

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2019 HR & EQUITY REPORT

FAMILY CARE OFFICE

214 College Street, Toronto ON M5T 2Z9
416-978-0951; www.familycare.utoronto.ca
M,W,R,F: 9-5 and T: 9-6
Summer Hours- M,W,R,F: 9-4:30 and T: 9-6

The mandate of the Family Care Office (FCO) is to support students, staff, faculty, and their families with any family care related issue by providing information, guidance, referrals and advocacy. Through all its functions, the office aims to raise awareness of family care issues and of quality of life issues central to the achievement of educational equity and employment equity at the University of Toronto.

Services and Programs Provided:

We support students, staff, and faculty with family responsibilities by assisting to remove barriers to their academic and work success through:

1. Casework: concerns centered primarily on issues such as childcare availability (including access, subsidies, and quality), pregnancy and pregnancy/parental leave, relocation issues, family financial planning, balancing work/study with family, counselling and mental health, and elder care and caregiver leaves. (please see Table 2 in the appendix)
2. Workshops, family events, discussion groups and a student peer mentorship program.
3. Maintaining a website and a resource library comprised of practical material on topics ranging from pregnancy and infant care to lesbian, gay and trans parenting issues, bereavement and caring for elderly family members.
4. Maintaining a web-based babysitter listing service and a U of T Parents Exchange Facebook group.
5. Providing on-location drop-in hours during the academic year every Thursday afternoon to students living at Student Family Housing; providing on-location office hours every 4-6 weeks on the UTM campus and UTSC campus for students, staff and faculty
6. Outreach to departments/colleges to raise their level of awareness of students with family responsibilities and to educate on services available to students through the FCO.
7. Advocating on behalf of University families with University departments, student organizations, and government and community agencies.
8. Providing recommendations to the Director, Family Programs and Services in the Office of the Vice-President Human Resources and Equity, regarding existing university policy, procedures and publications and their impact on individuals with family responsibilities.

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Current Staffing:

- 4 FTE staff appointed; 5 students under the Fall/Winter Work Study Program and 1 student under the Summer Work Study Program; 2 USW casual staff members

In July, a one-year term position was filled for an Education and Communications Coordinator (Pay Band 12 level). Of note, the hiring process happened twice as the original hire left for another full-time job at U of T.

- Provided an academic service learning opportunity in the Winter 2019 term for a graduate student in LHA1122: Practicum in Adult Education and Community Development at OISE. The student assisted with the coordination of our Women's Wellness Program that is provided to the residents of Student Family Housing. This included assisting with organizing the workshops and evaluating the program.
- **Student Choice Initiative and 10% tuition cut** – introduced by the Ontario provincial government in January 2019 and so our plan for hiring additional staff to assist with communications and with the UTM and UTSC campuses was placed on hold. Moving forward we are not clear if funding will be in place for 2020

Significant Changes and Achievements in 2019

Innovation Hub – Partnered with the Innovation Hub to produce the report: [Understanding the Experience of Student Parents at the University of Toronto - Themes and Insights: Design Thinking Summary April 2019](#)

This has led to a feedback session that discussed how to make U of T more family friendly. In addition, a conference will be organized collaboratively with our office, Innovation Hub, Student Family Housing, Robarts Library faculty, KPE, and SGS next June 20, 2020. It is tentatively titled- Redefining Traditional: Making Higher Ed Family Friendly

Family Study Space at Robarts Library – Childminding and a Reading Circle

The Family Study Space offered a Reading Circle in November and childminding before exam time as a pilot project. The pilot was successful and with the continued assistance of the Director of Family Programs and Services, and the Family Care Office, this pilot will likely continue in the new year.

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Notification of Leave Form Instruction Video

Two videos were recorded to explain how to fill out the Notification of Leave Form for Pregnancy/Parental/Primary Caregiver and Adoption Leave for both staff and faculty.

Best Practices for Graduate Student Instructors

A discussion was held with the Vice-Dean, Students, School of Graduate Studies - Charmaine Williams to examine issues faced by graduate students with family responsibilities. A best practices document is under development and it will include a sample 'syllabus' entry.

Programming Highlights for 2019

On-Line Learning Modules

A retired faculty member with Centennial College in their Early Childhood Education program developed two on-line learning modules.

The first module was on child development and allowed parents to learn about child development through three on-line workshops that discussed three stages: infants and toddlers, preschool and kindergarten, and school age.

The second module was on behaviour guidance and parents learned through three on-line workshops titled—Indirect Guidance: Setting the Stage; Lighting the Way: Positive Guidance Techniques; Supporting Your Child through Challenging Times.

For each on-line module, the facilitator was available to respond to personalized questions during the submission period which was within 5 days of a workshop's start date. For the second module, the Office was able to add a discussion board that was monitored by the Information and Communications Coordinator during the initial three weeks. Also, each module remained available for parents to access until the end of the term.

Elder Care: Be With – Letters to a Caregiver

Mike Barnes, the author of [Be With: Letters to a Caregiver](#) presented some of the main themes of his book. The focus was on dementia caregiving, but also touched on issues relevant to any caring relationship. The presentation consisted of half a dozen segments, each with a topic briefly discussed and illustrated by a passage from the book. Mike then opened it up to questions and discussion, in the hopes of exchanging ideas and experiences about dementia and caregiving.

Elder Care: Parkinson's Disease 101

The facilitator from Parkinson Canada provided a brief overview of Parkinson's disease, reviewed the motor and non-motor symptoms of Parkinson's, explained the importance of

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taking medications on time, and provided tips for caregivers as they supported their loved ones with day to day living and with medications

Overwhelmed to Overjoyed (U of T Scarborough)

This workshop focused on ways to manage stress in healthy ways, and was facilitated by a certified life and leadership coach who is a mother to two children.

Understanding the Impacts of Learning Disabilities (LD) (U of T Scarborough)

This workshop facilitated by the Learning Disabilities Association of Toronto focused on understanding the impacts of Learning Disabilities (LD) on children and their families.

Navigating Special Education in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB)

This workshop focused on development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) process. It also looked at how learning challenges identified in the IEP are addressed in the classroom, and provided a brief overview of the gifted program. The session was facilitated by a TDSB Special Education Inclusion Consultant.

Happy Parents, Happy Kids

This workshop happened during the 'Celebrate It' activities in October, and was live broadcast to UTM and UTSC. Ann Douglas, a Canadian best-selling parenting author, provided a guide to parenting without anxiety, guilt, or feeling overwhelmed using her latest book: *Happy Parents, Happy Kids*.

Mindful Parenting (U of T Mississauga)

Mindfulness principles were applied to the art of parenting as a way to build strong child-parent relationships and increase personal well-being.

Student Families Pizza Night

This event occurred twice, and allowed student parents, their partners, and their children to have a fun and relaxing night out. Parents had the opportunity to relax and network, and children activities were provided in the same space. This event was a collaboration with the UTGSU, Hart House, and the Family Care Office.

Teaching Kids, Tweens, and Teens about Consent (3 webinars)

Three webinars are in the process of being developed with the Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre.

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Training, Outreach and Information Sessions

- The Manager attended a conference call for post-secondary institutions across Canada in February 2019 to discuss issues that effect students with family responsibilities.
- The Manager attended a Political Science Caregiving Panel in March 2019
- The Family Care Advisor (student focus) participated on the TYP Admissions Committee in May 2019.
- The Family Care Office attended various outreach sessions in late August and early September 2019 including events with Student Life, SGS, Faculty of Information Studies, Accessibility Services, Academic Bridging, OISE, Social Work, UTM, Woodsworth College (January), UTSU, SGS - Postdoctoral Fellows Office, and Student Family Housing (St. George).

Performance Indicators

Participation:

- This year the office handled 2104 cases: 569 students (99 undergraduate students and 470 graduate students), 1256 employees (736 staff, 454 faculty members, and 66 postdoctoral fellows), 204 department consultations and 75 'other' that include visiting faculty, other institutions, alumni and members of the community. (please see Table 1 in the appendix)
- This year 67 workshops, 15 family events, 8 webinars (including 2 on-line workshop modules), 7 discussion groups, and 1 event were sponsored or co-sponsored by the FCO. Just over 1770 students, staff, faculty and postdoctoral fellows attended these activities.
- Our office space was used by approximately 54 students, staff and faculty for the Student Parent Lounge and/or for breastfeeding/pumping.
- The Child Care Reimbursement for Extra and Co-curricular Activities fund was not accessed in 2019.
- There has been a steady increase in our blog users and e-newsletter subscriptions. We saw almost a 250% increase in our blog users, and almost a 14% increase in our e-newsletter subscriptions. (please see Table 4 in the appendix) For 2020, we plan on doing a communications strategic plan, so that we can improve our social media usage and determine its direction.

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Faculty Relocation Service

The Office also coordinates the **Faculty Relocation Service (FRS)**. This highly successful initiative provides deans, chairs and search committees with assistance in meeting their goals in an intensely competitive recruiting environment. The program helps newly appointed faculty and their families to relocate and transition smoothly to life within the University and Toronto communities. In its 19th year, the Office met by appointment with **225** prospective and newly appointed faculty and followed up **28** times with these individuals before they received an offer or were hired. Working in conjunction with the office of the Vice Provost, Faculty and Academic Life, the Office also assists with a welcome/orientation event for new faculty and their families in August.

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Testimonials/Quotes

I found the webinar very helpful, especially the option to ask questions (the answer that I got was very tailored, detailed and helpful, this is much appreciated). I hope there will be a repetition of the webinar series at a later time.

Faculty member who accessed the Child Development Module Series

I want to thank you for the Summer Sky Adventure. Both my daughter and I enjoyed the program so much. I can't tell you how much it means to a little girl that the stars can actually sing for us. For me, I am thrilled to see the ring of the Saturn myself. Look forward to more exciting activities. Thank you for carrying on the wonderful work.

Graduate student who attended the Family Event – Summer Sky Adventure

This was a very useful informative workshop. The guest speaker is very knowledgeable and resourceful. I love the examples she provided and answering all questions with tips and suggestions. Thank you for organizing this amazing workshop.

Staff member who attended 'Preparing Healthy Lunches and Snacks' workshop

Learnt a lot and am looking forward to implementing some of the suggestions discussed in the webinar.

Staff member who attended 'Say Goodbye to Homework Hassles' webinar

I have found the library to be very useful. The resources on teenagers and raising girls have been helpful.

Graduate student

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Appendix

TABLE 1: Direct Service - January 1 to December 31, 2019

Undergraduates	99
Graduate students	470
Post-doctoral fellows	66
Staff	736
Faculty*	454
Departments	204
Other**	75
TOTAL	2104

* All inquiries on behalf of an individual prospective or new faculty member are counted as one case per year, regardless of the number of contact hours.

** "Other" includes alumni, researchers, visiting faculty, media, and the general public

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TABLE 2: Types of Inquiries - January 1 to December 31, 2019

Pregnancy and/or parental leave	32%
Child care facilities; children's programs; schools; babysitting	24%
New faculty; relocation	12%
Caregiver Leaves	5%
Medical; health	3.5%
Library	3%
Financial aid; child care subsidy	3%
Relationships; support groups; counselling	3%
Student pregnancy	2%
Housing	2%
Elder care	1%
Balancing work, study, family; flexible work arrangements; academic problems	1.5%
Legal assistance	1%
Emergency assistance; abuse	1%
Parenting	0.1%
Other (general information and services etc.)	6%

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TABLE 3: Kit Stats - January 1 to December 31, 2019

The Office provided advice to staff and departments on maternity, parental, adoption and primary caregiver leaves, particularly on the discretionary aspects of the leaves for faculty members, and promoted best practices. The Office provides information kits to employees on the various leaves provided by the University and this year approximately 341 kits were distributed electronically.

Type of Leave Kit	Number of kits distributed
Pregnancy Leave Kits for Faculty & Librarians	27
Pregnancy Leave Kits for Staff	173
Pregnancy Leave Kits for Postdoctoral Fellows	24
Parental Leave Kits for Faculty & Librarians	32
Parental Leave Kits for Staff	65
Parental Leave Kits for Postdoctoral Fellows	14
Primary Caregiver and Adoption Leave for Faculty & Librarians	1
Primary Caregiver & Adoption Leave for Staff	5

Faculty Recruitment Booklets

The Office is the contact point for the distribution of faculty recruitment booklets. Faculty recruitment booklets continued to serve as a valuable tool with approximately 385 booklets requested from January 1 to December 31, 2019.

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Table 4: Social Media and Website Inventory of Users from 2013 to 2019

Social Media	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Twitter Followers	524	623	713	857	971	1017	1078
Facebook Likes	156	204	257	301	321	359	397
FB Parent Exchange	268	340	453	501	518	522	562
Blog Users	2,583	3,805	5361	6065	7210	13,139	45,900
E-Newsletter Subscription	820	1282	1814	2225	2611	2852	3247