## Bridging the Gap: Examining Child Care’s Intersection with

## Postsecondary Education and Workforce Development

With the support of the Ford Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Urban Institute is currently undertaking a phased set of studies examining how child care intersects with postsecondary education and workforce development for low-income parents. We are looking at the systems, policies, and practices that affect access to child care for low-income, low-skilled parents seeking education and training. Our work thus far has helped lay a framework for a broader conversation about the child care needs of low-income parents who are seeking economic security for themselves and their families by improving their education and skills.

**Key Challenges**

Through these efforts, we have identified the following key challenges:

* Relatively few low-income parents participate in education and training, despite low basic skills, and experts report that child care is a key barrier that can interfere with their ability to enroll, participate, and complete education and training.
* Low-income parents that seek education and training are one of many low-income populations served by postsecondary education, workforce development and child care systems, but often are not a priority.
* These systems face common challenges that create barriers to working together around the child care needs of families, including inadequate funding levels, complex and decentralized systems, a diversity of stakeholders, and policies and incentives that create barriers to serving these families.
* Some aspects of the intersection of the systems that appear to be particularly problematic for families include arranging child care for the complexity of education and training program schedules; financial constraints and limited access to subsidies or free care; the limited supply of appropriate child care options; and limited information about child care options.

**Areas of Work**

To address the challenges, we are working in four areas as described below. Under each area are listed relevant publications and projects to date. All publications can be found at <http://www.urban.org/bridging-gap>

**1) Exploring and documenting challenges**

* An overview of the child care and workforce development systems, their intersection, and implications for policy (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015, [full report](http://www.urban.org/research/publication/bridging-gap) and [policy brief](http://www.urban.org/research/publication/bridging-gap-executive-summary))
* An analysis of low-income parents and their participation in education and training efforts ([Eyster, Callan, and Adams 2014](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/413253-Balancing-School-Work-and-Family.pdf))
* An analysis of low-income student parents who are employed ([Spaulding, Derrick-Mills, and Callan, 2016](http://www.urban.org/research/publication/supporting-parents-who-work-and-go-school-portrait-low-income-students-who-are-employed))

2) S**upporting the development of effective *policies***

* An overview of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) state eligibility policies and services for families in education and training ([Adams, Heller, Spaulding, and Derrick-Mills 2014](http://www.urban.org/research/publication/child-care-assistance-parents-education-and-training-executive-summary))
* An examination of the implications of the reauthorized CCDF for parents seeking education and training ([Adams and Heller, 2015](http://www.urban.org/research/publication/child-care-and-development-fund-and-workforce-development-low-income-parents))
* 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](http://www.urban.org/research/publication/workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-and-child-care-low-income-parents))
* An overview of challenges and opportunities around supporting the child care and workforce development needs of TANF families [(Hahn, Adams, Spaulding, and Heller, 2016)](http://www.urban.org/research/publication/supporting-child-care-and-workforce-development-needs-tanf-families)

**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)](http://www.urban.org/research/publication/partnering-meet-child-care-needs-parents-education-and-training-four-profiles-collaboration)
* An overview of programmatic strategies that can support low-income parents seeking education and training (Adams, Derrick-Mills and Heller, 2016, [full report](http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000938-Strategies-to-Meet-the-Child-Care-Needs-of-Low-Income-Parents-Seeking-Education-and-Training.pdf) and [policy brief](http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000937-Strategies-to%20Meet-the-Child-Care-Needs-of-Low-Income-Parents-Seeking-Education-and-Training-Executive-Summary.pdf))

**4) Supporting collaboration and access to resources**

* An online discussion among practitioners working to bridge the gap between child care and education & training [(Derrick-Mills and colleagues, February 2016)](http://www.urban.org/debates/bridging-gap-between-child-care-and-workforce-development)
* Summary of conference proceedings from “Bridging the Gap: A Strategic Dialogue.” April 29, 2016. ([Spaulding, 2016](http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/84366/2000941-Future-Steps-to-Bridge-the-Gap-Ideas-to-Meet-the-Child-Care-Needs-of-Low-Income-Parents-Pursuing-Education-and-Training.pdf))

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