

# Child Care Programs

## Introduction

Child care is essential to many parents when they are enrolled in college, but the expenses are becoming increasingly difficult to manage. With a greater influx of non-traditional students in need of affordable child care services, schools must be cognizant of how doing more to connect them to the help they need gives them a better chance of succeeding in the classroom.



### Promoting Equal Opportunity

- Providing affordable child care services can give both young children and their parents a better opportunity to succeed.



### Child Care on Campus

Many students in need of childcare services barely miss qualifying for state-sponsored programs and are desperate for on campus alternatives to support them.

## Implementation

In June 2016, the Tennessee Department of Human Services launched a child-care assistance program called Smart Steps. The program will offer financial support for income-eligible parents pursuing a post-secondary education and provide additional help in choosing from the over 2,400 licensed child care facilities in Tennessee.

With this new state-sponsored program available, institutions should be proactive in connecting students to child care services by identifying those in need through the Financial Aid office, and making sure those students are provided the necessary resources as soon as possible.

There are many examples of free programs at colleges, such as Oregon State University's Our Little Village/Library<sup>1</sup>, which offers free drop-in child care at their library for students, but this and many others are usually funded through expensive student fees.

In addition, eligibility for Head Start child care assistance includes families that have young children with disabilities, children in foster care, homeless children, and children from families receiving public assistance (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) or Supplemental Security Income.

*"According to the National Center for Education Statistics, less than half of the more than 1,000 community colleges in the United States offer on-campus child care for students."<sup>2</sup>*

## Best Practices

- Identify students who may be in need of child care assistance; send them necessary resources (Smart Steps, Head Start programs, etc.)
- If you offer child care on your campus, think of ways to be more inclusive toward low-income students (award discounts for community service, high GPA, etc.)

## Resources

- [Smart Steps](#)
- [Southwest TN CC Campus Child Care](#)
- [NYU Babysitting Registry](#)
- [Clinch-Powell Educational Co-op](#)
- [Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority](#)
- [Early Head Start Program](#)
- [Community Action Agencies](#)

<sup>1</sup>[Our Little Village/Library at Oregon State University](#)

<sup>2</sup>Hill, Catherine. "Child Care on Campus: A Must for Mothers in College." AAUW: Empowering Women Since 1881. N.p., 06 May 2014. Web.