

Student Parent Profile: Jessica Bull



Jessica Bull has been juggling her online studies with caring for her young son. *Photo courtesy of Jessica Bull.*

Jessica Bull is a Clark College student pursuing an Industrial Maintenance Technician degree. She works part-time at the college's Child and Family Studies (CFS) and she is full-time parent to her son, Eathin, 5, who is in kindergarten. During fall term, when her welding class ended at 9:20 p.m., Bull's partner stayed with her son. CFS doesn't offer evening childcare.

This story is part of a series of interviews with Clark College student parents about how they are balancing life, work, and school during quarantine.

Q: What is your family's involvement with Clark College Child and Family Studies?

JB: When I go to work at CFS, my son goes with me. I appreciate that the center schedules time to help kids with their schoolwork. That relieves some pressure from helping him do his schoolwork at home.

Q: How are you and your son coping with COVID challenges?

JB: My son is awesome but being at home—instead of school—is hard for him to switch gears. I just started work again, and he started kindergarten. He's been going to Clark's childcare center since he was 1. We've had early-morning and late-night schedules. He's adaptable.

Q: How have both you and your son adapted to online learning from home?

JB: This whole COVID thing has been rough. I'm not going to

lie. I miss studying in Clark's library. When I'm home, I like to spend time with my son, my family. That's our leisure time. But now my son has schoolwork. I try to help him, but I'm Mom. It's hard to get him to focus and to listen to me. It's hard for parents to educate our kids because we're not teachers. It's tough.

Q: What's your advice to fellow Clark students juggling your schoolwork, parenting young children and supervising their remote schoolwork?

JB: As much as you can, stay to the same routine. Kids like routine. Dinner's at one time, bedtime is this time. Make a visual schedule to help them understand their day. Take extra care to reassure them. Get down to their level. Encourage them that it will be OK. Always. Because of the pandemic, we're spending so much more time inside looking at screens. It's not healthy for kids to have so much screen time.

Q: What's your advice to Clark students who are parents of young children?

JB: Give yourself a break. Don't be so hard on yourself. Try your best. Keep pushing forward.