

Investing in Student Parents: A Catalyst for Economic Mobility



MAY 8, 2025 | 2:00 PM ET —

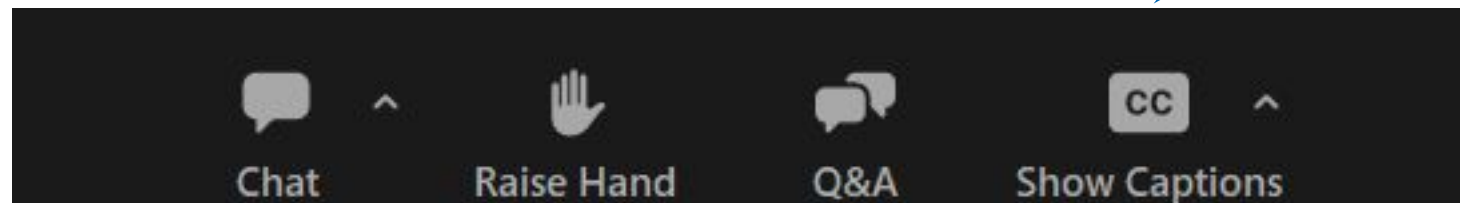
Webinar Control Panel

PARTICIPATE

Type your question in the
Q&A BOX
to be addressed during
discussion breaks or during
Q/A

CLOSED CAPTIONS

Captions can be turned on via
Show Captions
to be viewed in real-time and
will also be available in the
recording afterwards



NATIONAL AFN OVERVIEW

- Leading national grantmaker network focused on economic and racial justice.
- Mission is to engage philanthropy to advance equitable wealth building and economic mobility.
- Committed to identifying data and research to advance systemic change.
- Social and economic advancement require both incremental change and bold action.
- Our content is iterative, intersectional, and evolving to build a responsive movement.



“ ”

I believe AFN is the original system change leader — the network has always tried to understand the underlying root causes of economic inequality and adopt the role of bridge builders between different philanthropic fields, sectors, regions, and cultures. As the issues facing our communities become more complex and intersected, we all need to do that more than ever.

BRANDEE MCHALE
Citi Foundation

AFN ISSUE AREAS

AFN works with its members across eight issue areas:



Financial Health



**Post Secondary
Education Without
Debt**



A Just Economy



**Employment:
Benefits & Income**



**Housing: Affordable
Rental & Home
Ownership**



Climate



Business Ownership



Health

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**WELLS
FARGO**

Speakers



Becca Bice

**Director of Economic
Advancement**

United Way for Greater Austin



Christopher J. Nellum

**Executive Director
EdTrust-West**



Enyi Okebugwu

**Senior Program Manager
Imaginable Futures**



Claire Wernstedt-Lynch

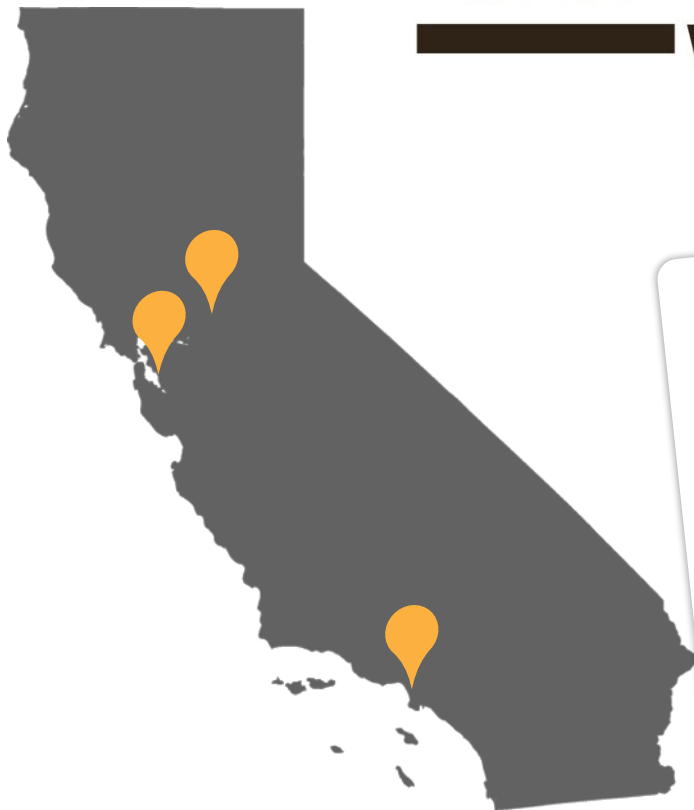
**Moderator
Program Associate
Annie E. Casey Foundation**

Our Mission

EdTrust-West is committed to advancing policies and practices to dismantle the racial and economic barriers embedded in the California education system.

Through our research and advocacy, EdTrust-West improves racial equity in education, engages diverse communities dedicated to education equity and justice, and increases political and public will to build an education system where students of color and multilingual learners, especially those experiencing poverty, will thrive.

edtrust WEST



Oakland

Black Liberation Walking Tour

Our work on student parents

DisruptEd Blog

We're still missing something: shining a light on student parents

The fact remains that within the education equity space, parenting students are far too often viewed as a special population. This is a misnomer that separates out policy and practice conversations about parenting students despite the fact that more than 1 out of every 10 college students in California is a student parent.

DR. CHRISTOPHER J. NELLUM



Juggling Roles and Achieving Goals

The California Student Parents Almanac

SEPTEMBER 2024



The CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE for STUDENT PARENT SUCCESS

ADMINISTERED BY CALIFORNIA COMPETES: HIGHER EDUCATION
FOR A STRONG ECONOMY AND THE EDUCATION TRUST-WEST

The CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE for
STUDENT PARENT SUCCESS

Request for Applications for The Alliance's Empowering Single Mothers & Parenting Students Community of Practice

Background

The California Alliance for Student Parent Success (The Alliance) is a collaboration between EdTrust-West and California Competes: Higher Education for a Strong Economy (California Competes). Together, these organizations have formed The Alliance, guided by the following mission and vision:



HEAR MY VOICE II:

Supporting Success for Parenting and Unhoused Women of Color

July 17, 2024

Bring Your Kids to College Day Engages Student Parents

Two California colleges hosted a Bring Your Kids to College Day to highlight the lived experiences of parenting students and promote community building among learners.

By Ashlee Mouradian

Who are student parents?

There have always been college students who are also parenting while in college...

But they've been white men, with wives at home doing the vast majority of parenting duties.



Who are student parents?

Continuing college policies and practices as usual to reach “traditional students”...



Ignores the students who are in our states, our communities, and in college – or who want to be.



Who are student parents?

Current and aspiring college students these days are men, women, students of color, and commuter students. They often have jobs and many are parents.



Research shows that nationally about 1 out of every 5 undergraduate students is a student parent.

That's 3.8 million student parents in colleges across the country.

Who are student parents in California?

300,000 UNDERGRADUATES ARE STUDENT PARENTS

Gender



15%

of female
students
have children



8%

of male
students
have children

Race/Ethnicity

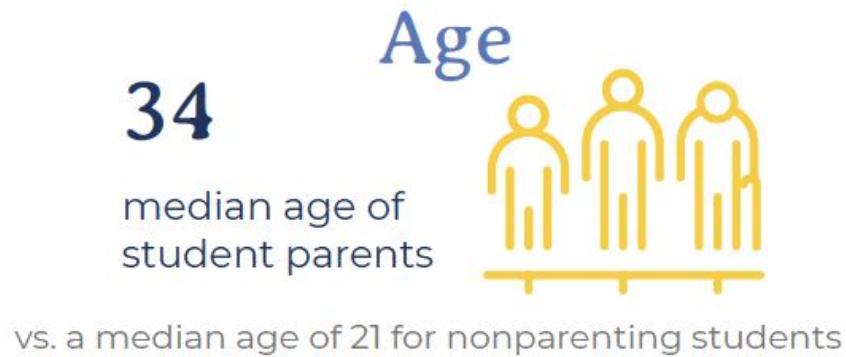
72% 

are Black, Latinx, Asian, Pacific
Islander, or American Indian

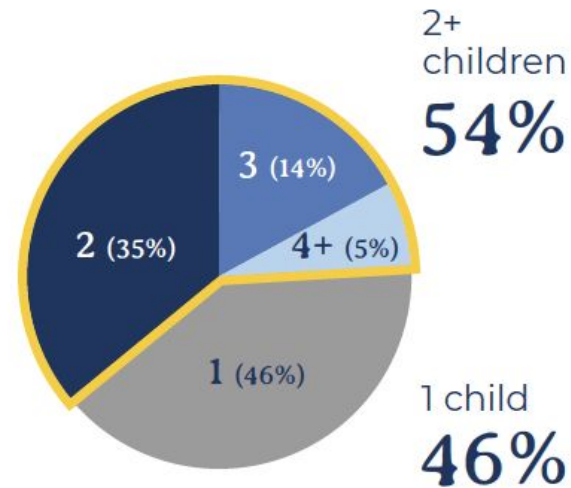
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Who are student parents in California?



Number of Children



First Generation to Go to College

61%

are first-
generation
college
students

vs. 50% of nonparenting students



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Who are student parents in California?



47% work full time
vs. 19% of nonparenting students



66% attend community college
vs. 60% of nonparenting students



83% enroll part time or for part of the year
vs. 63% of nonparenting students

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A note on these numbers...



Economic Mobility and CA's Student Parents

Because California's students parents are under-supported by postsecondary systems, they are often forced to make choices on their college journeys that limit their ability to be upwardly mobile financially;

- Parenting students often delay college
- Parenting students tend to opt for shorter credentials than Bachelor's degrees
- Parenting students are more likely to take out student loans, and take out bigger loans
- Parenting students are more likely to rely on public assistance programs



70% pursue
shorter-term credentials
(certificates and
associate's degrees)
vs. 58% of nonparenting
students

Economic Mobility and CA's Student Parents

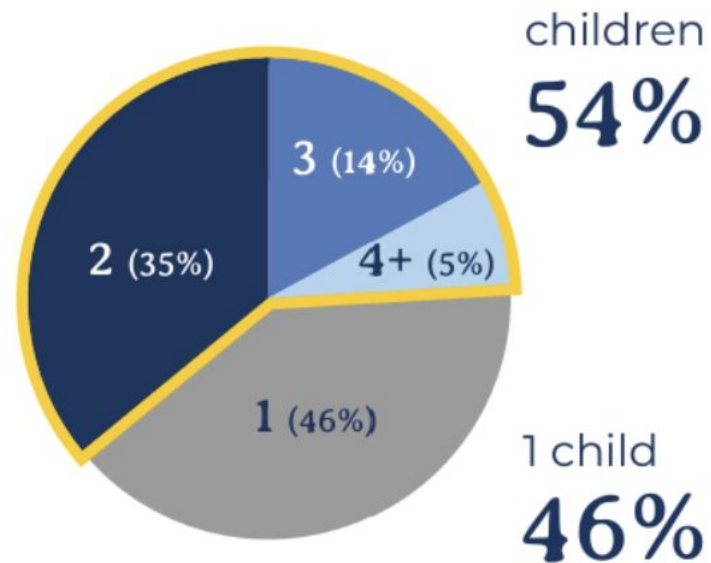
College can be a huge catalyst for economic mobility.

But when postsecondary systems don't support student parents, they often are forced to make choices that limit those possibilities of economic mobility.

And this means that as a society, we're missing out on a huge lever for multigenerational wealth, financial stability, and stronger, healthier communities.

Economic Mobility and CA's Student Parents

Student parents are raising over half a million children



Student parents in California are raising

531,000
children



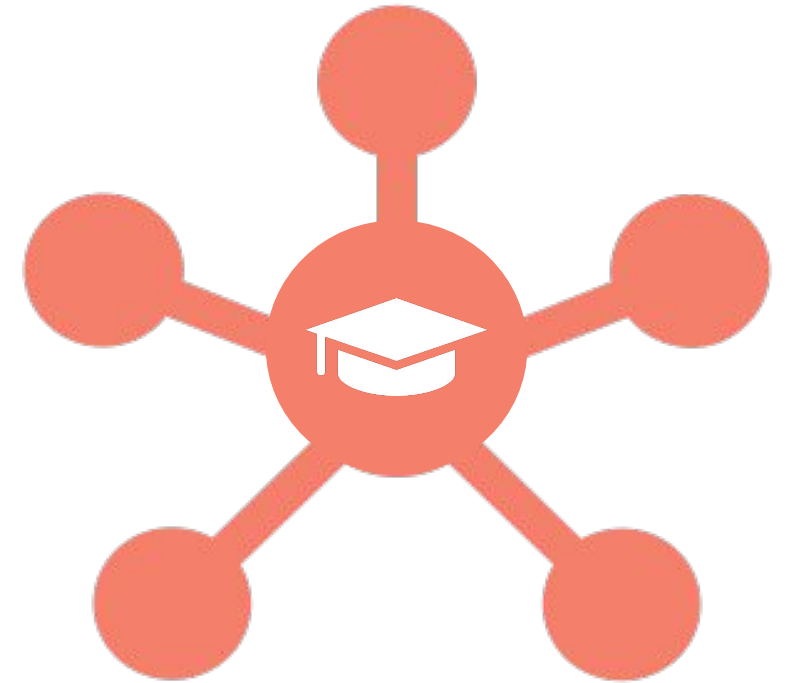
castudentparentalliance.org/almanac



All connected

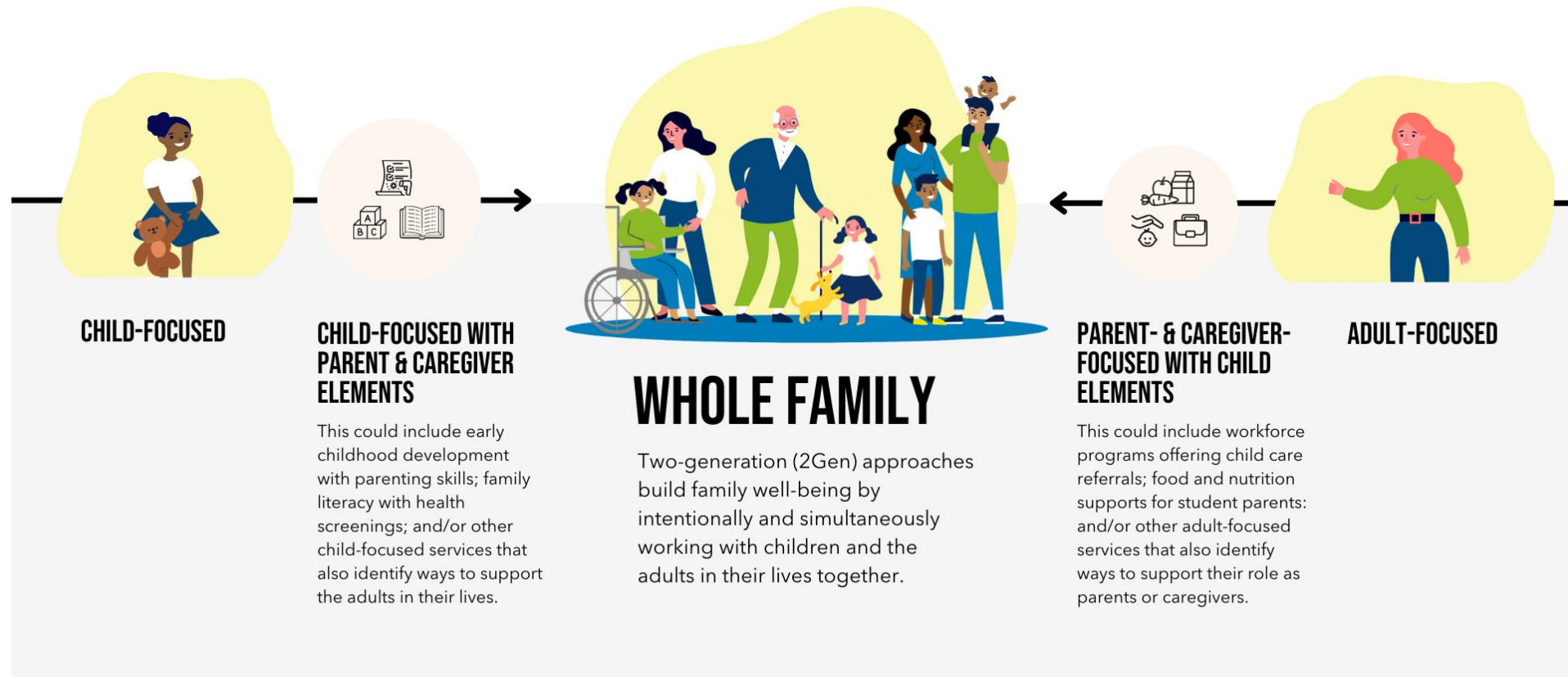
Changing policies and practices to better support student parents:

- benefits both students and their children
- helps students to become more financially stable and independent
- strengthens local economies and better prepares the local workforce
- decreases usage of public benefits and taxpayer-funded programs



All connected

TWO-GENERATION (#2GEN) APPROACHES CENTER WHOLE FAMILIES



All connected

THE SIX KEY COMPONENTS OF TWO-GENERATION APPROACHES

Two-generation approaches (2Gen) build family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously working with children and the adults in their lives together.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- Head Start
- Early Head Start
- child care partnerships
- preK
- home visiting
- Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care (FFN)

K-12

- kindergarten ready
- 3rd grade reading skills
- parent engagement
- graduation and postsecondary prep

POSTSECONDARY & EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

- community college
- training and credentials
- workforce partnerships
- employer partnerships

SOCIAL CAPITAL

- peer and family networks
- coaching
- cohort strategies

HEALTH, INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH

- mental, physical, and behavioral health
- coverage and access to care
- adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress

ECONOMIC ASSETS

- asset building
- housing and public supports
- financial capacity
- transportation



Thanks!

**EdTrust-West
Executive Director
Dr. Christopher J. Nellum**

Contact Info



Postsecondary Education: A Generational Asset



1 in 5 college students is raising kids.



12 million more parents have some college, but **no degree**

LEARN MORE



find more data @ studentparentaction.org

Motivation + Talent = **NO DEGREE?**

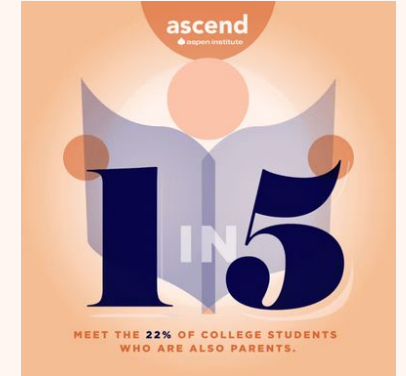


Despite earning comparable grades,
parents are
80% LESS LIKELY
to complete their degree than students without kids.



"Student parents are very tenacious. We're resourceful. We are persistent... I think we have our children watching us for an example, so we have that to live up to."

- WAUKECHA WILKERSON



LISTEN: "1 IN 5" PODCAST



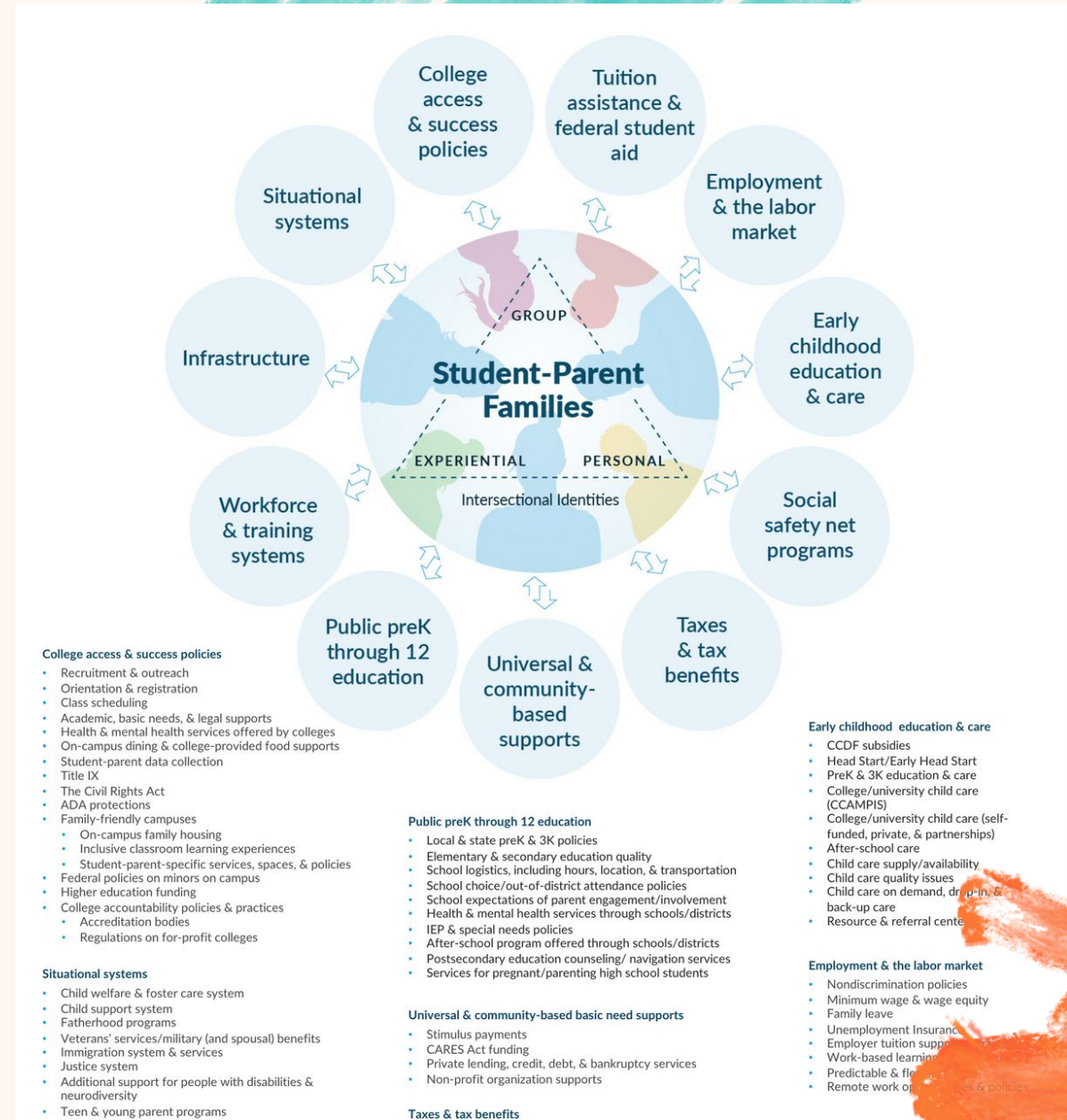
Single moms who finish their BA earn
\$625K MORE
over their lifetime.



CHALLENGE & OPPORTUNITY

Student parents and their families navigate 11 different policy realms

Source: Urban Institute, "Student-Parent Families at the Center"



Investing in Generational Change

Promising ideas, solutions, and approaches



INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

(PICTURED: KIDS ON CAMPUS
PHOTO CREDIT: ANTHONY FRANCIS [FOR NPR](#))



DIRECT SERVICE

(PICTURED: JEREMIAH PROGRAM)



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

(PICTURED: GENERATION HOPE FAMILYU SCHOLAR VALERIA FERNANDEZ)



RESEARCH

(PICTURED: SPARK COLLABORATIVE)



ADVOCACY

(PICTURED CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE FOR STUDENT PARENT SUCCESS)



NARRATIVE CHANGE

(PICTURED [RAISING UP: A STUDENT PARENT FILM SERIES](#))





Grantmakers Advancing Economic Equity