

RESEARCH BRIEF

MAY 17, 2018 | BRIEF NO. 18-3

CAMPUS CHILDCARE RECIPIENTS

Background

Starting in fall 2015, the Washington community and technical colleges (CTCs) began tracking student use of campus childcare centers with a common code in the student management system. This common tracking allows for more system-wide research into the demographics and educational outcomes for students using campus childcare services. Thirteen colleges coded 677 students as childcare recipients during the 2016-17 school year:

College	Child Care Recipients
Big Bend	37
Clark	119
Clover Park	39
Edmonds	39
Lower Columbia	44
Olympic	112
Peninsula	16
Pierce Fort Steilacoom	73
Pierce Puyallup	42
Seattle South	24
Shoreline	37
Spokane	45
Spokane Falls	77
Total	677

Some colleges with childcare centers did not begin using the common coding of childcare recipients in fall 2015 and some have had intermittent tracking of childcare recipients. The colleges that did use the common coding can be used as a sample for comparing students who received childcare services

(“childcare recipients”) to other students at these colleges who reported that they have children or other dependents (“other student parents”).

Demographics Comparison

Compared to other student parents, childcare recipients were more likely to be female (83% vs. 63%) and more likely to be between the ages 25-39 (75% vs. 48%). It seems that student parents under 25 or over 39 were much less likely to use the campus childcare centers. Not all of the childcare recipients had a reported family status indicating that they have children or other dependents – those who did were more likely to report as a single parent than the other student parents were (54% vs. 33%). Income information is only available for students who provide that information on a financial aid application. An alternative indicator for income is socioeconomic status (SES), which is generated based on students’ reported address and SES data reported for neighborhoods (census block groups) from population surveys. Based on this SES indicator, childcare recipients were more likely to be in the lower SES quintiles than other student parents (47% vs. 33%). Childcare recipients were also more likely to identify as White (61% vs. 50%), and less likely to identify as Asian (5% vs. 8%) or Hispanic (12% vs. 16%).

One-year outcomes comparison

In addition to the demographic differences between the childcare recipients and other student parents, there were some differences in student characteristics that are likely to have an impact on the comparison of student outcomes. The childcare recipients were more likely to be award-seeking (88% vs. 66%), more likely to be attending full-time (75% vs. 45%), and more likely to have already earned 45 college credits (47% vs. 30%). Because of these differences, the outcomes comparison was done with only the full-time, award

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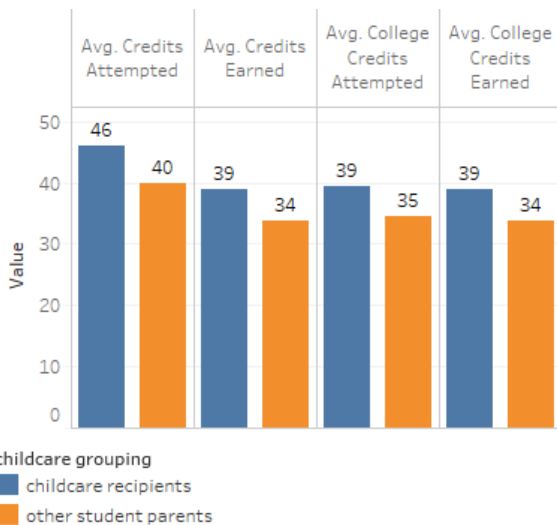
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seeking child care recipients with less than 45 prior college credits (231 students) and other full-time, award seeking student parents with less than 45 prior credits (5,740 students).

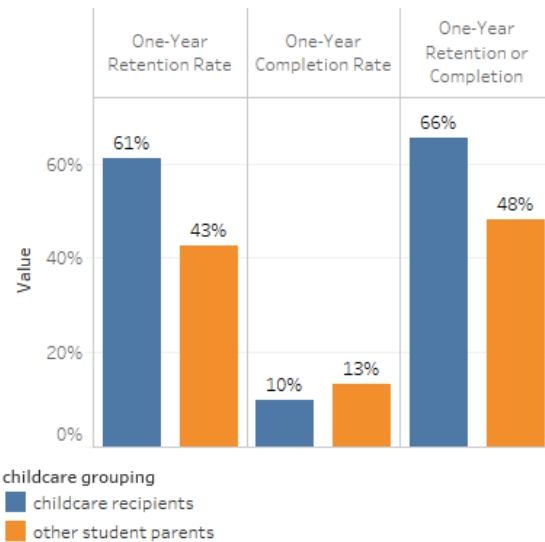
Figure 1 shows a comparison of credits attempted and earned within one year by childcare recipients and other student parents. The first two columns have comparisons for all credits attempted and earned (including precollege credits); the second two columns only include college level credits. On average, childcare recipients enrolled in six more credits during the year (four more college level credits), and they earned five more credits during the year (five more college-level credits).

Figure 1: Average Number of Credits Attempted and Earned within one year



was restricted to students with fewer than 45 prior college credits.

Figure 2: One-Year Retention and Completion Rates



Summary and Comments

For colleges tracking childcare recipients in 2016-17, the childcare recipients were more likely than other student parents to make progress and continue to enroll one year later. This positive outcome for students using the childcare centers is found when recipients are compared to only full-time, award seeking students with fewer than 45 prior college credits, as well as other subsets of the samples not included in this summary. It is possible that there are other characteristics or requirements for childcare recipients that might help to explain the difference in outcomes that were not included in this review. Local review of childcare centers may help to reveal whether there are other explanations for the positive impact of using the service. Assuming that the positive outcomes of childcare services will still be apparent after local review, colleges should consider what keeps more students from using the services and the cost/benefit of expanding services.

Figure 2 shows a comparison of one-year retention and completion rates. Childcare recipients were more likely to still be enrolled one year later (61% vs. 43%), slightly less likely to have completed a program during the year (10% vs. 13%), and more likely to still be enrolled or have completed a program during the year (66% vs. 48%). The difference in completion outcomes may suggest that childcare recipients were more likely to enroll in longer-term programs, considering the sample



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