Childcare Guidelines for Employees and Undergraduate & Graduate/Professional Students

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Childcare and Family Resources
The “Guidelines” references general childcare resources, and related University of Arizona programs and services through UA Life & Work Connections and others. Email here regarding content comments and questions.

Contact Information
520 is the Mountain Standard Time (MST) area code for the University of Arizona’s Tucson campus. Visit www.lifework.arizona.edu, or call 621-4365 regarding application questions about our programs.

The Difference Between Childcare Referrals and Recommendations
In support of best practices, the University provides child care information and resources as referrals, and does not endorse programs or services. It is the obligation of the responsible adult to evaluate and confirm program features when determining selection appropriateness. Sources for personal recommendations can include relatives, friends and colleagues.

Requesting Your Personalized Childcare Consultation
Schedule a telephone or in-person appointment by email or call 621-9870. This office also offers child and elder care referrals for those seeking resources when caring for children (including grandchildren) and older adults at the same time.

Ages Referenced in the Guidelines
A primary focus is on infants and toddlers, and those attending preschool and elementary school (e.g., birth - 12 years). Select sections can be useful for those in middle and high school grades.

Types of Childcare Environments & Corresponding State of Arizona Agencies
Childcare that occurs outside your home may represent a single, setting selection, or a combination of arrangements to accommodate employment, academic and personal schedules. “In-home childcare” occurs in the child’s family residence and is referenced in a later section.

Standards and ratios vary from state to state. In Arizona, regulated, unregulated and registered childcare programs exist. Multiple, regulatory agencies oversee childcare. More information is here.

The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) Child Care Administration regulates, monitors and certifies small family childcare homes, and provides childcare assistance for those meeting DES requirements. Learn about DES here.

The Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS) Division of Licensing Services, Office of Child Care Licensing regulates, monitors and licenses childcare facilities, public school childcare programs and regulates, monitors and certifies family childcare group homes. Learn about DHS here.
Childcare and Staffing Ratio Examples
These regulated, setting examples also represent qualifying childcare options for eligible participants in the employee Childcare Voucher Program and the student Student Childcare Subsidy Program.

- **Small Family Childcare Homes Certified by the Department of Economic Security (DES)**
  Childcare takes place in the home of another person, caring for as many as four (4) children. There is a 1:4 staff/child ratio.

- **Family Childcare Group Homes Certified by the Department of Health Services (DHS)**
  Childcare takes place in the home of another person caring for up to ten (10) children for compensation. There is a 1:5 staff/child ratio.

- **Childcare Centers Licensed by the Department of Health Services (DHS)**
  Childcare takes place in a center-based facility and serves larger groups of children. Centers may be called “preschools, schools or nursery schools and early childhood centers.” Staff to child ratios vary according to the age group and are referenced below. 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 & Accreditation Standards**
Best practices research indicates responsive, early care and education programs consistently demonstrate features that support optimal learning experiences. Such features include ratios where larger numbers of adults serve smaller groups of children.

State, parent and consumer information is [here](#). Beyond state criteria, independent and voluntary national accreditation also exists. The [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#) (NAEYC) is a professional membership association that accredits childcare centers. NAEYC has developed recommended adult to child ratios that are referenced in the following matrix. Childcare programs can also be accredited by other entities representing a specific affiliation (e.g., by religion or curriculum philosophy).

Similarly, family childcare 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</th>
<th>National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Recommended</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children’s Ages</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adult to Child Ratios</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants (Birth–12 months)</td>
<td>1 adult/5 children 2 adults/11 children</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 1 Year Olds | 1 adult/6 children 2 adults/13 children | Toddlers/Twos (12-28 months)* | 1 adult/3 children in a group no larger than 6 1 adult/4 children in a group no larger than 8...
| 2 Year Olds | 1 adult/8 children | (21-36 months)* | 1 adult/4 children in a group no larger than 8 1 adult/5 children in a group no larger than 10 1 adult/6 children in a group no larger than 12 |
| 3 Year Olds | 1 adult/13 children | Preschool (30-48 months) 2 ½-4 years | 1 adult/6 children in a group no larger than 12 1 adult/7 children in a group no larger than 14 1 adult/8 children in a group no larger than 16 1 adult/9 children in a group no larger than 18 |
| 4 Year Olds | 1 adult/15 children | (48-60 months) 4-5 Years | 1 adult/8 children in a group no larger than 16 1 adult/9 children in a group no larger than 18 1 adult/10 children in a group no larger than 20 |
| 5 Year Olds | 1 adult/20 children | (60 months to Kindergarten) 5 Year Olds to Kindergarten Enrollment | 1 adult/8 children in a group no larger than 16 1 adult/9 children in a group no larger than 18 1 adult/10 children in a group no larger than 20 |
| School-Age Children | 1 adult/20 children | Kindergarten (Enrollment in Any Public or Private Kindergarten) | 1 adult/10 children in a group no larger than 20 1 adult/11 children in a group no larger than 22 1 adult/12 children in a group no larger than 24 |

*These age ranges purposefully overlap. Source: NAEYC

**Selecting Childcare**

- Visit our [web site](#). Request a telephone or in-person appointment by [email](mailto:) or call 621-9870. Screen referrals by telephone in preparation for your visits.

- During your visit(s), 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 adult to child, and child to child interactions and transitions. Similarly for family childcare homes, schedule your visit(s) 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 transitions.

- Location is an important issue. While having childcare 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 childcare near public transportation or that is closer to your home and childcare at or near your child’s school, or proximal to another responsible adult’s location (as applicable). Such extended choices may give you more flexibility should you need care when you are not at your campus location.
• If your child has special health considerations, discuss with the director/provider. Inquire about relevant protocols, and staff experience and training.

• Federal laws may be applicable to your child’s care experience. The United States Department of Justice provides information about childcare programs and services, and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Visit here as part of ADA Technical Assistance Materials.

• The United States Department of Education (ED) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance from ED. Learn more about ED OCR here.

• As you prioritize your final choices, you may also wish to learn about public, compliance and background facility information here. DHS office locations and phone numbers are available here.

• For small family childcare homes, you may contact the Department of Economic Security. DES office locations and phone numbers are available here.

• 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 Childcare

In-home childcare occurring where your child resides is not regulated. In-home childcare is considered the responsibility of parents regarding employer/employee roles. As with care occurring outside of the child’s residence, it is the parents’ responsibility to interview, observe and select an in-home childcare 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 employer/employee relationship the responsible adult has with the provider, are unique to this type of care. Email or call 621-9870 to schedule a consultation regarding this type of arrangement. Campus departments or firms that may offer in-home childcare referrals and announcements are responsible for managing and maintaining their information.

Individuals may also have state and federal responsibilities as an employer. 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 employer and employee obligations; to monitor and verify compliance; and to contact tax, insurance, legal and other professionals as needed.

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, articles and resources. Consider additional state and federal agency research that may be relevant to your in-home inquiries.

“Au pair” in-home childcare offers distinct, arrangement features. 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.

Childcare Expenses
The Department of Economic Security (DES) can offer childcare financial support for families. To determine your eligibility, contact the appropriate DES office, with locations throughout Arizona. Independent discounts may be available from childcare programs or providers upon request.

Employees Eligible for Full Benefits
The Internal Revenue Service has determined that employees may allocate up to $5,000 per year in a dependent care assistance account established by their employer. This $5,000 allocation includes the combined monies applied to the following UA sponsored pre-tax programs:

- Flexible Spending Account (FSA)* for dependent care only (excludes medical expenses)
- Childcare Voucher Program for employees eligible for full benefits
- Employee Sick Child and Emergency/Back-Up Care Program (includes the entire value of the program - employee and employer costs)

*You may designate an amount of pre-tax salary to be placed in a dependent care related and/or medical expenses related FSA. These tax-free dollars may then be used to reimburse you for qualified out-of-pocket medical care and/or dependent care (child/elder care) expenses. You reduce your taxable income, as no Social Security, federal or state income taxes are taken from the designated dollars and this amount is excluded from your taxable income.

Please note that dependent care expenditures that exceed the $5,000 limit are subject to income tax. The annual FSA figures (total costs) will appear on your Form W-2 Wage and Tax Statement. This information is not intended to serve as tax advice. Please consult your professional tax advisor to identify full tax implications of program use and to determine the optimal use of dependent care offerings.

Undergraduate and Graduate/Professional Students
Eligible students may be interested in the Student Childcare Subsidy Program. Childcare can be a major expense for many students. Please contact a professional tax advisor to determine if you are eligible for a tax credit. Additionally, subsidized monies applied toward childcare can be considered “scholarship” income and may be subject to taxation. This information is not intended to serve as tax advice. Please consult your professional tax advisor to identify full tax implications of program use and to determine the optimal use of dependent care offerings.

Breakdown with Regular Child Care Arrangements?
Find out if the University-subsidized Sick Child and Emergency/Back-Up Care Program for eligible employees and students through UA Life & Work Connections, can serve as a viable care option.

Next Steps
Congratulations on building a broad and cohesive childcare network that includes consultations and programs from our office. Continue to assess the appropriateness of your care selection as needs change, with resources and support from UA Life & Work Connections. Call 621-4365 or 621-9870 to establish your personal relationship with caring professionals throughout your childcare years. Our best to you and your family.