CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR UNDERGRADUATE MOTHERS ATTENDING COLLEGE AT A FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION

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CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR UNDERGRADUATE MOTHERS ATTENDING COLLEGE AT A FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION
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The purpose of this study is to examine the instrumental, social and emotional supports in place for young mothers ages 18-24 as they persist through college. Five parenting college students from a large, public four-year university completed a modified version of the Arizona Social Support Interview Schedule (ASSIS) and responded to a series of 20 open-ended questions to assess challenges, opportunities, and support needs from the beginning of their pregnancies until the present day.

Results showed student-parents receive most of their support from family members and friends and often struggle balancing their multiple roles as student, parents and employees. Implications from this study point to an increased need for college and universities to create and promote policies that remove barriers for this population.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Becoming a mother at any age presents its own sets of challenges. From big decisions like childcare, to the smallest issues like what brand of diapers to use, motherhood requires nimbleness, flexibility, and optimism. But what happens when that pregnancy is either unplanned or mistimed? How does it change the life trajectory of the mother?

The highest group of women with unplanned pregnancies are those ages 18-24 (Finer & Crenshaw, 2006; Brown & Amankwaa, 2007), followed close behind by teens ages 15-19 (Finer & Henshaw, 2006). Typically, these two groups are in the midst of completing their schooling (either high school or college) when they discover they are pregnant. Much of the research has focused on how teen mothers (roughly defined as those ages 15-18) persist to high school graduation and whether they move on to post-secondary education. Little research exists on the older population of "undergraduate mothers," those who had their first child during the traditional college age-range of 18-24. To gain insight into this latter group, it may be helpful to extrapolate from the available literature on teen mothers and to consider where the two populations might
diverge in terms of outcomes and the supports needed to complete their educational career.

Typically, an early pregnancy is associated with an interrupted education, lower education completion rates, and a future mired in poverty (Card, 1999), although newer research suggests that preexisting factors contribute to these outcomes rather than the pregnancy itself (Bissell, 2000). Teen mothers are often single, carrying most of the responsibility for the day-to-day care of the child in the absence of the child’s father (Hanna 2001). In addition, negative societal views of teenage motherhood can affect how teen mothers view themselves and whether they give up from the lack of support in pursuing their goals. Yardley (2008) found that the typical stereotype of these young mothers is one of being “immature, irresponsible, single and benefit-dependent” (p.680). Some notable teen pregnancy prevention campaigns frame their messages in the same way. The Candies’ Foundation, dedicated to “shaping the way youth in America think about teen pregnancy,” features advertising that encourages girls to avoid becoming “a statistic” (2011). The print and video ads feature dark images and negative portrayals of teenage motherhood. The underlying message? “You don’t want to be like them.”

Another teen pregnancy prevention campaign developed a video that used “humor” to present how little sense teen pregnancy actually makes (D.C. Campaign To Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2011). In the infomercial for teen pregnancy, the script goes like this:
Teen girl: “Do you want to drop out of high school and maybe never graduate from college?”

Friends: “Yeah!”

Teen girl: “Do you want to increase the chances of your child being abused, put in foster care or even jail?”

Friends: “Yeah!”

Teen girl: “Well, do I have the thing for you! Teen pregnancy!” (D.C. Campaign To Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2011)

To teens who are already pregnant and parenting, these types of ads can be considered offensive, unsupportive, and ill-conceived (Lewis, et al., 2007; Vianna, 2011).

Undergraduate mothers feel much of the same shame directed at teen mothers, often reporting they feel "singled out" by professors or unwelcome by their non-parent peers on their college campuses (Duquaine-Watson, 2007).

But even in the face of harsh societal views of young motherhood, most teen mothers still have high ambitions for themselves. The majority do eventually gain their high school diploma and become gainfully employed over the long term (SmithBattle, 2007). Many teen mothers credit their children with giving them the motivation to pursue their dreams with greater force than if they had remained childless (Schultz, 2011). It is likely that undergraduate mothers feel this same compulsion to complete
their degree, not only for their personal satisfaction, but to make their children to be proud of their perseverance.

Research indicates that the majority of teen mothers have career goals requiring the completion of a college degree (Phipps et al., 2011). This makes the support they receive at their college campus all the more important, to ensure they persist toward graduation. SmithBattle (2007) found that college guidance and educational support made the difference between teen mothers keeping their high aspirations or downgrading them for something more “realistic.”

Women who give birth as teens can generally find resources and support groups to help them complete their high school education, but the support typically stops once they get their diploma or G.E.D. (Hofferth, Reid, & Mott, 2001). Teen mothers acknowledge how crucial this moral and social support is in completing their college degree (Lewis et al., 2007). Researchers have examined what particular type of support teen mothers need to finish high school and suggested areas of focus include mentoring from an older teen mom who has walked in their shoes, parenting and personal development classes, relationship skills, and peer support (Rowen, Shaw-Perry, & Rager, 2005; Sadler et al., 2007). Most teen mothers are first-generation college students, and therefore often lack familial support to help them navigate through the sometimes choppy waters of higher education (SmithBattle, 2007). University support may be critical in enabling them to persist with their college education. Likewise, undergraduate mothers benefit from the support of faculty and staff at their institution; when it is absent, their
commitment to education at that particular school may waver (MacLaughlin & Randolph, 2012).

Because they are typically juggling work demands, childcare, and schooling, it can be difficult for teen mothers to prioritize school and remain on track for graduation. Research indicates that unforeseen problems like inflexible work arrangements, transportation difficulties, and rigid attendance policies can cause them to withdraw from high school (SmithBattle, 2007). While attendance might not be a factor impeding educational persistence for undergraduate mothers (due to the ability to make their own schedules), finding the financial resources to pay for school and finding and funding childcare might interfere with their progress through college (Wilson, 2011).

Although limited, the available scholarly literature examining teen mothers in their educational pursuits beyond high school points to challenges and supports (Duquaine-Watson, 2007). This research may provide some insight into what life might be like for undergraduate mothers. However, based on developmental considerations of the differences between becoming a parent as an adolescent versus as a young adult, it is likely that there are differences in the experiences and needs of teen mothers persisting to college compared to undergraduate mothers.

The purpose of this study is to examine the instrumental, social, and emotional supports in place for young mothers ages 18-24 as they persist through college. Specifically, this study will examine: 1) self-reported needs for support within the past 30 days; 2) levels of support received within the past 30 days; 3) overall sources of support;
and 4) similarities and differences between teen mothers and undergraduate mothers on the previous three (extrapolated from current research on teen mothers in college). We will also examine specific challenges undergraduate mothers may encounter, as well as the opportunities present for colleges to remove barriers for this population.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned, representing roughly 3 million pregnancies each year. The highest rate of unplanned pregnancies are among women ages 18-24 (Finer & Crenshaw, 2006; Brown & Amankwa, 2007), followed close behind by teens ages 15-19 (Finer & Henshaw, 2006). While the teen pregnancy rate has recently reached a 40-year low (Guttmacher, 2012), the unplanned pregnancy rates of these two age groups are nonetheless significant. Nearly 3 in 10 young women will become pregnant by the time they are 20—that represents more than 700,000 in 2008. Roughly 70% of 20something pregnancies are unplanned (Finer & Crenshaw, 2006).

Typically, young women between the ages 15-24 are still in school (either high school or college) during the time they discover they are pregnant. For those who choose to carry their pregnancies to term, this unplanned entrance into parenthood may change the life trajectory of the mothers as they work to provide the best possible outcomes for their children. Much of the research has focused on how teenage mothers (roughly defined as those 15-18) persist to high school graduation and whether they move on to post-secondary education. In contrast, little research exists on the older population of "undergraduate mothers," those who had their first child during the traditional college age range of 18-24. To gain insight into this latter group, it may be helpful to extrapolate
from the available literature on teen mothers and to consider where the two populations might diverge in terms of outcomes and the supports needed to complete their educational career.

**Educational and Employment Outcomes**

Research has shown that unplanned pregnancy rates are higher among minority women, lower-income women, and women with limited education (Finer & Crenshaw, 2006). This is not surprising as an unplanned pregnancy is usually associated with an interrupted education, lower education completion rates, and a future mired in poverty (Card, 1999). Among young women who did not have a teen birth, 90% earn their high school diploma. Among teen mothers who had a child before 18, that number drops to 50 percent (Perper, Peterson, & Manlove, 2010). Moreover, fewer than two percent of teen mothers earn a college degree by age 30 (Hoffman, 2006).

However, for decades researchers have suggested that pregnancy is not necessarily the cause, but a symptom of larger societal issues. Grindstaff (1988) studied approximately 200,000 Canadian women divided into subgroups based on marital status and age at first birth. He found that 68% of women who were married and had children as teens were employed full-time by age 30. In contrast, for women who were married and had children after 25, 65% were employed full-time by age 30. This suggests that over the long-term, teen mothers are able to catch up and become gainfully employed in
similar numbers than if they had delayed childbirth. Bissell (2000) continues this line of research and concludes:

The negative consequences of teen pregnancy are shown to be largely dependent on race, ethnic background, and income level rather than on maternal age at birth. The fact that a large percentage of teen mothers come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds means that they suffer many of the negative consequences of teen pregnancy by virtue of their family status and pre-pregnancy life situation (pg. 202).

Similarly, undergraduate mothers typically come from a lower socioeconomic background (Miller, Gault, & Thorman, 2011). Their lower socioeconomic status represents a hurdle that these mothers might have faced regardless of when they had their first child. Students from lower-income families are more likely to leave school without completing their degree, with most leaving after their freshman year (Engle & Tinto, 2008). They are also less likely to receive financial support from parents and have other demanding obligations (like employment) competing for their attention. Adequate support for both the teen mother and undergraduate mother population carries the same urgency as support for the low-income population.

But even in the face of somewhat grim statistics, most teen mothers still have high ambitions for themselves. While many teen mothers dropped out of school prior to becoming pregnant, SmithBattle (2007) found that, in some cases, becoming a mother
helped to renew their commitment to their education. She studied nineteen teen mothers and their parents over the first ten months postpartum and evaluated how their educational aspirations changed over time. She found a quarter of the women were early dropouts who left school before they became pregnant, and nearly half were continuous enrollees. The other participants had either completed a GED before they became pregnant, or dropped out as a result of pregnancy. One mother in the study dropped out at the end of her pregnancy, hoping to return to school a year later:

I long to go to school...It's best for my future in order to go to college. And I miss it. I wanna learn. I really do. Everybody treats school, yuk. But I can't just stay at home all day and go to work. I want school so bad. (pg. 355)

Most teen mothers in the study emphasized their belief that completing their high school degree and then progressing on to college was the best way to assure a good life for themselves and their children. It is likely that undergraduate mothers who find themselves pregnant during college and continue with their education, do so because they feel it is the best option for their future and their children.

**Supports Needed for College Persistence**

Multiple supports are needed for these teen mother and undergraduate mother populations in order for them to persist and graduate from college. Because they are typically juggling work demands, childcare and schooling, it can be difficult for teen mothers and undergraduate mothers to prioritize school and remain on track for
graduation. It typically takes teen mothers and undergraduate mothers longer than two years for an associate's degree or four years for a bachelor's degree, as they take fewer classes at a time to accommodate their work schedules and childcare (Matus-Grossman & Gooden, 2002). During that time, they are dealing with shifting childcare availability, demanding course work, and their part-time or full-time jobs. Matus-Grossman and Gooden (2002) studied 131 low-income workers (including some undergraduate mothers) affiliated with six geographically diverse community colleges to examine their challenges as they combine work, school and family life. The researchers found students were more likely to look for part-time work to accommodate their school schedule. As a result, financial aid was a huge determining factor of whether school was feasible since they were likely to have smaller incomes.

Childcare is also a major consideration for these mothers enrolled in higher education. Undergraduate mothers might have a harder time with childcare than teen mothers, whose children might even be school-aged once they get to college. The convenience of on-campus childcare can provide some relief for student parents, but it is not widely available—only 19% of four-year colleges and 25% of all two-year institutions have on-campus childcare for students (Miller, Gault & Thorman, 2011). Another consideration is that undergraduate mothers are primarily looking for infant and toddler care, which is harder for on-campus childcare facilities to staff and accommodate need (Miller, Gault & Thorman, 2011). In addition, since many student parents (both teen mothers and undergraduate mothers) work during the day, they often take evening
and weekend classes that fit their schedule. However, finding childcare during those times is often difficult, expensive, or unreliable (Miller, Gault & Thorman, 2011). Researchers also found that childcare centers served as an important source of support for student parents through their connections with other parents and the availability of information about child development.

**Sources of Support for Student Parents**

One potential source of support for student parents is their relationship partners. However, teen mothers are often single, carrying most of the responsibility for the day-to-day care of the child in the absence of the child's father (Hanna, 2001). Nearly eight in ten teen fathers remain single (they do not marry the mother of their children), and their ability to contribute financially in terms of child support is severely limited (Brien & Willis, 2007). These young fathers typically have lower educational levels, which hampers their ability to provide for their children (Brien & Willis, 2007). Larson et al. (1996) studied the relationships of 241 adolescent parents and found that many of the relationships tended to be off and on—one month they are together, the next month they are not. In the study, 60% of the mothers surveyed said they were in a relationship with their child's biological father one month postpartum. Three years later, that number dropped to 26%. Only 17% of the mothers had the same partner during the six-interview span, occurring over three years. While much less is known about the relationship status of undergraduate mothers, research has found that unplanned pregnancy is also linked
with the parents suffering from depression, relationship conflict, and poor relationship quality (National Campaign, 2009). However, it should be noted that while teen mothers or undergraduate mothers may not have a relationship with their child's father, they may be dating someone else. In any case, it is likely that support from their relationship partner may be limited.

While their relationship partner might not be in the position to contribute to their child-related expenses, both populations (teen mothers and undergraduate mothers) still typically have significant financial needs. In their quest to complete their education and provide for their children, teen mothers and undergraduate mothers often rely on governmental assistance or social support programs to assist with their educational goals. Wilson (2011) gathered case studies of ten low-income single mothers attending a community college to determine how they were financing their education post-welfare reform. She found that the rules and policies of different social programs were confusing and the single mothers navigated as best they could. The ten participants participated in twenty different social programs at the state, federal and institutional (school) level. Nine mothers qualified for Pell grants, Medicaid, and the Earned Income Tax Credit. The majority received food stamps and WIC. Other forms of financial support include Head Start, scholarships, private loans, work-study programs, subsidized housing, and other grants.
Lewis et al. (2007) took an in-depth look at one teen mother determined to break stigmas of teen parenthood. Charlie, a young teen mother profiled for her successful journey through high school and into college, credited her community support for her success thus far, but made a careful distinction that she is not a drain on the system:

“I have been on food stamps and Medicaid, but I am not a burden. I contribute to my community in spirit and action far more than I take in funds.” (Lewis et al., 2007)

Charlie's disclaimer is important because it points to the fact that these young women see support (be it governmental, institutional or community-based) as a means to an end, not the goal itself.

Charlie's comment points to the role that societal stigma plays in how teen mothers view themselves and whether or not they even approach these agencies for resources. Through her in-depth interviews with teen mothers, Yardley (2008) analyzed the effects of stigma among this age group. Most of the participants reported feeling stigmatized by the public at large, and particularly by the media's portrayal of teen mothers as lazy and welfare-dependent. Hanna (2001) discovered in her research with teen mothers that the negative criticism was a part of their daily lives.

This was particularly frustrating as it occurred in everyday locations such as in the streets, on buses, in supermarkets, in health centers, in medical facilities, in
welfare payment offices, and in places where women themselves gather, such as playgroups. (pg. 460)

Hanna found that in order to receive government support, these teen mothers had to subject themselves to increased surveillance.

Thus their trustworthiness was questioned at every turn but, despite their anger and frustration, they were ready to comply, fearing noncompliance would brand them as unworthy parents and might result in removal of the child. (pg. 460)

Despite the stigma, teen mothers moved cautiously within the system, working to get as many benefits as they could to provide a stable life for their child(ren). Undergraduate mothers (who in many cases may not look much older than teen mothers) may deal with much of the same stigma, adding an additional hurdle to obtaining the benefits they might be eligible for. When it comes to approaching organizations, institutions or community agencies for support, teen mothers and undergraduate mothers may choose to weigh the severity and urgency of their need versus the criticism or prejudice they will most likely face.

Teachers and professors also represent a potential source of support for teen mothers and undergraduate mothers. In SmithBattle's (2007) examination of teen mothers, she outlined some of the supports offered to Pam, a young teen mother from a chaotic background who excelled despite several obstacles in her way. Pam was able to go from Ds and Fs prior to having her son to making straight As for two years afterward.
She had a teacher who would drive her and her son home from cheerleading practice. She had counselors who urged her to consider college and gave her information on how to enroll. SmithBattle (2007) underscores that this was rare among the 19 teen mothers she studied and that more support along these lines could have been beneficial for all who participated in the study.

Undergraduate mothers have reported feeling either "in the spotlight" or invisible on their campuses (Duquaine-Watson, 2007). Some reported feeling singled out in class. One mother recalled a time when her professors asked her to discuss her experiences on welfare—making the incorrect assumption she had ever been on welfare. Others reported they preferred to hide their motherhood status as to not draw attention to themselves. During an interview with one undergraduate mom, Duquaine-Watson reported that another student interrupted their discussion, interjecting: "Maybe I should go get pregnant and then someone will give me money and I won’t have to work any more—I could just go to school and take care of my kid." (pg. 236) Duquaine-Watson wrote that her interview subject was in tears and was visibly shaken. She notes: "Given this type of treatment, it is little wonder she tries to hide the fact she is a single mother." (p. 237)

In addition to harsh comments from their peers, undergraduate mothers can also feel unwelcome by their professors, looking to them for support and understanding, but sometimes coming up short. For example, these mothers report avoiding classes where outside group work is assigned, fearing they would not be able to adhere to the
requirements, based on their other obligations and lack of appropriate childcare (Duquaine-Watson, 2007). Duquaine-Watson urged colleges and professors to consider single mothers/parents in their attendance policies, suggesting small tweaks to help accommodate students with other, often unexpected, situations such as a child falling ill or a babysitter falling through.

Emotional and social support from peers can also assist teen and undergraduate mothers as they persist through college. Crase, Hockaday & McCarville (2007) studied 154 adolescents (half who were pregnant or parenting and half who were neither) to evaluate the differences in their perception of their support systems. They measured types of positive support (i.e., sharing private feelings and money) and negative support (i.e., conflict) among their support sources. Best friends were rated as more supportive to nonpregnant or nonparenting teens than to their pregnant or parenting peers. The researchers hypothesized that the friends of the pregnant and parenting students might feel pressure from their parents to distance themselves, as the adolescent mothers now appear to be "bad influences."

There is not as much research on the availability of peer support within the undergraduate mother population. But Duquaine-Watson (2007) found that undergraduate mothers were hesitant to share their motherhood status with their childless peers, which may result in these student mothers missing out on valuable potential
support from other young men and women who are having some of the same college experiences.

Family is another potential source of support for student parents pursuing college degrees. In general, family support has been found to be beneficial to teen mothers. For example, positive familial support is correlated with lower rates of depression and child abuse (Prodromidis, Abrams, Field & Scafidi, 1994). It is worth noting, however, that teen mothers tend to be first-generation college students (SmithBattle, 2007). This can mean their parents are often ill-equipped to help them navigate the sometimes choppy waters of higher education as half of the teens' parents had not graduated high school themselves (SmithBattle, 2007). The teen mothers might then turn to guidance counselors or other school personnel for help with college preparation, but often modify their goals if they receive prejudicial treatment (Kalil, 2002). Another consideration is that teen mothers might also still be dealing with disappointment or shame from their family members, who might feel that they have deviated from their family's expectations (Gilliam, 2007). Because it is a lesser-studied area of research, we do not know how family dynamics can provide support for undergraduate mothers.

The majority of the literature surrounding student parents deals with the teen mothers' educational pursuits and ends with their high school graduation. However, there is a little research available on their collegiate pursuits, most focusing on the challenges they face—childcare difficulties, stress, exhaustion, financial strain. Much of this
research may provide insight into the undergraduate mother population. However, based on the developmental considerations of the differences between becoming a parent as an adolescent versus as a young adult, it is likely there are differences in the experiences and needs of teen mothers persisting to college compared to undergraduate mothers.

It is important to remember that developmentally, teen mothers are just that—teens. At this age they are struggling with identity and autonomy, their ability to govern themselves and make appropriate decisions (Steinberg, 2008). After the birth of their child, however, they may find themselves in a role that they are not equipped to handle on their own. In the case of teen mothers under 18, they are still legally tied to their parents and may depend on them more than undergraduate mothers. Teen mothers, for instance, may not be eligible for certain governmental supports if they are still claimed as their parents' dependents. Undergraduate mothers may have already "left the nest" by the time they discover they are pregnant; depending on their parents for support may feel like a step backward.

The population of student-parents is sizeable—nearly one in four undergraduate students (Miller, Gault, & Thorman, 2011). This population includes nontraditional students and men as well as teen mothers and undergraduate mothers. While all student parents may face some common challenges, little is known about what support is needed and/or available specifically for those in the 18-24 age range.
The purpose of this study is to examine the instrumental, social and emotional supports in place for young mothers ages 18-24 as they persist through college. Specifically, this study will examine: 1) self-reported needs for support within the past 30 days; 2) levels of support received within the past 30 days; 3) specific sources of support; and 4) similarities and differences between teen mothers and undergraduate mothers on the previous three. We will also examine specific challenges undergraduate mothers may encounter, as well as the opportunities presents for colleges to remove barriers for this population.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Sample

Five parenting college students were recruited from a large, public four-year university. To be eligible for the study, participants had to be between the ages of 18-24, currently enrolled (either full-time or part-time) at the university as of May 2012, and be the primary guardian of least one child (not currently pregnant with their first child). Research began with a list of students enrolled in the Literacy and Independence for Family Education (LIFE) program at the Center for Adult and Veteran Services and from the on-campus organization P.R.E.S.S. (Parents Reaching Educational Success). Participants were not compensated for their involvement in the study.

Measures

A modified version of the Arizona Social Support Interview schedule (ASSIS) (Barrera, 1981) (Appendix A) was used to gauge the sources of instrumental, social, and emotional support participants relied on during the duration of their college career. The questionnaire measured two types of instrumental support (material aid and physical assistance), three types of emotional support (private feelings, advice, positive feedback), and one type of social support (social participation). For each specific type of support, respondents were asked to indicate how much they needed that particular type of support,
the degree to which that support was given, and who (out of eight support sources) provided that support. To provide more in-depth information on the lives of the participants and their stated needs for support, the ASSIS ended with a series of 20 open-ended questions to assess their perceived difficulties and support needs from the beginning of their pregnancies until the present day. The 20-open ended questions were developed after a thorough examination of current literature on adolescent motherhood. Particular attention was paid to previous studies of this population that focused on resilience theory, which prompted questions that not only looks at challenges these undergraduate mothers may face, but also the opportunities present to them as well. Data were collected during one-on-one tape-recorded interviews.

In addition to information about social, emotional and instrumental support, respondents provided demographic information (Appendix B), which includes age, race, relationship status, living arrangements, number of children, major, year in school, estimated graduation date and whether they are a first-generation student.

**Procedures**

Participants were recruited from the student-parent population at the university. A list of student-parents were gathered from the on-campus student-parent association and the Center for Adult and Veteran Services. (There was some overlap.) Additional participants were recruited through the snowball method. After the list of students was assembled (about 10), students who did not fit the criteria (who may have been currently pregnant or had their children during high school) were removed from consideration.
Once the remaining five students were identified, I made initial contact with prospective participants via email. This email provided an overview of the purpose of the study and an invitation to participate. Within three days after the initial email was sent, I followed up with a phone call to each prospective participant. The purpose of this phone call was to answer any questions and to ask whether the prospective participant was interested in being interviewed. All five of the participants contacted agreed to be interviewed. These interviews took place at a time and place convenient to the participants’ schedules, with the majority of interviews taking place in the participant's home. Each interview ranged from 45 minutes to an hour. In a few instances, the participants' children were at home during the interview, and occasionally we would have to pause the interview for the parents to tend to their needs. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their responses would be kept confidential. After the participants signed the consent form, they were guided through the three research instruments.

**Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to examine: 1) self-reported needs for support within the past 30 days; 2) levels of support received within the past 30 days; and 3) specific source of support. Specifically for each of the six categories of support measured by the ASSIS, sample means were computed for needed support, received support, and likelihood of support from eight specific sources.

In addition, scores on the items pertaining to private feelings, advice, and positive feedback were summed to compute a total emotional support score. Similarly, scores on
the material aid and physical assistance items were summed to generate a total instrumental support score. For each of these total scores, sample means were computed.

After each interview was transcribed, I looked for similarities between the responses. Transcripts were read repeatedly to identify themes that persisted among more than one respondent. Within each interview the key themes were numbered and ranked according to frequency. To examine similarities and differences between teen mothers and undergraduate mothers, data collected from the responses of undergraduate mothers were compared to what has been reported in the literature about teen mothers.

A major motivating factor for this particular line of research was my own personal experience as an undergraduate mother. My background was not revealed to the participants at the time of the interviews, but it undoubtedly affected the way I approached the interviews. For instance, during my time as an undergraduate mother, I found it difficult to make my way to campus for any obligations outside of class, and so now as a researcher looking into this population, I was willing to do the interviews wherever and whenever the mothers suggested as most convenient to them.
CHAPTER IV

ARTICLE ONE

Sources of Support for Undergraduate Mothers

Unplanned pregnancy continues to be a major concern in the United States. Nearly half of all American pregnancies are unplanned, representing roughly 3 million pregnancies each year. The highest rate of unplanned pregnancies are among women ages 18-24 (Finer & Crenshaw, 2006; Brown & Amankwaa, 2007), followed close behind by teens ages 15-19 (Finer & Henshaw, 2006). Almost 75% of all pregnancies among unmarried women aged 20-24 are unplanned.

Typically, the late teens and early twenties are the prime years for completing educational pursuits. Adding in a pregnancy and the new role as a parent can complicate matters. What will these women do regarding school? Will they attempt to take care of their child while completing their studies? These concurrent roles can lead to role strain as young mothers attempt to make sense of their new lives.

In her study of 19 teen mothers in their first year of motherhood, SmithBattle (2007) found that it was extremely difficult for young mothers to stay committed to their education when they had work and family conflicts. Transportation or childcare issues could easily derail their plans for school and work. MacLaughlin and Randolph (2012) found that student-mothers from low-income families are three times as likely to drop out of college as female students without children. This leads to decreased economic
opportunities, as the Center for Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University estimates that by 2020, two-thirds of all jobs will require some type of higher education. Research that helps identify factors that increase college persistence for these young mothers will help improve our workforce for generations to come. Some of the current research available points to a strong support network as one such factor (Brown & Amankwaa, 2007).

This support is crucial for not only the personal satisfaction of the parents, but also for the future economic stability of the family. Attewell and Lavin (2007) found a link between a woman's college completion and whether her children would be successful at a college career as well. By pursuing post-secondary education and finishing, today's student-parents are increasing the likelihood that their children also will pursue higher education.

With almost four million parents enrolled in some form of higher education (Miller, Gault, & Thorman, 2011), the population is sizeable enough that an investigation into the sources of support available to them as they pursue their goals will have ramifications for society as a whole. Thus far, there has been a void in the literature surrounding the challenges student-parents face and how the support sources help them persist through higher education.

Traditionally, research focused on the student-parent population has veered to two extremes: the teen parent persisting to higher education or the older student coming back after an interruption (often the birth of a child). However, in this current study, we
examine the lives of the "undergraduate mother," a woman who gave birth to her child(ren) while in college, to see how these simultaneous roles factor into her ability to persist through and graduate from an institution of higher education. Specifically, we will examine the instrumental, social and emotional supports in place for undergraduate mothers as they persist through college.

We know through existing literature that teen mothers tend to see more emotional and instrumental support from their families of origin, particularly their parents, whereas they lack much-needed social support from their peers. While the support needs of teen mothers has been researched, little is known about the needs of undergraduate mothers and whether this population experiences the same types of support as the teen parent population.

While young men often share in the day-to-day parenting responsibilities, the majority of student-parents in the 18-24 age group tend to be unmarried, and the mother has primary custody in most of these situations (Miller, Gault & Thorman, 2011). As a result, our focus is on mothers as opposed to fathers, to get a better sense of the day-to-day support needs of student-parents.

**Methodology**

**Sample**

A total of five participants were interviewed for this study. Four participants were current full-time students of the university and the fifth was a recent graduate. The
average age of the participants was 22.2, with an average age at first birth 20.6. All five of the participants were African American and had children ranging in age from one month old to three years old. Only one participant had more than one child.

In terms of romantic relationships, three of the participants described their relationship with their children's father as strong, while one referenced her status as "complicated," and the fifth said she was no longer romantically involved with her child's father. None of the participants lived in on-campus housing. Two lived alone with their children, one split time between her parents' house (her main residence) and her child's father's house; another lived with her mother, and the last participant lived with her child's father. In order to provide for themselves, four participants held part-time employment positions, while the fifth one did not work and focused solely on school. (It's interesting to note that the only participant who was not working, was also the only participant to live with her child's father.)

Measures

A modified version of the Arizona Social Support Interview schedule (ASSIS) (Barrera, 1981) was used to gauge the sources of instrumental, social, and emotional support participants relied on during the duration of their college career. The questionnaire measured two types of instrumental support (material aid and physical assistance), three types of emotional support (private feelings, advice, positive feedback), and one type of social support (social participation).

For each specific type of support, respondents were asked three questions:
(1) how much they needed that particular type of support ("During the past month, how much do you think you needed people to _____ (insert support type here)?")

(2) the degree to which that support was given ("During the past month, would you have liked a lot more opportunities for this type of support, a few more opportunities, or was this about right?"), and

(3) who (out of eight support sources) provided that support ("How likely would it be that you would go to the following people for this type of support?").

To provide more in-depth information on the lives of the participants and their stated needs for support, the ASSIS ended with a series of 20 open-ended questions to assess their perceived difficulties and support needs from the beginning of their pregnancies until the present day. Data were collected during one-on-one tape-recorded interviews.

In addition to information about social, emotional and instrumental support, respondents provided demographic information, which includes age, race, relationship status, living arrangements, number of children, major, year in school, estimated graduation date and whether they are a first-generation student.

**Procedures**

Participants were recruited from the student-parent population at the university. A list of student-parents who fit the criteria for the study were gathered from the on-
campus student-parent association and the Center for Adult and Veteran Services. (There was some overlap.) After the list of students was assembled, one-on-one interviews were scheduled with the selected student parents. The majority of interviews took place in the participants' homes with their children playing in a nearby room. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their responses would be kept confidential and anonymous. After the participants signed the consent form, they were guided through the two research instruments. Participants were told that they could elect to skip any question they felt uncomfortable answering, and that they could answer in as little or as much detail as they felt comfortable doing.

**Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics examine: 1) self-reported needs for support within the past 30 days; 2) levels of support received within the past 30 days; and 3) specific sources of support. Specifically for each of the six categories of support measured by the ASSIS, sample means were computed for needed support, received support, and likelihood of support from eight specific sources.

In addition, scores on the items pertaining to private feelings, advice, and positive feedback were summed to compute a total emotional support score. Similarly, scores on the material aid and physical assistance items were summed to generate a total instrumental support score. For each of these total scores, sample means were computed.

The answers from each participant on the 20 open-ended questions were coded and analyzed according to common themes that emerged. To examine similarities and
differences between teen mothers and undergraduate mothers, data collected from the responses of undergraduate mothers were compared to what we currently see in the literature about teen mothers.

**Results**

The purpose of the study was to analyze instrumental, emotional and social support for each of the undergraduate mothers in our sample. Table 1 reports the mean scores for each of the sources of support and support types. While means of a sample size this small may not be statistically significant, it is nonetheless helpful to see the different sources of support available to the participants at a glance. For example, a quick look at the table reveals that mothers are more likely to provide participants with positive feedback than siblings, based on the mean scores.

Within the analysis below, qualitative data were used in conjunction with quantitative responses to provide a more thorough insight into the support sources available to the participants.

**Private Feelings**

Being able to talk about things that were personal and private was measured in the "private feelings" portion. With regard to how much they needed to share their personal and private feelings in the previous month, participants reported they needed "a little bit" of this type of support. When asked if they had adequate opportunities to talk to people
Table 1.

**Mean Scores of The Arizona Social Support Interview Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Sources</th>
<th>Private Feelings</th>
<th>Material Aid</th>
<th>Advice</th>
<th>Positive Feedback</th>
<th>Physical Assistance</th>
<th>Social Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriend</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellow young mother/Friend</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor/University staff</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community member</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N=5
about their feelings in the past 30 days, three out of the five said they wanted a few or a lot more opportunities to talk to people about things that were personal. When examining the specific sources of support for each of the participants, fellow young mothers, the participant's mother, and the participant's boyfriend/child's father ranked highest among private feelings support. All three ranked "somewhat likely" on average.

Material Aid

Defined as the extent to which people would be willing to lend or give participants $25 or more, or a physical object that was valuable, material aid presented smaller sample means than the previous answers on private feelings. With regard to how much they needed someone to lend or give them some money or something valuable in the past 30 days, participants reported that they needed some material aid. When asked if they had adequate opportunities for people to offer material aid, four out of the five participants said the amount of assistance offered was "just about right."

Specific sources of material aid clustered around the child's father. Three out of five participants ranked their child's father as someone "very likely" to help financially. The participants' own fathers ranked higher in this portion, tying with their mothers for the next likely person to provide material support to the participants. Compared to other measures of support, participants did not rely on their friends as much for material aid. One participant, Lucy, said all of her friends need just as much help as she does and therefore does not feel comfortable asking for their assistance:
"They're busy. They have their own kids and things to do. I don't feel comfortable asking them to watch my kids. Maybe if I needed help moving [to a new apartment] or something. Only something big like that."

Other participants reported that a sense of pride keeps them from asking for help as often as they might want to. One of these participants, Gwen, insisted that while she may need help from time to time, she is confident she can handle most things by herself.

"That's just me being a mom. That's how I see it. It's my responsibility to take care of my child. No one else. It's just the kind of pride that I have."

**Advice**

Having someone to give advice was another source of support measured through the ASSIS. With regard to how much they needed to receive advice in the past 30 days, participants reported they needed "a little bit." All five participants reported they received adequate advice from their various support sources within the previous month. However, sometimes the participants can get overwhelmed with advice. "I get so much conflicting advice," one of the participants, Melissa, said. "It's hard to know what to listen to."

Participants' fellow young mother friends ranked highest among sources of support, with the next closest source being the participants' mother or boyfriend, respectively.

**Positive Feedback**
In the ASSIS, positive feedback was defined as sharing with the participants that they liked the things they did or the ideas they had. With regard to how much they needed positive feedback in the past 30 days, participants reported needing "a little bit." Participants reported feeling the positive feedback they received over the past 30 days was adequate.

Participants' mothers and fathers' ranked highest among available support sources. Fellow young mothers/friends ranked high as well. Three of the participants mentioned that their friends had older children, which made them well-equipped to provide positive feedback about the ideas or questions they had. One participant, Melissa mentioned the difference between her friends she met at college versus the ones she had from growing up in nearby Warren:

My college friends don't have any kids. When we found out I was pregnant, they wondered how I was going to manage going to class while having a kid. They were just kind of in awe that someone could do both. But my friends back home in Warren, they've had kids for a while. Some of them even have three kids. They told me, "You're going to be fine."

**Physical Assistance**

Physical assistance was defined as support sources being willing to give up some of their time and energy to help take care of something participants needed to do—things like driving them someplace they needed to go, helping them do some work around the house, going to the store for them, etc. Four out of the five participants reported needing
"quite a bit" of physical assistance over the past 30 days. Perhaps not surprisingly, during the past month, participants reported that they would have liked more physical assistance offered to them.

Again, the mother and boyfriend ranked highest among all support sources, with the father and close friends ranking a close third and fourth, respectively.

Social Participation

Social participation was defined as getting together with people to have fun or relax. From the beginning of the interviews, it was apparent that this support source would be very dismal. Several participants laughed or rolled their eyes when introducing the questions. One responded, "I'm what you consider anti-social. I study. I go to class. I don't hang out with friends."

In the past 30 days, four out of the five participants reported needing opportunities for fun and relaxation "quite a bit." However, when contrasted with their needs, most found this type of support lacking, with four out of the five reporting a need for at least a few more opportunities for social participation.

Most mothers reported that their free time was very limited and thus, social participation wasn't as much of a possibility. When they did find pockets of time to relax, they most often turned to their friends. While the majority of participants said they still enjoyed close relationships with most of their friends, one of the participants, Gwen, acknowledged that her relationships with her friends changed after she gave birth:
My friends treated me very differently. They didn't really make time for me. The partying, all that other stuff? I got X'ed out of that. But truthfully? Hanging out with them is time I could be spending with my daughter. If it's not going to benefit my kid, then I'm not going to waste my time. I understand parents need that time to themselves, but I just don't have that time to give.

Another mom, Melissa, reported that she only had two people (her mother and her boyfriend's mother) that she trusted enough to watch her one-month-old son to be able to have that time to herself. "If I need to, I can go to my mom's house [about 45 minutes away]," she said. "[Her boyfriend's ] mom lives in Twinsburg, so it's not like it's down the street. Everyone that I would let watch [my son] is kind of far away."

**Overall Instrumental, Emotional and Social Support Scores**

Taking together the private feelings, advice, and positive feedback responses into consideration, participants reported that they needed quite a bit of these types of emotional support over the past month. With regard to opportunities for emotional support, participants responded that their needs for this type of support was mostly met. When we looked at the responses for material aid and physical assistance, participants reported they needed between "a little bit" and "quite a bit" of instrumental support within the past month. With regard to opportunities for instrumental support, participants responded they would have liked more opportunities for material aid or physical assistance. Our overall social support score is based off the responses to the social
participation, where participants reported needing quite a bit of time for fun and relaxation and desiring more opportunities to do so.

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the instrumental, social, and emotional support available to undergraduate mothers as they progressed through a four-year institution. The major study question was whether this support was deemed adequate by the mothers themselves and what, if any, support deficiencies were present. We also examined who provided support to the undergraduate mothers. We then wanted to compare the undergraduate mothers experience to the current research available of the teenage mothers who persisted to college.

Our findings show that the participants live very busy lives. Out of the five participants, four hold full-time jobs in addition to heavy course loads. Two of our participants are also working at internships as part of their major requirements. Only two of the participants have their children in a full-time daycare setting, with the rest relying on babysitting help from family.

With so many obligations running concurrently, the risk for role strain is very high. However, Carlson & Perrewe (1999) found that social support can help alleviate the stress from work-family/school-family interactions. The researchers found that "individuals who develop strong social support networks at work and at home may actually perceive fewer stressors in their organizational and family life" (p. 533). Having
these networks in place may alleviate stress in these young mothers as they juggle multiple roles.

**Emotional Support**

With regard to emotional support, each of the participants could name at least one friend that they could call on for positive feedback, advice, and an opportunity to share their private feelings. Receiving advice was a big need for the young women. Each participant said they needed at least some advice in the past month, with some of the women saying they had more advice than they anticipated.

Much of this advice came from their friends. For some of the women, they were not the first of their friends to have children, which made their transition easier. Several participants said their friends from high school were already mothers, while they were the first of their college friends to have children. The difference between their support networks that existed before college and the ones that formed after they enrolled is a significant item to note. It shows that the participants are straddling two worlds, where they might feel like they fit in to both in varying degrees.

Teen parents might find their friendships tested as well. Crase et. al (2007) found that teen mothers perceived less support from their peers than their nonpregnant and nonparenting counterparts. Researchers considered that this was perhaps a result of high expectations not matching up with reality or of their peers distancing themselves from their friends due to pressure from parents.
**Instrumental Support**

With regard to instrumental support, participants were most likely to name their mother (sometimes their father) and their boyfriend as major support sources. Their mothers were often the first ones they told about their pregnancy and one of the few people they felt comfortable having watch their children. Bridget, the only mother in the sample with two children, reported that her mother was her biggest source of support. The only participant who had graduated at the time of the interview, Bridget also said that without her mother, she doubted that she would have been able to continue school and persist to graduation. While all of the participants reported that their parents were "shocked" by their pregnancies, all of them provided support to their daughters once the baby was born.

When the participants had good relationships with their fathers, they were likely to name him as someone they would turn for material aid and physical assistance. When they weren't as close with their fathers (as was the case with two of the participants), they were likely to receive lower scores on those measures. Those who had a good relationship with their fathers said they were able to ask them for help without reservation. As an observer, I was able to see the interaction between Stacey and her father during the interview at Stacey's home. Her young son was with her and squirming on her lap as she answered questions. When her father arrived home, he came in and greeted his grandson with a hearty smile and whisked him away to play. When asked if
her father often watched her son for her, she replied that he did often, when she needed to study or something unexpected came up.

Among teens, a distant relationship with one or both parents is often one predictor of early parenthood. Woodward, Fergusson, and Horwood (2001) found that adolescents growing up witnessing a dysfunctional marital relationship or a series of marital breakdowns are at an increased risk of teenage pregnancy. However, East and Jacobson (2003) found that even when the teen mothers may have difficult relationships with their parents, their mothers are highly likely to be involved in raising their children. By contrast, the undergraduate mothers surveyed in this study described their parents as important sources of support and the majority of them grew up in a two-parent household with their biological mother and father.

**Social Support**

Regarding social participation, participants all indicted they would like more time for fun and relaxation and their preferred source for social support is their friends who are also young mothers. However, among all the undergraduate mothers interviewed, none had an on-call babysitter, someone they paid to come to their residence to watch their child. They primarily used their family members (usually their mother) to watch their children while they went to school or to work, but not for leisure activities like going to the campus recreation center or to a movie with friends.

With the teen parent population, researchers found that adolescent mothers with low social support showed more depressive symptoms than those with robust support
networks (Burchinal, Follmer, & Bryant, 1996). Conversely, higher amounts of social support improved mental health among adolescent mothers. Much of the research on teenage mothers revolves around their stress levels and coping strategies, but not much is known about their opportunities for relaxation.

**Primary Sources of Support**

Out of the five participants, four were still in some form of romantic relationship with their child's father at the time of the interview. Their partners were top sources of instrumental (material aid and physical assistance) and social support (social participation). During the interviews, many said they could call on their boyfriends for child care or other instrumental tasks.

While as a whole the participants' partners scored lower on emotional support measures, there were some qualitative stories that point to some level of emotional support. One of the participants, Stacey, said she was glad her child's father has been there for her since the beginning.

He was very helpful and he wanted to go to my appointments. He was supportive. He's older and he already had a child, so he already knew what to do and how the process would go. He was answering questions for me at the doctor's office.

Stacey was the only participant who split her time between her parents' house and her child's father's house. She characterized her relationship with her boyfriend as strong.
Mellissa, the mother of a one-month-old, was the only participant to cohabitate with her significant other. Raley, Kim and Daniels (2012) found that cohabitation was rare among college students, with only 5% of college seniors living with a partner. The three other women spent time with their partners but did not consider his residence "theirs."

Most participants had similar stories of the trajectories of their relationships. Once they found out they were pregnant, both parties were in disbelief. But most of the participants noted that the pregnancy felt "real" once the baby began kicking hard enough to be felt from the outside and once they began to "show." Any initial friction caused by the pregnancy tended to dissipate by the end of the pregnancy.

The findings for the undergraduate mothers' relationships deviate from the literature on teen mothers' romantic relationships. Teen mothers are often single, carrying most of the responsibility for the day-to-day care of the child in the absence of the child’s father (Hanna 2001). The majority of teenage fathers do not live with the mother of their children and tend to have a deteriorating relationship over the first three to four years after childbirth. There might be a few factors that cause this difference. One may be because of the developmental stage most teenage fathers are in, where they may not feel equipped to handle the demands of parenthood. Since traditionally mothers are the primary caregivers, fathers may believe their presence is not as necessary as the mother’s. Another issue may be the strained relationship with the mother (Allen & Doherty, 1996). Some teen fathers may desire increased involvement with their child,
but see the mother as an obstacle. They may lack the fortitude to press forward with their parenting relationship in the face of opposition from the mother.

Perhaps surprisingly, siblings were not named as a top source of support for the participants. This, however, may be due to proximity or age of the siblings. Most of the participants were the oldest in their families, with their younger brothers and sisters still in high school and perhaps not as able to provide some of the material or instrumental tasks. Some of the siblings were also away at college themselves and therefore the distance prevented them from being as close as participants would have perhaps liked.

Neighbors were only named as a source of support in a few cases. Stacey, who lived with her parents, had lived in the same house for years and knew her neighbors very well. Lucy said some of her friends moved into the apartment complex where she lived and she felt comfortable asking them for help with "the big stuff" but not with smaller, everyday tasks. Others mothers had moved within the past year and admitted they did not know their neighbors very well.

None of the participants spoke of a meaningful connection with any professors. It is interesting to note that each student informed their professors of their pregnancy very early on. One mother, Melissa, brought up an interesting story about her professor's reaction:

I was surprised when my professor decided to announce my pregnancy to the class. I actually had him for two classes and he announced it in both. I wasn't too
upset about it; everyone came up to me and congratulated me. So in a way, I guess he was supportive.

Four out of five participants reported that their professors were mostly understanding about their dual role as parent and student, but that there was no additional interaction beyond that of a typical student-professor relationship. In McLaughlin and Randolph's (2012) study of low-income mothers in college, they found that student-mothers who perceived faculty and staff as supportive had stronger commitments to the institution and were less likely to drop out. SmithBattle (2007) released similar findings of her study of teen mothers persisting to college.

With regard to community members (such as a pastor), only two participants named a university staff member as being beneficial to them for emotional support. Those two mothers were participants in TRiO Upward Bound, a high school college access program. Even as former participants, they maintained a connection to the staff members and kept them updated on new events in their lives. One of the participants, Gwen, felt comfortable going to the Upward Bound offices for advice:

I was juggling between keeping my child or giving her up for adoption. Ms. Bonnie [Richardson-Berry], she recommended that I go to counseling on campus.

Her comfort level with approaching a university staff member with a concern of that magnitude highlights the importance of relationships that begin long before they are needed. The two participants had known Richardson-Berry since they were in high school and had time to develop the type of bond that would allow them to talk about
issues that were personal and private or to ask for advice. This relationships strikes similarities to the "natural mentor" relationship Hurd and Zimmerman (2010) examined in their study of adolescent mothers. A natural mentor is a nonparental adult figure that often provides emotional and instrumental support in addition to or in lieu of the biological parents. Hurd and Zimmerman concluded that having a natural mentor might increase resiliency among adolescent mothers at risk for poor outcomes. From their findings, we can extrapolate that someone who serves in that capacity could be beneficial for the undergraduate mothers as well. They are experiencing some of the same fears and concerns as the teen mother population, yet might feel more separated from their parents than the teen mothers who still live at home.

**Opportunities**

Undergraduate mothers must quickly become adept at managing their multiple roles or run the risk of having to drop one of their obligations. Since motherhood is not one that they can readily remove, if they need to lighten their load, dropping out of school or cutting back their hours at school or work is usually their only option. Often, childcare can be one of the major areas where they struggle. If they have a group project or an unexpected shift at work, it can be difficult to locate reliable and quality childcare. Only one of the participants said she was able to get information about childcare from an on-campus resource. Three participants wondered about the on-campus childcare center, but they weren’t sure if it was for students’ or faculty members’ children. Others just relied on family and friends in an effort to minimize cost.
Colleges can help this population by making sure all available resources are easy to locate and easy to understand. The importance of this is illustrated by the case of one of the mothers, Melissa, who has a newborn. She said she was relying on help from her WIC counselor to help her continue breastfeeding, but she was not aware of any lactation rooms available for her to pump on campus. A quick call to the Women's Resource Center gave me a list of lactation rooms that was also posted on the university website. However, the lactation information was under the human resources section and was targeted toward employees. A student-parent might not understand whether they are able to use these rooms as well. Something as simple as also explicitly specifying which locations are available to students would give all student-parents the information they need.

Of course, there are several limitations to the study that we must address. Our sample was five, young, African-American women from the same four-year institution. Our findings might not hold true at a small, private university or among students of varying races and backgrounds.

Further research is needed on a larger, more diverse sample of undergraduate mothers. It might also be beneficial to expand the age range to the upper 20s. In the recruitment portion, there were a number of students who had children during their college career and withdrew from the university, only to return a few years later. That subgroup might have some of the same challenges as the current group, and may benefit from an analysis of their support needs as well. A longitudinal study following
undergraduate mothers from the birth of their first child to their college graduation might provide a more thorough look at their support needs as they may fluctuate over time due to a variety of circumstances the current study could not capture. More information on the undergraduate mothers' financial situation might give insight as to how colleges can help them balance both their courses and their work obligations. At the present time, our sample is too small to generalize to the broader population; however, our current findings represent a good base for further research on this population.
CHAPTER V

ARTICLE TWO

Challenges and Opportunities for Undergraduate Mothers

Much attention has been paid to the boom in nontraditional students flocking to universities to further their education. The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that almost 40 percent of undergraduates are over the age of 30—that number is expected to increase exponentially by 2019. These students present a different set of concerns to campus life than their counterparts in their late teens and early twenties. They are often working full time, have one or more children to care for, and are more likely to have a GED versus a high school diploma. As a result, the issue of retention lingers on the mind of higher education administrators. A 2013 study commissioned by the American Council on Education calls for broader support for this demographic: "The simple fact is that our traditional system of two- and four-year colleges and universities with their campus-based, semester-timed, credit-hour driven model of instructional delivery is not well-suited to educate post-traditional learners" (Soares, 2013).

As more and more nontraditional students become a presence on college campuses, universities are being forced to examine what barriers stand in the way of degree completion. A 2012 study by the U.S. Department of Education outlined three forms of barriers for nontraditional students, first discovered by Cross (1981):
1. Situational
2. Institutional
3. Dispositional

Situational refers to "conditions at a given time that limit the student’s ability to access and pursue higher education." For example, if a student lacks the money for tuition or has limited time for classes due to family and job commitments, these would be considered situational barriers. Institutional refers to "practices and procedures which may discourage or exclude students from pursuing postsecondary education." This includes classes that do not fit with the nontraditional students' schedule or lack of awareness about a specific institution's policies. Finally, dispositional refers to "student perceptions of their ability to access and complete learning activities." As nontraditional students tend to be older, they are likely to feel out of place on a campus filled with younger students and as a result, they may feel inadequate.

While campuses have tried to adapt to the needs of nontraditional students, there is a subgroup that has much in common with this group—undergraduate mothers, those who give birth to their child sometime during the pursuit of their bachelor's degrees. The problem is that too often, these mothers blend in with their age peers who are childless, and their needs are not as easily apparent as, say, the students who come back to campus after a 20-year absence from formal education. As they make their transition from traditional student to nontraditional student while they are already enrolled, it would be
easy for their new identities to fall under the radar. To date, little is known about the experiences of these undergraduate mothers.

This study examines the challenges and opportunities encountered by undergraduate mothers at a large, four-year institution. Specifically, we consider the situational and institutional barriers to success and the undergraduate mother’s ability to overcome them. We chose not to focus on dispositional barriers, as undergraduate mothers have already been enrolled in higher education and are unlikely to feel that they can not compete intellectually. By speaking to women who have juggled their responsibilities as mothers, students, and sometimes employees, the intent is to discover the impact of university policies and personal considerations on whether these women persist to graduation or rather are unable to meet all the demands placed on them.

Methodology

Sample

A total of five participants were interviewed for this study. Four participants were current full-time students and the fifth was a recent graduate. The average age of the participants was 22.2, with an average age at first birth 20.6. All five of the participants were African American and had children ranging in age from one month old to three years old. Only one participant had more than one child.
In terms of romantic relationships, three of the participants described their relationship with their children's father as strong, while one referenced her status as "complicated," and the fifth said she was no longer romantically involved with her child's father. None of the participants lived in on-campus housing. Two lived alone with their children, one split time between her parents' house (her main residence) and her child's father's house; another lived with her mother, and the last participant lived with her child's father. In order to provide for themselves, four participants held part-time employment positions, while the fifth one did not work and focused solely on school. (It's interesting to note that the only participant who was not working, was also the only participant to live with her child's father.)

Measures

To gather in-depth information on the lives of the participants and their perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing them as they pursue their degree, they were asked a series of 20 open-ended questions to assess their perceived difficulties and support needs from the beginning of their pregnancies until the present day. Questions were developed after a thorough examination of current literature on resilience and adolescent motherhood. Current resilience theory research emphasizes support networks and internal motivational factors (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010) as a way for young mothers to overcome their current obstacles. Therefore, the questions developed focused on both challenges and opportunities for these young mothers, instead of only
challenges. Specifically, questions were intended to elicit respondents' perceptions of challenges and opportunities arising within the situational (e.g., time management) and institutional (e.g., campus resources) realms identified earlier. Data were collected during one-on-one tape-recorded interviews.

In addition to information about the challenges and opportunities present for these women, respondents provided demographic information, which includes age, race, relationship status, living arrangements, number of children, major, year in school, estimated graduation date and whether they are a first-generation student.

**Procedures**

Participants were recruited from the student-parent population at a large, Midwestern, four-year institution. A list of student-parents who fit the criteria for the study were gathered from the on-campus student-parent association and the Center for Adult and Veteran Services. (There was some overlap.) From there, the snowball method was used to recruit more students. After the list of students was assembled, one-on-one interviews were scheduled with the selected student parents. The majority of interviews took place in the participants' homes with their children playing in a nearby room. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their responses would be kept confidential and anonymous. Participants were told that they could elect to skip any question they felt uncomfortable answering, and that they could answer in as little or as much detail as they felt comfortable doing.
Data Analysis

Each set of questions represented an area of focus for the study. The answers from each participant on the 20 open-ended questions were compiled according to focus area to illustrate the experiences of these undergraduate mothers.

Results

Following the themes of the open-ended questions, participants shared their experiences interacting with university administrators and professors, their expressed "invisibility" on campus, and their needs for better time management to help decrease or eliminate role strain.

University Relationships

None of the respondents made significant use of on-campus offices to assist them with questions or concerns as student-parents. One of the participants, Lucy, made it very clear that she had been self-sufficient in balancing her roles as a mother and a student: "The only office I'm aware of is the adult services office, but even then I had to figure out childcare by myself." However, each of them came into regular contact with their professors. All five participants reported at least one experience where they felt being a student was at odds with their role as a mother.

Two students in particular had experiences that they said made them question whether faculty is given any direction on how to deal with pregnant and parenting
students. Melissa, a senior who has been taking classes primarily online since discovering she was pregnant, said that while most of her professors have been understanding, there was one she had difficulties with:

I emailed all my professors before the semester began to let them know I was pregnant and due soon. Most were really cool about it. But one professor made me email my discharge papers [from the hospital] to prove that I had the baby and only then did she give me an extension for the work I missed while I was out.

Melissa said she felt the professor's request was a bit insensitive and made her feel like she was a "problem student."

The other student, Bridget, had a difficult time managing her maternity leave after her second child. A transfer student, Bridget had her first child while enrolled at Xavier University and was able to compare the differences in how she was treated there versus when she transferred to her current school:

At Xavier, they were pretty understanding [after my first child]. I tried my hardest to get work in on time. With my second one [at my current school] , I had to take six weeks off. I had to turn in all my medical documentation. One of my professors refused to accept my medical notes and she dropped me a full letter grade because of all of the absences.
The only participant to have graduated at the time of the interview, Bridget had a few suggestions on how to improve:

The university should try to communicate to professors that students do have lives outside of the classroom and if students have legitimate medical reasons [for missing class], then that should be accepted as a valid excuse for an absence. Sometimes you have to miss class and then play catch up. It's frustrating because it's not like you're blowing off class just to blow off class.

Other participants agreed that they have had to miss class because of their children, either when they were recovering from childbirth or because of their child's illness.

According to university policy, instructors have "the responsibility and the prerogative for managing student attendance." What counts as a legitimate reason for missing class varies by class to class and professor to professor. Whereas some are more lenient, others are more strict, causing a student to lose points no matter what the reason for the absence. Current university policy cities the following as acceptable absences: "illness, death in the immediate family, religious observance, academic field trips, and participation in an approved concert or athletic event, and direct participation in university disciplinary hearings." While illness is mentioned, it is not clear whether that includes absences when the student's child is sick. In general, daycares will not take sick children and usually enforce a 24-hour at-home period before the child is allowed to rejoin the center. An instructor who does not include a child's illness as a legitimate
reason for the parent to miss class puts the impetus on the parent to arrange not only childcare, but back-up childcare in order to receive the best grade possible. However, depending on the severity of the illness, parents may not feel comfortable leaving their child to attend class, so even arranging for back-up childcare may not work.

**University Environment**

Is it easy being a student-parent on campus? The respondents shared their stories of trying to navigate this period in their lives and whether they felt the campus environment was welcoming to them. Lucy, the mother of a two-year-old, said she does not feel her school does enough to make student-parents feel comfortable:

"I don't feel welcome. Your child can't sit in class with you; they can't even say children are welcome in the class. There's not a lot of stuff on campus for kids."

Lucy mentioned that she would like to be able to study at the library, but there are no family-friendly floors there. Another mother, Melissa, said that she had a few experiences on campus while she was pregnant that made her feel uncomfortable:

I used to go to the rec center when I was pregnant, just to walk around the track, and I felt like people looked at me funny, like I shouldn't be there. At first I would say I didn't want to go because I didn't want people to look at me. But after a while, I guess I was more proud and I didn't really care. I just smiled at them.
Melissa adds that she would like to go back but she has no babysitter and the rec center, unlike some other gyms, does not offer child care to members.

When the campus recreation center opened in 1999, it was touted as a family-friendly center with its child activity center for children ages 3 to 12. (Not only were the children supervised while their parents exercised, but the children were able to exercise as well throughout the building). However, in light of budget cuts, the child activity center has since been eliminated, leaving few options for parents (students or otherwise) who want to exercise but have no babysitter.

Another issue for student-parents on campus is housing. All of the undergraduate mothers lived off campus and several mentioned they would love to be closer, making their commute to campus more convenient. Gwen, who lived 30 miles away, the furthest of all the participants, mentioned housing as one area the university could focus on to serve student-parents:

Have more affordable apartments around the campus. Not these $700 apartments. If you get yourself a reasonable apartment, you have to worry about who else lives there. You get what you pay for, you know? And for a studio, it's $650. I'm not paying that.

Affordable housing is a concern for any college student, but perhaps more so for students with families, who may have extra expenses (childcare, for one) than their childless peers. Currently, the university has a family housing complex that features a shared
meeting room area and planned activities for the families that live there. However, the facility is more than 40 years old and plans to renovate the complex proved to be too costly for the university. The university currently does not have any plans to build more student housing, instead opting to refer students to other apartment complexes off-campus.

One advertised perk of the on-campus housing complex was the ability to live among like-minded peers—other students with children, working to balance their multiple roles. Without that option, students may feel isolated or out of place in the apartments with other students without children.

**Time Management/Role Strain Issues**

With multiple roles pulling them in multiple directions each day, it may not be surprising that each participant reported they could use better time management skills to help them stay on task in their lives.

Gwen, one of the least self-reliant of the mothers in the study, lives with her mother and 17-month-old daughter and does not have a car of her own. She commutes to school with her mother three times a week and said she wishes she could have been more prepared to tackle motherhood:

Time to study is a major one. I can't tell you how many times I had to study with my daughter in the backseat and she's screaming because her teeth are coming
in... If I had gotten on the ball with stuff, things would have been a lot easier. It's a rollercoaster for me, still.

Other participants reported having to be a parent and a student simultaneously. Bridget, the only graduate in the study, recalled her difficulties finding an appropriate amount of time to study: "Granted, my mom would give me a couple of hours to study, but I never had quiet time." When she decided to breastfeed her youngest, she said it created additional challenges:

"I once had to take an accounting test while breastfeeding at the same time—that wasn't very easy."

However, she said even though becoming a mother had an effect on her grades, she had no regrets:

"My GPA wasn't what I knew it could be. I'd have interruptions during my online timed tests and I ended up finishing with a 2.92. I just had to chalk it up. My kids come first."

Other participants mentioned exhaustion as a key factor for their decreased study time and how they had to push through it if they wanted to graduate.

Lucy said it takes twice as much energy to fulfill all her responsibilities as it did before she became a parent: "You don't have time to study, you have that pregnancy brain
still, and you have a baby crying in your ear because they want your attention. Oh, yeah, grades do suffer."

But while the women talked about their challenges with finding the appropriate balance between student and mother, they all talked about their determination to finish their degree, both for the personal satisfaction as well as a point of pride with their children later.

Stacey, the mother of an 8-month-old boy, said she did not want her role as a mother to have any effect on her grades. When asked if she had any advice for other undergraduate mothers:

"It's not going to be easy, but they can do it. It can be very challenging at times and overwhelming, but it does get better and you're doing this for your child. You want to better their future and your future as well."

The other participants echoed her comments. Melissa, the senior with a one-month-old baby, reported that she was especially looking forward to graduation because she could now share the moment with her son. Another participant, Gwen, said her daughter is her biggest motivation: "I'm showing her, even if you do make a mistake, you can still come out ahead. There are no obstacles that can prevent you from handling your business."

Discussion
When beginning my research, I had to find suitable students for my study. I decided to turn to the office of adult students as a beginning point, as they are touted through campus communications as a resource for single mothers and they are the coordinating office for the lone student-parent program on campus. However, when I approached them for total numbers of student-parents on campus, I was informed that that type of data did not exist. The only numbers they had were of students who had actively sought them out or had been referred to their office. The typical student-parent who was involved with their office was a former teen parent who persisted to higher education. Those who were undergraduate mothers were less likely to seek them out and become involved with programming. As a result, no data existed on how many student parents were enrolled at the university.

If a college is to engage their student-parent population, the first step should be to count how many are enrolled. This is a somewhat difficult task. One solution could be to survey students or to work with the financial aid office to see which students have dependents. Once the college knows how many student-parents they have enrolled, or at the very least, a good estimate, they will be better equipped to meet their needs. For example, having more family-friendly spaces on campus was mentioned by most of the participants, with most agreeing that something as small as changing tables in the restrooms on campus would be a sign that the space was welcoming to children. Melissa, mother to one of the youngest children in the study, said she was attempting to breastfeed her one-month-old but was not sure if she’d be able to continue once she was back on
campus: "I think they do have one room where you can pump milk, but there should be another one, maybe at the student center." Having a map of lactation rooms available on campus might be a small step to make these undergraduate mothers feel more supported.

The undergraduate mothers surveyed said that they did not reach out to many campus offices once they found out they were pregnant. Their main involvement with university staff came in the classroom, with their professors. As such, making sure the professor-student relationship is a collaborative one would go a long way to assuring student-parent success.

While Raley, Kim and Daniels (2012) found that pregnant students were not statistically more likely to drop out of school, it does take the average student-parent longer to graduate. 2003 U.S. Department of Education data shows that 54 percent of non-parents complete a degree or certificate within six years compared to 40 percent of parents. Student parents are more likely to complete certificate programs or associate's degree, but less likely to complete a bachelor's degree. Scenarios like the ones mentioned earlier, where students were dropped entire letter grades for absences due to their role as caregivers, can definitely play a part in how long it takes student-parents to graduate. As Springer et. al. (2009) noted, student-parents' needs are often handled on a case-by-case basis, rather than a standard baseline policy. One professor may handle a student-parents' absence differently than another, leading to discrepancies in grades and class progress.
Any recommendations for colleges and universities looking to support the needs of the student-parents on campus must first attempt to gather data on how many are enrolled. This can be done in a number of ways, all of which are imperfect but adequate for the first attempts of measurement: by either surveying the student body through e-mail, including a message in the President's messages to students or by working with the financial aid office to identify dependents.

Once the university has gathered a preliminary sample of the student-parents on campus, administrators will be in a better position to determine what changes they can make to be more inclusive of this group. In order to minimize challenges and increase opportunities for this population, there are several steps universities can take.

Perhaps what might be one of the easiest recommendations to implement would be to provide clear information for student-parents on the university website. Some information to include would be information on lactation rooms, local childcare centers and other resources of interest to this population. Some schools, like Oregon State University, have a wide variety of resources available on their website (Oregon State University, 2013). Oregon State has information on childcare options, scholarships, events, and activities, making it a helpful one-stop shop for student-parents.

Another recommendation would be to work with faculty to educate them about the needs of the student-parent population and to equip them to be a resource for student-parents if needed. For example, workshops could be developed to increase awareness
about Title IX, the federal law that prohibits discrimination of pregnant and parenting students at schools that receive federal funding (Egan & Kaufmann, 2012). Under Title IX, pregnant and parenting students can not be penalized for absences related to pregnancy or childbirth. They must be given the opportunity to make up the work and retain the same status they had before being pregnant. From the interviews with the student-parents, it appears Title IX protections are not well known amongst professors, many of whom develop their own policies about attendance that might differ widely from department to department, from class to class. Each school is required to appoint a Title IX coordinator to handle any issues that arise; he or she can be the starting point for educating faculty and staff about the needs of student-parents. Again, some schools have already done this successfully, including Oregon State. In addition to the resources available to student-parents, the university also provides incentives for university staff and faculty to be more student-parent friendly by giving out family-friendly faculty awards each year.

In addition to recommendations for university faculty and staff, a few recommendations also extend to student-parents themselves. First, student-parents should educate themselves about Title IX policies and procedures in order to come to faster solutions to problems that may arise when they are pregnant or recovering from childbirth. (This, of course, hinges on whether they can find this information readily available either on campus or online.) In addition, student-parents should also be upfront about any current parenting challenges or situations (say, a child recovering from chicken
pox and unable to go to day care) in order to be able to come to the most beneficial solution for all parties.

For future research, a longitudinal study following undergraduate mothers from the birth of their first child to their college graduation might provide a more thorough look at their support needs as they may fluctuate over time due to a variety of circumstances the current study could not capture. More information on the undergraduate mothers' financial situation might give insight as to how colleges can help them balance both their courses and their work obligations. At the present time, our sample is too small to generalize to the broader population; however, our current findings represent a good base for further research on this population. Future studies on this population must not only feature a larger sample but should also include faculty members and department heads to determine how widespread knowledge is about policies pertaining to student-parents.
APPENDIX A

ARIZONA SOCIAL SUPPORT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
Appendix A

Arizona Social Support Interview Schedule

Beginning instructions

In the next few minutes, I would like to get an idea of the people who are important to you in a number of different ways. I'd like to also understand your needs in terms of support and whether the people in your life help meet these needs as much as you would like. I will be reading descriptions of ways that people are often important to us. After I read each description, I will go through eight different support sources (mom, dad, siblings, friends, etc.) and will ask you to rate them in terms of how much support you receive.

A. PRIVATE FEELINGS

1. During the past month, how much do you think you needed people to talk about things that were very personal and private?
   1 = not at all
   2 = a little bit
   3 = quite a bit

2. During the past month, would you have liked:
   1 = a lot more opportunities to talk to people about your personal and private feelings
   2 = a few more opportunities
   3 = or was this about right?
3. If you wanted to talk to someone about things that are very personal and private, how likely would it be that you talk to the following people? (1 = not very likely, 2 = somewhat likely, 3 = very likely)

Mother
Father
Sibling
Boyfriend/Child's father
Neighbor
Fellow young mother/Friends
Professor/University staff member
Community member
Other ________________________________

B. MATERIAL AID

1. During the past month, how much do you think you needed people who could give or lend you things?

   1 = not at all
   2 = a little bit
   3 = quite a bit

2. During the past month, would you have liked people to have loaned you or to have given you:

   1 = a lot more
   2 = a little more
   3 = or was it about right?

3. If you needed someone to lend you or give you $25 or more, or you lend or give you something (a physical object) that was valuable, how likely would it be that you would receive this type of support from the following people? (1 = not very likely, 2 = somewhat likely, 3 = very likely)

   Mother
C. ADVICE

1. During the past month, how much do you think you needed to get advice?
   1 = not at all
   2 = a little bit
   3 = quite a bit

2. During the past month, would you have liked:
   1 = a lot more advice
   2 = a little more advice
   3 = or was it about right?

3. How likely would it be that you would go to each of the following people for advice? (1 = not very likely, 2 = somewhat likely, 3 = very likely)
   Mother
   Father
   Sibling
   Boyfriend/Child's father
   Neighbor
Fellow young mother/Friends
Professor/University staff member
Community member
Other ________________________________

D. POSITIVE FEEDBACK

1. During the past month, how much do you think you needed to have people let you know when they liked your ideas or things that you did?

1 = not at all
2 = a little bit
3 = quite a bit

2. During the past month, how much do you think you needed to have people let you know when they liked your ideas or things that you did?

1 = a lot more often
2 = a little more
3 = was it about right?

3. How likely is it that the following people will let you know when they like your ideas or the things that you do? (1 = not very likely, 2 = somewhat likely, 3 = very likely)

Mother
Father
Sibling
Boyfriend/Child's father
Neighbor
Fellow young mother/Friends
Professor/University staff member
Community member
Other ___________________________________

E. PHYSICAL ASSISTANCE

1. During the past month, how much do you feel you needed people who would pitch in to help you do things?
   1 = not at all
   2 = a little bit
   3 = quite a bit

2. During the past month, would you have liked:
   1 = a lot more help with things that you needed to do
   2 = a little more help
   3 = or was this about right?

3. How likely is it that you can call on the following people to give up some of their time and energy to help you take care of something that you needed to do—things like driving you someplace you needed to go, helping you do some work around the house, going to the store for you, etc? (1 = not very likely, 2 = somewhat likely, 3 = very likely)
   Mother
   Father
   Sibling
   Boyfriend/Child's father
   Neighbor
   Fellow young mother/Friends
   Professor/University staff member
   Community member
   Other ___________________________________
F. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

1. During the past month, how much do you think that you needed to get together with other people for fun and relaxation?
   
   1 = not at all
   2 = a little bit
   3 = quite a bit

2. During the past month, would you have liked:
   
   1 = a lot more opportunities to get together with people for fun and relaxation
   2 = a few more
   3 = or was it about right?

3. How likely is it that you would get together with the following people to have fun or relax? (1 = not very likely, 2 = somewhat likely, 3 = very likely)
   
   Mother
   Father
   Sibling
   Boyfriend/Child's father
   Neighbor
   Fellow young mother/Friends
   Professor/University staff member
   Community member
   Other ________________________________

G. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe the moment you found out you were pregnant?

2. Who did you tell first about your pregnancy and how did they respond?

3. At what point (what semester) were you in your college career when you found out you were pregnant?
4. Did you have any interruptions with school, e.g., did you take any time off from school around your due date, did you take a semester off, etc?

5. Did your living situation change (for example, from the dorms back to your parents' house)? If so, how did you feel about that?

6. How would you characterize your child's father's reaction to the pregnancy?

7. How would you characterize parents'/family members/friends' reaction to the pregnancy?

8. Have you identified any on-campus offices that can assist you as a student-parent? If so, were they easy to locate and access?

9. Have you made any special arrangements with professors around your coursework?

10. After you had the baby, did you have any difficulty making it to class?

11. What has been the most important source of support to you during your college career?

12. What would you choose as the greatest challenge of being an "undergraduate mother"?

13. What is the greatest reward of being an "undergraduate mother"?

14. What is one thing your university could do to make life as an "undergraduate mother" easier?

15. In your opinion, has being a parent had an effect on your grades e.g., study time is more efficient in order to work around your child's schedule?

16. Do you have a babysitter? If not, do you plan to hire one in the future? Do you participate in any informal babysitting swaps with friends or family?

17. What motivates you to complete your degree?

18. After you became a parent, have you ever felt particularly welcome or unwelcome on campus?

19. How do you deal with any negativity you might face?

20. What advice would you give to a fellow undergraduate mother?
APPENDIX B
BACKGROUND INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE
Appendix B

Background Information Questionnaire

Name/Initials ________________________________________________

Age _____________________

Number of children___________

Children's ages____________________________

College major _________________________

Relationship status (Circle one)

□ Single (Not dating)            □ Divorced

□ In a relationship with the child's father

□ In a relationship with someone other than the child's father

□ Married

Year in school (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) _________________________

Estimated graduation date__________________________________________

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Are you the first in your immediate family to go to college? _____________________

Circle the option that best describes your living arrangements

I live alone with my children in an apartment/house.

I live with my children with my significant other.

I live with my children and a roommate(s).

I live with my children and other family members.

Other ________________________________
REFERENCES


