

## **STUDYING WITH A CHILD**

Taking on the roles of student and parent at the same time can be overwhelming. A number of times, I struggle to find the balance between my education and care-giving responsibilities.

I had my son in September 2017, at the time when I still had the motivation to further on my studies and build a career. It was a tough decision to make knowing fully well what it entails especially with a child in the picture but I'd say my determination conquered all fears. Fast forward to a year later, I had gotten admission for a master degree.

I came into Germany (a totally new environment) with my son and I was totally clueless as to how to begin my journey. It was a very difficult time for me- from trying to find accommodation, register in the city hall, get a bank account, attend the student orientation, and most of all, getting my son into a kindergarten.

The last part was very important to me so that I will be able to attend my lectures without having to carry him around. Sadly, that was not the case at the beginning. Upon arrival, I visited the school day care office several times to request for a space for my son in the kindergarten because I had applied before arrival. I was told every spot was filled and they kept him on the waiting list. I had no choice, I had to take him to class all the time. Half the time, during lectures, I was not paying attention. He wanted all the attention he could get and when he felt uncomfortable, I had to leave the class so that the entire class was not distracted. Needless to say, that was one of the most difficult times for me as a mother, however, I made sure my son was my principal priority amidst every hurdle.

Very importantly, as a student parent, I realized that I had to triple my efforts with that of a single student to achieve the same results. I encouraged myself to put in so much work in my studies while focusing on raising my child. I try to study while he is occupied. I break out the books after I had put him to bed or before he wakes up in the morning. I created a rotating study schedule because my parental duties and other obligations changes from day to day. Most times, I dedicate my time to studying while on campus because I know it might be more difficult to study at home. I made use of the on- campus resources to help me study, manage my time, and even help me complete assignments. My academic adviser was always there for help and advice when I needed it. She is one of the greatest resources available to me.

Above all, I developed confidence in myself. I try not to dwell on negative thoughts, such as worrying that I haven't studied for a long time, or that I shouldn't take so much time away from my family. I constantly remind myself that I am doing this to better myself and that I have the support of my family and the maturity and experience to succeed.

**Name:** Ms. Ifunanya Orisekeh

**Country of Origin:** Nigeria

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