

# Graduate Students with Children: Support, Challenges, and Academic Success

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## RESEARCH QUESTION

What support and challenges do graduate students with children encounter at a private, highly selective, research university, and how can the institution encourage the academic success of these students?

### RATIONALE

1. Nationwide, 24% of women and 28% of men in doctoral programs are parents, and 42% of women in masters/ first professional degree programs have children(Mason, 2006).
2. Graduate students with children are less likely to:
  - Finish their degree programs
  - Earn tenure
  - Hold a faculty position at a top-tier research university

(Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006; Wolfinger et al., 2009)

### LITERATURE DOMAINS

- Theories of Work-Family Conflict and Role Strain
- Student Experiences of Mothers and Fathers
- International Graduate Students with Children
- Best Practices for Encouraging the Academic Success of Graduate Students with Children

### IMPLICATIONS

1. Few studies address the specific needs of graduate students with children, and how different forms of support benefit mothers, fathers, international, domestic students
2. This research may help private, highly selective, research universities with effective methods for assisting these students

## DATA COLLECTION PLAN

### Artifact Analysis

Analyze web resources for services/ support for students with children, and student testimonies

### Existing Survey Data

2012 Survey on parenting/ childcare, academic life, financial info, career services, etc. (800+ responses)

### Student Interviews

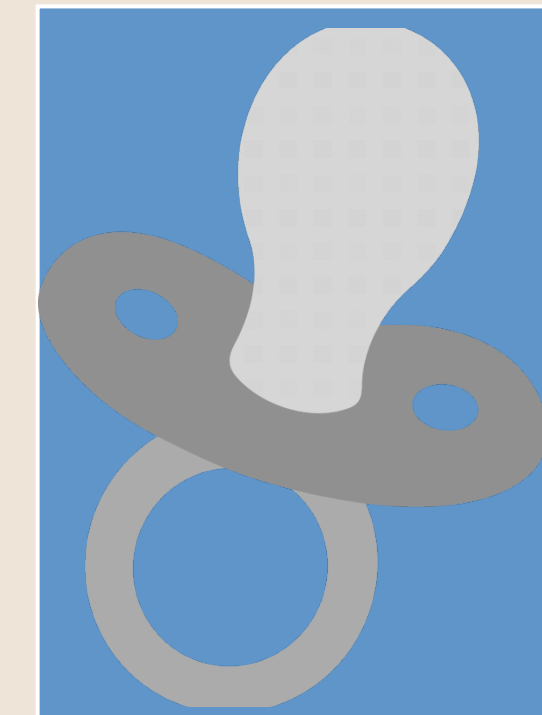
One-on-one interviews with 10 graduate students who have a child/ children

*“It would be nice to feel that my experiences as a parent are valued and supported rather than tolerated as long as I am meeting benchmarks”*

## STUDENT TESTIMONIES

*“Although I do not regret having my children in graduate school, I found the experience to be considerably more alienating and isolating than I had anticipated”*

## INITIAL FINDINGS



66% have experienced “problems with finding child care”



56% have had “problems with paying for dependent insurance”



22% reported a “funding shortage due to taking time off”

How many hours per week do you spend on your degree?

