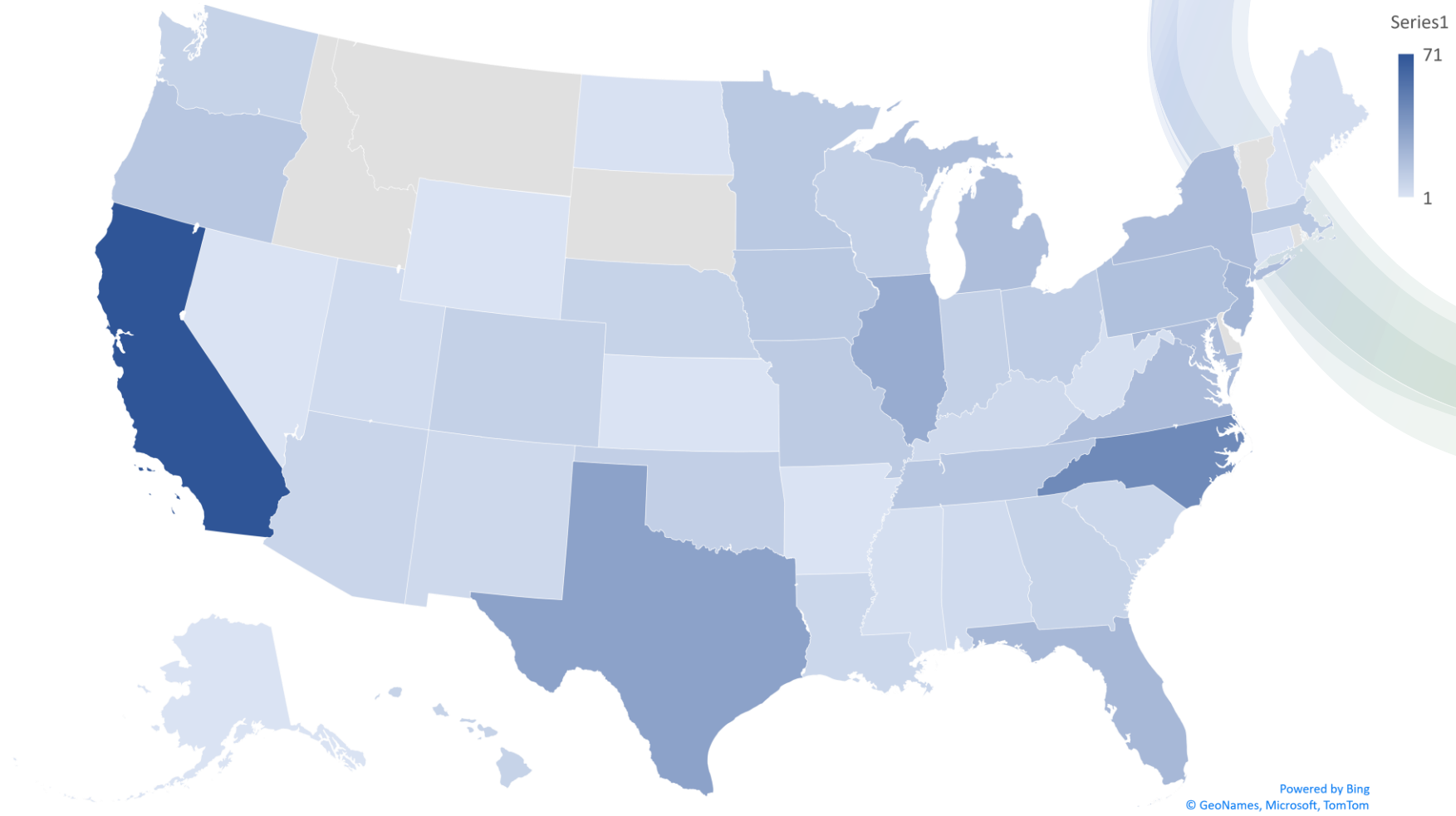


# Exploring On-Campus Childcare Solutions: Head Start and Community College Partnerships



# National Interest



# Educational Investments in Student Parents & Their Children: More than Doubling Returns

**Teresa Eckrich Sommer, PhD**

Northwestern University Two-Generation Research Initiative

*Webinar, Kids on Campus, Exploring On-Campus Childcare Solutions*

Association of Community College Trustees & National Head Start Association

Funded by ECMC Foundation & The Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation

April 13, 2023

Northwestern  
University

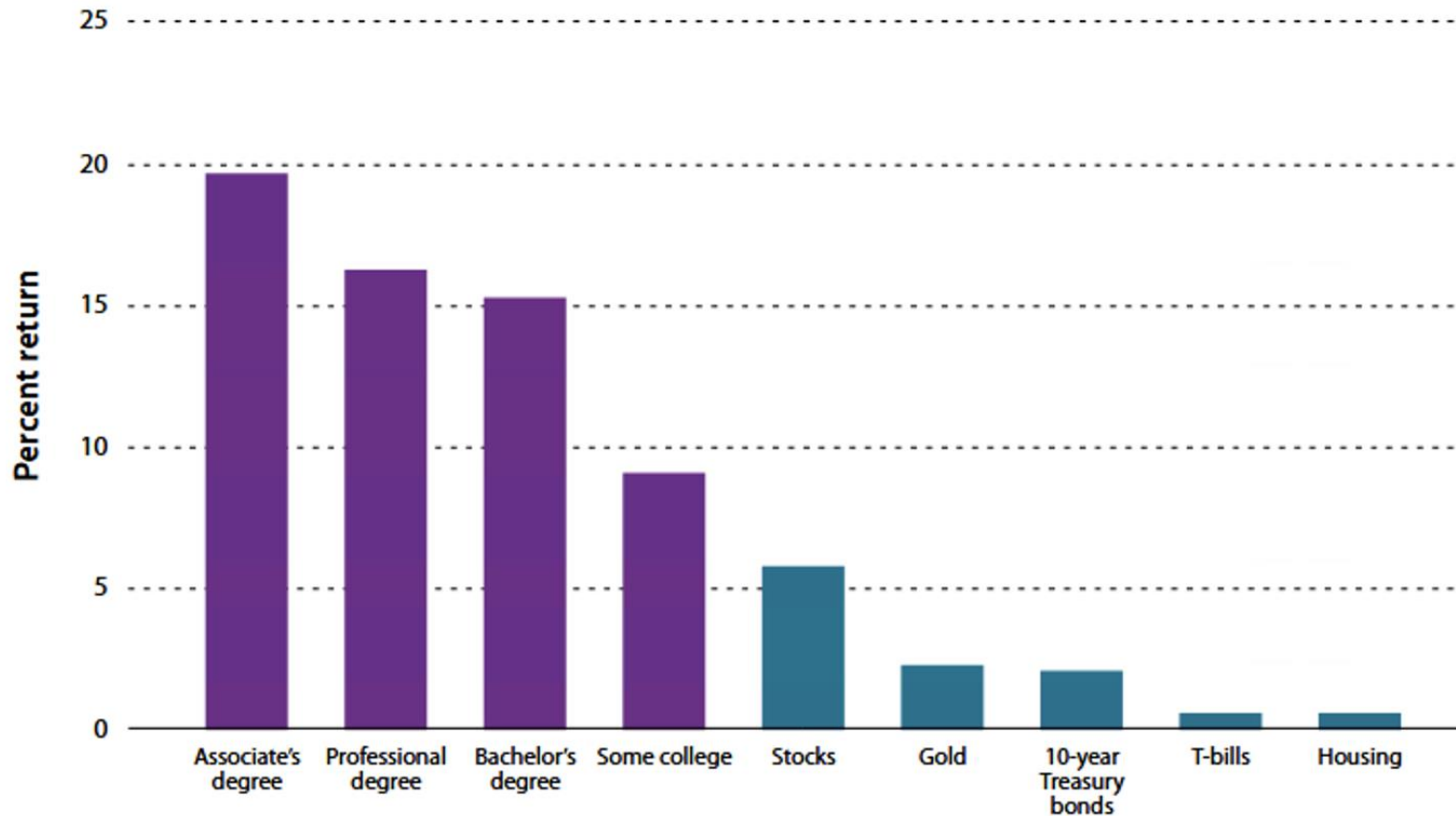
NU2GEN  
THE NORTHWESTERN TWO-GENERATION  
RESEARCH INITIATIVE

[nu2gen.org](https://nu2gen.org)

# Benefits of Higher Education

## Returns to Education Compared to Other Investments

The average returns to earning a degree are high, and even the returns to starting college and not finishing are still higher than the returns to any other traditional investment.



Greenstone et al., 2013

# Education and Family Systems: Empirical Evidence

Education is one of the **strongest predictors of income**

Parents' education and income are significantly linked to **children's education and achievement**

Educational investments in children have **greater returns when children are younger**

Parent education + child education leads to **social mobility**

# Potential Benefits of Coordinated Education for Families

Educational programs for parents and children are **traditionally siloed** by funding and service delivery

Investments are likely to yield greater returns when educational **programming is coordinated and funding is braided** for parents and children

**Linked lives:** Changes in one generation are likely to lead to changes in the other generation, with mutual reinforcement over time

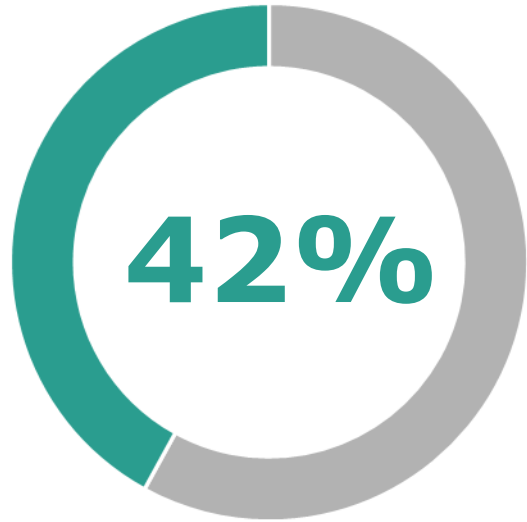
# Example of Linked Lives: Head Start Impact on Parents' Education

Head Start Impact Study (2002-2006), randomized control trial

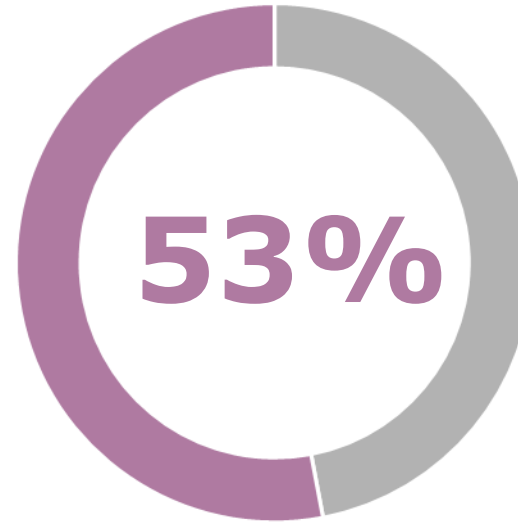
Parents whose children were randomly assigned to Head Start were **more likely to increase their education** than parents whose children were not randomly assigned

This is especially true for parents with some college education

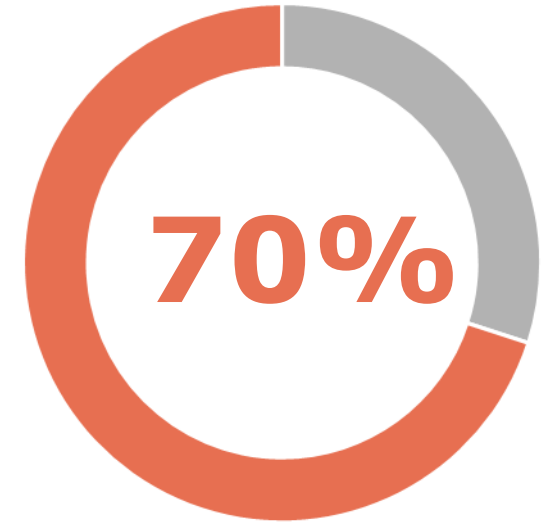
# Families in College: ~4 Million Students Parents Today (22%)



**Enrolled at  
community colleges**



**Have preschool-  
aged children**

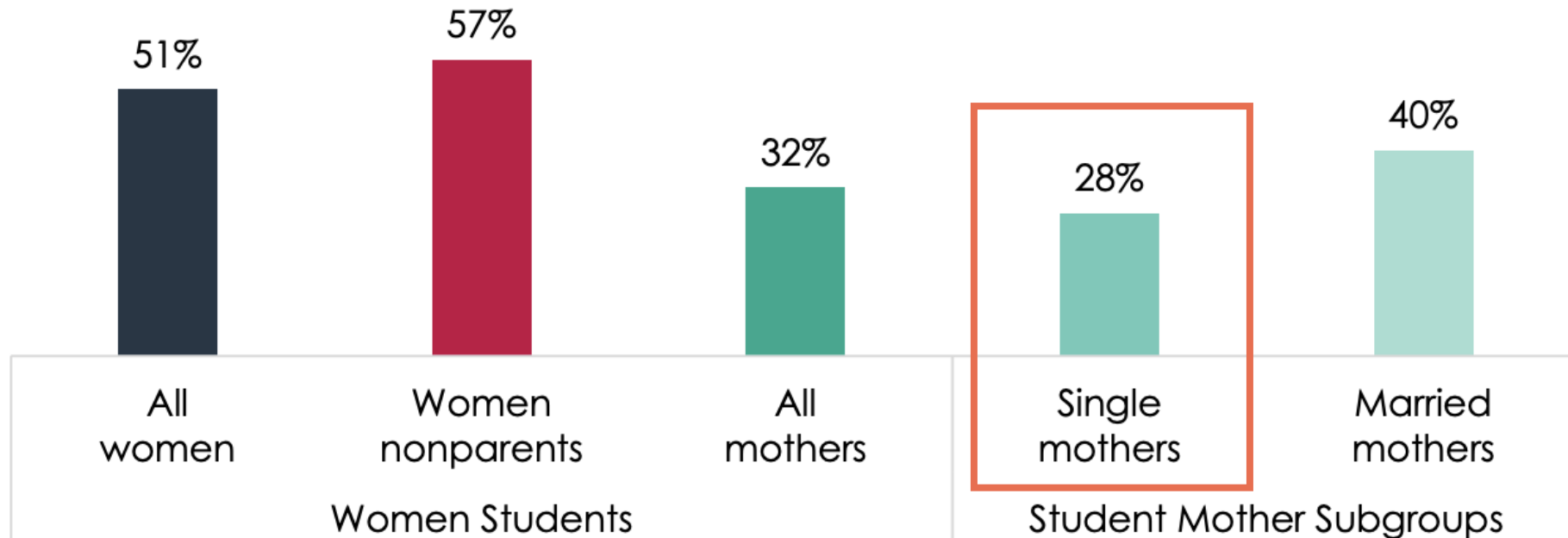


**Are mothers**  
**1.6 times more  
likely to be  
single** than  
student fathers



# Single Mothers: Least Likely Women to Attain a Degree/Certificate

Figure 3. Share of Female Undergraduate Students Who Attained a Degree or Certificate within Six Years of Enrollment, by Parent and Marital Status, 2003-09




Source: IWPR analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003-04 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, Second Follow-up (BPS:04/09).

# **New Approach: Children as a Motivator, not a Barrier**

Student Parents: Motivated to improve their education on behalf of their children's educational futures and families' economic stability and mobility

# New Approach: Children as a **Motivator**, not a Barrier

Student Parents: Motivated to improve their education on behalf of their children's educational futures and families' economic stability and mobility



"Looking at my kids each and every day, **that's what keeps me going**... I look at them, and I see me when I was a kid, and I don't want them to ever, ever, ever go through what I went through... We're going to own our own house. My kids are going to be able to have friends over, sleepovers without having us worried about getting robbed or anything like that... **That's why I keep doing these [educational] programs.**" -*Student Parent*

# Yet, **Childcare** is a Major Barrier for Student Parents



**Tuition**



**Childcare**



**Mental Health**



**Housing**

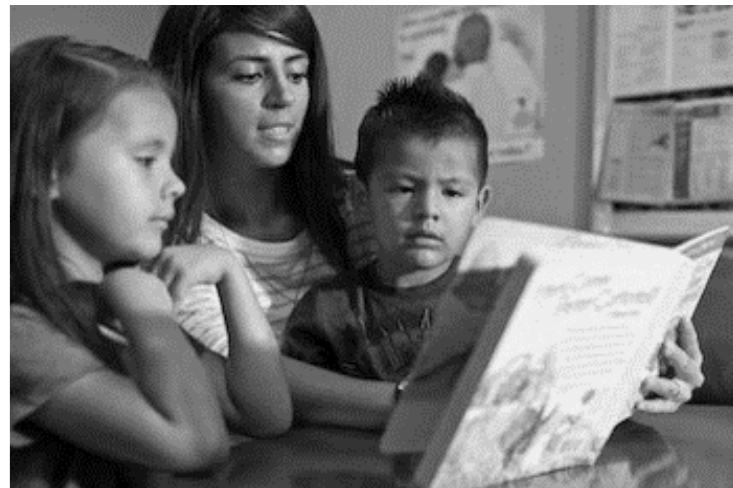


**Food/Basic Needs**

# Head Start as Logical Platform for Childcare at Community Colleges



**Original two-gen model:**  
Supports parents  
and children



Offers **safe, trusting**  
environment

Eases **logistical burdens**

Improves **social capital** by merging two  
communities of support

# Head Start as Logical Platform for Childcare at Community Colleges



Original two-gen model:  
Supports parents and  
children

Offers **safe, trusting**  
environment

“It is a great **opportunity** and **peace of mind**  
that we have the children here at Head Start.”  
*-Student Parent*

Eases **logistical burdens**

Improves **social capital** by merging two  
communities of support

# Community College (CC) + Head Start (HS) Makes Sense

Community college student demographics are increasingly similar to Head Start parents

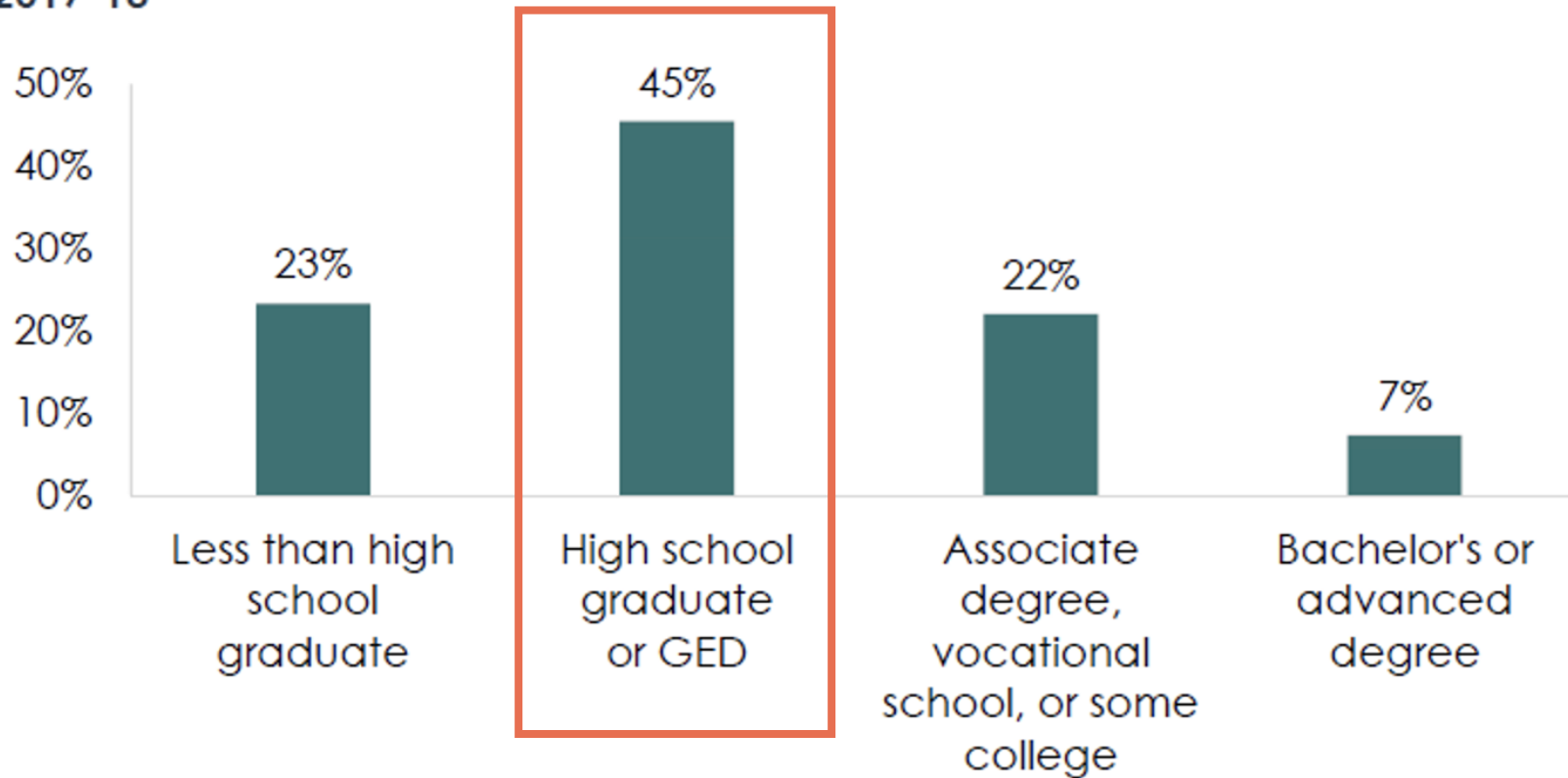
Nearly half of college students with children under 6 meet Head Start income eligibility requirements

Three-quarters of a million parents in Head Start need higher education

Community college + Head Start = promising policy model

# High Educational Needs of Head Start Parents

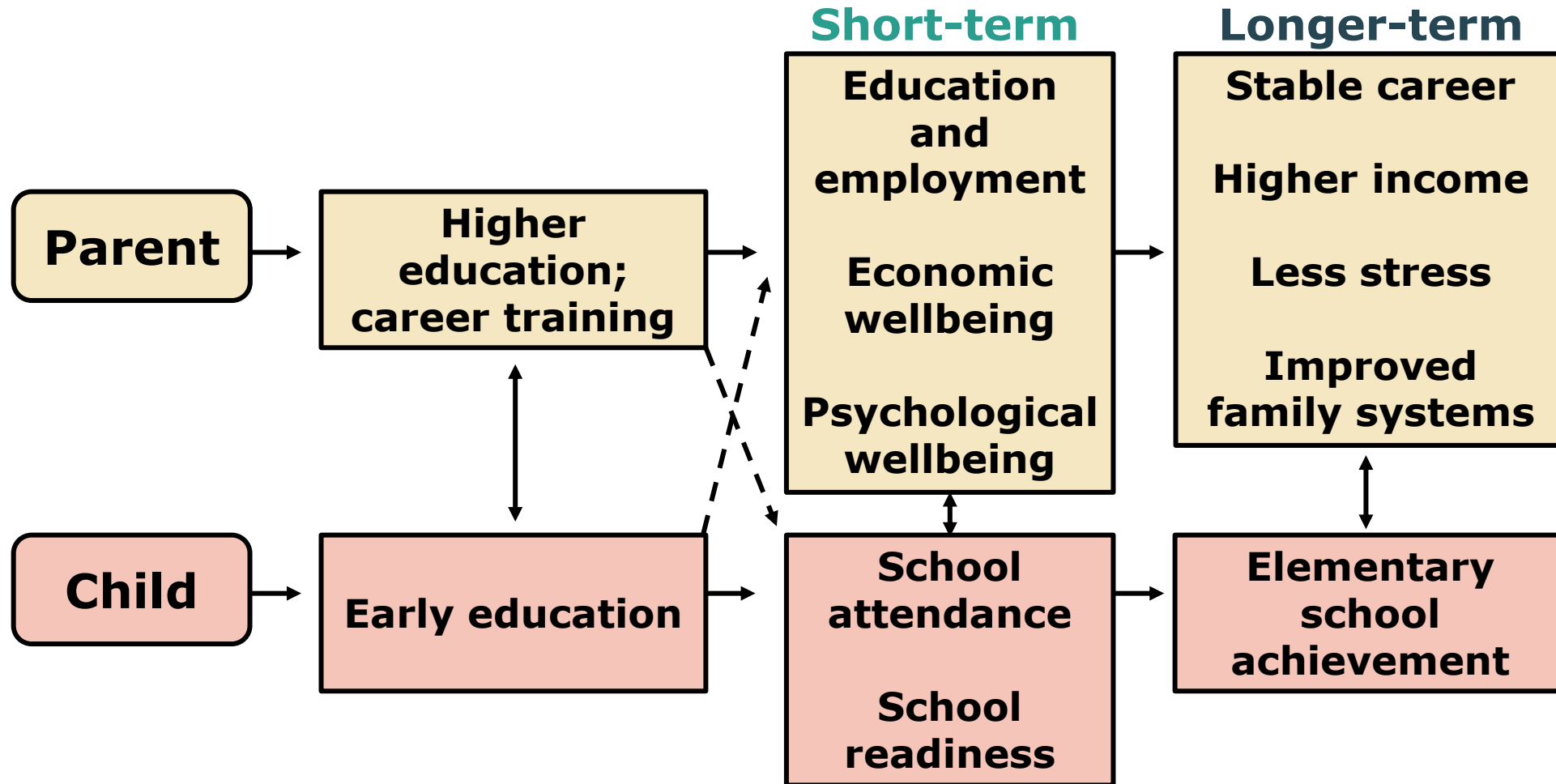
Figure 1. Educational Attainment of Head Start Children's Parents/Guardians, 2017-18



Source: IWPR analysis of data from the 2017-18 Program Information Report (PIR), Office of Head Start.



# Community College + Head Start Theory of Change



# Benefits of CC + HS Model to Families? Research Evidence

**Study of CareerAdvance** (Tulsa, OK):  
Education and career training in healthcare for parents +  
Head Start for children and families

Additional **comprehensive family-based supports**,  
including free tuition, coaching combined with Head Start

**Quasi-experimental research design**, 300 families

Parent and child outcomes under study:  
**Education, economic wellbeing, and psychological wellbeing**

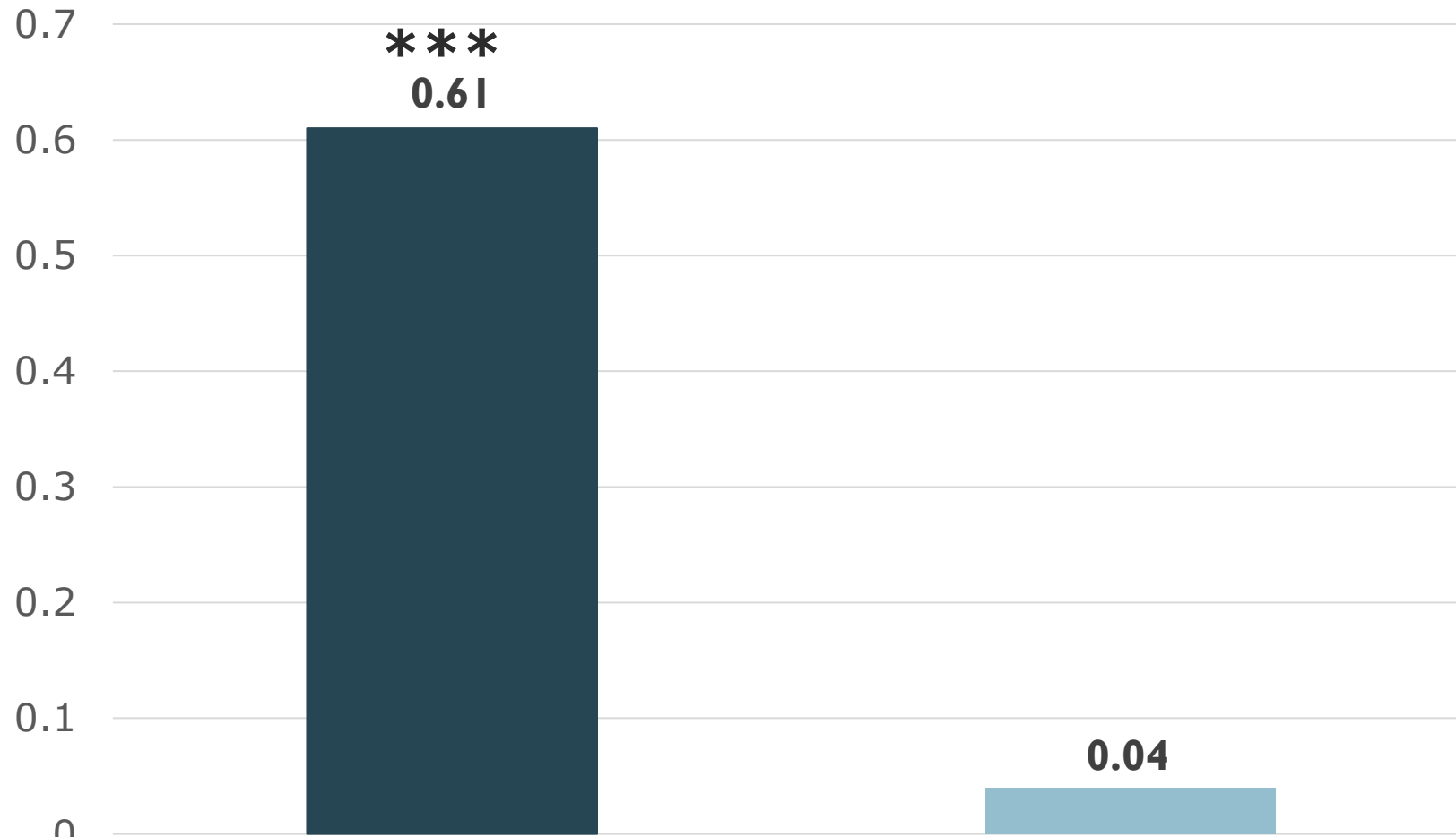
**CareerAdvance**<sup>®</sup>

# Career*Advance* Results: Parents' Education and Economic Wellbeing

- Higher levels of education
- Greater employment in the healthcare sector
- Stronger career identity (i.e., importance of work and career)
- Less material hardship and financial worry

# Example:

## Higher Rates of Certification



\*\*\*  $p < .01$

# Career*Advance* Results: Parents' Psychological Wellbeing

Higher optimism (i.e., hopefulness)

More self-efficacy (i.e., belief in ability to achieve goals)

No increases or decreases in perceived stress or psychological distress

# Career*Advance* Results: Children's School Attendance

 Higher rates of Head Start attendance

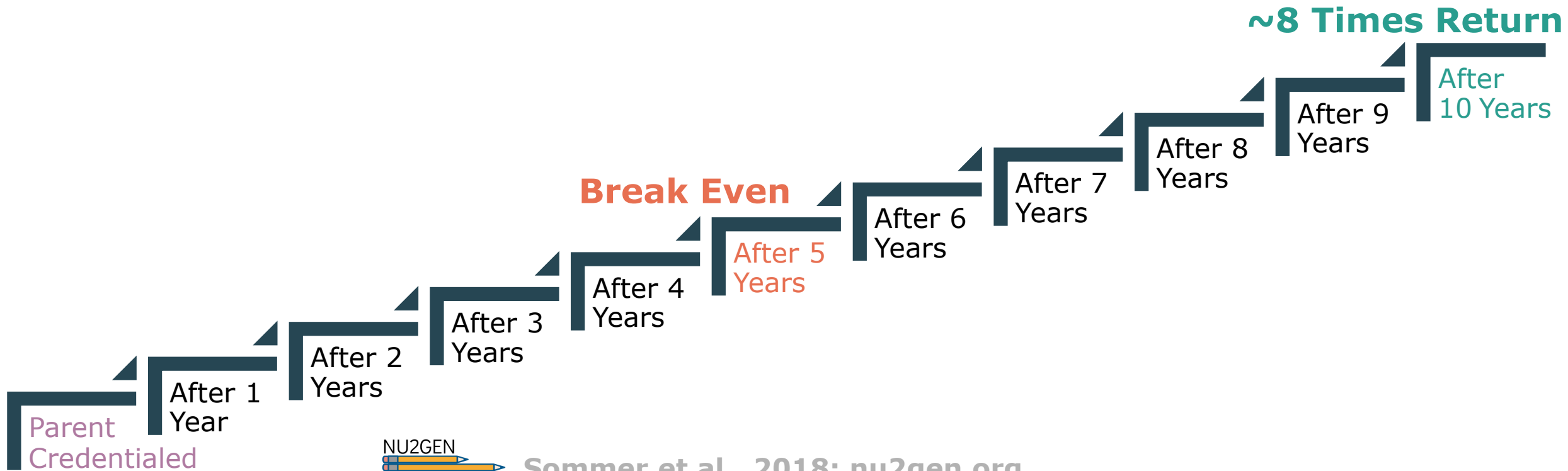
 Lower rates of chronic absence in Head Start

# Benefits of CC + HS Model to Society?

## Cost-Benefit Analysis

Research benefits and costs of new model:  
Career Pathway Training + Head Start

- Benefits based on improved parent earnings over time



# Research Evidence for Promising Program and Policy Approaches

- Streamline **dual eligibility** (e.g., FAFSA and Head Start)
- Promote **intersecting identities** (e.g., community college student, first gen, students of color, mothers/fathers)
- Add **coaching** to manage **complexities**
- Address the **mental health crisis** of parents and children with a **family-centered approach**
- Expand **financial supports** (e.g., student debt relief and financial aid)



# Next Frontier: 2Gen College Promise Scholarship Programs

- Parents and youth receive scholarships at the same time
- Studied the first 2Gen college promise model in nation, HOPE Toledo Promise
  - Many positive dynamics taking place across generations
    - **Mutual motivation**
    - **Intergenerational decision-making**
    - **Academic competition**
    - **Simultaneous skill development**
    - **Bidirectional support**
- Untapped opportunity for scholarships + coaching + additional benefits/services for two generations

# Project Overview



List of NHSA + ACCT members seeking matching + TA



Co-develop materials and processes for identifying, vetting, and matching interested members (focus groups and surveys, questionnaires to identify available spaces, requirements for relocation, etc.)



Draft MOUs, sample contracts, guides for estimating retrofit costs, and other background materials

## Learn more about the Kids on Campus Initiative

<https://www.acct.org/page/kids-on-campus>



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