Supporting Student Success

Access, affordability, quality and student success -- what change drivers in the field of early care and education strive for. But the early childhood field is composed largely of women who are challenged in their pursuit of higher education by the obstacles of money, time, location and dependent care needs. Together these realities support the need for higher education institutions to provide flexibility in when, where and how opportunities are offered for adult learners. These needs also dictate how support services are designed and provided. How can you support ongoing increases in the education levels of the early childhood workforce?

Create Access

- **Engage employers.** Access into postsecondary institutions is influenced by the amount of employer support an individual may have.

- **Offer supports.** Students need information about support services from academic resources to career and life/family supports. Find out which colleges in your state have a Student Support Services grant and link with that office.

- **Advocate for flexible options.** The availability of off-campus learning centers, distance learning technologies (such as online and hybrid courses), and flexible course schedules (such as evening/weekend courses, accelerated schedules) enhance adult learners' persistence by removing time and travel barriers.

Creating Access, Supporting Success

To recruit and retain adult learners, stakeholders should ensure institutions create programs that take into consideration individual circumstances and are consistent with high academic standards.

http://www.womeningovernmentorgfilesfile/higher-ed/toolkit/AccesstoHigherEducationfortheAdultLearnerPresentation.pdf

Provide Affordable Options

- **Tap into existing strategies that reduce college costs.** Information about financial resources such as T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®, Pell grants and tax credits can provide students with the options they need that decrease costs and reduce student debt.

- **Create avenues for accessing low cost textbooks.** Students are finding a variety of ways to reduce the cost of textbook purchases. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® provides recipients with deep discounts on required course materials. Textbook rentals, book sharing and lending libraries are other options for cost savings.

Promote Quality

- **Require funding be targeted to programs that support articulation.** Transfer of prior college credit and high GPAs may positively influence adult student persistence toward a baccalaureate degree.

- **Advocate for quality settings and curriculum.** Program size and instructional quality impact adult students' learning outcomes. Encourage community college early childhood degree programs to become accredited.

- **Engage students and build strong communication networks.** Faculty, counselor and administrator communication with adult students influences their persistence to graduation. Social networks (family and friends) outside of the classroom positively influence adult learners' persistence.

Learn More!

- **Student Support Services/TRIO**
  http://www2.ed.gov/programs/triostudsupp/

- **Lumina Foundation**
  http://www.luminafoundation.org

- **Community College Research Center**
  http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/

- **National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education**
  http://www.highereducation.org/

- **Center for Community College Student Engagement**
  http://www.ccsse.org

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