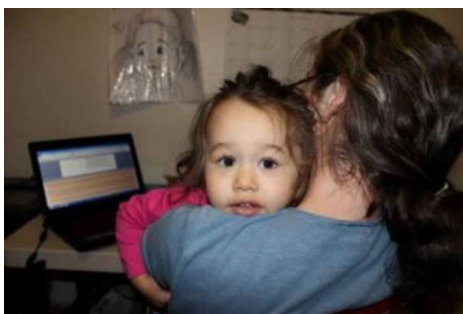


College Student Parents Juggle Family and School

Aryn Dotterer, Lisa Boyce

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USU Wide Receiver, Devven Thompkins, recently shared his experience of being a USU football star and father (USU Statesmen, 2021):

"When I'm at home, you know, that's my time to be a dad," he said. "It's time to give my kids my time and things like that. And then whenever I'm in school, you know, I got schoolwork, and I'm doing everything I need to do. I can kind of put school and family together, you know, take care of my kids into my classes online stuff. And then when it's football time for me, it's my life right here."

Over 4.8 million college students are raising children while attending school. Financial concerns, childcare needs, and feeling overwhelmed are the primary factors that place student parents at greater risk for dropping out of school. HDFS faculty, Aryn Dotterer and Lisa Boyce collaborated on a study to examine 1) the association between student parents' stress and distress in their relationships with their children and 2) how parents managed their multiple roles.

The researchers used a mixed-methods research design in which they analyzed quantitative survey data and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews.

Current and former HDFS graduate students Audrey Juhasz, Kristin Murphy, and Sujung Park were integral in conducting this research and conducted interviews, coded data, and analyzed results. Quantitative results showed that college student parents experienced a variety of stressors that spilled over into their relationships with their children and these associations were more detrimental for father-child relationships.

Results from the interviews with student parents echoed quantitative findings by highlighting sources of stress that included time demands, and fulfilling multiple roles.

However, qualitative interviews also revealed positive spillover and showed that student parents were also motivated by their families and personal expectations to pursue their college degrees which likely contributed to their persistence in school. Further, qualitative results showed that parents drew on external resources (e.g., childcare subsidies) to help cope with stressors.

One way that USU is helping support student parents is through Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS), which provides funding to eligible USU students to help pay for childcare while they are in class.

Dr. Lisa Boyce, Principal Investigator of CCAMPIS just received notification that they were awarded another four-year grant from the Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education. "We are excited to continue to provide supports and childcare subsidies for USU student parents on our Logan and Blanding campus," said Dr. Boyce.

You can read more about this research in the [*Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*](#).