



Family-Friendly College Toolkit

Using Data to Improve Outcomes for
Parenting and Caregiving Students

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Thank you!



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Learning



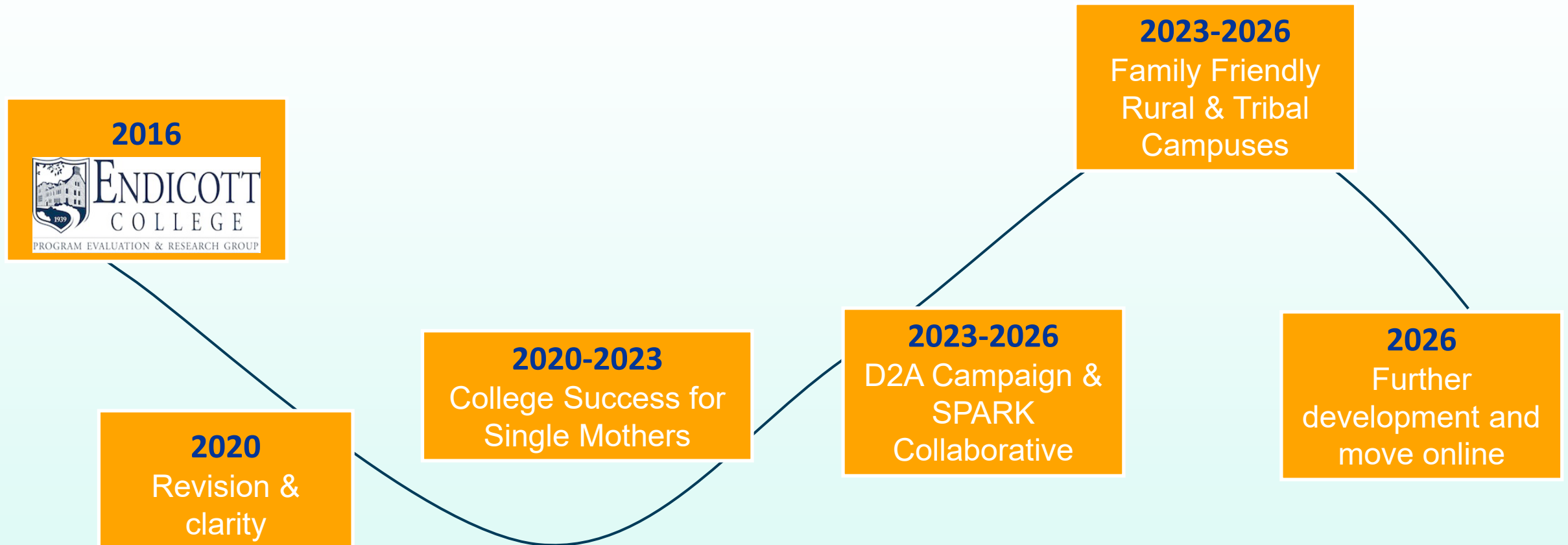
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What is the Family-Friendly College Toolkit?

Set of tools designed to help colleges:

- ✓ **Learn (more) about caregiving students** and their experiences at college
- ✓ **Collect data** about outcomes, conditions, services, resources for parenting students
- ✓ **Gain awareness of recommended practices** currently implemented by other institutions
- ✓ **Make evidence-based plans** to improve conditions and outcomes for student parents and their children

Story of the Toolkit



New Features of the Toolkit

- Changed from “campus” to “college” in the title to reflect a more diverse range of institutions and students
- Focus is on student parents and/or student caregivers, reflecting feedback from our TCU partners.
- Integrated online tool; you can download Word or Excel documents to work, or type directly into the website where it will be saved for when you come back.
- Continues to be free, while becoming more modular and customizable.



Family-Friendly College Toolkit Modules



1. Get Started

Lay the foundation: clarify your purpose, connect the work to college and state priorities, and build a team with parenting students as co-leaders from the start.



2. Understand Your Landscape

Build a shared picture of what your college already offers. Knowing what exists helps you coordinate efforts, raise visibility, and strengthen support for parenting students.



3. Gather Data

Learn from your students through a survey, focus groups, and improved strategies for collecting student record data.



4. Engage Your College Community

Share what you've learned with your college community to gather new insights and ideas—and to raise the profile of the work.



5. Plan for Action

Review what you've learned and map out your action plan



6. Make Change

Put your action plan into motion, make it sustainable, and spread the word.



7. Library

Access your notes, data that has been filled in forms, and links to many resources and examples of other colleges doing this work

Within each module are **activities**,
and within most activities are **tools**

Now you try!



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Family-Friendly College Toolkit

Using data to improve outcomes for parenting and caregiving students

This award-winning self-assessment system is a guide for improving supports and outcomes for students who are raising children. It is intended for those in higher education—staff, faculty, and students—who want to improve outcomes and conditions for student parents and others. The Toolkit offers a flexible process and set of tools designed to be used in any institution.

The refreshed online, modular version of the Toolkit is informed by a partnership with rural Tribal Colleges and Universities, materials from the Data-to-Action Campaign for Parenting Students, and feedback from national and college partners.

To access the Toolkit, you will need to complete a free registration form. This is separate from your SPARK membership, though you can register for both the Toolkit and SPARK to access all the resources on this site.

[Access the Toolkit](#)



1. Get Started



1. Get Started

Lay the foundation: clarify your purpose, connect the work to college and state priorities, and build a team with parenting students as co-leaders from the start.



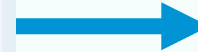
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Goals of this module:

- Become familiar with the Toolkit website
- Invite the right people to participate in this process, including students
- Convene your Task Force
- Articulate your Task Force members' purpose and hopes for this work

Get to Know the Online Toolkit

A few key notes:

- We use the term "college" throughout this Toolkit, but other types of institutions, including universities, nonprofit organizations, or workforce organizations may use this resource and adapt it to their needs and settings.
- The Toolkit uses the term "parenting student" throughout, but individual tools may not always have the exact same language. **Everything is customizable**—adapt any resource to your institution's preferred terminology.
- You do not have to do every activity or complete every tool. Review all of the modules and tools in the Toolkit so you can start thinking about what you want and need.

Some neat website features:

- **You can navigate the entire Toolkit by using the bar at the left.** *Note that the Toolkit works best on a computer, laptop, or tablet in landscape mode; on a phone, some features are harder to use.*
- **Take notes using the purple box on the right side of your screen.** These save automatically and can be accessed by revisiting each page or all at once by looking in the Library. Use the Notes feature to respond to questions posed in the activity sections, record ideas, jot down questions for follow-up, or track to-do items.
- **The Library compiles all of the Tools, your "Making Sense" summaries, your notes, college examples, and resources.** *Some examples and reference materials are still being compiled.*
- **The Tools are interactive.** Some can be filled in directly on the website, and others can be downloaded and customized. Even the online tools have downloadable templates that can be printed and completed offline. Your work will be saved automatically in the online Toolkit (*note that automatic saving may take up to 3 seconds*).
- **Some Tools have a Making Sense section**, where you reflect on what you learned. These are compiled in your Library and will become useful in activity 5b. [Reflect on What You've Learned](#).

Tool: Practice Using the Website



Form a Team



1. Get Started

Lay the foundation: clarify your purpose, connect the work to college and state priorities, and build a team with parenting students as co-leaders from the start.

Potential Task Force Members:

- At least one current or recent parenting student
- A representative of student services or student affairs
- A faculty member
- Your college's Title IX administrator or a member of the Title IX office
- A representative of institutional research (IR) or student data management
- An executive-level leader (e.g., vice president, provost, or dean)—may overlap with another category

Tools Include:

- Email template to invite team members
- Outreach flyer to recruit parenting student members
- Guidance around engaging parenting students

Start the Discussion



1. Get Started

Lay the foundation: clarify your purpose, connect the work to college and state priorities, and build a team with parenting students as co-leaders from the start.

- **Motivation:** Why do we want to use the Toolkit?
- **Resources:** What time or financial resources are available to support the Task Force's efforts? Where are there constraints?
- **Concerns and barriers:** What challenges might arise in collecting data or supporting parenting students?
- **Parenting student engagement:** How will parenting student members contribute to planning, and how will their lived expertise be honored?
- **Team composition:** Are the right people at the table? Are any important perspectives missing?
- **Alignment:** How does the Task Force's effort connect to other college initiatives or strategic priorities? Are there opportunities for intentional coordination?
- **Visibility:** When and how should the team announce this effort to the broader college community?

Engage Students as Co-Leaders



1. Get Started

Lay the foundation: clarify your purpose, connect the work to college and state priorities, and build a team with parenting students as co-leaders from the start.

Parenting students should be treated as equal partners—and supported accordingly, whether through financial compensation, leadership development, or non-monetary benefits that reflect the value of their contributions.

- Parenting students are included in change efforts
- Spaces feel inclusive for parenting students during events or in-person and virtual meetings
- Parenting student data is collected, and parenting students are included in data collection and interpretation efforts
- Parenting students are represented, and community-building efforts are supported and sustained at the college

2. Understand Your Landscape



1. Get Started

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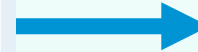
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Build a shared picture of what your college already offers. Knowing what exists helps you coordinate efforts, raise visibility, and strengthen support for parenting students.



3. Gather Data

Learn from your students through a survey, focus groups, and improved strategies for collecting student record data.



Goals of this module

- Identify existing resources at your college—including supports, people, policies, partnerships, and data.
- Find individuals or groups who may become partners, supporters, or champions.
- Determine what your current data systems already tell you about parenting students, so you know what to build on.

Profile Your Existing Resources



2. Understand Your Landscape

Build a shared picture of what your college already offers. Knowing what exists helps you coordinate efforts, raise visibility, and strengthen support for parenting students.

Categories to Catalog

1. Financial supports
2. Child care options
3. Gathering spaces
4. Targeted college services
5. General college services
6. College policies
7. Inclusive college practices
8. Existing data sources
9. External community resources
10. College partnerships

- Identify what resources already exist
- List details about each resource in the online form (or download it to Word and fill it out there)
- When you are done, assess how developed resources are in each category and identify areas for improvement

Map Your Community



2. Understand Your Landscape

Build a shared picture of what your college already offers. Knowing what exists helps you coordinate efforts, raise visibility, and strengthen support for parenting students.

Tool: College Community Map

To use this map, click on the "+" button to add a person. Put their name or title in the box and drag it to the section where they belong.

The interface is a white rectangular area with a dashed line forming a 'Y' shape that divides it into three sections. The top section is labeled 'Students'. The bottom-left section is labeled 'External Partners'. The bottom-right section is labeled 'Non Student College Community Members'. On the right side of the 'Students' section, there are three circular buttons stacked vertically: the top one has a magnifying glass icon, the middle one has a magnifying glass with a minus sign icon, and the bottom one has a plus sign icon. A small upward-pointing arrow is in the top right corner of the tool's header.

Students

External Partners

Non Student College Community Members

Assess Your Data Capacity



2. Understand Your Landscape

Build a shared picture of what your college already offers. Knowing what exists helps you coordinate efforts, raise visibility, and strengthen support for parenting students.

Tool: Data Capacity Assessment

1. What systems (e.g., student information systems, client records management tools, Excel files) currently store student-level data? List both institution-wide systems and program- or office-specific tools (e.g., admissions, TRIO, advising, basic needs, child care).

1

2. Who manages or oversees these systems? Are they aware of or involved in this Task Force's effort?

2

3. Do any systems currently collect data related to parenting status? If so, how is that information recorded and accessed?

3

Making Sense of Your Data Capacity

What We Learned

List insights and important information learned (positive or negative) from completing and discussing the questions about data capacity.

Our data systems don't talk to each other



We have a bit of information on students who have preschool aged children



+ Add a row



Summarize Your Existing Data



2. Understand Your Landscape

Build a shared picture of what your college already offers. Knowing what exists helps you coordinate efforts, raise visibility, and strengthen support for parenting students.

**Demo-
graphics**

**Family
and
Housing**

Academics

3. Gather Data



1. Get Started

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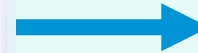
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3. Gather Data

Learn from your students through a survey, focus groups, and improved strategies for collecting student record data.



Goals of this module

- Deepen your understanding of parenting students and their experiences
- Gather actionable data to inform decisions about resources, policies, and supports

Choose a Data Collection Strategy



3. Gather Data

Learn from your students through a survey, focus groups, and improved strategies for collecting student record data.

Which best describes what you most need to learn?

1. Representative data on the basic characteristics—and eventually outcomes—of your parenting students (→ [Improve Student Record Data](#))
2. Breadth of student experiences, needs, and use of supports across many students (→ [Student Survey](#))
3. In-depth understanding of the "how" and "why" behind student experiences (→ [Focus Groups](#))

IRB and Informed Consent Considerations

Some colleges—and especially universities—may require that Task Forces undergo Institutional Review Board (IRB) review before collecting data. Many colleges will not require this if the purpose is to inform the college's own policies and programs and not to inform the broader field. However, Task Forces may want to check with their own IRBs about what would be required, and if different approaches to data collection carry different review requirements.

Improve Student Record Data



3. Gather Data

Learn from your students through a survey, focus groups, and improved strategies for collecting student record data.

Consider Your Level of Data Development

- **Level 1:** Identifying Parenting Students
- **Level 2:** Tracking Student Outcomes
- **Level 3:** Connecting Outcomes to Supports and Experiences

Lots of resources from the Data-to-Action Campaign for Parenting Students:

Survey Students



3. Gather Data

Learn from your students through a survey, focus groups, and improved strategies for collecting student record data.

Tool: Survey Builder



This survey builder contains more questions than should be asked on one survey. The survey builder below will take you through each of 5 categories, where you can choose the questions that you would like to include in your survey. To select a question click the check box on the top right corner. The categories are:

- Parenting/Caregiving Status
- Demographics
- Experiences in College
- Support Services at School
- Additional Information

Survey Students



3. Gather Data

Learn from your students through a survey, focus groups, and improved strategies for collecting student record data.

Are you caregiving for anyone? This can include a child, an adult, or an elder. Since this survey is about caregiving, this question cannot be skipped.

☐

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (leave survey)
- ☐ Not sure

*****Overall, how much do your caregiving responsibilities complicate or interfere with your college progress (e.g., going to class, studying, etc.)?**

☐

- ☐ A huge amount
- ☐ Quite a bit
- ☐ Moderately
- ☐ A little
- ☐ Not at all

Conduct Focus Groups



3. Gather Data

Learn from your students through a survey, focus groups, and improved strategies for collecting student record data.

Tools Include:

- Focus group sample questions for staff and students
- Informed consent samples
- Guidance for running focus groups

You could explore the following topics with your participants:

- **Student background and family profile:** Enrollment history, transfer status, age, number and ages of children, single-parent status; may also include caregiving responsibilities beyond parenting
- **Impact of parenthood on educational pursuits:** How becoming a parent or caregiver shaped their path to/through college, including any stops and starts
- **Strengths as a parenting student:** Assets and skills that parenting brings to their academic life
- **Challenges to academic achievement and graduation:** Barriers, stressors, and competing demands related to both academics and other aspects of college life
- **Experience at this institution:** Overall sense of how the college has or hasn't worked for them as a parenting student

Toolkit Modules #4 through #6



4. Engage Your College Community

Share what you've learned with your college community to gather new insights and ideas—and to raise the profile of the work.



5. Plan for Action

Review what you've learned and map out your action plan



6. Make Change

Put your action plan into motion, make it sustainable, and spread the word.

Library

- Shortcuts directly to Tools
- “Making Sense” sections in one place to reflect on what you learned
- Stores notes
- College examples in one place
- Resources

The screenshot shows the 'Notes' tab selected in a navigation bar with options: Tools, Making Sense, Notes, College Examples, and Resources. Below the navigation bar, a message states: 'See all your notes from every chapter here in one place!'. To the right of this message are three buttons: 'Expand All' (with a downward arrow icon), 'Collapse All' (with an upward arrow icon), and 'Download' (with a download icon and a dropdown arrow). The main content area is titled 'Module 1 Get Started' and contains a list of sections: '1a Plan for Toolkit Use', '1b Get to Know the Online Toolkit', '1c Form a Team', '1d Start the Discussion', and '1e Engage Parenting Students as Co-Leaders'. The '1a Plan for Toolkit Use' section is expanded, showing the text 'Here are the notes I took while planning to use the Toolkit' and buttons for 'Edit' and 'Download'. The '1b Get to Know the Online Toolkit' section shows 'No notes yet.' and buttons for 'Edit' and 'Download'. The other sections are collapsed, indicated by downward arrow icons.

Tools Making Sense **Notes** College Examples Resources

See all your notes from every chapter here in one place!

Expand All Collapse All Download

Module 1 Get Started

1a Plan for Toolkit Use

Here are the notes I took while planning to use the Toolkit

Edit Download

1b Get to Know the Online Toolkit

No notes yet.

Edit Download

1c Form a Team

1d Start the Discussion

1e Engage Parenting Students as Co-Leaders

Thank you!

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