



GSG Graduate Students with Children Survey

Participation and Remarks on Methodology

204 students took the survey; 129 (63%) of the participants currently do not have children but consider such a step during their time at Princeton.

The quantitative results listed below refer to the subgroup (75 students) who currently either have children or are pregnant. For the qualitative comments, we have included comments by all participants in the survey.

Results and Implications

Family-Focused Initiatives played a role or some-role for 36% of students when deciding whether to accept Princeton's offer.

Given the results of the survey, the GSG Executive Board advocates for the following policy changes:

- 1. Changes to Child-Care Support**
Short term: Address needs of spouses that don't work or work less than 20 h/week, peg subsidy to age of child
Long term: Start affordable child-care facility for students
- 2. Improve Communication of Health Plan**
Provide a guide for students that spells out the extent of Aetna's coverage for childbirth and pregnancy
- 3. Changes to Policies that Regulate Giving Birth during DCE Status and Leaves for Fathers after Childbirth**
Make students in DCE status eligible for extra semester of funding; accommodate fathers also
- 4. Make Long-term Changes to Family Friendly and Affordable Housing**

a) Child-Care Support

- low utilization (62% do not make use of it) and impression that it does not fit student needs (spouse has to work more than 20 h/week, costs in the Princeton area for child care are too high)
- Also: \$5000 subsidy has not been increased in five years; not pegged to child's age
- Even with University help, cheapest child care facility in Princeton is about \$1000/month for the first year
- 47% say that the current SCCAP program does not match their needs

b) Improve Communication of Health Plan

- 42% of Students with Children find the Princeton Health Plan somewhat unclear or very unclear in terms of coverage of pregnancy and birth (especially costs)
- 82% don't know or are unsure about the differences in policy between having childbirth during normal enrollment or DCE status

c) DCE Status

- 2/3s of the respondents like the childbirth policies in place, but there is a significant amount of comments like the following that call for **extending childbirth accommodations to DCE status**

Quote: "It seems unreasonable that all Childbirth Accommodations cease after your G5 year. I understand the university's potential concerns about students 'sticking around' to have children rather than leaving to get jobs... But at the same time, it seems like a very smart life choice to plan to have children later in your graduate pro gram—after course work and research. By arbitrarily cutting off the eligibility for a semester of funding and/or leave, you seem to be penalizing people who make reasonable plans about the best time to balance infants, and/or who have trouble getting pregnant."

Also: Students called repeatedly for some form of official accommodation for parents who are not the birth mother/primary caregiver because current policy does not take into account "modern parenting".

Quote: "There is no accommodation whatsoever for a parent who will not be the primary caregiver--not even a week or two leave at the time of a child's birth. My oldest was born at the end of a fall semester. So me faculty members were willing to make special arrangements for me to turn in coursework late, but others were less accommodating. I appealed to Dean Montero, but she told me that because my wife was the primary caregiver, there was no policy that would require the faculty to accommodate our child's birth."

d) Housing Issues

- 63% of students live off-campus, 25% in Butler
- **71% of students say that the housing options offered by the university do not match their needs**
- Rent issues for families with need for more than 1 BR
- Text fields: only 14 out of 55 students do not live in the Princeton area; 32 responses held that post-Butler options are too expensive and that there is no longer any family-friendly housing option available

Quote: "It is really disappointing that the university does not have dedicated family housing. We would like very much to live among other graduate students, especially those with children the same age as ours, but there is no such community here. Butler provided a greater family-oriented community, but we had to leave there after my fourth year because we were unsuccessful in the lottery. Given the price of rents and our need for at least two bedrooms, we moved to Lawrence Township, south of I-95. I ride the public bus to school and we rarely interact as a family with other Princeton University families. Our move off-campus has damaged my productivity and our connection to the university community. It is sad that the university is not investing in family housing. Although the new construction could potentially accommodate families, the rents will be too high for a single-earner family. Furthermore, this housing still will not provide an opportunity for families to live near one another."