Student Parenting: Mastering the Double Life

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I can not thank enough UVM HESA for giving me this opportunity to grow and TVC for this platform. More importantly, a big thank you to my children for giving me the balance in life and hope for brighter days. To my mother and family, thank you for your support always.
Student Parenting: Mastering the Double Life
Miriam Mukurazita

This photo reflection looks at student parenting as a rising phenomenon in higher education. Non-traditional students are increasing, especially in the advent of hybrid classes and flexible or on-line learning. Contrary to the belief that it is more advisable to have children later in life, more people now see it as a better option to have children early then have early retirement after sending children off to college. Having children later on in life tends to delay retirement due to financial obligations related to having children.

Miriam Mukurazita (she/her) is a M.Ed. candidate in the University of Vermont Higher Education and Student Affairs program. Miriam grew up interchanging the cities Harare and KweKwe, Zimbabwe. Miriam holds a Bachelor of Business Management and Information Technology from Catholic University in Zimbabwe. She hopes to inspire her audiences to defy odds and see beyond current circumstances.
Student Parenting: Mastering the Double Life

Anybody can have the capacity to be a parent, but not everybody will choose to be a student parent. It takes a lot of work, energy, and time to be there for a dependent child. This is an era where students do not have to choose between being a student or being a parent, but can be both. I want a career and I want a family. I am a student of color who is also over the traditional college student age as I am over thirty years of age and a first-generation student. While I know that college success statistics are against me as there are layers of obstacles, success and a great but different college experience is possible.

Morning routine, start day with getting everyone ready for the day.
School run

Day starts with dropping child at school, I go to my work, then class and later go pick up child from school.
Day at the lake, taking a break from work and school.

Fun under the sun, spending quality time with my children.
Thanksgiving Turkey Dinner ON the table

And there is that chaotic turkey meal on a weekend when baby just wants to sit on the table.

Find time to play. As the saying goes, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. I have to do school but my children need to be children and play. I make time for that. For my mental health, this play time is critical in keeping me in balance with classes, school and work.

Student parent challenges affect both student mothers and student fathers. It is hard work that needs discipline, being responsible, setting realistic boundaries, and commitment. Academic support, faculty support, community, co-workers and cohort support, access to financial and food resources all play a part promoting parent students to graduate and succeed. Having children who understand that my parent needs to work is such great help, but sometimes, the child is just a baby who cannot understand
that. Self-care is necessary even for student parents. Laughing, relaxing, sleeping, physical activities, relationships, mind and body wellness and finding time for personal hobbies is necessary for wellness of all students including student parents who are part of marginalized student populations.

Sometimes there has to be a doctor visit right in the middle of stressful deadlines. This may lead to requesting time off or replacing in-person class/work with virtual attendance.
Assignment helpers

Work on an assignment... with a special assistant. Parenting is a full-time job and being a parent while in school or working full time is a choice and sacrifice.
Making memories, Christmas

The idea is make memories together in the midst of all the deadlines, school, and life. Happy holidays!
Graduation is within reach

It is not easy, but it can be done. I am living this life and I know it is fulfilling.
And it is worth the sacrifice! I have the best of both worlds!