Suggested Child Care Guidelines for Employees and Undergraduate & Graduate/Professional Students

UA Life & Work Connections

Child Care and Family Resources

- **The Guidelines and Contact Information**

Thank you for your interest in these Guidelines. Phone numbers represent Mountain Standard Time (MST). 520 is the area code for The University of Arizona and Tucson. Call 621-4365 regarding general program and form information, or contact staff by email [here](mailto:).  

- **The Difference Between Child Care Referrals and Recommendations**

In support of best practices, the University provides child care information and references for referral purposes and does not endorse programs or services. It is the obligation of the responsible adult to evaluate and confirm program features and references in selecting care. Relatives, friends and colleagues can provide subjective responses and recommendations.

- **Requesting Your Personalized Appointment**

To complement your efforts, a Master’s level professional in early childhood education and gerontology coordinates your consultation. We integrate your University and family needs with objective perspectives to help promote greater program compatibility. If your inquiry is of a sensitive or timely nature, or to request a telephone or in-person appointment, call 621-9870 or visit [here](http://www). We also respond to requests for [child and elder care support](http://www) from employee and student grandparents (or other relatives) caring for multiple generations.

**Ages Discussed in the Guidelines**

A primary focus is on infants and toddlers, and those attending preschool and elementary school. Select sections can be useful for those in middle and high school grades, as well as in college. Because information and links may be subject to change, we welcome updates.

**Guidelines Review Tips**

Visit [here](http://www) to access this Guidelines link and other related topics.

**Types of Child Care Environments and Corresponding State of Arizona Agencies**

Selecting child care that occurs outside your home may be as straightforward as choosing one program, or it may require a combination of arrangements to accommodate academic, employment, and personal schedules. Care that occurs in the child’s family residence is referenced as “in-home child care,” and this discussion appears in a later section.

Standards and ratios vary from state to state, and registered and unregulated child care programs exist in Arizona. Multiple agencies oversee the different Arizona facilities offering certified or licensed child care, as well as other types of care facilities for a variety of populations.

The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) Child Care Administration has responsibility for regulating, monitoring and certifying certain types of small family child care...
homes and provides child care assistance for those meeting DES requirements. DES information is available here.

The Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS) Division of Licensing Services, Office of Child Care Licensing has responsibility for regulating, monitoring and licensing child care facilities, public school child care programs and certified child care group homes. DHS information is available here.

It is important to have a full understanding about child care requirements and features, including the setting, staffing ratios, inspections and more. Descriptions about the various arrangements and types of center and regulated and unregulated family child care settings in the state (including large and small family child care group homes, alternative approval child care homes, and registered and unregulated child care homes) are available here.

**Examples of Child Care and Staffing Ratios**

**Small Family Child Care Homes:** This type of child care takes place in the home of another person, caring for as many as four (4) children. Homes are certified by DES and have a 1:4 staff/child ratio.

**DES Relative Caregiver:** According to DES, “families are also able to select certain relatives to provide child care. DES reimbursement is available once the relative caregiver is fingerprinted and enters into a financial agreement with DES.” Further information is available here.

**Child Care Group Homes:** This type of child care takes place in the home of another person caring for up to ten (10) children for compensation. Homes are certified by DHS and have a 1:5 staff/child ratio.

**Child Care Centers:** This type of child care takes place in a center-based facility and serves larger groups of children. A center may use descriptions such as “preschool, school or nursery school and early childhood center.” Staff to child ratios vary according to the age group and are referenced in the following matrix. Child care centers are licensed by DHS. Exceptions include centers that are located on military bases and tribal lands, where parents are on the premises (such as health clubs) and where children are free to come and go.

**State Standards and Accreditation Standards**

Best practices research indicates that responsive, early childhood education programs consistently demonstrate ratios emphasizing larger numbers of adults serving smaller groups of children. Arizona allows for staff to child ratios of up to 1:20. Locate additional state information, including parent and consumer resources here.

Beyond state criteria, independent and voluntary accreditation also exists. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a professional membership association that accredits child care centers. NAEYC has developed recommended adult to child ratios that are referenced in the following matrix. Child care programs can also be accredited by other entities representing a specific affiliation (e.g., by religion or curriculum philosophy).
Family child care homes may also pursue voluntary accreditation through the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC). Both NAEYC and NAFCC offer useful web-based accreditation searches and suggestions on how to select care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of Arizona Adult to Child Ratios</th>
<th>NAEYC Recommended Adult to Child Ratios</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infants (Birth–12 months)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Infants (Birth–15 months)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 adult/5 children</td>
<td>Up to 1 adult/4 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 adults/11 children</td>
<td>in a group no larger than 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Year Olds</strong></td>
<td><strong>Toddlers/Twos (12-36 months)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 adult/6 children</td>
<td>Up to 1 adult/4 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 adults/13 children</td>
<td>in a group no larger than 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Year Olds</strong></td>
<td><em>(12-28 months)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 adult/8 children</td>
<td>Up to 1 adult/6 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(21-36 months)</em></td>
<td>in a group no larger than 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Year Olds</strong></td>
<td><strong>Preschool 2 ½-3 years (30-48 months)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 adult/13 children</td>
<td>Up to 1 adult/9 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 Year Olds</strong></td>
<td>in a group no larger than 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 adult/15 children</td>
<td>Up to 1 adult/10 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 Year Olds/School-Age</strong></td>
<td>in a group no larger than 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 adult/20 children</td>
<td>Up to 1 adult/10 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>in a group no larger than 24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These age ranges purposefully overlap. Source: NAEYC

**Selecting Child Care**

- Contact Child Care and Family Resources at 621-9870 and on the web to initiate your customized consultation appointment. This can include referrals to community agencies. Screen referrals over the telephone in preparation for your visits.

- Note the availability and responsiveness of staff, and the quality of books, toys, supplies and equipment present. For centers, request to meet the director, teachers and assistants who will likely be working with your children. Spend time in the classroom and outdoors observing staff/child interactions and transitions. For family child care homes, schedule your visit with the provider and children present. Observe the home and outdoor set-up, and how the provider engages a group of multi-age children and manages their transitions.

- Location is an important issue for employees and students. Although having child care close to your campus setting may seem ideal, other features can influence the success of your arrangement (and the ease of your child’s transition). These can include child care that supports public transportation routes or that is closer to your home or employment, and child care at or near your child’s school (or near another selected adult’s home, school or work locale). Such extended choices may give you more flexibility should you need care on days when you are not on campus.

- If your child has special health considerations, discuss with the director/provider. Inquire about relevant procedures, and staff experience and training. Consider the value of shared perspectives and recommendations between you and the professionals who comprise your child’s health and child care teams.
Federal laws exist that may relate to your child’s care experience. The United States Department of Justice provides information about child care programs and services, and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Locate information here as part of ADA Regulations and Technical Assistance Materials.

The United States Department of Education (ED) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces several federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance from the Department of Education. Locate ED, OCR and disability discrimination information here.

- Review additional child care suggestions. Having a series of objective indicators can assist you with comparing and contrasting care choices. Locate further resources here.

- As you prioritize your final choices, you may also wish to learn about public, compliance and background facility information. For centers or (family) child care group homes, you may contact the Department of Health Services in Tucson at 628-6540, or in Phoenix at (602) 364-2539 or toll free at (800) 615-8555. AZ Care Check from DHS can be found here.

- For small family child care homes, you may contact the Department of Economic Security in Tucson at 791-2732, or in Phoenix at (602) 254-5823. DHS and DES offices are located throughout Arizona.

- Finally, be flexible and fully research available options. Select the environment and staff offering the broadest complement of required and desired features. Contact our office again if assistance is needed or your situation changes.

**In-Home Child Care**

In-home child care occurring where your child resides is unregulated. In-home child care is primarily considered the responsibility of parents as to employer and employee roles. As with care occurring outside of the child’s residence, it is the parent’s responsibility to interview, observe and select an in-home child care provider best meeting their family’s needs. An in-home provider is sometimes referred to as a “nanny.”

The location (child’s home and private residential setting) and the relationship the responsible adult has with the provider (in making the selection and overseeing the service) are unique to this type of care. As such, Child Care and Family Resources can provide specialized materials addressing these topics. Employees and students may receive resources describing both “help wanted” requests for hiring, as well as postings indicating an individual’s in-home availability.

Call 621-9870 to request referral materials and schedule a consultation. Individual firms and campus departments are responsible for maintaining referral notices and announcements.

Employees and students may also have state and federal responsibilities as an “employer” of an in-home employee. As such, references and topics are not intended to be inclusive, nor serve as advice concerning such accountabilities. It is the responsibility of employees and students at The University of Arizona to research and determine the full extent of their obligations; to contact tax,
insurance, legal and other professionals as needed; and to monitor and verify compliance concerning an employer/employee relationship.

Arizona’s Department of Economic Security (DES) can provide employer related programs and resources, including a link to the New Hire Reporting Center’s Frequently Asked Questions, discussing domestic employees. In addition, the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) can provide federal fact sheets, article and resources. Consider additional state and federal agency research that may be relevant to your in-home inquiries.

An “au pair” in-home arrangement offers distinctions from the above. For information regarding descriptions, potential federal (e.g. visa) and state regulations and more, visit the United States Department of State for subject and contact information.

Child Care Expenses
The Department of Economic Security (DES) can offer child care financial support for families. To determine your eligibility, contact DES in Tucson at 791-2732, or in Phoenix at (602) 542-4248. DHS and DES offices are located throughout Arizona. Additionally, independent discounts may be available from select child care programs or providers upon request.

Benefits-Eligible Employees
In addition to the information regarding the employee Child Care Voucher Program, it is important to note federal tax issues. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) offers employee and student references on child and dependent care expenses. The IRS has also determined that employees may allocate up to $5,000 per year in a dependent care assistance account established by their employer. This office does not provide tax advice. Please consult your professional tax advisor to determine the optimal use of dependent care offerings. Information concerning the University’s Flexible Spending Account (FSA) may be found here under Health Benefits.

Undergraduate and Graduate/Professional Students
In addition to the information regarding the student Child Care & Housing Subsidy Program, it is important to make full use of federal tax credits on your personal income for child care if you qualify. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) offers employee and student references on child and dependent care expenses. This office does not provide tax advice. Contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 or here to learn more about other tax-related child care forms and information.

Additional Resources at The University of Arizona
To complement employee and student programs at UA Life & Work Connections, the institution offers a wide selection of support resources, ranging from student groups to departmental and college services. Visit here to perform your search, as changes may occur each academic year.

Next Steps
Congratulations on building a broad and cohesive child care network that includes professional consultations, programs and resources from UA Life & Work Connections, as well as assistance from family, friends and the community. Visit UA Life & Work Connections often and call 621-4365 or 621-9870 to establish your personal relationship with caring professionals throughout your child care years.