



Are You School Ready?

As a single parent, your college experience is unique. Unlike the traditional student, you are balancing work, school and family. Balancing roles of employee, student and parent can be challenging and often presents obstacles. The Career Links program can assist you in problem-solving these obstacles during the course of a semester, but we will also be looking for some of these obstacles to be addressed prior to your application to the program.

Each student we accept into the Career Links program is an investment; we are investing our time and funding in your long term academic and economic success. It has been our experience that our most successful students have been those who are “school-ready”. What does “school-ready” mean?

School-Ready Students...

- ❖ **Have A Reliable Source of Income to Pay for Basic Needs Such As Rent, Utilities, Food, Etc.** This source of income may be from alimony, child support, Social Security benefits or a part-or full-time position. Regardless of the source, it must be reliable. All single parents struggle to make ends meet, but the less major financial crisis you experience during a semester the more successful you will be. If you are looking for employment or need job training skills, we would prefer you meet that need first before becoming a student.
- ❖ **Maximize Financial Aid Resources By Applying for Federal & HCC Financial Aid.** Career Links provides each student in the program comprehensive support; financial assistance is only a small part of this support. Each student is expected to first maximize all traditional financial aid opportunities available to them before seeing financial assistance from the Career Links program.
- ❖ **Have A Reliable Childcare Provider And Have the Means to Pay Childcare Costs.** Reliable childcare is necessary for you to be a successful student. You should consider having enough childcare to enable you to both attend class and to study. For instance, if you have personal relatives helping you with childcare, are they committed? You don't want them bailing out on you midway through the semester.
- ❖ **Have A Reliable Form of Transportation.** Whether you have your own car, take the bus or carpool, you need to have worked out before you start school how you will get back and forth to campus. You also need to consider a back-up plan in case your car breaks down during the semester—what will you do?
- ❖ **Have Adequate and Affordable Housing.** Changing residence or being evicted in the middle of a semester is a difficult obstacle to overcome and still be a successful student. Some of the things current Career links students do to cut down on high housing/rental costs in Howard County include: *sharing an apartment with a roommate, obtaining section 8 assistance, obtaining an apartment in a complex with a discounted rent program for low-income individuals, and living with a relative.*