Strategies to Meet the Child Care Needs of Low-Income Parents Seeking Education and Training

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September 2016

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ABOUT THE URBAN INSTITUTE

The nonprofit Urban Institute is dedicated to elevating the debate on social and economic policy. For nearly five decades, Urban scholars have conducted research and offered evidence-based solutions that improve lives and strengthen communities across a rapidly urbanizing world. Their objective research helps expand opportunities for all, reduce hardship among the most vulnerable, and strengthen the effectiveness of the public sector.

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Executive Summary

Nationwide, there are low-income parents who need additional education or training to better support their families. However, they can face daunting challenges to achieving this goal. In addition to challenges common among low-wage workers—low education levels, financial pressures, and limited opportunities—low-income parents struggle with child care needs that limit their ability to participate in and complete education and training.

While the child care needs of these families have generally not received widespread public attention or funding, and are not often a priority for either the workforce development or child care systems (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015a), there is a growing interest in strategies that address these needs. Our interviews with individuals and organizations across the country suggest that although significant challenges to addressing this issue exist (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015a), local organizations and agencies are taking steps to overcome these barriers. These organizations come from a diverse group, including workforce development organizations, postsecondary education institutions, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) agencies, child care subsidy agencies, child care resource and referral agencies, and local community organizations. Despite their different approaches, these organizations share a common goal and vision around supporting the child care needs of parents seeking to participate in education and training to improve their skills and mobility through postsecondary education, workforce development programs, TANF work activities, or career pathways programs.

This report presents findings from a review of 17 programs and initiatives working to meet the child care needs of low-income parents seeking education and training. It highlights common strategies these organizations have implemented to meet the challenges of serving this population. Our goal is to provide ideas to other organizations and initiatives interested in supporting these families, such as

- colleges and universities interested in boosting completion rates,

- workforce development agencies investigating how to better serve populations with more challenges,

- career pathways initiatives working to support parents over the long term from education and training through employment retention and advancement in the labor market,

- child care organizations seeking to meet the needs of low-income parents, and

- two-generation programs seeking to meet the needs of children and parents simultaneously.

This report is part of a series from the Urban Institute's Bridging the Gap project (see box ES.1 for more information).

Bridging the Gap: The Intersection of Workforce Development and Child Care

With the support of the Ford Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Urban Institute is conducting a phased set of studies examining the intersection of child care and workforce development systems, policies, and practices, and the implications of that intersection for low-income, low-skill parents seeking education and training. Our publications and projects focus on four areas and are listed below:

1. Exploring and documenting challenges

- An overview of the child care and workforce development systems, their intersection, and implications for policy, available in a report (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015a) and policy brief (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015b).

- An analysis of low-income parents and their participation in education and training efforts (Eyster, Callan, and Adams 2014).

- An analysis of low-income student parents who are employed (Spaulding, Derrick-Mills, and Callan 2016).

2. Supporting the development of effective policies

- An overview of Child Care and Development Fund state eligibility policies and services for families in education and training (Adams et al. 2014).

- An examination of the implications of the reauthorized Child Care and Development Fund for parents seeking education and training (Adams and Heller 2015).

- An overview of the implications of new provisions in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for families needing child care to participate (Spaulding 2015).

- An overview of challenges and opportunities around supporting the child care and workforce development needs of TANF families (Hahn et al. 2016).

3. Supporting the development of effective practices

- A presentation of four collaborations between workforce/post-secondary organizations and child care support organizations (Derrick-Mills, Adams, and Heller 2016).

4. Supporting collaboration and dialogue

- An online discussion among practitioners working to bridge the gap between child care and education and training.[a]

- Summary of conference proceedings from "Bridging the Gap: A Strategic Dialogue." April 29, 2016. (Spaulding 2016).

[a] Teresa Derrick-Mills, Karon Rosa, Vanessa Freytag, Ricardo Estrada, Linda Chappel, and Tonya Williams, "Bridging the Gap between Child Care and Workforce Development," Urban Institute, February 2016, http://www.urban.org/debates/bridging-gap-between-child-care-and-workforce-development.

Common Challenges Facing Parents

Our interviews with practitioners revealed several core challenges facing organizations working on behalf of low-income parents. These are highlighted in greater depth in our earlier study (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015a), but include the following:

- **Complex child care needs and schedules.** Parents seeking education and training may require multiple providers to meet their complex child care needs, which include difficulty matching their education and training schedules with the times that child care is available. This can be even more difficult for the many parents who have more than one child and/or work while also enrolled in education and training activities. Transportation is another common barrier for low-wage workers and can be especially complex for parents who have to drop off and pick up their children from child care.

- **Inadequate information about child care options and understanding of what is available.** Parents seeking education and training may not know what child care options are available in their community to meet their complex needs.

- **Unaffordable care and inadequate public funding.** Child care can be expensive and public funding for early childhood programs and child care assistance is insufficient to serve all who are eligible.

- **Inadequate supply of quality care.** Supply of high-quality child care is inadequate overall. Quality child care available during the nontraditional or unpredictable hours that parents in workforce development or education programs may need is especially hard to find. There are also systemic gaps in care for infants and toddlers, children with special needs, school-age children after school hours, and children in some geographic areas (e.g., rural areas, etc.).

- **Policy and systems barriers.** Policies of the child care and workforce development/postsecondary systems are often not designed to effectively meet the child care needs of low-income families, forcing practitioners to design work-arounds and fill in gaps. Conflicting measures of performance may exacerbate these gaps.

Steps to Address Challenges

We conducted phone interviews with staff in 17 programs and initiatives and asked them what strategies they use to meet the child care needs of low-income parents seeking education and training. The strategies they described can be conceptualized as six steps.

Step 1: Assess Needs and Identify Partners

- Identify potential partners and develop collaborative relationships.

- Identify shared goals and build trust and communication.

- Assess child care needs, share data, conduct an asset map, and identify barriers.

Step 2: Structure and Schedule Workforce Development Activities to Facilitate Access to Child Care

- Consider timing and scheduling of education and training activities to facilitate easier access to child care.

- Create cohorts of students.

- Be strategic in locating child care services in relation to education and training services.

Step 3: Assess Child Care Needs as Part of Intake and Planning and Provide Ongoing Support

- Make child care part of intake and screening.

- Consider financing for child care as part of intake.

- Include child care needs as part of the client's employment and training plan.

- Continue to work with parents to address child care challenges that may arise.

Step 4: Help Parents Understand and Find Child Care Options in Their Community

- Help parents get information about child care options and resources and refer parents to providers in the community.

- Provide extra supports around finding and retaining care.

Step 5: Help Parents Access Child Care Subsidies to Offset the Cost of Care

- Screen for eligibility and refer families to public child care subsidies and other assistance.

- Help parents navigate the public child care subsidy system.

- Provide subsidies from other sources.

- Advocate for policy changes and adjustments.

Step 6: Facilitate Access to a Supply of Affordable Care

- Explore and build upon existing subsidized or publicly funded programs where available.

- Use other strategies to help families access programs, such as providing services directly or partnering with community agencies.

- Explore cooperative approaches.

- Work to address the particular challenges of securing care during nontraditional hours.

Table ES.1 highlights the information we have on each of these steps for the different programs covered in this report.

TABLE ES.1

Highlighted Programs

	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Anne Arundel Community College	X	X	X		
Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative		X	X	X	
Basic Food, Employment, and Training Program				X	
Capital IDEA		X		X	
Community Action Project of Tulsa County	X	X		X	X
Early Learning Coalition of Duval County			X	X	
Erie Community College One Stop Center		X		X	
Instituto del Progreso Latino	X	X	X	X	X
Jeremiah Program		X		X	X
Keys to Degrees at Endicott College		X	X	X	X
Linn-Benton Community College	X		X	X	X
Massachusetts Community Colleges and Workforce Development Transformation Agenda	X	X	X		
Project QUEST				X	X
The SOURCE	X			X	
University of Michigan		X	X	X	X
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill			X	X	
4C for Children		X	X	X	

Note: Programs are marked with an "X" if our interviews revealed use of strategies related to the corresponding step. Programs may also be using strategies in steps that are unmarked, but these were not reported to us.

Bringing It All Together and Making It Work

Our interviews revealed several insights into how local initiatives make their efforts work despite funding and policy constraints:

- Meeting the child care needs of low-income parents seeking education and training often requires cross-system collaboration, linkage, and communication (Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams 2016).

- Flexibility is needed to respond to changing opportunities and constraints.

- Organizations must be creative and multifaceted in identifying funding opportunities. Interviewees identified a range of public funding sources:

  » Funds available to institutions of higher education (e.g., student fees, the federal Child Care Access Means Parents in School program, and university donations).

» Other sources (city/county dollars, the United Way or other local partners, local foundations, private philanthropy, etc.).

» Shared and blended resources and funds. See Adams, Spaulding, and Heller (2015a) for more information on funding sources.

■ Leadership and vision are needed to develop solutions.

■ Organizations should use data to document the problem, target resources, and assess program effectiveness.

■ Maintaining focus on the success of participants and their children was essential to keeping momentum and supporting partnerships.

While these strategies are not meant to constitute an exhaustive list and generally have not been evaluated, they provide a sample of the activities that are possible through an initial scan of the landscape. A more systematic review and assessment of these strategies is needed.

Conclusion

Our previous work under Bridging the Gap has highlighted the challenges that programs and organizations face in supporting families, whether because of funding inadequacies, policy constraints or barriers, or lack of awareness of the importance of these issues. Although programs and organizations are obviously challenged by a lack of resources, individuals and organizations working to support low-income parents have developed a range of innovative approaches.

The strategies highlighted in this paper illustrate the barriers and challenges that impede efforts to serve parents effectively, but they also demonstrate the possibilities for designing innovative solutions. The efforts these programs have made to work around barriers and redesign their services when funds dry up are significant. For more of these programs to flourish and help families succeed, steps must be taken to address the fundamental barriers that constrain them, such as funding inadequacies, policy barriers, low awareness of the needs of these families or willingness to make them a priority, and a lack of an evidence base about the most effective ways to support their success. A focused effort to address these constraints across the domains of child care and workforce development/postsecondary education will be critical to helping low-income parents succeed in improving their skills and abilities while supporting their children's well-being and development.

Introduction

Nationwide, there are low-income parents who need additional education or training to get ahead. However, they can face daunting challenges to achieving this goal. In addition to challenges common among low-wage workers—low education levels, financial pressures, and limited opportunities—low-income parents also must ensure that their children are cared for and safe while they pursue education and training. Unfortunately, child care can be costly and hard to find, and good-quality care that helps children get the strong start they need in life can be especially scarce. As a result, these parents can face a difficult trade-off between ensuring their children's safety and well-being and providing them a stronger future.

While the child care needs of these families have generally not received widespread public attention or funding, and are not often a priority for either the workforce development or child care systems (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015a), there is a growing interest in strategies that address these needs. For example, the interest in two-generation strategies and in reducing barriers to employment both have resulted in a focus on child care as a critical support service, as demonstrated by the Obama administration's recent investment of $25 million in the Strengthening Working Families Initiative and the increase in two-generation efforts across different sectors (Gencer and Waters Boots 2014).[1]

This report presents findings from a review of 17 programs and initiatives working to meet the child care needs of low-income parents seeking education and training. It highlights common strategies these organizations have implemented to meet the challenges of serving this population. Interviewees are all involved with organizations and initiatives that work to address the child care needs of families seeking education and training, sometimes in partnership (Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams 2016) and sometimes on their own. The individuals we interviewed described initiatives that involve a range of programs and perspectives: workforce development organizations, postsecondary education institutions, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) agencies, child care subsidy agencies, child care resource and referral agencies, and local community organizations. Some focus explicitly on parents and others serve broader populations. Despite their different approaches, all share a common goal and vision around supporting the child care needs of parents seeking to participate in education and training to improve their skills and mobility.

This report provides concrete examples of strategies different entities can use to better support families seeking education and training. The findings are relevant for colleges and universities that are

increasingly interested in boosting completion rates, workforce development programs investigating how to better serve populations with more challenges, two-generation programs exploring strategies to simultaneously meet the needs of children and parents, and child care organizations interested in serving families with more complex needs. This report highlights the efforts of local programs and pulls out some of the common strategies they have implemented to inform and support the growing interest in meeting the child care needs of parents seeking education and training. As noted above, this report is one of a series from the Urban Institute's project Bridging the Gap project.

While the strategies presented here are not meant to be an exhaustive list and generally have not been evaluated, they provide an initial scan of the activities that are possible. A more systematic review and assessment of these strategies is needed.

Background

Child care can be a major barrier for low-income parents seeking to improve their employment opportunities through additional education and training (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015a). Our review of the complexity of policies, programs, and market challenges that lie at the intersection of child care needs and workforce development efforts suggests several key findings:

- Low-income parents are more likely to have low levels of education and could benefit from education and training. But relatively few are enrolled in such efforts and may face significant challenges and have trouble completing their programs (Eyster, Callan, and Adams 2014; Spaulding, Derrick-Mills, and Callan 2016; US Department of Education 2013).

- The publicly funded systems designed to address the child care and workforce development/postsecondary education needs of low-skill individuals are underfunded, complex, largely disconnected, and have few formal points of intersection. None of these systems prioritizes the child care needs of parents needing education and training, and they all have barriers in policy and practice that make it challenging to meet those needs (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015a; Spaulding 2015; Adams and Heller 2015; Hahn et al. 2016).

- Meeting the child care needs of parents can be complex, as parents have varying needs based on the characteristics of their family and children; the characteristics of their education and training activities; the supply, cost, and quality of child care and whether it matches their schedules; and the variations in the policy context that shape the ease with which parents can

access workforce development activities and/or child care assistance (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015a).

In sum, a sustained effort is needed to meet the child care needs of low-income parents seeking education and training. However, there is clearly no silver bullet or single approach that will work for all parents in all contexts. This suggests the importance of identifying a range of strategies and the pros and cons of those strategies for different contexts and needs.

About this Report

This report presents our findings from phone interviews with 17 individuals from organizations and initiatives that have developed strategies to address the child care needs of parents seeking education and training. We conducted semistructured interviews with individuals working in the fields of workforce development, postsecondary education, and/or child care and early education. Interviewees were identified using a snowball approach, whereby we asked experts in the field to recommend individuals to interview, then asked those initial respondents for their suggestions (see appendix A for a list of initiatives and respondents). Data from these interviews were coded and analyzed with NVivo, a tool for qualitative analysis.

These organizations can be classified into three categories:

- **Community-based organizations**: We spoke to several individuals with community-based organizations working to meet particular community needs. This group was diverse and included organizations that provide Head Start services, child care services, child care resource and referral services, education and training services, workforce development services, comprehensive support services, and/or benefits access services.

- **Postsecondary education institutions:** Some interviewees work in community colleges, where students earn certificates, diplomas, and degrees up to associate's degrees. Others work in public or private four-year colleges and universities. Some of these institutions award certificates, diplomas, and associate's and bachelor's degrees, and others award bachelor's and more advanced degrees.

- **Public agencies or affiliated organizations:** Some interviewees work for state or local agencies that focus on child care assistance, workforce development services, or postsecondary education. These included child care agencies, statewide workforce systems, workforce

investment boards (or workforce development boards),[2] or agencies managing workforce development funding, and training programs funded through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's Education and Training program.

Information from these interviews, as well as interviews with a broad range of other stakeholders and experts, was used to produce earlier papers in this project (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015a; Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams 2016) and has been reanalyzed for this report. As a result, much of this data was originally collected in late 2014. We contacted respondents to verify the accuracy of the information for that point in time and to capture any major changes in their approach. While the timing of this original data collection means that the efforts of these initiatives may be somewhat different now, the strategies and experiences detailed in this paper remain relevant.

As noted above, although we have not evaluated these strategies, they seem promising and are worth investigating further. However, careful evaluation and assessment are needed to help policymakers and practitioners determine how to allocate public resources. Capturing this kind of information will be an important next step for the field.

Findings

Our interviews provided useful insights into three areas:

- Common challenges families face

- Steps that local programs and initiatives can take and specific strategies local programs have used to address those challenges

- Ideas as to what is needed to make these efforts work

Common Challenges

Our interviews with these sites, as well as with a broader group of individuals from the workforce development and child care domains working to meet the child care needs of low-income parents seeking education and training, underscored the issues that low-income parents face and revealed several core challenges facing those working on behalf of these families (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015a). These challenges include the following:

- **Complex child care needs and schedules.** Parents seeking education and training can have particularly complex child care needs. One challenge is that they may require multiple child care providers to meet their needs (e.g. providers may not serve all age groups or cover the parents' full schedules). A family's needs may also change over time, as they vary depending on the activities parents are engaged in, children's characteristics (e.g., age, disability status, temperament), number of children, parent experiences and preferences, and so on. Transportation is another common barrier for low-wage workers and can be especially complex for parents who have to drop off and pick up their children from child care.

  One challenge facing parents seeking education and training is the need to match their schedules with the times that child care is available. This can be even more difficult for the significant number of parents who also work while enrolled in education and training activities.

- **Inadequate information about child care options and understanding of what is available.** Parents seeking education and training may not know what child care options are available in their community to meet their complex needs. While this is true for many parents, it can be

particularly challenging for these low-income parents due to scheduling issues with education and training activities.

- **Unaffordable care and inadequate public funding.** Child care can be expensive, and public funding for early childhood programs and child care assistance is insufficient to serve all who are eligible. And eligibility criteria or application requirements may make it difficult for parents to access care even when funds are available (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015a).

- **Inadequate supply of quality care.** Supply of high-quality child care is inadequate overall. Quality child care available during the nontraditional or unpredictable hours that parents in workforce development or education programs may need can be especially hard to find (National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team 2015). There are also systemic gaps in care for infants and toddlers, children with special needs, school-age children after school hours, and children in some geographic areas (e.g., rural areas, etc.). As a result, parents may face additional barriers depending on their particular needs or area of residence.

- **Policy and systems barriers.** Policies of the child care and workforce development/postsecondary systems are often not designed to effectively meet the child care needs of low-income families, forcing practitioners to develop strategies to work around and/or fill in gaps in creative ways. For more information, see Spaulding (2015), Adams and Heller (2015), and Hahn et al. (2016). Similarly, funding constraints make it difficult for program efforts to address these issues, which may be exacerbated by conflicting performance criteria.

Steps to Address Challenges

Our review of the strategies undertaken by the 17 programs and initiatives suggests that there are a set of steps some sites have taken to address these challenges:

- Step 1: Assess needs and identify partners

- Step 2: Structure and schedule workforce development activities to facilitate access to child care

- Step 3: Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support

- Step 4: Help parents understand and find child care options in their community

- Step 5: Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care

- Step 6: Facilitate access to a supply of affordable care

The initiatives profiled here varied in how they employed these steps and the specific strategies within them. Some focused on one step; others were involved in each step. Some initiatives focused primarily on parents while others focused on a broader population, of which parents were just a subset. Some employed these strategies on their own, but some partnered with outside organizations to ensure their clients were able to access services. Still others combine the two approaches.

Although appendix A has profiles of each initiative, we thought it would be useful to illustrate some of the ways sites approach and package these steps and some of the strategies they use. Table 1 provides an overview of which programs/initiatives utilize which steps.

TABLE 1

Highlighted Programs

	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Anne Arundel Community College	X	X	X		
Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative		X	X	X	
Basic Food, Employment, and Training Program				X	
Capital IDEA		X		X	
Community Action Project of Tulsa County	X	X		X	X
Early Learning Coalition of Duval County			X	X	
Erie Community College One Stop Center		X		X	
Instituto del Progreso Latino	X	X	X	X	X
Jeremiah Program		X		X	X
Keys to Degrees at Endicott College		X	X	X	X
Linn-Benton Community College	X		X	X	X
Massachusetts Community Colleges and Workforce Development Transformation Agenda	X	X	X		
Project QUEST				X	X
The SOURCE	X			X	
University of Michigan		X	X	X	X
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill			X	X	
4C for Children		X	X	X	

Note: Programs are marked with an "X" if our interviews revealed use of strategies related to the corresponding step. Programs may also be using strategies in steps that are unmarked, but these were not reported to us. Information on specific program activities is available in appendix A.

In addition, we have included six profiles—one at the end of each strategy discussion—of initiatives that employ multiple strategies on behalf of their clients to provide examples of how different sites pull these pieces together. These represent just a few of the programs that we profile in greater depth in appendix A.

Step 1: Assess Needs and Identify Partners

As is highlighted in more depth in our companion paper (Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams 2016), several strategies and initiatives appeared to involve some common components early in their development:

- **Identify potential partners and develop collaborative relationships.** Several interviewees discussed the importance of identifying potential partners and collaborating to bridge the gap between workforce development and child care services.

  » On the workforce development side, potential partners include postsecondary education institutions (both two- and four-year colleges), education and training community-based organizations, state TANF agencies, and workforce development boards.
  » On the child care side, potential partners include state or local child care subsidy agencies, child care resource and referral agencies, and child care and early education programs (such as Head Start, prekindergarten, and community child care).

- **Identify shared goals and build trust and communication:** Interviewees discussed the process of developing partnerships and highlighted the importance of understanding their shared goals, building trust and communication, and sharing information and knowledge.

- **Assess child care needs, share data, conduct an asset map, and identify barriers:** Interviewees discussed the importance of assessing child care needs and gaps in services, sharing data across agencies, and identifying barriers that families face. Programs can also conduct an asset map to identify resources at the local, regional, state, and federal levels to support child care initiatives, and to identify various agencies and potential partners at all levels that are involved in these issues.

BOX 1

Bringing It All Together: Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative

The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (AR CPI), administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and funded by the Department of Workforce Services through the TANF state block grant, provides case management and student support services to students in education and training at 25 sites, including all Arkansas community colleges. To be eligible, participants must be low-income custodial caretakers. They are able to enroll full or part time in college, although most are enrolled part time and are employed at the same time. Support services include financial aid for tuition, books, and supplies; child care; transportation; and assessments related to employment. Since 2005, AR CPI has served over 30,000 students, many of whom have needed help meeting their child care needs.

The program facilitates access to child care using three strategies:

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and make child care part of the employment and training plan.** Case managers interview every student applying to the program and complete an informal intake form and needs assessment to determine their primary needs and develop an individual career plan for the student.

- **Help parents understand and find care in their communities.** Case managers provide students with a list of approved child care providers to assist them in finding child care.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** AR CPI has worked to increase access to child care subsidies in multiple ways. At the state level, AR CPI worked with the Arkansas Department of Human Services, which administers subsidies, to secure child care subsidies for AR CPI students when funding is available. AR CPI also provides child care subsidies from TANF block grant funds.

For more information, see appendix A.

Step 2: Structure and Schedule Workforce Development Activities to Facilitate Access to Child Care

One challenge facing parents is that the design of education and training services can impede their ability to find child care. Interviewees highlighted three strategies they used to address this challenge:

- **Consider timing and scheduling of workforce/education activities to facilitate access to child care.** This can help address two issues:

  » A number of respondent sites noted the challenges created for parents when activities are scheduled during nontraditional hours, such as evenings and weekends, when child care

programs are less likely to be available (National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team 2015; Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015a)

» Respondents also noted the challenges created by schedules involving a significant number of breaks during the day, week, or year. Many child care programs prefer children to be enrolled and attend on a full-time basis, and child care subsidy rules could make it challenging for parents to get full-time coverage if they have irregular schedules (Adams and Heller 2015).

In recent years, the workforce development field has been working to make programs friendlier to adult learners by implementing scheduling innovations, robust support services, and accelerated programs. Our respondents described efforts to align the schedules of child care and workforce development activities by having class times conform to traditional child care hours and by scheduling activities in blocks. Block scheduling condenses coursework so that students have fewer classes but for longer times each day, which can help minimize breaks in a given day, reducing travel time and accelerating learning.

- **Creating cohorts of students** makes it easier to partner with child care organizations to offer aligned hours because of the improved cost structure. In other words, child care providers may be willing to offer aligned hours for a large group of children rather than just one or two children. Also, some sites found that cohort approaches allow parents to mutually support each other and provide child care for each other.

- **Be strategic in locating child care services.** There is no right approach to this issue, but it is one that programs should take into account as they consider the child care needs of their clients. Several programs chose to help parents access subsidies that allow them to identify options convenient to where they live and/or work; other programs decided that providing child care on-site or nearby was the best strategy. In some cases, both strategies can be employed.

Programs that **structure and schedule workforce development activities to facilitate access to child care**:

- Anne Arundel Community College
- Community Action Project of Tulsa County
- Instituto del Progreso Latino
- Linn-Benton Community College
- Massachusetts Community Colleges and Workforce Development Transformation Agenda
- The SOURCE

Programs that **create cohorts of students**:

- Anne Arundel Community College
- Community Action Project of Tulsa County
- Massachusetts Community Colleges and Workforce Development Transformation Agenda

More information on these programs is available in appendix A.

BOX 2

Bringing It All Together: Instituto del Progreso Latino

Instituto del Progreso Latino is a community-based organization located in a predominantly Latino community in Chicago. The organization provides a variety of services, including workforce development training, adult and youth education, a citizenship program, and additional services through their Center for Working Families. Many of these services are delivered in partnership with other organizations, colleges, and foundations. To address the child care needs of its parents in education and training classes, Instituto uses several strategies:

- **Structure and schedule workforce development activities to facilitate access to child care.** Instituto provides on-site training in block scheduling during the evenings for four hours a day, four days a week. They also colocate education and training services with child care and early childhood education.

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** Instituto provides case management services and academic, vocational, and financial coaching through its Center for Working Families.

- **Help parents understand and find child care options in their community.** Instituto provides parents a list of child care providers in the area.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** Instituto also helps parents complete applications for public benefits, including child care subsidies. In some instances, staff members accompany parents to the subsidy offices.

- **Facilitate access to a supply of affordable care.** Instituto is able to offer child care free of charge for children ages 3 to 7 to parents in on-site education and training courses by including child care support as a line item for student support services in workforce service budgets. Instituto is also able to offer on-site after-school education programs for up to 80 children ages 8 to 12 through private and public funding.

Step 3: Assess Child Care Needs as Part of Intake and Planning and Provide Ongoing Support

Programs should ensure that child care needs are part of initial intake screening and assessment, of any employment and training plan, and of ongoing case management and support.

- **Make child care part of intake and screening.** A number of programs include an initial screening and planning process as part of intake. Exploring participants' child care situations— whether they have child care already in place, and so on—was part of intake process in several sites and helped them identify whether to link families to other services. For example, Keys to Degrees helped meet the particular needs of parents of children with disabilities. This could also include, for example, helping parents find care (step 4), helping parents access subsidies (step 5), or facilitating access to affordable child care options (step 6).

- **Consider financing for child care as part of intake.** One interesting strategy used by the Office of Financial Aid at the University of Michigan is to structure the application process for child care so that it is connected to broader financial aid applications. This allows students to more easily connect to child care aid and find out about other forms of financial assistance they may be eligible for. Helping parents access subsidies (discussed in step 5) is another important approach to helping families pay for care.

- **Include child care needs as part of the client's employment and training plan.** Some sites helped low-income parents develop a plan that supports their personal goals for their education and training, tailored to their particular circumstances. Helping parents consider how they will pay for child care, how to make sure that child care is stable (i.e. backup care, reliability of care, etc.) and how to deal with child care problems should they arise all seem likely to support their continued participation and completion (Grote 2004, 27). While most sites did not specifically mention child care as part of this planning process, experiences from the child care resource and referral field suggest that having a thoughtfully developed child care plan can help parents make successful choices.

  4C for Children in Cincinnati is one program that helps parents develop a strategic child care plan. 4C provides what it calls "enhanced" child care resource and referral services (CCR&R) to families in education and training. These enhanced services include helping parents develop a child care plan that includes identifying emergency backup care and thinking through the set of services that best meets their needs. More information is available in Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams (2016). The role that CCR&R agencies can play is discussed in more detail in step 4.

- **Continue to work with parents to address child care challenges that may arise.** Although a few sites only focused on child care issues at intake, some described the importance of working with parents on an ongoing basis, given that child care needs can easily change if activities change, a provider falls through, and so on. Working with parents may include supporting them in finding new care (see step 4) or helping them deal with problems retaining their subsidies (see step 5). Ongoing support allows parents to get help making child care fit their changing needs and seems likely to help reduce the chance of child care problems derailing their ability to participate in the program, thus supporting retention and completion.

While sites vary in how they approach these efforts, several programs use a case manager, coach, or navigator to work with clients and provide a wide variety of supports and services. These include some combination of screening for clients' needs, identifying and linking clients to supportive services in the community, and/or helping clients access public benefits, including child care benefits, for which they are eligible. Sites also vary in where they locate these staff. Several sites strategically colocate staff providing this navigation or case management support within public benefits offices, local Head Start programs, one-stop career centers, or on the campus of the educational institution or training program.

Programs that **make child care part of intake and screening**:

- Anne Arundel Community College
- Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative
- Capital IDEA
- Erie Community College One Stop Center
- Jeremiah Program
- Keys to Degrees at Endicott College
- University of Michigan

Programs that **include child care needs as part of the client's employment and training plan**:

- 4C for Children
- Capital IDEA
- Community Action Project of Tulsa County
- Jeremiah Program

Programs that **continue to work with parents to address child care challenges**:

- Anne Arundel Community College
- Capital IDEA
- Community Action Project of Tulsa County

- Instituto del Progreso Latino
- Jeremiah Program
- Keys to Degrees at Endicott College

More information on these programs is available in appendix A.

Bringing It All Together: University of Michigan

The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor is a four-year public university that served over 43,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students in 2015. The university provides a variety of services to address the child care needs of its student parent population, often as part of a package of services it offers to all students, staff, and faculty:

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** The Office of Financial Aid has structured the application process for child care so that it is connected to broader financial aid applications. This allows students to more easily connect to child care aid and find out about other forms of financial assistance they may be eligible for.

- **Help parents understand and find care in their community.** University families are able to access information on child care resources at the Students with Children website and the Work-Life Resource Center website. A staff member in the Work-Life Resource Center helps families navigate the website and its database of child care providers.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** The University offers child care subsidies to undergraduate and graduate students, based on need and income, for use at a licensed home or center. These subsidies are financed by a one-dollar fee paid by all students and by the university's general fund. During the 2014–15 school year, these funds amounted to $1.2 million, of which about $124,000 came from student fees. During that time, subsidies supported 220 students, including 25 undergraduates. There is also a child care tuition grant, based on family size and income, for faculty, staff and students to use at the on-campus child care centers.

- **Facilitate access to a supply of affordable child care:** The University helps increase the supply of child care by providing on-campus child care, sick child and backup child care, and by partnering with licensed home-based child care providers.

Step 4: Help Parents Understand and Find Child Care Options in Their Community

Lack of knowledge of child care options that meet their unique needs can be a major barrier for families. Although not all parents need help understanding their options and finding care, it can be essential for those parents who do. The complexity of family needs in this area and the variety of factors that go into decisions about child care can mean that some parents may benefit from more in-depth counseling that helps them understand their options, identify the best choices for their situation, and find programs or caregivers in their community. Some sites rely on local child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies as part of this process. CCR&R agencies assist families in understanding and accessing child care. They work to build the supply of child care and may operate in single communities, across multiple communities, or across a state. Many are community-based organizations, but they may also be operated by colleges or by local or state governments.

Programs have developed strategies to help parents understand and find care in their community, often by providing or referring families to child care resource and referral services:

- **Help parents get information about child care options and resources and refer parents to providers in the community.** Several programs examined in this report help parents get information about their child care options for their particular needs. Programs vary in the level of information and support provided to parents. Some sites give parents a list of possible programs, some refer them to a website, and some refer them to other organizations. Information may be provided on child care licensing and quality rating systems in the communities of interest, on selecting care that best meets the family's needs, and on referrals to child care, Head Start, prekindergarten, and out-of-school time programs most likely to meet those needs.

  Other programs work to connect parents to more individualized services. More intensive services such as those offered by 4C for Children seem likely to benefit parents with complicated schedules or with child care needs that can be hard to meet. Among sites offering these services, some provided information directly using staff within the education and training organization/agency, and others had parents work with local CCR&R agencies that specialize in helping parents understand and find care.

- **Provide extra supports around finding and retaining care.** Some sites provide extra services to help families find care:

» Contacting providers to find out whether they have vacancies. Many programs are often full, so it is useful to know ahead of time if they have availability.

» Following up to see if parents' needs have been met. 4C for Children in Cincinnati follows up with the parent and the provider to make sure the situation is working out and to facilitate adjustments if needed. This support is important as child care needs can easily change over time as parents' schedules and other parameters change or because problems occur with the child care arrangement.

Programs differ along several different dimensions in the approach they take to helping parents find care:

- Helping parents understand and find care can be a part of broader case management or counseling services or can be a separate additional service.

- Sites vary in which staff provide the information to parents. Some sites rely on staff from local CCR&R agencies to provide the service, while others provide referral services with their own staff. The benefit of partnering with CCR&R agencies or hiring staff trained in child care resource and referral counseling is the extensive knowledge these staff have about the factors parents need to consider and local options in the community. This is helpful because of the complexity of the child care market and the challenging needs of parents. But not all communities have CCR&R agencies, and partnering with them is not always an option.

- Regardless of who provides the service, it seems important to have staff that understand the unique demands facing parents in education and training. These include the unusual time and scheduling demands created by education and training activities (and by employment, if they are also working) and the ways their education and training trajectory is likely to shape their child care needs in the short- and long-term.

- Sites also vary by where child care counselors are located. Some sites provide services in-house, either through program staff or through colocated CCR&R staff. Other sites partner with CCR&R agencies to provide off-site services, and some offer a combination of on- and off-site services. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill contracted with a local CCR&R agency to provide services both on- and off-campus, and 4C for Children provides services on- and off-site as well. At Chatfield College, which works with 4C for Children, staff sometimes contact the CCR&R agency directly to ensure the parent is accessing the service (Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams 2016).

Programs that **help parents get information about child care options and resources, and refer parents to providers in the community**:

- 4C for Children
- Anne Arundel College
- Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative
- Early Learning Coalition of Duval County
- Instituto del Progreso Latino
- Linn-Benton Community College
- Massachusetts Community Colleges and Workforce Development Transformation Agenda
- Keys to Degrees at Endicott College
- University of Michigan
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

More information on these programs is available in appendix A.

BOX 4

Bringing It All Together: 4C for Children

4C for Children is a private, nonprofit, community-based organization based in Cincinnati that provides child care resource and referral services to about 7,800 families annually across 40 counties in Ohio and Kentucky. 4C partners with local education and training providers, such as community colleges and workforce development organizations, to meet the child care needs of parents in education and training through enhanced referral services, which are offered both on-site and by phone and are funded by United Way of Greater Cincinnati and the City of Cincinnati. 4C for Children employs several strategies to meet the needs of parents in education and training:

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** 4C staff work with clients to assess their needs and identify their top three child care preferences and emergency backup options to create an individualized child care plan.

- **Help parents understand and find child care options in their community.** 4C provides information on child care quality and options, occasionally through presentations during college orientations and open houses; vacancy checks; assistance with child care subsidy applications; three referrals to licensed child care providers; and two follow-ups to ensure parents' needs are being met. While their clients often have diverse and complex schedules, 4C is usually able to find child care that matches these schedules by proactively reaching out and developing a large and diverse database of child care providers. The organization maintains a database of over 1,000 family child care providers.

- **Facilitate access to child care subsidies:** 4C staff also helps clients complete child care subsidy applications.

Step 5: Help Parents Access Child Care Subsidies to Offset the Cost of Care

Helping parents defray some or all of the costs of child care through public or private subsidies is another common strategy used to help meet their child care needs. Child care subsidies reduce the cost of child care but leave the choice of care up to the parent rather than providing care directly (discussed in step 6). Subsidies have the benefit of allowing parents to make their own choices about the care that best meets their needs, though they do not address the previously discussed gaps in supply.

Programs whose staff we interviewed included one or more of the following approaches in their subsidy strategies:

- **Screen for eligibility and refer families to public child care subsidies and other assistance.** Several sites reported screening parents for eligibility for public benefits, and some specifically screened for eligibility for public child care subsidies. These public subsidies are usually provided through state programs funded by the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). If parents were found eligible, sites referred them to state or local subsidy agencies. For more information, see Adams et al. (2014), Adams and Heller (2015), and Adams, Spaulding, and Heller (2015a).

- **Help parents navigate the public child care subsidy system.** Some sites go beyond simply referring clients and actively help them navigate the subsidy process by assisting them with paperwork and/or accompanying them to subsidy offices.

- **Provide subsidies from other sources.** Several sites provide their clients with subsidies from other public and private sources. Many of these programs first attempt to access CCDF and other public subsidies and use alternative funds for families who are not eligible for public subsidies or cannot be served because of inadequate funding. While we did not gather systematic information about how these initiatives are designed, they appear to vary in how they fund these efforts, how they approach key decisions about which providers to reimburse, and how much they are willing to pay. These questions need additional exploration, as this information is important for workforce development and postsecondary institutions seeking to implement subsidy efforts.

- **Advocate for policy changes and adjustments.** Several respondents described working with child care subsidy agencies and caseworkers to help them understand the needs of their clients and to make the subsidy system work more effectively for parents seeking education and training.

» Some respondents discussed working with subsidy agencies on how much care parents were authorized to receive and how to maintain subsidies during breaks between semesters or activities. Respondents from Keys to Degrees at Endicott College described ongoing efforts to help parents who are temporarily not involved in their activities because of changing schedules keep their eligibility for child care—even if they lost their voucher—and avoid going on a waiting list for subsidies.

» During a time when additional funding was available, the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative project worked with the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Higher Education to make clients participating in the program a higher priority for vouchers. The two agencies also developed a memorandum of understanding to facilitate client access to vouchers. The memorandum required that Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative students only use DHS-approved child care providers and that the Department of Human Services verify child care eligibility for these parents and provide vouchers if funding was available (Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams 2016).

Programs that **screen for eligibility and refer families to public child care subsidies and other assistance**:

- Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative
- Basic Food, Employment, and Training Program
- Community Action Project of Tulsa County
- Early Learning Coalition of Duval County
- Erie Community College One Stop Center
- Linn-Benton Community College
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Programs that **help parents navigate the public child care subsidy system**:

- 4C for Children
- Capital IDEA
- Early Learning Coalition of Duval County
- Erie Community College One Stop Center
- Instituto del Progreso Latino
- Jeremiah Program
- Keys to Degrees at Endicott College
- Linn-Benton Community College
- Project QUEST
- The SOURCE

Programs that **provide subsidies from other sources**:

- Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative
- Basic Food, Employment, and Training Program
- Capital IDEA
- Community Action Project of Tulsa County
- Erie Community College One Stop Center

- Jeremiah Program
- Keys to Degrees at Endicott College
- Linn-Benton Community College
- University of Michigan
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Programs that **advocate for policy changes and adjustments**:

- Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative
- Basic Food, Employment, and Training Program
- Capital IDEA

- Jeremiah Program
- Keys to Degrees at Endicott College
- Project QUEST

More information on these programs is available in appendix A.

BOX 5

Bringing It All Together: The Erie Community College One Stop Center

The Erie Community College One Stop Center is a service program for the unemployed and underemployed funded through a local workforce investment board by the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act. The program largely serves TANF parents and provides career preparation services, such as counseling, resume writing, classes, and job search assistance, as well as supports and referrals to other government agencies.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** Staff screen clients to see what benefits they may be eligible for, then refer them to specific case managers with expertise in those issues and benefits. For example, parents eligible for CCDF subsidies work with a case manager who was previously a child care administrator.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** Staff work with parents to get CCDF subsidies and maintain a close relationship with the child care program managers to facilitate this access. The one-stop also provides up to $12,000 in child care subsidies to parents who do not qualify for CCDF subsidies and are in training that will likely lead to employment. These subsidies must be used at a state-approved provider.

Step 6: Facilitate Access to a Supply of Affordable Care

One of the biggest challenges facing low-income parents is the inadequate supply of good-quality, affordable child care. Individuals we spoke with said their organizations addressed this challenge in several different ways. These approaches sometimes overlap, and some initiatives use more than one of these strategies to meet the varying needs of the parents they serve. Note that the strategies below are in addition to the common strategy of helping parents access public subsidies through CCDF and other sources, described above. It is not uncommon for sites to employ strategies from both steps 5 and 6 simultaneously.

- **Explore and build upon existing publicly funded programs where available.** Several sites chose to affiliate with or use a free or low-cost program. The most commonly discussed programs were Head Start/Early Head Start and child care funded by the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) grant, a small federal initiative that provides funds for child care programs on college campuses.

    This approach can be very effective if local service providers have access to such programs and if workforce development programs have reliable demand (either within their program or in the overall community) from individuals who meet eligibility requirements (if any). In some cases, education and training providers offer in-kind resources such as physical space, staff support, and so on. This approach, used by Linn-Benton Community College, gave the Head Start program free rent and utilities (and no need for transportation), allowing Head Start to provide care for an extended day and for the entire college year (an additional two weeks beyond the normal Head Start calendar). Sometimes, these programs are operated by the same agencies operating the workforce development services and, therefore, are more reliably available to participating parents.

    Sites taking this approach varied in whether services were colocated. These relationships can also be informal. One site we spoke to described having a relationship with Early Head Start where the Early Head Start program manager contacts the organization about openings in their program that become available.

    Although respondents were positive about these efforts, some were also clear about the limitations of this approach. Most public resources available for supporting entire programs or even classrooms come from Head Start and state prekindergarten, which often support part-day/part-year services and predominantly serve children ages 3 to 4. As a result, programs building on these early education initiatives have to be creative about accessing other

resources to address the broader scheduling needs of parents, such as full-day services, summer care, and/or care for nontraditional hours), and to address the child care needs of parents with infants, toddlers, and/or school-age children. Several sites using this strategy couple these services with child care subsidies to address these additional costs. These kinds of programs also depend on public funding, and access to such services, as well as any efforts to include new programs or classrooms, is constrained by the availability of public resources.

- **Use other strategies to help families' access programs, such as providing services directly or partnering with community agencies.** Several programs identified other ways to help families access child care:

  » Some sites provide child care or preschool services directly to their clients, usually on-site. They finance these services through grants, the CCAMPIS program, Head Start, cooperative models, student fees and university general funds, and other sources.

  » Some sites partner with child care providers in the community to accommodate parents seeking education and training, usually with some financial assistance but sometimes simply to help parents find a program that meets their unique needs. In some cases, sites partner with child care centers or family child care homes in the community. Keys to Degrees at Endicott College partnered with child care centers to ensure they would accept student vouchers. Instituto del Progreso Latino previously partnered with a local YMCA to serve parents needing evening care. The University of Michigan used a network of Campus Child Care Homes that agree to reserve one-third of their availability for university families, including faculty, staff, and students.

- **Explore cooperative approaches.** Some programs arrange for cooperative caregiving arrangements between students. While it is no longer in operation, Linn-Benton Community College had a cooperative model, subsidized by the college's general fund, where students worked in a child care setting in lieu of paying fees. This model can be useful, though it only works in circumstances where parents have time to participate. Other sites worked with their clients to develop cooperative and/or peer-to-peer arrangements. Keys to Degrees at Endicott College and the Jeremiah Program both connect students within particular cohorts to backup care when parents are sick or need help picking up their child. This works in part because students all live in the same building. The cohort-based models described in Step 2 lend themselves to this approach.

- **Work to address the particular challenges of securing care during nontraditional hours.** A barrier noted by many respondents was the difficulty of helping parents find care during nontraditional hours. Many workforce development and postsecondary education programs do not fit the traditional work day, and many parents continue to work while involved in education and training (Eyster, Callan, and Adams 2014; Spaulding, Derrick-Mills, and Callan 2016). Research suggests that relatively few child care centers operate during nontraditional hours (National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team 2015), though extended hours and more flexible schedules are more common in family child care homes and even more common among informal caregivers, such as family, friends, and neighbors. This challenge is not limited to parents seeking education and training, as such hours are common in the low-wage job market (Lambert, Fugiel, and Henly 2014; Illinois Action for Children 2016; Vogtman and Schulman 2016).

  One strategy is to explore group care options, such as center-based care, for evenings and weekends. At least two sites we spoke to indicated they had at one time made arrangements for center-based care in the evenings. In both cases, however, the option was discontinued due to lack of demand. This is likely because parents did not want their children to be away from home or a home-based setting in the evenings, nights, and on weekends.

  A different strategy is to connect parents with child care options that are more likely to operate during these hours and are in home-based settings that may be more appealing to parents (National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team 2015). These include family child care programs and family, friend, and neighbor care and babysitters. Some programs chose to implement this strategy:

  » The University of Michigan connects families to family child care options.
  » Keys to Degrees at Endicott College provides their students with a network of approved student babysitters to be used during nontraditional hours or when a child is sick. These babysitters were often students studying in fields related to children and families or were already experienced nannies or babysitters. The program conducts background and reference checks for babysitters and keeps a database of approved providers. Further, the program covers the cost of backup care up to 75 percent for students whose vouchers do not provide such coverage.

  Parents using public child care subsidies can also, depending on state policies, use their vouchers to pay for child care provided by family, friends, or neighbors (also sometimes

known as informal care). While this addresses the issue of affording such care, it does not address the problem of locating nontraditional care, and it does not help families in states that disallow the use of subsidies for informal care (Adams and Katz 2015). Experts are also concerned that the newly reauthorized Child Care and Development Fund may make this form of care even less available, as states must now conduct health and safety inspections for legally unregulated care settings that receive subsidies (excluding relatives) (Adams and Heller 2015; Hahn et al. 2016). It is not known whether and under what circumstances sites that make subsidies available through other funds allow them to be used by these caregivers.

Programs that **explore and build upon existing publicly funded programs**:

- Community Action Project of Tulsa County
- Linn-Benton Community College
- Project QUEST

Programs that **use other strategies, such as providing services directly or partnering with community agencies**:

- Instituto del Progreso Latino
- Jeremiah Program
- Keys to Degrees at Endicott College
- Linn-Benton Community College
- University of Michigan

Programs that **explore cooperative approaches**:

- Jeremiah Program
- Keys to Degrees at Endicott College
- Linn-Benton Community College

Programs that **work to address the particular challenges of securing care during nontraditional hours**:

- Instituto del Progreso Latino
- Keys to Degrees at Endicott College
- Linn-Benton Community College
- University of Michigan

More information on these programs is available in appendix A.

BOX 6

Bringing It All Together: Keys to Degrees at Endicott College

Keys to Degrees is a two-generation program designed to support the education of both college students and their children. To be eligible, a student must be between the ages of 18 and 24 at the time of enrollment and be a single parent with one child. Endicott's program provides housing, a dining hall meal plan (children eat for free), child care, and after-school support. The program also provides close monitoring, check-ins, and transitional support to students, as well as help navigating and applying for public benefits and supports on-campus. As of 2016, the Endicott program serves 10 student parents at a time. To address the child care needs of student parents, Keys to Degrees utilizes the following strategies:

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** The program conducts a prescreening of each student parent's child care needs.

- **Help parents understand and find child care options in their community.** Staff provide student parents with a list of center-based child care options in the area and work to help parents meet their child care needs during nontraditional hours if their classes or other school demands do not fit within child care center schedules.

- **Facilitate access to child care subsidies.** The program facilitates students access to public subsidies and provides its own subsidies to help pay for care in multiple ways:

  » Student parents are required to sign up for child care vouchers through the state's income-eligible child care subsidy program, even if there is a waiting list. Program staff help students with the subsidy application and applications for other public benefits, such as SNAP and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. Program staff advocate for student parents to access CCDF subsidies and other public benefits.

  » The program works with local Department of Transitional Assistance and CCDF agencies to ensure that students are meeting the requirements to maintain their child care subsidies and to help parents not lose eligibility during breaks in their activities.

  » For students unable to receive TANF or CCDF subsidies, Endicott provides a child care subsidy up to 75 percent of the total cost of care.

- **Facilitate access to a supply of affordable care.** The program helps parents access affordable child care, including during nontraditional hours, by covering 50 percent of the cost of summer care even if the student is not enrolled in summer classes, by covering 75 percent of the cost of backup care for students receiving CCDF or TANF vouchers, and by offering a student babysitting referral service. Because the program is so small and only serves 10 students at a time who all live in the same building, students often provide each other with backup child care.

Bringing It All Together and Making It Work

Our interviews highlighted the rich array of strategies and approaches different entities have taken to address the child care needs of low-income parents seeking education and training. Our respondents also provided several insights as to how they have managed to make their efforts work despite funding and policy constraints:

- **Meeting the child care needs of low-income parents needing education and training often requires cross-system collaboration, linkage, and communication**. Many examples described in this report involve some level of cross-sector partnership or cross-sector collaboration, a topic discussed in a companion report (Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams 2016). Respondents identified several interesting approaches that bring together the workforce development and child care systems on behalf of low-income parents:

  » **Developing informal and formal relationships across sectors/agencies.** The partnerships profiled in our earlier work clearly show the importance of informal, such as pizza lunches, and formal connections, such as committees, staff trainings, and so on (Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams 2016).

  » **Sharing information across agencies about parent needs.** Sharing information about parent needs, realities, and challenges was noted by some respondents as being useful to both ensure that services met families' needs and to make the broader case for addressing these child care challenges.

  » **Collaborating around policy barriers.** Several sites worked with local subsidy offices to address policy barriers within or between the child care and workforce development systems. Some also worked at the state level to connect services to parents.

  » **Participating in cross-sector boards or committees.** The Early Learning Coalition of Duval County partners with a local workforce investment board, and the director of the board plays a role in slot management. The organizations hold quarterly case meetings together. The Child Care Advisory Committee at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill also partners with the Child Care Services Association to meet the needs of student parents. The president of Chatfield College at the time of its partnership with 4C for Children had previously been president of 4C's board of directors.

» **Partnering with other agencies to provide a full range of services.** A common approach was identifying which services were better provided by the organization and which were better provided in partnership with another entity with expertise in that area.

▪ **Many sites described the importance of responding to changing opportunities and constraints.** Talking with interviewees about the evolution of their strategies made it clear that the process was rarely linear, and that it was essential to rework strategies and efforts to respond to changing demands and resources. Some sites tried strategies that didn't work and needed to be redesigned. In other cases, funding opportunities dried up and the site needed to identify new options. Occasionally, project leadership or leadership within partner agencies changed in ways that affected the initiative.

▪ **Sites must be creative and multifaceted in identifying funding opportunities.** Although all sites face funding challenges, they continue to identify resources to support the child care needs of parents. Although this issue is described in greater depth in Adams, Spaulding, and Heller (2015a), our interviews revealed several common sources of funding:

» Public funding sources such as Head Start, state prekindergarten, CCDF, TANF, SNAP E&T, Community Services Block Grant, and WIOA funds used for supportive services.

» Funds available to postsecondary institutions, such as student fees, the federal CCAMPIS program, and university donations.

» City/county dollars and funding from United Way or other local partners, local foundations, and private philanthropy.

» Several respondents, particularly those providing intensive workforce development programs focused on ensuring that parents get early education services, discussed blending resources from more than one of these approaches and programs. This strategy, known as braiding resources, can be complex, but it allows sites to address some policy challenges. For example, blending funds allows sites to use local funds to extend the day for Head Start services. Sites that blend funds in this way include the Community Action Project of Tulsa County, Keys to Degrees at Endicott College, the Early Learning Coalition of Duval County, and the Jeremiah Program.

» Some sites share resources as a way to reduce the cost of providing services. As mentioned, Linn-Benton Community College provided free rent and utilities to Head Start, allowing Head Start to provide additional services). Similarly, the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative partnered with a workforce investment board to develop the board's annual plan.

In some cases, this partnership also led to additional funds from the workforce investment board for supportive services such as child care and transportation.

- **Sites described the importance of leadership and vision in addressing these issues.** The impetus for leadership varied among sites, but it usually came from someone realizing the critical barrier that child care issues created to the success of workforce development goals and the need to develop solutions (Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams 2016).

- **The importance of data to document the problem, target resources, and assess program effectiveness.** Data came up in many of the interviews. Many respondents were clear about the importance of data in documenting problems and targeting resources toward solutions. But data challenges were also common, and programs had difficulty collecting data on need, identifying parents, assessing child care usage, and documenting effectiveness. This underscores the need for evaluations and assessments of these efforts to support more effective use of resources and stronger implementation.

- **Maintaining focus on the success of parents and their children was essential to keeping momentum and supporting partnerships.** Respondents told us the need for parents to support themselves and their children provided motivation and momentum for these efforts and sustained them through challenging times.

Conclusion

Our previous work under Bridging the Gap has highlighted the challenges that programs and organizations face in supporting families, whether because of funding inadequacies, policy constraints or barriers, or lack of awareness of the importance of these issues. Although programs and organizations are obviously challenged by a lack of resources, individuals and organizations working to support low-income parents have developed a range of innovative approaches.

The strategies highlighted in this paper illustrate the barriers and challenges that impede efforts to serve parents effectively, but they also demonstrate the possibilities for designing innovative solutions. The efforts these programs have made to work around barriers and redesign their services when funds dry up are significant. For more of these programs to flourish and help families succeed, steps must be taken to address the fundamental barriers that constrain them, such as funding inadequacies, policy barriers, low awareness of the needs of these families or willingness to make them a priority, and a lack of an evidence base about the most effective ways to support their success. A focused effort to address these constraints across the domains of child care and workforce development/postsecondary education will be critical to helping low-income parents succeed in improving their skills and abilities while supporting their children's well-being and development.

Appendix A. Program Profiles

Anne Arundel Community College

Arnold, Maryland

Based on an interview in June 2014, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) is a public institution in Arnold, Maryland, where students can earn up to an associate degree. At the time of our interview, AACC was the lead college in the National STEM Consortium, a collaborative of 10 leading community colleges in nine states that received funding from a US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration grant to develop nationally portable, certificate-level programs in science, technology, engineering, and math and build a national model of multicollege cooperation in the design and delivery of high-quality, labor market-driven occupational certificate programs.

During their participation in the National STEM Consortium, AACC developed and launched two new certificate programs: one in mechatronics and the other in cyber technology. The 30-credit certificate programs were designed to be completed in one year and taught in a cohort model where students enrolled in the same courses together each semester. The mechatronics certificate program served up to 16 students per cohort, and the cyber technology program served up to 20 students per cohort, determined by classroom or lab seating capacity.

At the time of our interview, the two certificate programs under the grant at AACC had active students and recent completers. Approximately 15–20 percent of active student participants and recent completers were also parents. Initially, the county's workforce development agency provided funding for students to participate in the program and the grant paid for curriculum development and staffing. However, after cuts to the county budget, incoming students had to contribute financially for their participation in the program, although AACC was able reduce the cost to students through an additional funding source.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Structure and schedule workforce development activities to facilitate access to child care.** Classes for the certificate program grant students at AACC were mainly offered in a block scheduling format with a consistent schedule throughout the year. This made it easier for

parents to schedule child care because it minimized breaks between classes and let them know exactly when they would be in class.

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** Every student in a certificate program cohort worked with a navigator, who helped them with the application process and connected them with resources regarding child care options, financial aid, scholarships, and other public benefits. The navigator also worked with students to overcome any barriers to their success. If a parent was having difficulty attending class and completing work because their child was sick, the navigator would talk to their instructors about deadline extensions and coordinate with the tutor to help the parent catch up on missed lectures and assignments.

- **Help parents understand and find care options in their community.** The navigator also provided referrals to specific child care programs that might fit parents' needs, including evening child care options and the on-campus child care center. During the application process, the navigator would explain that attendance is mandatory and students who were also parents needed to find appropriate child care.

Program update: At the conclusion of the grant funding in September 2015, the Mechatronics Technology and Cyber Technology certificate programs were adopted as regular programs of study at AACC. The curriculum and credit hours for the programs were modified slightly based on feedback from program completers, faculty, and industry advisory boards. Students that meet the college's regular admissions requirements can now enroll in these programs and courses. The programs are no longer offered in a cohort model with a block schedule because of the amount of staffing needed to maintain those formats and the accompanying classroom and lab constraints. Navigation services have continued and been expanded to other programs within AACC's School of Science and Technology. However, funding for this position is supported through a state grant with a specific time limitation.

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Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative

Arkansas

Based on interviews from June 2014, November 2015, and December 2016, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (AR CPI), administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) and funded by the Department of Workforce Services through the TANF state block grant, provides case management and support services to students in education and training at 25 sites, including all Arkansas community colleges. To be eligible, participants must be low-income custodial caretakers. Students are able to enter and exit the program and there is no time limit on participation. They are also able to enroll full or part time in college, although most enroll part time while working. Support services include financial aid for tuition, books, and supplies; child care; transportation; and assessments related to employment. Since 2005, AR CPI has served over 30,000 students, many of whom have needed help meeting their child care needs.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** Case managers interview every student applying to the program and complete an informal intake form and needs assessment to determine their primary needs and develop an individual career plan for the student.

- **Help parents understand and find care options in their community.** Case managers provide students with a list of approved child care providers to assist them in finding child care.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** AR CPI has worked to increase student parents' access to child care subsidies at the state and local level.

  » At the state level, ADHE and the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS), which administers child care subsidies, had a memorandum of understanding under which DHS agreed to verify child care subsidy eligibility for and provide child care subsidies to AR CPI students when funding is available. ADHE and DHS jointly developed a form used to determine eligibility for AR CPI students. DHS also provided priority to AR CPI students when funding was available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

  » At the local level, some AR CPI program directors develop and maintain relationships with DHS child care administrators to increase parents' access. For example, DHS administrators may let directors know when a child care opening is available. AR CPI also

provides child care subsidies from TANF block grant funds. Although there is a waiting list, case managers work with every eligible applicant to identify and connect them with other areas of support, such as single-parent scholarships. Some AR CPI program directors also develop relationships with local workforce investment boards and write the program's annual plan with them. In some cases, these workforce investment boards also provide money for supportive services, such as child care and transportation, if they have the funding.

For more information on this organization and its partnerships, please see our companion paper (Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams 2015) or contact:

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Basic Food, Employment and Training Program

Washington

Based on interviews from July 2014, December 2015 and January 2016, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

The Basic Food, Employment and Training (BFET) Program provides education and training to federal SNAP recipients in Washington, with an end goal of employment that leads to a livable wage and self-sufficiency. Services are available at community-based organizations and community and technical colleges. Training and education services begin with small certificate programs and go as high as associate's degrees. Job search assistance is also offered. The program is funded through a 50/50 federal match where community-based organizations and colleges match federal funds with nonfederal funds. In the past fiscal year, the program served 26,000 individuals, of which 2,919 were parents with child care needs.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** BFET does not directly provide subsidies or vouchers for child care. Instead, the program estimates that between 98 and 99 percent of its clients receive child care subsidies through CCDF. The Department of

Early Learning develops policies and manages the CCDF funds, and the Department of Social and Health Services administers the subsidies to clients. Previously, parents were not eligible for CCDF subsidies if they were not employed, but the Department of Early Learning adjusted its policy to make BFET an approved categorical activity for receiving child care subsidies. For the 1 to 2 percent of BFET clients ineligible for CCDF funds, training providers are allowed to use the nonfederal match funds to pay child care providers directly.

For more information on this organization and its partnerships, please see our companion paper (Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams 2015) or contact:

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Capital IDEA

Austin, Texas

Based on an interview from May 2014, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

Capital IDEA is a nonprofit organization located in Austin, Texas, that sponsors the education of adults. Sponsorship includes financial support for tuition, fees, textbooks, transportation, emergency funds, and assistance with child care, as well as career navigation and employment placement services. Career navigators provide life skills sessions focusing on, for example, financial management, work-life balance, and parenting, and also meet with students on a biweekly basis. Students enroll in courses at Austin Community College or another approved training provider for remedial education, credit-level English for Speakers of Other Languages, or an approved career plan for up to an associate's degree. In 2015, Capital IDEA served 996 low-income adults, of which 58 percent were parents.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** Each prospective applicant meets with a career guidance specialist to develop financial, academic, and personal plans. Personal plans focus on the student's support systems and any potential barriers to completion. Staff let students know about their child care options early on so they can begin looking for a provider and prepare any applications. Once accepted, students are assigned to a career navigator, often by career track, for their entire time with Capital IDEA.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** Capital IDEA maintains a strong relationship with the workforce board, which administers CCDF subsidies. Capital IDEA provides information on students' child care needs and the workforce board lets Capital IDEA know of any barriers or follow-through issues. Because of this relationship, workforce board staff can be flexible with students' child care needs. If a student is not eligible for these subsidies, Capital IDEA provides its own subsidy, covering 80 percent of the cost of care. Funding for this subsidy comes from private and public entities.

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Community Action Project of Tulsa County

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Based on an interview from June 2014, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

The Community Action Project of Tulsa County (CAP Tulsa) is an antipoverty agency that uses a two-generation approach to support children and parents. The organization offers early childhood education programming (including Early Head Start, Head Start, the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program, and Parents as Teachers home visiting) to children ages 5 and under. For parents of children enrolled in early childhood education programs, CAP Tulsa offers the CareerAdvance program in partnership with local education and training providers, which includes remedial education and health care training. Parents have access to parent education resources, a family support specialist, and financial assistance for tuition, books, and transportation, as well as incentives. At the time of our interview, CAP Tulsa enrolled about 50 new participants each year and had about 100 participants active at any time.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Structure and schedule workforce development activities to facilitate access to child care.** CAP Tulsa works with education and training providers to offer classes that align as closely as possible with early childhood education and child care hours. Adult students go through their

training in cohorts of 12–15, and each cohort meets weekly with its career coach, which helps with retention. When possible, the program pays for education and training services for an entire classroom so that every student in the classroom is a CAP Tulsa parent.

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** Each parent works with a career coach to develop a career plan and address barriers such as child care and transportation issues. The career coach also works on soft skills like time management and resume writing.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** CAP Tulsa pays for child care when parents are ineligible for CCDF subsidies or Head Start. The majority of the organization's child care spending goes toward before- and after-school care for children in Head Start, or to cover care for elementary-age children when classes do not align with the school schedule or during summer breaks. This allows parents to continue to attend education and training.

- **Facilitate access to a supply of affordable care.** All CAP Tulsa parents have a child in one of the following programs: Early Head Start, Head Start, Oklahoma Early Childhood Program, or Parents as Teachers, and thus have access to that programming.

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Early Learning Coalition of Duval County

Jacksonville, Florida

Based on an interview from May 2014, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

The Early Learning Coalition of Duval County is one of 30 early learning coalitions in Florida that provide school readiness program services, which include administering Child Care and Development Block Grant vouchers and providing resource and referral services. The Duval County coalition leverages local partnerships to coordinate services for children and manages enrollment in voluntary prekindergarten. As part of a partnership with the local workforce investment board, the director of the workforce board plays a role in slot management, and the organizations hold joint quarterly case

meetings with staff to improve service delivery for families. Staff also attend the orientation the workforce board holds for its clients to help set up child care appointments. The Child Care and Development Block Grant vouchers can be a wraparound with voluntary prekindergarten to cover more hours. As of April 2016, 30 percent of families that received a voucher through the Early Learning Coalition of Duval County were in education or training programs.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Help parents understand and find child care options in their community.** The Early Learning Coalition provides resource and referral services to parents in education and training and maintains a network of over 750 child care providers.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** The coalition administers subsidies creatively and with a family-friendly approach. For example, subsidy administrators have the flexibility to determine how many transportation hours to cover for child care. By authorizing parents for an hour of transportation each way, administrators give parents more flexibility when they are traveling between work, school, and child care. This may also qualify them for full-time coverage rather than part-time coverage.

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Erie Community College One Stop Center

Williamsville, New York
Based on an interview from February 2016, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

The Erie Community College One Stop Center is a service program for the unemployed and underemployed funded by a local workforce investment board through the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act. The program largely serves TANF parents and provides career preparation services, such as counseling, resume writing, classes, and job search assistance, as well as supports and referrals to other government agencies.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** Staff screen clients to see what benefits they may be eligible for, then refer them as needed to specific case managers with expertise in those issues and benefits. For example, parents eligible for CCDF subsidies will work with a case manager who was previously a child care administrator.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** Staff work with parents to get CCDF subsidies and maintain a close relationship with the child care program managers to facilitate this access. The one-stop also provides up to $12,000 in child care subsidies to parents who do not qualify for CCDF subsidies and are in training that will likely lead to employment. These subsidies must be used at a state-approved provider.

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Instituto del Progreso Latino

Chicago, Illinois

Based on an interview from June 2014, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

Instituto del Progreso Latino is a community-based organization located in a predominantly Latino community in Chicago. The organization provides a variety of services, including workforce development training, adult and youth education, a citizenship program, and additional services through their Center for Working Families. Many of these services are delivered in partnership with other organizations, colleges, and foundations. For example, Instituto provides basic and foundational skills training for their career pathways and career bridges programs. Once participants have attained skills to a ninth grade level, they take an entrance exam for the City Colleges of Chicago and continue their technical education there. Although Instituto continues to provide case management, including academic, employment, and financial coaching, participants receive their technical training on the college campus.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Structure and schedule workforce development activities to facilitate access to child care.** Instituto provides on-site training in block scheduling during the evenings for four hours a day, four days a week. They also colocate education and training services with child care and early childhood education.

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** Instituto provides case management services and academic, vocational, and financial coaching through its Center for Working Families.

- **Help parents understand and find child care options in their community.** Instituto provides parents a list of child care providers in the area.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** Instituto also helps parents complete applications for public benefits, including child care subsidies. In some instances, staff members accompany parents to the subsidy offices.

- **Facilitate access to a supply of affordable care.** Instituto is able to offer child care free of charge for children ages 3 to 7 to parents in on-site education and training courses by including child care support as a line item for student support services in workforce service budgets. Although this care is unlicensed, it is legal because parents are on the premises. Instituto is also able to offer on-site after-school education programs for up to 80 children ages 8 to 12 through private and public funding. While the primary purpose of these programs for older children is to provide academic support, nutrition, and a safe space for youth, the program also gives parents time to attend class and study. At one point, Instituto had an informal agreement with a nearby YMCA, which would remain open until Instituto classes ended at 10:00 p.m. to provide child care for children under 3 at a cost of about $10 per day. Parents were able to walk to pick up and drop off their children before and after classes. However, this agreement did not last because of a lack of demand by parents.

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Jeremiah Program

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Based on an interview from June 2014, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

Jeremiah Program is a two-generation program focused on providing single mothers and their children with career-track college education, quality early childhood education, a safe and affordable place to live, individualized coaching and empowerment, and life skills training. The organization has two fully operational sites in Minneapolis and St. Paul. A campus in Austin, Texas, will open to 35 families in fall 2016, and plans are in place to break ground on a campus in the Fargo—Moorhead area by early 2017. In addition, a pilot program is under way with Endicott College in Boston. To be eligible, mothers must have a high school diploma or GED, be accepted to or enrolled in a postsecondary education program, and have a child under 5. Applicants go through a rigorous screening and application process. Jeremiah continues to offer affordable, subsidized housing for up to six months following graduation while graduates look for jobs. At the time of our interview, Jeremiah's Minneapolis and St. Paul locations had the capacity to serve 77 families in residence and dozens of alumnae.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** Participants receive coaching and support throughout the program and following graduation. Coaching includes weekly or biweekly meetings focused on individualized career and employment plans and family well-being. Residents also participate in weekly life skills classes on topics such as financial health, physical health, parenting, and career development.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** Jeremiah staff help parents apply for CCDF subsidies and other state child care grants. If parents are not eligible for subsidies, have a lapse in CCDF coverage, or need subsidies for more child care hours, the program provides its own subsidy. Staff also help parents qualify for additional hours of child care subsidy by writing letters to have their coaching, life skills, and empowerment classes count toward their social service activities with employment counselors.

- **Facilitate access to a supply of affordable care:** Jeremiah Program has high-quality, on-site child development centers open to children older than six weeks through kindergarten age. This service is available to both resident and community families, although resident families receive priority. To reduce any additional financial burden, the program ensures that rates are not higher than what CCDF subsidies will cover; it also provides all supplies, such as diapers,

wipes, formula, and food, and pays for the costs of field trips. Because participants live in shared housing, they create an informal network of support and often provide each other with backup care on evenings and weekends.

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Keys to Degrees at Endicott College

Beverly, Massachusetts

Based on interviews from May and June 2014, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

Keys to Degrees is a two-generation program designed to support the education of college students and their children. To be eligible, a student must be between the ages of 18 and 24 at the time of enrollment and be a single parent with one child. The program was originally founded in 1993 at Endicott College and is now being replicated at other colleges, including Eastern Michigan University, Dillard University, and at Portland State University and St. Catherine University beginning in fall 2016. Endicott has also initiated a nonresidential collaboration with the Jeremiah Program in Boston. Endicott's program provides housing, a dining hall meal plan (children eat for free), child care, and after-school support. On-campus housing during the academic year and the summer is included in the financial aid package. Students receive free housing and a full tuition waiver while they take classes, complete internships, and/or work. The program also provides close monitoring, check-ins, and transitional support to the students, as well as help navigating and applying for public benefits and supports on campus. As of 2016, the Endicott program serves 10 student parents at a time.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** The program conducts a prescreening of each student parent's child care needs. Program staff also work with public schools to connect special needs children with early intervention services and to develop individualized education plans.

- **Help parents understand and find child care options in their community.** Staff provide student parents with a list of center-based child care options in the area. Student parents can only use

center-based child care because Keys to Degrees staff have found it more reliable and easier to bill and assess program quality. The program also requires that children enroll in full-time care (i.e., five days per week) because it is a more natural fit with the structure of center-based care and because it allows parents to use their out-of-class child care hours to complete homework and attend other program activities. The program also works to help parents meet their child care needs during nontraditional hours if their classes or other school demands do not fit within child care center schedules.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** The program facilitates student access to public subsidies and provides its own subsidies to help pay for care:

  » Student parents are required to sign up for child care vouchers through the state's income-eligible child care subsidy program, even if there is a waitlist. Program staff help students with the subsidy application and applications for other public benefits, such as SNAP and the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infant, and Children. Program rules also require parents to use child care providers that accept CCDF subsidies, even if they aren't receiving one. This is meant to support continuity of care if the family gets off of the subsidy waiting list. Students may opt to pursue a TANF voucher, for which there is no waiting list.

  » Staff advocate for student parents to access CCDF subsidies and other public benefits. The program director maintains a direct relationship with a supervisor or caseworker at the local Department of Transitional Assistance and CCDF agencies to ensure that students are meeting the requirements to maintain their child care subsidies. Staff also work with child care subsidy administrators to provide voucher interruptions when student parents, for various reasons, are not able to work the required 20 hours per week. With the voucher interruption, student parents would still lose subsidies during this time but would get the subsidy back, without going on the waitlist, once they resume work or school activities for at least 20 hours a week. This policy may not be necessary under the new requirements of the reauthorized CCDF, which minimize loss of subsidies during temporary interruptions.

  » If a student cannot access a TANF or CCDF subsidy or is put on a waiting list, Endicott provides a child care subsidy equal to 75 percent of the total cost of care up to about $18,000 per academic year. Additional funding is available to students enrolled in summer coursework, internships, or career development activities.

- **Facilitate access to supply of affordable care.** Keys to Degrees helps parents access affordable child care, including care during nontraditional hours, in several ways. For example, it covers 50 percent of the cost of summer care if the student is not enrolled in summer classes but is

working and 75 percent of the cost of backup care for students receiving CCDF or TANF vouchers for approved activities. In addition, the program offers a student babysitting referral service for evening/weekend and emergency/sick child care. The program conducts background and reference checks on its babysitters, who are students at the college studying in fields related to children and families. Parents are able to review babysitters' profiles and hire them directly. The program also partners with child care providers to ensure they accept students' subsidies, and at the time of our interview, staff were negotiating discounts for students with one center. Finally, because the program is so small and only serves 10 students at a time who all live in the same building, students often provide each other with backup child care.

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Linn-Benton Community College

Albany, Oregon

Based on an interview from June 2014, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

Linn-Benton Community College is a two-year community college that serves over 22,000 students annually, including over 7,000 full-time students, most of whom work while attending classes.

The college has used multiple strategies over time, based on funding and partner availability, to facilitate access to child care:

- **Structure and schedule workforce development activities to facilitate access to child care.** Students are encouraged to sign up for classes within a particular time "zone" so their classes are during predictable blocks of the day.

- **Help parents understand and find child care options in their community.** The student association purchased basic child care resource and referral services so that students can work with the regional CCR&R agency, which is located on Linn-Benton's campus.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** CCR&R staff assess parents' eligibility for CCDF subsidies and help them with the application. Students are encouraged to apply for CCDF subsidies as soon as possible because of the waiting list. Through the CCAMPIS grant, Linn-Benton also covers full-year child care costs for between 10 and 20 families who use care in the community.

- **Facilitate access to a supply of affordable care.** The college has tried a variety of models to provide on-campus child care, including co-op care, "other hours" care, and Head Start.

  » Previously, student parents could work in the classroom on campus instead of paying for child care. This co-op model for 3- and 4-year-olds was subsidized by the college's general fund and other grants. A similar model for infants was funded by allowing a local school system to lease space for a kindergarten classroom on campus. One benefit of this model was it required student parents to work in the classroom, get to know each other, and build a support network.

  » Through grants, the school also once provided "other hours" care in the evenings and on weekends.

  » The current model uses Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms on campus to serve Linn-Benton students who are income eligible. Head Start signed a 10-year lease, which provides a stable location for the Head Start classroom over the next decade. These classrooms do not provide transportation to parents or pay rental or utility fees, so they are able to extend the hours of care and match their year to the academic year. As of spring 2014, these classrooms served 80 families with a constant waiting list. Those on the waiting list are connected with the CCR&R agency to find alternative care in the community.

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Massachusetts Community Colleges and Workforce Development Transformation Agenda

Massachusetts

Based on an interview from May 2014, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

Massachusetts community colleges received a $20 million grant through the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training program from the US Department of Labor to implement the Massachusetts Community Colleges and Workforce Development Transformation Agenda between 2011 and 2014. This agenda brought together community colleges; adult basic education providers; the workforce development system, including workforce investment boards and one-stop centers; and industry representatives to redesign education and training programs and their delivery. As a result, community colleges saw increased completion and placement rates. Still, at the time of our interview, our respondent estimated that about 25 percent of students in Massachusetts community colleges faced issues with child care.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Structure and schedule workforce development activities to facilitate access to child care.** As part of the Transformation Agenda, education and training providers redesigned programs to offer accelerated, stackable, and online schedules, making it easier for students with child care needs to attend and complete programs. This effort also included a component where seven Massachusetts colleges focused on offering cohort-based, structured schedules that better align with the provision of child care.

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** The Transformation Agenda established the role of a college and career navigator, a college employee housed at the one-stop center who would connect with potential students and introduce them to support services and staff on campus. Navigators were used to streamline access to higher-education services and supports.

- **Help parents understand and find child care options in their community.** Navigators provided referrals to local community-based organizations to help meet child care and other family needs.

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Project QUEST

San Antonio, Texas

Based on an interview from June 2014, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

Project QUEST is a workforce intermediary that prepares clients for employment in high-demand occupations through education and training. The organization provides financial supports, remedial education, case management services, workforce skills training, and job placement services while clients attend education and training at a local accredited institution. Financial assistance is available for tuition, books, uniforms, test fees, transportation, and utility expenses. Training programs last between 12 and 18 months and are available in the following sectors: health care and bioscience, information technology/security, aerospace, and energy and manufacturing. In 2015, Project QUEST provided financial supports, including child care, to 1,088 individuals, approximately 48 percent of whom were parents. Participants are 30 years old on average and must have a GED or high school diploma to be accepted.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** Because many participants are in health care training programs, their credit hours earned—used to determine eligibility for child care subsidies—and their actual need for child care often do not align. For example, on a clinical day, students are in training for 10 hours but receive only five credits and thus 5 hours of child care subsidies. To better align the hours, Project QUEST staff develop a letter along with education and training providers asking the local child care program manager to consider training to be a 40-hour work week. This strategy works on a case-by-case basis, depending on the child care administrator.

- **Facilitate access to supply of affordable care.** Project QUEST has a memorandum of understanding with a local Head Start provider, which has led to improved communication

between the two organizations and resulted in Project QUEST staff advocating for services for their participants with 3- and 4-year-old children.

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The SOURCE

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Based on an interview from May 2014, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

The SOURCE is a nonprofit employee support organization created by manufacturing companies in the Grand Rapids area that were having difficulty retaining employees because of child care issues. The organization provides free services focused on retention and training to employees of member companies and their families. At the end of the 2015 fiscal year, The SOURCE worked with 14 member companies, which pay a membership fee. Retention services address issues related to, for example, child care, transportation, health, housing, and finances. Training services include Spanish language classes and computer and financial literacy classes. The SOURCE partners with 45 human services organizations in the community to provide these services and supports. At the time of our interview, The SOURCE was serving between 1,000 and 1,100 employees per year.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Structure and schedule workforce development activities to facilitate access to child care.** As part of a pilot funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, The SOURCE worked with a Head Start program located in the same building as one of its adult education programs to align class and child care schedules.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** The SOURCE contracts local Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) caseworkers to work with eligible employees and facilitate access to CCDF subsidies. Eligible employees are those who are receiving or eligible for public benefits. If such an employee is hired by a member company, their case transfers to one of the DHHS caseworkers contracted by The SOURCE. The program

has a 97 percent retention rate of employees whose DHHS cases were managed by DHHS caseworkers contracted by The SOURCE.

Program update: In 2015, The SOURCE received a MOVE UP (Mobility and Opportunity for Valuable Employment by Upskilling Parents) grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to pilot a program focused on moving entry-level, low-income employees who are parents of children ages 8 and under into higher paying jobs through training programs, career development and work supports, such as transportation and child care. As part of this project, The SOURCE is helping parents access child care that aligns with their work and school schedules.

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University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Based on interviews in May and June 2014, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

The University of Michigan is a four-year public university that served over 43,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students in 2015. The university provides a variety of services to address the child care needs of its student parent population, often as part of package of services it offers to students, staff, and faculty.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** The university's financial aid office has structured the application process for child care so that it is connected to broader financial aid applications. This allows students to more easily connect to child care aid and find out about other forms of financial assistance they may be eligible for.

- **Help parents understand and find child care options in their community.** University families are able to access information on child care resources at the Students with Children website and the Work-Life Resource Center website. A staff member in the Work-Life Resource Center helps families navigate the website and its database of child care providers.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** The university offers child care subsidies to undergraduate and graduate students, based on need and income, for use at a licensed home or center. These subsidies are financed by a one-dollar fee paid by students and by the university's general fund. During the 2014–15 school year, these funds amounted to $1.2 million, of which about $124,000 came from student fees. During that time, subsidies supported 220 students, including 25 undergraduates. There is also a child care tuition grant, based on family size and income, for faculty, staff, and students to use at the on-campus child care centers.

- **Facilitate access to supply of affordable child care.** The university helps increase the supply of child care by providing on-campus child care, sick child and backup child care, and partnering with licensed home-based child care providers.

  » There are three on-site child care centers open to faculty, staff, and students. At the time of our interview, these centers had a combined 45 infant slots, 68 toddler slots, and 282 preschool slots. The centers are open from about 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., although one remains open until 6:30 p.m. for an additional charge. However, these centers often have waitlists for children under age 3. As of May 2014, 66 student parents had their children enrolled in an on-campus child care center, including 8 undergraduate students.

  » There is also sick child and backup care offered through the Kids Care at Home program, where a caregiver employed by a contracted agency comes to the client's home to provide care.

  » The university also established the Campus Child Care Homes Network, a network of licensed home-based child care providers that reserve about one-third of their slots for university faculty, staff, and students. This network was originally funded by a CCAMPIS grant and developed as an effort to recruit spouses of graduate students in on-campus housing to become licensed child care providers for other student families. Eventually, the program decided to focus on existing, experienced, home-based providers in the community. These providers are mostly group homes, with a few family homes as well—in 2014, there were three family providers and 10 group homes. Providers receive support from the University of Michigan based on the number of university families they serve. These child care providers often have more flexibility for pick up and drop off times than centers, and some even have availability on evenings and weekends, which is helpful for student parents with complex schedules. As of May 2014, 16 student parents had their children enrolled with a Campus Child Care Homes provider.

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University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Based on interviews from June 2014, December 2015, and February 2016, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) is a public university serving 18,421 undergraduate and 10,669 graduate students annually. Between 1988 and 2014, the university convened a Child Care Advisory Committee focused on programs and services for children and families at UNC. The committee partnered with a local CCR&R, the Child Care Services Association (CCSA), to address the needs of student parents.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Help parents understand and find child care options in their community.** UNC contracts CCSA to provide referral services and education on high-quality child care options for children 12 and under in the form of customized lists of options given to university-affiliated parents. These services are offered by phone, web, and on campus at informational sessions and workshops. UNC provides funding for these services on an annual basis.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** As part of the CCSA referral services, staff provide information on financial assistance options, including screening for eligibility for the state CCDF program and other child care scholarships. UNC also contracts CCSA to administer two child care scholarships for university-affiliated families: one scholarship is for fee-paying students and is funded through annual student fees, the other is for employees and students who do not pay fees and is funded by the Chancellor's office. Both of these scholarships require students to be engaged full-time in school, work, or a combination of both. Income guidelines were set by the Child Care Advisory Committee, and scholarships can support children up to age 12.

For more information on this organization and its partnerships, please see our companion paper (Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams 2015).

4C for Children

Cincinnati, Ohio

Based on interviews from May 2014 and December 2015, updated and approved by the program in June 2016

4C for Children is a private, nonprofit, community-based organization providing child care resource and referral services to about 7,800 families annually across 40 counties in Ohio and Kentucky. 4C partners with local education and training providers, such as community colleges and workforce development organizations, to meet the child care needs of parents in education and training through enhanced referral services, which are offered both on-site and by phone and are funded by United Way of Greater Cincinnati and the City of Cincinnati.

The program seeks to facilitate access to child care using the following strategies:

- **Assess child care needs as part of intake and planning and provide ongoing support.** 4C staff work with clients to assess their needs and identify their top three child care preferences and emergency backup options to create an individualized child care plan.

- **Help parents understand and find child care options in their community.** 4C provides information on child care quality and options, including through presentations during college orientations and open houses; vacancy checks; assistance with child care subsidy applications; three referrals to licensed child care providers; and two follow-ups to ensure parents' needs are being met. Although their clients often have diverse and complex schedules, 4C is usually able to find child care that matches these schedules by proactively reaching out and developing a large and diverse database of child care providers, currently at over 1,000 care providers.

- **Help parents access child care subsidies to offset the cost of care.** 4C staff also help clients with child care subsidy applications.

For more information on this organization and its partnerships, please see our companion paper (Derrick-Mills, Heller, and Adams 2015).

Notes

1. Heidi Silver-Pacuilla, "Strengthening Working Families Initiatives: $25M Funding Opportunity," news release, December 18, 2015, http://sites.ed.gov/octae/2015/12/18/strengthening-working-families-initiatives-25m-funding-opportunity/; "Ascend," The Aspen Institute, accessed August 19, 2016, http://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/.

2. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act has renamed these state and local oversight bodies workforce development boards, although many have maintained the name workforce investment board.

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