

Tips For Parents Juggling College, Career And Family

(NAPSA)—Balancing work and family is a familiar challenge for many parents, but when you add college classes to the mix it can become a real juggling act.

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, parents of dependent children comprise nearly a quarter (3.9 million) of America's 17 million college students and half of those (1.9 million) are single parents. For many college-bound parents, career success depends on advancing their education and refreshing their job skills.

"Today's careers are longer and more complex than in the past," says Dr. Tracey Wilen-Daugenti, vice president and managing director of Apollo Research Institute. "Continuing education is critical to staying employable over a career that may last 50 to 60 years and require 10 or more job changes."

But don't rush back to college if you don't have a clear purpose or plan for managing your time. Apollo Research Institute surveyed more than 4,400 adult students and found that 56 percent experience anxiety over not spending enough time with friends and loved ones. Here are some tips to help college-going parents stay the course:

- Seek a program with flexible class scheduling. Evening classes, online learning or hybrid programs that combine online and on-campus classes are designed for working adults.

- Look for programs that use innovative technologies. By building technology skills, you will increase your value to an employer.

- Don't underestimate the time you'll need to complete assignments outside of class. Ask faculty and fellow students about time requirements.

- Talk with your employer about your goals and educational



Online learning can help busy parents balance their classwork with job responsibilities and family time.

plan; explore tuition-assistance programs that your company may offer.

- Explore resources that your college may provide, such as work-life balance consultants to help you locate child care and manage your time.

- Engage your children in your learning process by taking them to the library or setting up shared space to do homework together. Dialogue with your kids about what you are learning and the role education plays in your lives.

- Read up on the financial impact of earning a degree. According to Apollo Research Institute, college goers who obtain a degree while employed can expect to increase their salary and lifetime income and earn on average a 22 percent return on their tuition dollars. The return is higher for graduates in high-demand fields such as engineering (53 percent), IT (49 percent), business (43 percent) and nursing (36 percent).

- Consider earning a certification if you are not sure about a degree program. Certifications are respected and increasingly required in industries such as manufacturing and IT.

Learn more at www.apolloresearchinstitute.org.