and the barriers to successful completion of their degrees. Given the importance of post-secondary education for single mothers (the largest group in the survey) and the University's expressed commitment to its diverse and non-traditional population of students, it is incumbent upon the University to address the needs of this marginalized student constituency. Below are recommendations that emerged from the findings of the Survey including specific suggestions from students who completed the narrative questions.

Affordable, High Quality Child Care Should Be Available To All Student Parents

- Establish a Child Care Scholarship Fund to insure that all student parents have the same rights to post-secondary education as all Eastern Michigan University students
- Implement a sliding scale that makes child care affordable for all student parents, including those with the lowest incomes
- Increase Financial Aid grants for low-income student parents to incorporate child care costs
- Establish a Campus Child Care Information and Referral Service
 - Referrals to off-campus quality programs
 - Provide information about child care resources and financial support to potential and current students on the EMU Website, in Admissions and Financial Aid packets
- Expand hours and flexibility of child care on campus to meet the needs of working parents and evening/weekend students
 - After school and school vacation care for school-age children
 - Evening and week-end care, particularly for working and graduate students
 - Drop-in child care (at library or other central location) so students can study
- Address the significant need for provision of infant care by expanding on campus infant care services, and creating special subsidies for students to locate high quality community-based infant care

Eastern Michigan University's Strategic Direction #4 states that "Eastern Michigan University will become a model for the principles of diversity and inclusion," calling for the development of "a comprehensive action plan for achieving institutional diversity, equity and inclusion." The student parents who completed this survey represent a significant part of the University community; yet their responses indicate their engagement in University activities is severely circumscribed, and their ability to participate fully as students in a learning community is restricted. They often feel

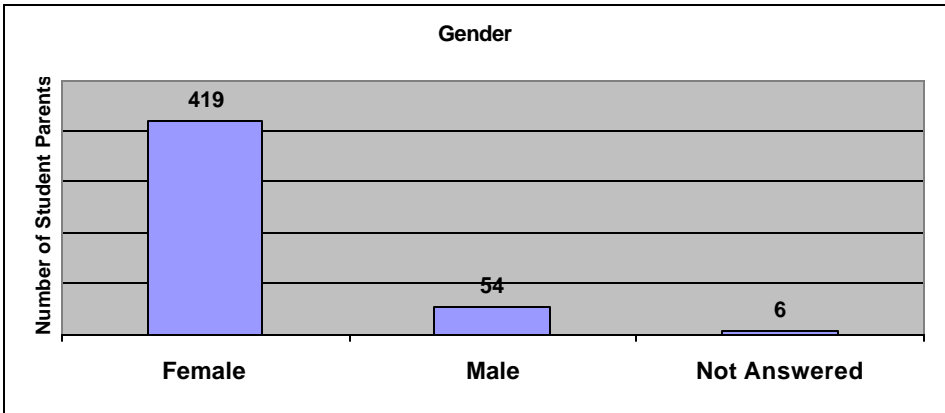
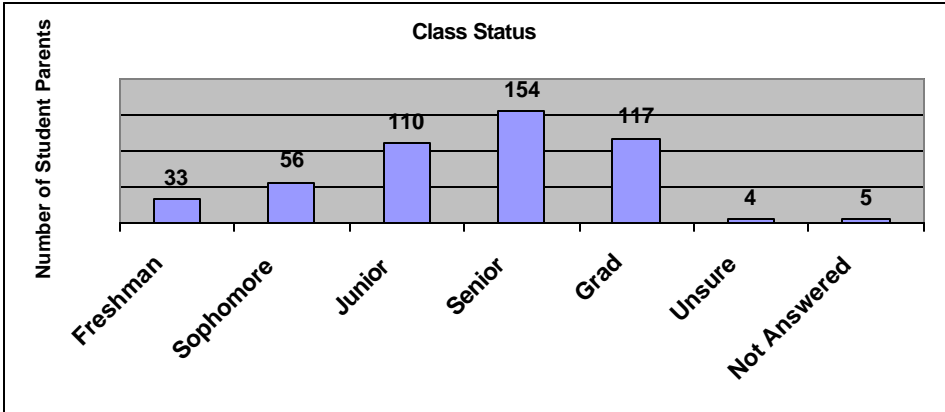
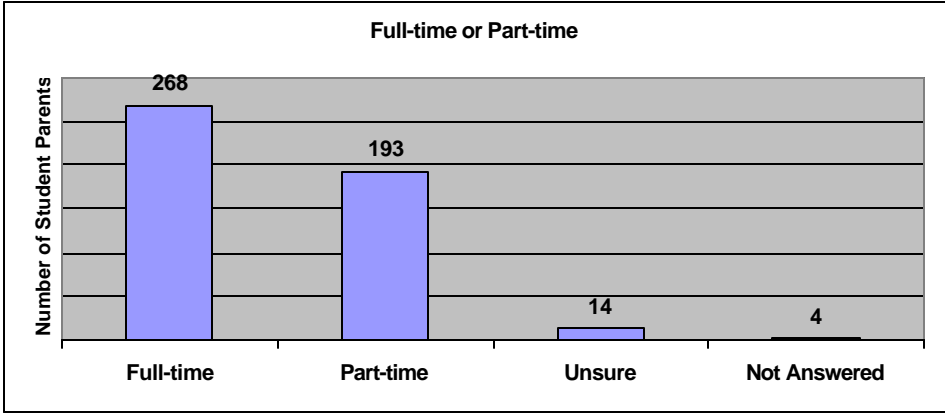
ignored and devalued, as the resources they need are not considered when program planning and development occurs. The stories told by these student parents speak to their own resilience and persistence in overcoming continuing obstacles and constant stress in pursuit of their degrees. The lack of a university support system that addresses child care, a pivotal resource, imperils the academic and economic futures of student parents and their children. For the University to maintain its national reputation as a diverse Campus, the needs of non-traditional students must be addressed as part of a broader educational mission. Innovative child care initiatives not only enhance students' lives, but also contribute to the enhancement of an inclusive learning community.

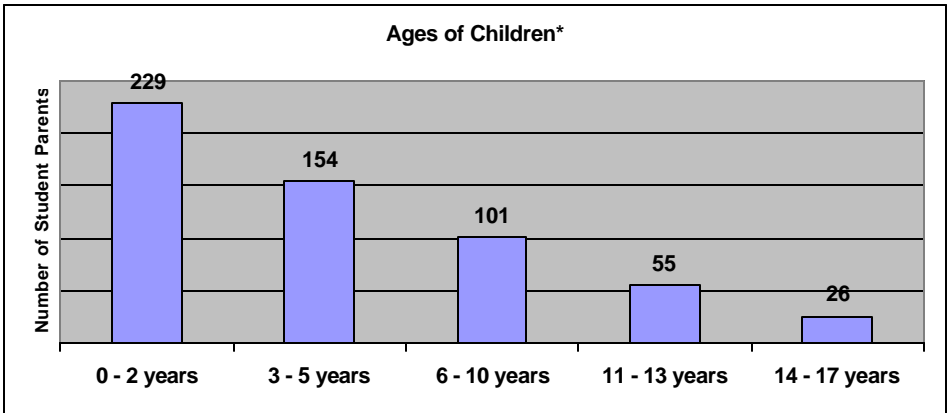
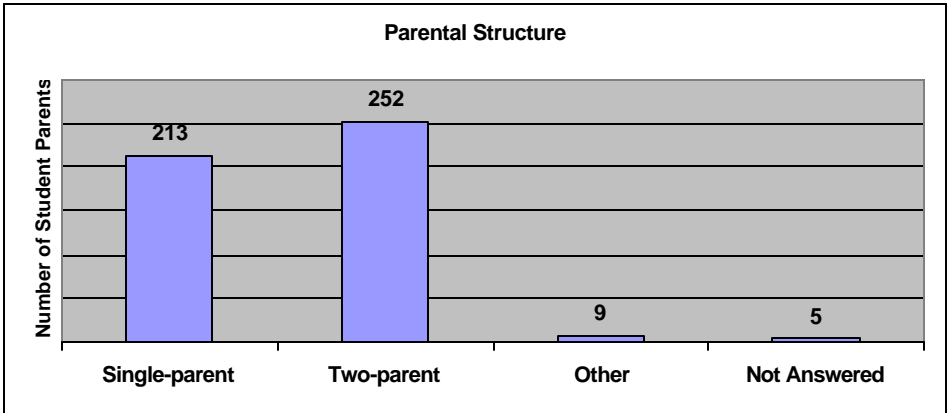
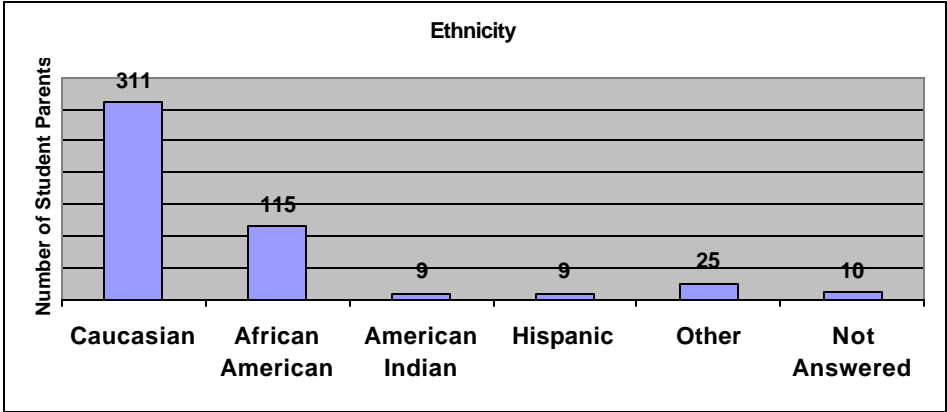
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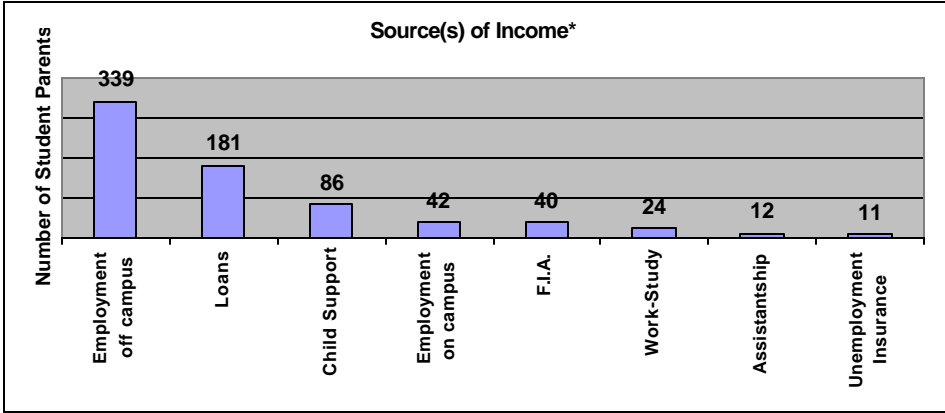


**Graphs of
Child Care Survey Findings**

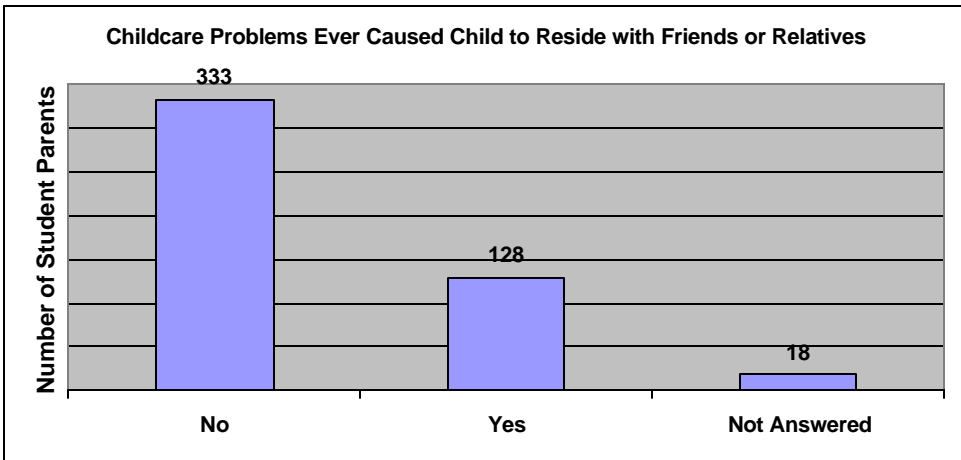
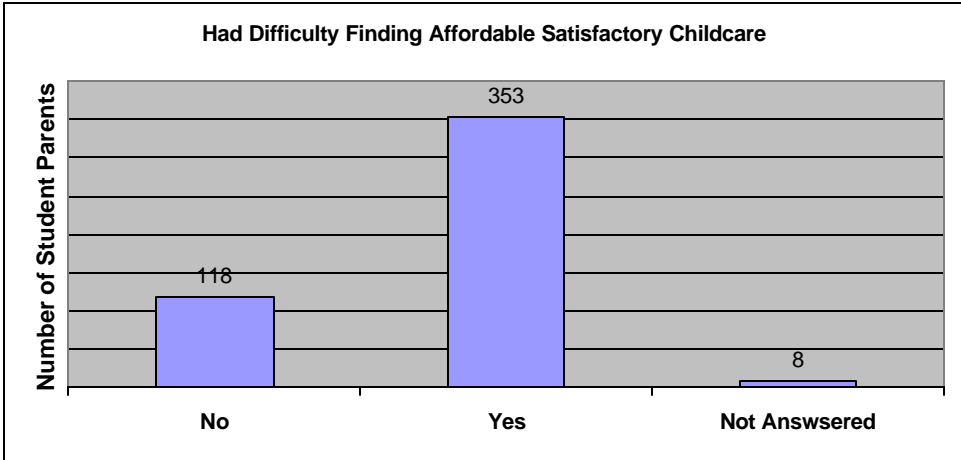


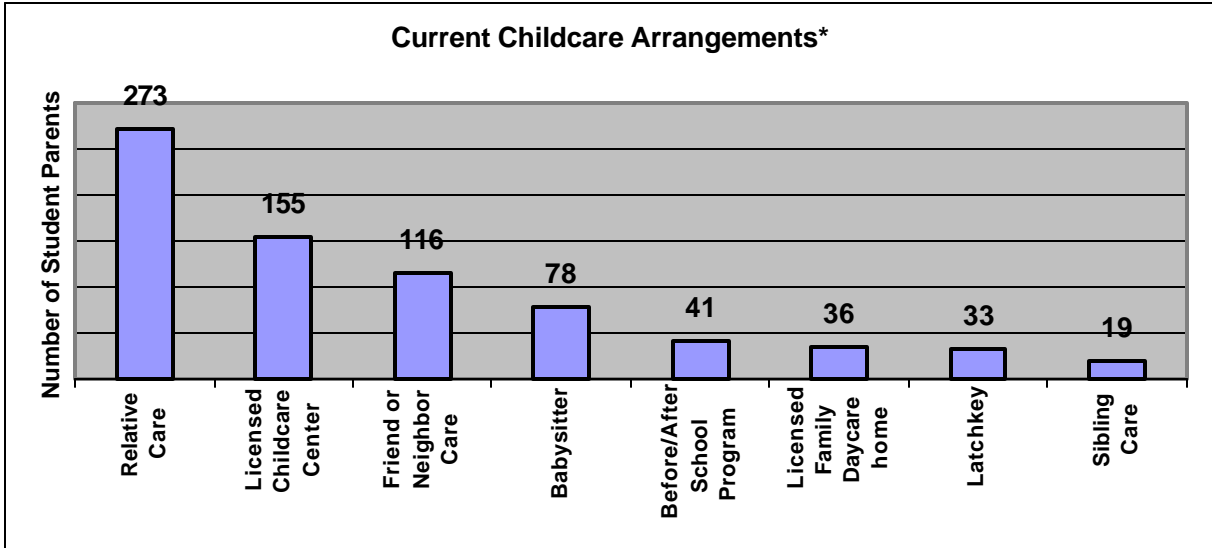
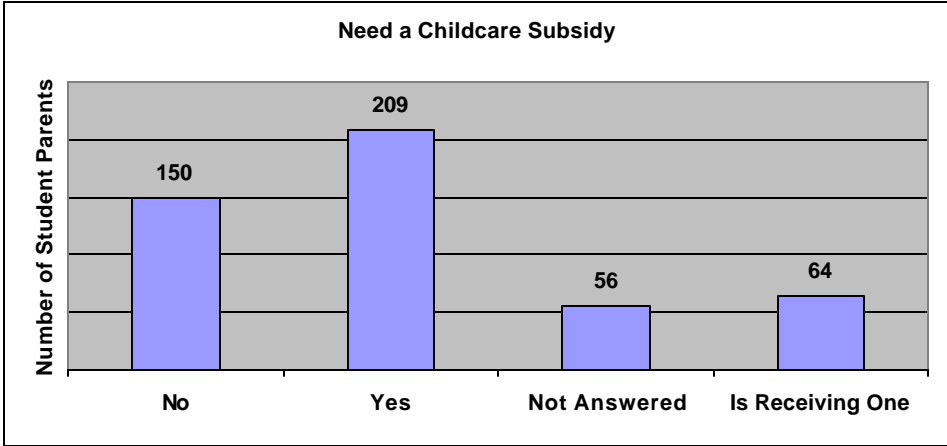


*Respondent could select more than one age group

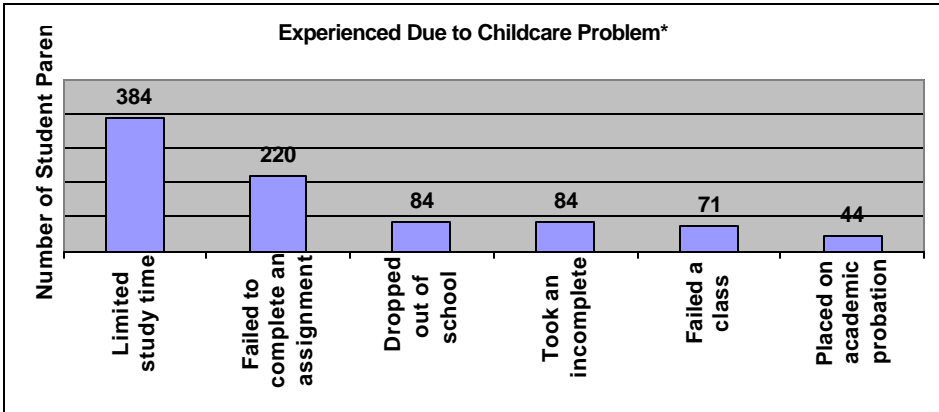
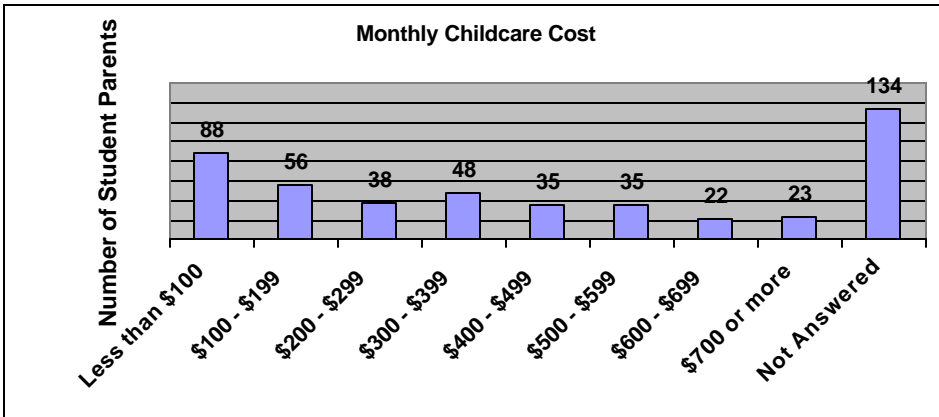
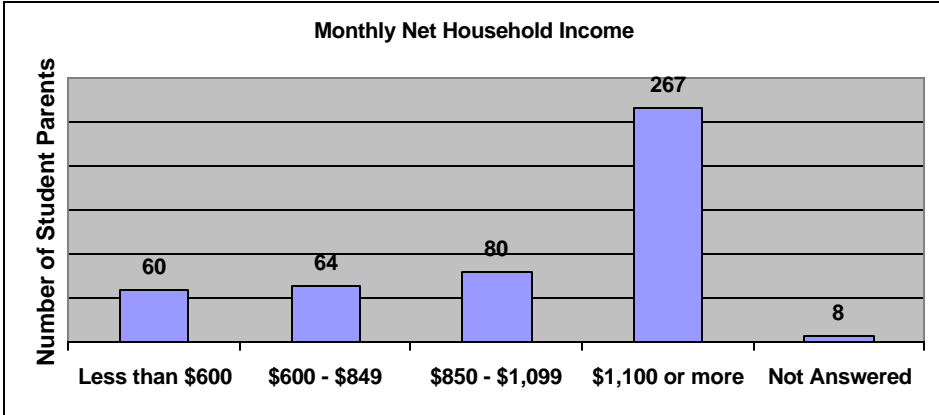


*Respondent could select more than one source.

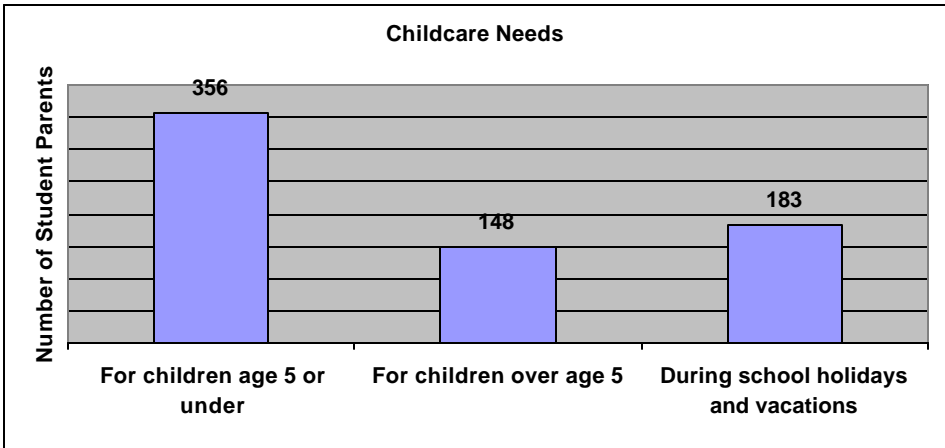
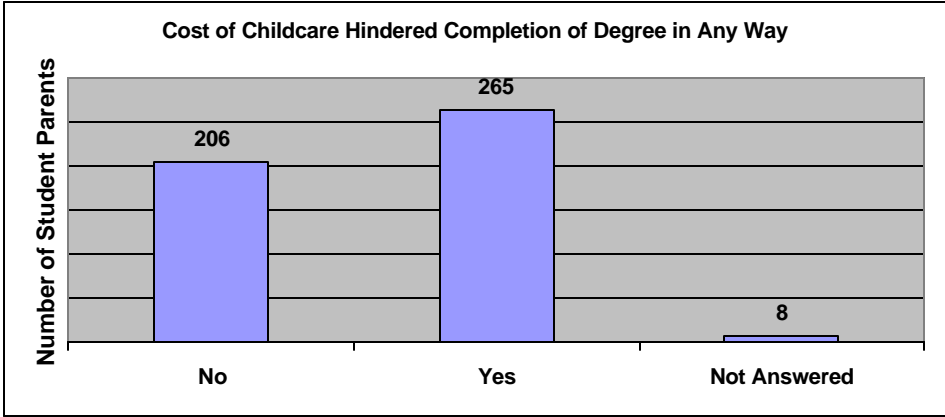




*Respondent could select more than one arrangement



*Respondent could select more than one experience.



*Respondent could select more than one source.

