

## HOW TO PURSUE A DEGREE WHILE RAISING A FAMILY

*Summary: Learn how to pursue a bachelor's degree and then a master's degree, all while raising a kid.*



**Question:** I'm 33 and a mother, and I am planning to return to school to complete my bachelor's degree and then my master's. I don't have a lot of time to spend in the classroom and am hoping that I could split it between campus and online. I already have more than 30 credits. What are the best colleges or universities in Chicago and what are their statistics when it comes to graduating in half the time?

**Answer:** Combining the roles of mother and student takes creativity and endurance, so your strategy of splitting campus and online is a fitting response. Locating the right college and the best split is the first challenge. I'm not aware of a source that pulls together all of the data you're seeking into one handy document, although you might try the Illinois Dept. of Education or check with a reference librarian in a Chicago Public Library. "Peterson's Guide to Distance Learning Programs" also provides specific information on programs from accredited college and universities. Due to the relative newness of online learning, you might have to piece together findings to address your questions. It's likely that your own investigative work will yield the most useful information.

Initially, select two to 10 programs that interest you. Then, contact representatives directly, visiting all of your potential colleges. In addition to statistics on completion time, be sure to check on accreditation, faculty profiles, and curriculum samples. Ask to speak with faculty and graduates of the program for first-hand accounts of the programs. While your goal is to cut back on time, a quality educational experience and a marketable degree are paramount to your success.