



Rubric for the Authentic Engagement of Student Parents

A Self-Assessment Opportunity for Partners Working with Student Parents

Kate Westaby
URBAN INSTITUTE

Kimberly Salazar
URBAN INSTITUTE

Afia AduGyamfi
URBAN INSTITUTE

Alyssa Callender
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Alex Davis
CALIFORNIA STATE
UNIVERSITY
CHANNEL ISLANDS

Elaina N. Frieson
KENNEDY-KING
COLLEGE

Lynne Hamblin
ROGUE COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

Alexis Primo-Hawkins
SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE

Kevin Relf
LANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

October 2024

Contents

The Importance of Student Parents	5
The Importance of Lived Expertise	5
The Story Behind This Rubric	5
Using this Rubric	6
Identity Terms in the Rubric	7
Notes	19
References	20
About the Authors	21
Acknowledgments	22

The Importance of Student Parents

By sheer number alone, student parents are important to postsecondary education. Approximately one in five undergraduates are student parents.¹ Student parents receive grades comparable to those of peers who are not parenting,² but they also experience longer degree completion timelines and are more likely to drop out given a lack of societal support for caretaking in education.³ Student parents' success in postsecondary education has intergenerational importance, as the children of mothers who complete degrees are more likely to have higher verbal or reading scores, complete a college degree, and have higher earnings.⁴ Student parents also bring an abundance of diverse perspectives and intersectional cultural experiences as they are more likely to have multiple marginalized identities and characteristics.⁵ Thus, helping them succeed in education reduces outcome gaps.⁶

The Importance of Lived Expertise

In this rubric, we describe how to engage student parents authentically. These descriptions are needed because including people with lived expertise in policy or practice yields more fulfilling, meaningful, and human-centered results. People with lived expertise often provide useful insights that significantly advance processes and protect against systemic harms that can occur when different groups are stigmatized. The exclusion of some parents from research processes has perpetuated negative and harmful stereotypes.⁷

The Story Behind This Rubric

The spark for this rubric began at a panel of student parents at the opening convening of the Urban Institute's Data-to-Action (D2A) Campaign for Parenting Students in October 2023 (box 1). Five student parents from different colleges provided invaluable insights and reflections stemming from their lived expertise. The students strongly advocated for data collection efforts to include student parents throughout the collection, analysis, and dissemination process. Although the college grantee teams were already required to have student parents as co-leaders in their efforts, the Urban Institute recognized the need to have student parent lived expertise to advise the project as a whole. Urban Institute researchers sustained and structurally supported student parents' participation in guiding the project, creating the Student Parent Action and Advisory Group (SPAAG), which convened student parent representatives from each D2A grantee college. Many SPAAG members contributed to and co-authored this rubric.

The rubric format was modeled after and builds on several sources. The first is a racial equity rubric created by Dr. Ja'Dell Davis.⁸ Also, Ascend at the Aspen Institute produced a guide describing "Eight Principles for Engaging and Centering Parent Voices,"⁹ which we reference below and

recommend reviewing in addition to this rubric, as it can add depth to why engaging student parents is essential. The rubric also benefitted from tangible examples of cultural responsiveness in research.^{10, 11} Finally, and importantly, the insights in this rubric also build from the authors' lived expertise as student parents and their professional experiences.

BOX 1

About the Data-to-Action Campaign for Parenting Students

The Data-to-Action (D2A) Campaign for Parenting Students supports colleges in collecting high-quality data on college students' parenting status. Through coaching, technical assistance, and peer learning, the D2A Campaign supports a college community of practice comprising institutions in California, Illinois, and Oregon. These states have taken the lead in passing legislation to collect college students' parenting status at the student-record level, with the goal of improving higher education outcomes for student parents. The Urban Institute is leading a collaboration of motivated colleges, parenting students, two advisory boards, and consultant partners. This team is cooperating to develop new best practices and strategies for responsibly collecting student-parent data that sets a positive example for other related efforts. The D2A team promotes these insights to various stakeholders, allowing more colleges, states, and federal agencies to use data to support the success of parenting students. ECMC Foundation, The Ford Family Foundation, and Lumina Foundation support this project.

Using this Rubric

The intent of this rubric is to guide leadership in engaging student parents in projects, initiatives, or organizations. Whether you are working on a small group project, on a program designed to support student parents, or on evaluating organizational practices for student parents, this rubric offers a flexible framework that can be adapted to guide project or organizational efforts. You may assess project, program, or organizational practices in the rubric, reviewing each principle based on any of these levels. We offer some guidance and ask you to adjust your orientation to the rubric, applying it based on your current or future efforts. Here are ideas to consider given your goals:

- ❑ **Apply the rubric to projects, initiatives, or programs.** This rubric can be used to evaluate and enhance student parents' engagement in specific projects, such as data-collection efforts or the classroom. By applying rubric principles to smaller-scale efforts, you can identify areas where your project might excel or need improvement in fostering authentic engagement with student parents.
- ❑ **Apply the rubric to organizational practices.** On a broad level, the rubric is a tool that can assess how your entire organization engages with student parents. It allows you to evaluate organizational policies, systems of support, and cultural practices, ensuring that student parents are fully integrated into your organizational community. The broader application of the rubric

helps organizations identify systemic strengths and areas for growth to reduce equity gaps and foster success for student parents.

- ❑ **Apply the rubric to ensure adequate funding support.** This rubric demonstrates that community-engaged and community-led work takes time. You can use the rubric to explain your intentional activities to engage the student parent community and ensure that your projects are budgeted and funded adequately to support this work.

After identifying your orientation to the rubric (project, initiative, or program versus organization), assess your project or organization in four areas. You could also apply it to a theory of change, theory of action, or strategic plan if you are planning a project or initiative. The four sections of the rubric assess the extent to which

1. student parents are included in change efforts,
2. spaces feel inclusive for student parents during events or in-person and virtual meetings,
3. student parent data are collected, and student parents are included in data collection and interpretation efforts, and
4. student parents are represented, and community-building efforts are supported.

In each section, teams can rate the extent to which their project or organization engages in this practice from 0 (minimal or absent practice) to 2 (promising practice) and explain this rating. At the end, teams should reflect on practices to celebrate, identify opportunities for improvement, and develop a plan for making improvements.

This rubric demonstrates aspirational criteria for engaging student parents, but we also recognize that real-world constraints (i.e., budget, staffing, time) will inhibit perfect scores. Explaining real-world constraints to student parents is also a recommended practice so they are informed about program or organizational limitations. We also recommend considering this rubric as a continuum or journey on becoming a student parent-serving project or organizational team. It will take time and considerable effort to achieve higher scores, and it is all part of team and organizational growth.

Identity Terms in the Rubric

We are intentional about the terminology used throughout this rubric, recognizing that “student parent” and “parenting student” are important identity terms. These terms are used interchangeably in this document, and when appropriate, we also include “caregivers” to ensure inclusivity. Although the term “caregivers” may not appear frequently due to our engagement of student parents in this work, it is important to note that this rubric is designed to apply to caregivers as well, and as a reader, “student parent” could be swapped out for “caregiver.”

We advise users of this rubric to be mindful of how and when they use “student parent,” “parenting student,” and “caregiver.” It’s essential to strive for the terminology that aligns with the individual’s identity, recognizing the importance of self-identification. This approach not only respects the diverse experiences of student parents, parenting students, and caregivers but also enhances the effectiveness of engagement practices outlined in this rubric.

Section 1: Student Parents (SPs) Are Included in Change Efforts

Principle	2 Promising practice	1 Emerging practice	0 Minimal or absent practice	Why?	Comments
1a. Representation: SPs are strongly represented on boards, committees, teams, or task forces related to SP issues.	Two or more SPs with diverse identities are included in each committee or task force to create SP change, or a student advisory group is created.	Only one SP is included on each committee or taskforce.	There are no SPs at the table when decisions are made about SP data, resources (e.g., housing or basic needs), or outcomes.	Some SPs can feel tokenized being the only one in the room. Having strong, intersectional representation is important to capture a range of SP perspectives.	
1b. Compensation and/or benefit: SPs are appropriately compensated; want to participate; and find they, their families, and their communities significantly benefit from their participation.	SPs are compensated financially at rates similar to consultants or in ways they prefer that are substantively beneficial to themselves or their families (i.e., coverage of travel expenses, gift cards, transportation benefits).	SPs receive some compensation and/or benefits for their participation, but the amount, item, experience is not comparable to other “professionals” and does not significantly benefit them or their family.	SPs receive no compensation or are expected to join the project for minimal compensation or benefit to themselves or their families.	Persons with lived expertise should be paid market-rate ¹² or consultant wages. Sometimes SPs may prefer other types of compensation to avoid conflicts with financial aid or other benefits (e.g., gift cards, travel expenses, or credit hours). Compensation demonstrates valuing lived expertise as a source of knowledge.	
1c. Influence: SPs have agency and their decisions advance initiatives and change.	SPs have authentic voice and agency, and their input directly advances the direction of an initiative or effort.	SPs’ opinions and decisions inconsistently and infrequently influence the direction of an initiative.	SPs are asked for their opinions in one-off instances and their decisions do not substantially influence outcomes more broadly or intentionally.	Do not just bring in SPs to appear inclusive—consider how to engage SPs meaningfully and intentionally in decision-making. Act in ways that promote agency, autonomy, and dignity.	

Principle	2 Promising practice	1 Emerging practice	0 Minimal or absent practice	Why?	Comments
1d. Mentorship and support: SPs are appropriately mentored and supported to be successful in their engagement while promoting personal and professional growth. ^{13,14}	SPs have multiple mentors (formal and informal) who provide them with supportive ideas or opportunities for growth and guidance toward being successful.	SPs have one mentor or feel support and resources are limited and only moderately useful. Guidance is minimally or infrequently focused on growth.	SPs are put into positions of leadership and power with little support and guidance from mentors or others.	Elevating people into positions of power with limited support can be harmful. Organizations could also leverage formal mentoring programs to ensure enough support for SPs.	
1e. Sustained opportunity: SPs are presented opportunities to sustain their participation and efforts.	Organizations identify sustained opportunities for SPs. This might include job offers or network connections to partners with other opportunities.	Organizations consider sustainability for SPs in this work, but follow-through is limited or does not lead to realistic or useful opportunities to the individual SP members.	SPs are provided a one-off engagement opportunity, with no opportunities for sustainability or connections to other opportunities.	If a main goal of the SP field is to build more SP experts in this space, organizations need to treat SP engagements as a potential platform for workforce development.	

Section 2: Spaces Feel Inclusive for Student Parents (SPs) during Events or In-Person and Virtual Meetings

Principle	2 Promising practice	1 Emerging practice	0 Minimal or absent practice	Why?	Comments
<p>2a. Human-centered, holistic, and 2Gen: Spaces feel inclusive for SPs to bring their whole selves, including other identities and roles.</p>	<p>SPs feel their humanity is centered and other identities or roles are welcome in the space.</p>	<p>SPs' humanity feels moderately centered, and identities are sometimes welcomed but sometimes marginalized.</p>	<p>Events or meetings feel overly professionalized in a way that limits personal expression, and events exclude intersectional identities or roles from spaces.</p>	<p>Sometimes spaces can feel exclusive or that students are only allowed to bring their professional selves. Yet students often have complex lives (especially for SPs) that impact professional work. Making space for these complexities can support sustained participation and engagement.</p>	
<p>2b. Child care: Child care or child inclusion is considered when building participatory spaces.</p>	<p>Organization or program provides paid, quality child care at events if SPs need it. Family- or child-centered events are organized (e.g., meals, entertainment, gift exchanges, etc.). In events not focused on SPs, child care is considered.</p>	<p>Child care is sometimes provided. Children are allowed to attend or tolerated, though not accommodated or encouraged to attend.</p>	<p>Child care is not considered or is an expected responsibility of SPs. Child care is not provided at events, and few or no family or child-centered events are held—or children are not allowed in organizational spaces at all.</p>	<p>Parents often need accommodations and care for their children to fully participate. Also, parents must prioritize the care and safety of their children. Event planners should see inclusion of students' children as a collective responsibility as well.</p>	

Principle	2 Promising practice	1 Emerging practice	0 Minimal or absent practice	Why?	Comments
<p>2c. Inclusive meeting flow, timing, and space: Time is provided to think and process, including silence to allow discussion others to lead.</p>	<p>Meeting flow, timing, and space considers SPs. This might include more small-group discussions or pausing to wait for members to have a chance to add their thoughts. Cheat sheets are provided to assist SPs in understanding the context, acronyms, and information being discussed, enabling them to actively participate.</p>	<p>Space is sometimes shared equitably, but sometimes feels unwelcoming for SP voices. Some conversational openings exist, but infrequently, with few openings for SPs to lead the space.</p>	<p>SPs do not have space in the conversation to talk and rarely contribute. SPs are not provided with necessary documents for engagement (e.g., cheat sheet, meeting agenda, etc.).</p>	<p>When concepts such as efficiency and productivity are the pervasive expectation, it can lead to burnout—particularly with the time poverty already experienced by SPs. Challenging these concepts can be a tool for social justice.¹⁵ Silence, rest, and thinking time can be tools for support and are valued in some cultures.¹⁶</p>	
<p>2d. Flexible and asynchronous: Opportunities to participate are flexible and can be asynchronous.</p>	<p>SP status yields automatic access to asynchronous formats, which are offered without expecting the SP to generate their own solutions. Organizers have asynchronous accommodations pre-planned in anticipation of SP needs for all offerings or events. Deadlines are flexible without need for additional explanations (e.g., disability).</p>	<p>Meeting agendas and other guiding materials mention or address SPs' existence, but flexible participation or other needs are not designed or anticipated.</p>	<p>Asynchronous instruction or accommodations are not offered or are offered with significant additional effort required to arrange. Parenting students' responsibilities are not considered in the construction of meetings and other events.</p>	<p>Often, last-minute issues can arise for parents. Children can get sick or have needs that require parents to shift their priorities. Providing asynchronous attendance options or agendas ahead of time can allow SP participation.¹⁷</p>	

Principle	2 Promising practice	1 Emerging practice	0 Minimal or absent practice	Why?	Comments
<p>2e. Additional needs supported: SPs' other needs are supported, including basic needs.</p>	<p>Organizations provide resources to support SP basic needs and acknowledge basic needs as essential to academic success and family well-being. When community programs are stressed or overused, organizations leverage their own funds to support basic needs.</p>	<p>The importance of basic needs is acknowledged, and some organizational support or navigation is provided. Resources SPs are connected to are not always accessible because of overly stringent qualifications or requirements, overburdened systems, and other accessibility barriers.¹⁸</p>	<p>Basic need supports are not in place and community services, particularly overburdened services, are relied upon to fulfill these needs. SPs are primarily expected to figure out basic needs access on their own.</p>	<p>There is growing recognition of SPs basic needs (e.g., nutrition, housing, quality child care, transportation, health supports) in supporting educational outcomes and their ability to participate in change work. And administrative and systemic barriers can bar people in need from accessing necessary services.</p>	

Section 3: Student Parent (SP) Data Are Collected, and Student Parents Are Included in Data Collection and Interpretation Efforts

Principle	2 Promising practice	1 Emerging practice	0 Minimal or absent practice	Why?	Comments
3a. SPs co-design research or data collection: SPs' incredible insights are leveraged to lead research directions during the research design process.	SPs co-design research questions, data collection instruments, or other research design processes. SPs receive ongoing support from researchers throughout the design process, as needed.	SPs are sometimes (but not always) engaged in parts of the research design process. This might include developing research questions or a data collection instrument. However, there are parts of the research design process from which SPs are omitted.	SPs are not provided the opportunity to participate in or co-lead research design. They are only positioned as subjects of research.	SPs are most familiar and knowledgeable about the opportunities and challenges associated with being a SP. Thus, their insights can be incredibly powerful in designing research. And being part of the process presents an opportunity to learn data instrument development or other research techniques for their professional development.	
3b. SPs co-collect research and data: SPs can lead, co-lead, or support the conduct of focus groups, interviews, or surveys.	SPs have the access, support, and training necessary to conduct appropriate data collection activities and feel confident contributing substantially to the research process. They are actively part of data collection.	SPs have some limited participation in data collection activities, or they are only offered limited training and subsequently feel uncomfortable fully participating.	SPs do not participate in data collection in any capacity.	SPs can offer shared lived experience to focus groups and interview participants, building trust to a greater degree than others may be able to. Further, SPs may have strong insight into survey data collection processes. Other non-SP team members may feel mutual benefit due to having a stronger team.	

Principle	2 Promising practice	1 Emerging practice	0 Minimal or absent practice	Why?	Comments
3c. SPs interpret research or data: SPs should have a strong role in interpreting results and formulating recommendations.	SPs always have the opportunity to assist with or lead the interpretation of research or data around their demographic and developing policy or practice recommendations.	SPs are rarely called on for their thoughts, ideas, and experiences when interpreting research or data, or they are only brought into interpretation but not formulating recommendations – or vice versa.	SPs are not included in data interpretation and have no part in developing recommendations.	When data is interpreted without those most impacted, we risk stigmatizing and marginalizing SPs. Further, these groups often have incredibly useful insights into results and how the findings can be applied in real-world contexts.	
3d. SPs are supported in using results and circulating them for change: SPs are supported in accessing and using data about themselves as well as communicating those results to the broader community.	SPs have the opportunity, support, and resources to initiate change across the organization for the betterment of all SPs. Publication of data includes active SPs as co-authors when applicable. SPs are offered opportunities to learn skills while engaged. Dissemination of findings or materials involves SPs.	SPs have some input on communications and might preview some data, but they are not able to contribute substantively to communication, dissemination, or co-authorship.	SPs have no input into how findings are communicated and disseminated.	The purpose of SP data collection is to lead to change for better outcomes and support. Teams must be intentional about leveraging data for impact, including engaging those most impacted in sharing the results.	

Section 4: Student Parents (SPs) Are Represented, and Community-Building Efforts Are Supported and Sustained at the Organization

Principle	2 Promising practice	1 Emerging practice	0 Minimal or absent practice	Why?	Comments
4a. Organization support for community-building: SPs' collaborative or organizing efforts are organizationally supported and sustained.	SPs have organizationally funded and supported opportunities to build community with other SPs. There are dedicated staff available to provide ongoing support and guidance for these collaborative initiatives.	Investment in SP initiatives is minimal (including funding and support) and SPs feel unable to leverage the limited resources toward action.	There are no formal support mechanisms or efforts for collaborative SP initiatives or organizing efforts.	SPs having leadership opportunities supports social justice and creates less harm. However, adequate organizationally supported resources are necessary for their success, especially given SP time constraints. Organizational staff can support sustainable SP efforts to address turnover of SP organizational leadership.	
4b. Intersectional identities are represented: SPs have multiple community spaces that represent intersectionality of identities.	Efforts to include SPs consider their intersecting identities. The organization supports and collaborates with different groups that represent these possible identities.	Few intersectional identities are considered in efforts and activities related to SPs, meaning many SPs feel unrepresented or alienated.	SPs are seen as relatively similar and little is done to respond to their different identities.	SPs are not a monolith and need culturally or identity-appropriate services related to different intersectional identities. Intersectional identities can include being a veteran, first-generation SP with marginalized racial and gender identities.	

Principle	2 Promising practice	1 Emerging practice	0 Minimal or absent practice	Why?	Comments
<p>4c. Consideration of historical or social context: Persons who work with SPs recognize complex histories of trauma and reproductive, racial, and other injustices in SP populations.</p>	<p>Organizations address historical issues such as institutional trauma, reproductive injustice, and racial inequalities. Trauma-informed care is integrated into engagement with SPs. Broader policies and initiatives are aimed at addressing systemic inequities.</p>	<p>There is a general awareness of historical and social issues, but it is rarely translated into practical strategies for supporting SPs. Supportive services and faculty may attempt efforts, but these efforts are not consistently implemented or fully integrated into the supportive systems.</p>	<p>Organizational staff and leadership overlook historical and context and lack training and awareness of these issues. As a result, this may reinforce systemic inequities and perpetuate harm and trauma, further marginalizing SPs.</p>	<p>Consideration of historical and social context in supporting SPs is crucial for identifying and addressing systemic inequities so they can fully engage. Comprehensive training and awareness enable supportive services and staff to tailor their approaches, promoting equity and preventing harm.</p>	
<p>4d. Mainstream representation: SPs are represented in outreach and communications for the organization.</p>	<p>Marketing and communications include SPs in promotional materials (i.e., brochures, website content, social media campaigns), with consent of the SPs who are depicted. These materials feature diverse representations of SPs, showcasing their experiences, challenges, and successes at the organization. Promotion feels authentic and not tokenizing to SPs.</p>	<p>The organization occasionally includes images or testimonials of SPs in its outreach and communications materials, but the representation lacks diversity and consistency. While there's an effort to acknowledge their presence at the organization, the content may not fully reflect their experiences and needs or may feel tokenizing for the purpose of benefitting those who are not SPs.</p>	<p>Outreach and communication completely overlook and exclude SP presence.</p>	<p>The visibility of SPs in outreach and communication is crucial for fostering an inclusive environment where SPs feel valued, supported, and appropriately credited. This helps build trust.</p>	

Principle	2 Promising practice	1 Emerging practice	0 Minimal or absent practice	Why?	Comments
<p>4e. Children are welcomed: Children of SPs are welcomed in organizational spaces (e.g., campus, offices).</p>	<p>Organizational policies strongly support the presence of children. Physical spaces are designed with children in mind (e.g., child activity kits). Children attending a meeting or class are introduced and maybe even engaged in the experience.</p>	<p>Organizational policies give special circumstances for children being welcomed on site. Policies describe the need for surveillance.</p>	<p>Organizational policies specifically describe that children are not welcomed.</p>	<p>SPs often are met with challenging circumstances that prevent them from fully participating. Children being welcomed and normalized gives the SPs the option to determine when it's appropriate, necessary, or beneficial for their children to come with them.</p>	

Total Scores from Each Section

1. Student parents are included in change efforts (1a-1e) _____
2. Spaces feel inclusive for student parents during events or in-person and virtual meetings (2a-2e) _____
3. Student parent data are collected, and student parents are included in data collection and interpretation efforts (3a-3d) _____
4. Student parents are represented, and community-building efforts are supported and sustained at the organization (4a-4e) _____

Engagement Plan and Reflection

Spend some time reviewing your scores and comments above. Consider and explain the following:

In what aspects of student parent engagement is our project, initiative, or organization doing well?

In what aspects of student parent engagement can our project, initiative, or organization improve? What are barriers and how can we circumvent any obstacles?

What can our team do in the short-term and long-term to create change in our project, initiative, or organization? What is our plan for making these changes?

Short-term goals:

Long-term goals:

Plan for change:

References and Notes

- ¹ Anderson, Theresa, Afet Dunder, Sheron Gittens, Renee Ryberg, Rebecca Schreiber, Laney Taylor, Jessica Warren, and Kate Westaby, "Who Are Undergraduates with Dependent Children? An Updated Overview of Student-Parent Characteristics Using 2020 Data," Student-Parent Action through Research Knowledge (SPARK) Collaborative, September 30, 2024, <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/who-are-undergraduates-dependent-children>.
- ² Anderson, Theresa, Afet Dunder, Sheron Gittens, Renee Ryberg, Rebecca Schreiber, Laney Taylor, Jessica Warren, and Kate Westaby, "Who Are Undergraduates with Dependent Children?"
- ³ Contreras-Mendez, Susana, and Lindsey Reichlin Cruse, *Busy with Purpose: Lessons for Education and Policy Leaders from Returning Student Parents*, Institute for Women's Policy Research, March 16, 2021, <https://iwpr.org/busy-with-purpose-lessons-for-education-and-policy-leaders-from-returning-student-parents/>.
- ⁴ Anderson, Theresa, "What if Mom Went Back to School? Short- and Long-Term Effects for Both Generations, with Policy and Practice Implications," Urban Institute, May 2022, <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/what-if-mom-went-back-school>.
The same is likely also true of fathers, but research has not explored this issue.
- ⁵ Anderson, Theresa, Afet Dunder, Sheron Gittens, Renee Ryberg, Rebecca Schreiber, Laney Taylor, Jessica Warren, and Kate Westaby, "Who Are Undergraduates with Dependent Children?"
- ⁶ Urban Institute. 2024. Urban Institute's analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS 2020).
- ⁷ Breheny, Mary, and Christine Stephens. 2010. "Youth or Disadvantage? The Construction of Teenage Mothers in Medical Journals." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 12 (3): 307–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691050903513234>.
- ⁸ Davis, Ja'Dell. 2020. Rubric for Racial Equity in Research and Evaluation. Racial Equity in Research and Evaluation Toolkit. Developed in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- ⁹ Ascend at the Aspen Institute, "Principles for Engaging and Centering Parent Voices," accessed September 14, 2024, <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Principles-for-Engaging-and-Centering-Parent-Voice.pdf>.
- ¹⁰ Westaby, Katelyn, Troy Williams, Nicole Robinson, and Emily Connors, "Being Responsive: The First Assessment of Culturally Responsive Evaluation in Wisconsin: Findings from the 2017 Survey," iMilwaukee Evaluation!, Inc., accessed September 14, 2024, <https://evaluation.wildapricot.org/Being-Responsive-CRE-Report>
- ¹¹ "Is My Evaluation Practice Culturally Responsive?" Public Policy Associates, Inc., September 2015, https://publicpolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/REL_Self_Assessment_rev_Sept_2015.pdf.
- ¹² Ascend at the Aspen Institute, "Principles for Engaging and Centering Parent Voices."
- ¹³ Ascend at the Aspen Institute, "Principles for Engaging and Centering Parent Voices."
- ¹⁴ D'Elia, Hailey, Amanda Briggs, Theresa Anderson, Julia Payne, and Shayne Spaulding, "How Postsecondary Mentorship Programs Can Advance Equity: A Resource Review by the CTE CoLab," August 2024, https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/How_Postsecondary_Mentorship_Programs_Can_Advance_Equity_A_Resource_Review_by_the_CTE_CoLab.pdf.
- ¹⁵ Hersey, Tricia. 2022. *Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto. 1st edition*. New York: Little, Brown Spark.
- ¹⁶ "Native American and Non-Indian Cultural Comparisons," Montana Indian Ministries, accessed September 14, 2024, <https://www.montanaindianministries.org/copy-of-brochures>.
- ¹⁷ Ascend at the Aspen Institute, "Principles for Engaging and Centering Parent Voices."
- ¹⁸ Herd, Pamela, and Donald P. Moynihan. 2018. *Administrative Burden: Policymaking by Other Means*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. <http://muse.jhu.edu/book/62771>.

About the Authors

Kate Westaby has been a parenting student throughout her postsecondary journey—bachelor’s to PhD, which influenced her motivation for building this rubric and engaging parents with lived expertise in practice and policy. She is also a research associate at the Urban Institute and founding director of the Young Parent Collective. She conducts mixed-methods and community-engaged, participatory research to explore college opportunity, well-being, and dignity for student and young parents.

Kimberly Salazar is a current student parent and research assistant at the Urban Institute. She focuses on supporting access and persistence for parenting students in college, drawing from her personal and academic experiences. Salazar’s research interests include the social safety net, particularly welfare-to-work programs. She’s passionate about understanding how work-first ideology and push toward vocational education and training affects postsecondary education, especially in four-year universities.

Afia Adu-Gyamfi is a research analyst at the Urban Institute, where she focuses on conducting workforce and postsecondary education research to help develop social safety net programs and policies. Her sister was a student parent, and she is often a caregiver for her nieces and nephew.

Alyssa Callender is a single parent to a young son and is earning her master’s and PhD at the University of Oregon. She is a nontraditional student by most definitions, who also carries lived experience related to interpersonal violence and is committed to prevent transgenerational trauma. Her academic expertise focuses on nontraditional families (i.e., single parents, domestic violence, special needs parents and children, and military families). Alyssa is committed to improving how we treat one another and advocates deconstructing systemic barriers for vulnerable families.

Alex Davis is parent to a 9-year-old daughter and recently received his bachelor’s degree at the California State University of Channel Islands. As a first-generation graduate and cancer survivor, Alex inspires people around him and continues to do so when advocating for student parents, collecting data, and finding ways to impact the future of student parents in Cal State.

Elaina Frieson is a student-parent expert and single mom to a daughter who is 7 years young. She is a recent graduate of City Colleges of Chicago at Kennedy-King College, studying business administration and economics. Elaina advocates for all students who are parents. She is doing the groundwork needed to solidify beneficial changes in programs and support for parenting students within City Colleges of Chicago. Elaina believes all parenting students deserve to achieve their goals with support and encouragement from their respective institutions.

Lynne Hamblin is a student parent at Rogue Community College in Grants Pass, Oregon. She obtained her GED in May 2021 and is currently working on a degree in business and marketing while raising her 8-year-old twins. Lynne is a student employee at Rogue and enjoys helping other students on their educational journey. She recently started a parenting club on campus and has spoken at conferences around Oregon, telling her story and promoting adult education.

Alexis Primo-Hawkins is a student parent at San Diego Mesa College and has embarked on a remarkable journey of profound personal development and continual discovery. At the core of her endeavors lies a

deep-seated passion for advocating on behalf of parents and child care providers, a cause that resonates deeply within her. With an unwavering commitment to lifelong learning, Alexis embraces every opportunity to broaden her horizons and embrace fresh insights. Gratitude fills her heart for the inclusive environments that embrace her presence, prompting her to reciprocate with unwavering accountability, reliability, and efficiency in fulfilling her entrusted responsibilities.

Kevin Relf is a student parent at Lane Community College in Oregon. He is a new student parent, just getting started with college, and father to a very curious 8-year-old daughter. He believes that education is the foundation of success and exploration in this evolving world and that every family should have access to this resource. Kevin is committed to ensuring equity for all student parents in our institutions and across all walks of life. He values parenthood as a journey in which we should cherish and recognize each individual experience equally.

Acknowledgments

ECMC Foundation, The Ford Family Foundation, and Lumina Foundation funded this toolkit. We are grateful to them and all our funders, who make it possible for Urban to advance its mission.

The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders. Funders do not determine research findings or the insights and recommendations of Urban experts. Further information on the Urban Institute’s funding principles is available at urban.org/fundingprinciples.

The authors thank Nathan Sick and Theresa Anderson for their review, which made this rubric stronger, and Alex Dallman for editorial assistance.



500 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20024

www.urban.org

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit research organization that provides data and evidence to help advance upward mobility and equity. We are a trusted source for changemakers who seek to strengthen decisionmaking, create inclusive economic growth, and improve the well-being of families and communities. For more than 50 years, Urban has delivered facts that inspire solutions—and this remains our charge today.

Copyright October 2024. Urban Institute. Permission is granted for reproduction of this file, with attribution to the Urban Institute.