

SUPPORT FOR PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS AT CSU

Cleveland State University, through the Office for Institutional Equity (OIE), supports pregnant and parenting students so they can achieve academic success.

A. Who is Eligible for Support as a Pregnant and Parenting Student?

Moms, dads and guardians are entitled to support from OIE, whether its an excused absence for one's own prenatal appointment or to accompany one's partner, and both moms and dads are equally likely to be on the hook to pick up a sick child from daycare or otherwise be called to duty as a parent. Support for pregnant and parenting students covers students, whether male or female or other, at any point in their journey, whether dealing with infertility, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, prenatal appointments, high risk pregnancy, common pregnancy complaints and miscarriage, and recovery from any of these events; or relating to child support, adoption, daycare, children's school, school conferences, custody issues, babies, young children, teens, or any other matter in which a student's identity as a parent, guardian or potential parent has the potential to negatively impact academic success.

Here are some examples of student who may need support based on their status as pregnant or parenting students:

- Babysitter calls off sick.
- Pregnant student spends weekend in hospital because of nonstop vomiting, and partner (also a student) must care for two toddlers without childcare all weekend long.
- Child falls at recess at school and might have a broken arm.
- Parent must attend court relating to child custody hearing.
- Student – male or female -- needs to see a counselor over the loss of a pregnancy.
- Parent is called to the high school because child got into a fight with another students.
- An exam is scheduled for the evening, when student doesn't have childcare.
- Student is up with teenage child all night because the teen is being bullied in school and spent the night crying.
- College age or adult child is in crisis requiring extensive, time consuming support from student parent.
- Guardian needs to attend court related to foster child.
- Social services agency assisting with adoption scheduled a home visit without notice.

B. The Law Mandates Support for Pregnant and Parenting Students

This support is required by law. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) within the United States Department of Education is responsible for enforcing Title IX, which states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis or sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

OCR maintains a webpage called "Know Your Rights: Pregnant or Parenting?" which states:

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”), 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., is a Federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex—including pregnancy and parental status—in educational programs and activities.



In a “Dear Colleague Letter” dated June 25, 2013, OCR states:

We as a nation need to do more to help the hundreds of thousands of young people who become mothers and fathers each year graduate from high school ready for college and successful careers. According to studies . . . 26 percent of young men and young women combined who had dropped out of public high schools — and one-third of young women — said that becoming a parent was a major factor in their decision to leave school. And, only 51 percent of young women who had a child before age 20 earned their high school diploma by age 22. The educational prospects are worse at the higher-education level. Only 2 percent of young women who had a child before age 18 earned a college degree by age 30. This low education attainment means that young parents are more likely than their peers to be unemployed or underemployed, and the ones who do find jobs will, on average, earn significantly less than their peers.

To help improve the high school and college graduation rates of young parents, we must support pregnant and parenting students so that they can stay in school and complete their education, and thereby build better lives for themselves and their children.

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201306-title-ix.html>

OCR’s pamphlet, “Supporting the Academic Success of Pregnant and Parenting Students,” Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, states:

Title IX protects students in all of the academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs or activities of schools. This includes prohibiting discrimination against pregnant and parenting students . . .

To ensure a pregnant [or parenting] student's access to its educational program, when necessary, a school must make adjustments to the regular program that are reasonable and responsive to the student's. . . status . . .

Every school that receives federal financial assistance is bound by Title IX. Schools must ensure that the policies and practices of individual teachers do not discriminate against pregnant [and parenting] students. For example, a teacher may not refuse to allow a student to submit work after a deadline that she missed because of absences due to pregnancy or childbirth [or parenting] . . .

As required by Title IX, [schools must] assist pregnant and parenting students who have excused absences by providing them with make-up assignments and exams. As long as the absences are excused, schools should allow pregnant [and parenting] students to make up the work that they missed.

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.html>



C. Available Support for Pregnant and Parenting Students

The Office for Institutional Equity supports pregnant and parenting students so that their grades reflect their academic achievement and not the challenges they face as they manage a pregnancy or care for their children.

Prior to the pandemic, this meant, for example, supporting pregnant students whose babies were due during a semester or immediately prior to it so that any related absences could be excused, students could start attending classes later than the first week of class, and absences related to caring for a child (e.g. child falls down the stairs, student misses class because he or she takes the child to an urgent care center) are excused. Other support from OIE included ensuring that students knew where on campus the private nursing rooms are located and arranging for students to bring sleeping or quiet infants to class.

Available accommodations include:

- excused absences
- extended deadlines
- flexible exam scheduling
- ability to go off camera during class
- ability to take a final early (before the expected birth of a child)
- ability to start class later in the semester (to account for time off required for the birth of a child)
- grades of incomplete or being withdrawn from courses (grade of W) without negative impact to academic standing and without regard to regular deadlines
- ability to attend class remotely (if course is scheduled for in-person)
- bringing a sleeping or quiet infant to class

Other accommodations designed to support student, but which are not discussed here, based on each student's individual circumstances.

The pandemic has been very hard on pregnant and parenting students. Many students have lost their childcare for children of all ages and special needs children: daycare centers are closed or considered unsafe by worried parents; on campus study areas like the libraries have limited hours which means that some parenting students have lost their quiet study places, and primary and elementary school is remote so students are home with their children all day. Students also now attend class from home with their children. OIE's support for pregnant and parenting students has evolved to meet these new needs. Here are some examples of the accommodations OIE is implementing during this difficult time:

- Excused absences from class and ability to go off camera during remote instruction without negative impact to participation or other aspects of her course grade. This is so that students can: nurse a baby off camera, move off camera to attend to a child (make lunch for children at home; separate children who are fighting in the background; help a school aged child who has been knocked off his/her school link reestablish a connection, and assist a child with special needs, for example).
- Extended deadlines and extensions of time to complete coursework (occasionally, the 24/7 of being with children with no respite (school or daycare) means that students are unable to timely complete assignments). The limited hours of the law library, combined with the limited hours of the law building and the lack of childcare has meant that law students who are parents, and who used the law school and the law library to study and do homework, no longer have that quiet time.
- Flexible exam scheduling (students all across the campus have told OIE about horror stories of the best laid plans to carve out time to take an exam only to have those plans dashed to bits by children who can't leave mommy or daddy alone, children who suddenly barf all over just as the exam is starting, children who nap every day at the same time of day but not on the day of the exam) that

taking exams while caring for children is extremely difficult). The purpose of this accommodation is so that students can do their best on exams.

D. Contact OIE to arrange for support

To receive support as a pregnant and parenting student, contact the Title IX Coordinators:

Rachel Lutner, J.D.
Director, Office for Institutional Equity
216-687-2223
2300 Euclid Avenue, Suite 236
r.lutner@csuohio.edu
after hours urgent matters: 937-756-1944 (call or text)

LaJuan N. Flores, M.Ed., SPHR
Associate Director, Office for Institutional Equity
216-687-2223
2300 Euclid Avenue, Suite 236
l.n.flores52@csuohio.edu
after hours urgent matters: 216-369-9445 (call or text)

<https://www.csuohio.edu/institutional-equity/institutional-equity>
email OIE@csuohio.edu

To receive support, students will meet with one of the Title IX Coordinators to discuss the student's unique situation and to identify supports, options and strategies to address the student's needs.

E. Confidentiality and Privacy

OIE will work with a student's professors to arrange appropriate support. OIE will not share students' information, and instead, will simply state that a student requires accommodations. OIE does not disclose why a student is receiving accommodations and instructors have been advised not to ask.





F. Other On and Off Campus Resources for Pregnant and Parenting Students

ON CAMPUS:

THE MAREYJOYCE GREEN WOMEN'S CENTER
2121 Euclid Avenue, Berkman Hall 142
Phone: 216-687-4674
Fax: 216-687-5109
womenscenter@csuohio.edu

Cleveland State University has three Lactation Rooms to support working moms and parenting students. Students should contact the Mareyjoyce Green Women's Center at 216.687.4674 for more information and to register for an access code.



Business Building

Double occupant use
Mini-frig, microwave
Desks, task chairs, lounge chairs

Rhode's Tower

Single occupant use
Mini-frig, microwave
Desk, task chair, lounge chair

Washkewicz Hall

Single occupant use
Sink, changing table
Mini-frig, microwave
Desk, task chair, lounge chair

[THE OFFICE FOR DISABILITY SERVICES \(ODS\)](#) is available to support students experiencing serious health problems associated with pregnancy. ODS' contact information is:

Rhodes Tower West 210
2124 Chester Ave.
Phone: (216) 687-2015
Fax: (216) 687-2343
ods@csuohio.edu

[THE CARE TEAM](#) works collaboratively to support the wellbeing and safety of students, and can be reached at:

Care@CSU
Student Center, 319
Phone: 216-687-2048
Office Hours: By Appointment
MagnusACTS@csuohio.edu

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Remote Learning: <http://www.esc-cc.org/FamilyResources.aspx>

First Year Cleveland: <https://www.firstyearcleveland.org/#>

Pregnant and Parent Students (National Women's Law Center): <https://nwlc.org/issue/pregnant-parenting-students/>



G. Unfair Treatment

Students who feel they are being treated unfairly because they are pregnant or parenting should contact OIE for assistance. Possible concerns about unfair treatment may include:

- Instructors not fully implementing accommodations
- Someone questioning a student's accommodations, remember, pregnant and parenting students do not have any obligation to tell their story or share information with anyone
- Someone singling out a student because of the student's pregnancy or status as a parent

Students with concerns about discrimination should contact OIE for information about options for reporting and help with problem solving or other strategies.

H. Student Responsibilities and Faculty Concerns

OIE accommodations should be used, but not be abused. To that end, OIE accommodation communications advise the student and faculty:

Student is responsible for all work (i.e. assignments, projects, labs, reports, memorandum, test, etc.) due in your course; however, she may need additional time to complete coursework. Please be flexible and creative, if necessary, with assisting Student.

Notwithstanding these accommodations, Student understands that she is required to, as much as possible, complete coursework on time, attend class and limit use of these accommodations. Student understands that this email is not a blanket accommodation to turn in all assignments late. To properly use this accommodation, Student will communicate regularly with her professors, including advising in advance or as close to the due date/time as possible that she will be turning in an assignment late and identifying when she anticipates turning it in, or that she cannot complete a quiz on the date it is given, but will complete it, for example, the next day. Alternatively, Student understands that her professors may contact her to set new deadlines for late work (e.g. "I see that you did not turn in Assignment 6 on Monday. I will expect it by Friday.")

If these academic accommodations or the later use of them raise concerns, please contact OIE and we can discuss your concerns and how to accommodate Student in a manner which addresses your concerns.

OIE will always take seriously a faculty member's concern about the use of accommodations and will work with faculty to address those concerns while still providing legally required support for the student. Faculty with concerns should contact OIE by phone or email as soon as their concerns arise.

