

Baby “Problems”

Kelly took a semester off when her daughter arrived. Before returning, Kelly checked out the campus day care center. She was shocked to find out that it would cost more per semester than her tuition; Kelly couldn't afford it. Kelly rearranged her course schedule so that most of her courses were in the evenings when her parents could watch the baby. Her advisor warned that this wasn't tenable for the long term; some upper level courses were only offered during the day.

One course required a group project and Kelly, unable to find a babysitter, brought her daughter to a group meeting. When the baby got hungry and fussy, Kelly draped her nursing cover over herself and started feeding her daughter. One of her classmates said, “Look, it's bad enough that you brought your baby because it's really distracting. Breastfeeding in front of us is gross.” Kelly knew she couldn't access the nursing room without a key from the department's secretary, who had gone home for the night. She was sleep-deprived and unable to hide her emotions. She started to cry.

For Discussion:

- If you were a member of Kelly's group, how could you advocate for her?
- What additional barriers might students who are parents of small children face?
- How might programs, policies and procedures be adjusted to support students like Kelly?
- Is your campus inclusive of students who are also parents? Why or why not?