

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2020 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

From March 17, 2020 to December 31, 2020 all services were offered remotely.

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 that were offered on-line as necessary.
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, however, as of mid-March, we were no longer available on site, but are providing remote access. Posters have been put up to explain how to reach the Family Care Office and we have provided phone or virtual appointments since July 2020.
6. The Office is providing on-location office hours every 4- 6 weeks on the UTM campus and UTSC campus for students, staff and faculty. Appointments were completed by phone after mid-March.
7. 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.

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2020 HR & EQUITY REPORT

8. Advocating on behalf of University families with University departments, student organizations, and government and community agencies.
9. 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.

Current Staffing:

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

Significant Changes and Achievements in 2020

To respond to the COVID 19 pandemic, the staff in the office are working remotely. We are able to respond to all questions, and provide resources remotely. All educational programming had to be switched to an on-line platform and offered virtually. We are currently using MS Teams, Adobe Connect and Zoom. Our e-newsletter is still produced. We are unable to provide library books to staff, faculty and students, but we have recently written a [blog post](#) that outlines how many of our library books can be found in an e-format through a public library or U of T Library. We are receiving more questions from students, staff and faculty who are struggling to balance caring for their children/family members, and maintain their studies or work, and so this is taking more time. We have offered some webinars to address these issues. We attempted to offer this Fall a FCO Child Care Exchange/Sharing Facebook group. This was to allow current U of T students, staff or faculty parents to connect with others to exchange/share child care. Unfortunately, this group was not successful or achieved any sort of traction.

Social Media

The Family Care Office now has an Instagram account and so can offer this as another avenue for students and likely younger staff and faculty who use social media.

Best Practices for Supervisors & Instructors of Graduate Students with Family Responsibilities

Instructors and Supervisors of graduate students now have access to the "[Best Practices for Supervisors & Instructors of Graduate Students with Family Responsibilities](#)". This document is on the School of Graduate Studies website.

We hope that instructors will become more aware of the issues facing graduate students with family responsibilities. This document was a collaboration between the Family Care Office and the Office of the Vice-Dean, Students at the School of Graduate Studies.

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2020 HR & EQUITY REPORT

Innovation Hub

A conference was to be organized collaboratively with our office, Innovation Hub, Student Family Housing, Robarts Library faculty, KPE, and SGS for June 20, 2020. It was tentatively titled- Redefining Traditional: Making Higher Ed Family Friendly. This conference was postponed due to the pandemic and it is unclear when we will move forward on this. In the meantime, the Innovation Hub has created a Facebook Group, website, and blog to generate awareness and valuable resources for student parents. The Family Care Office is part of the working group that assists with the development of these resources.

Programming Highlights for 2020

On-Line Learning Modules

A retired faculty member with Centennial College in their Early Childhood Education program developed an on-line learning module for the Fall term. This module of three on-line workshops was designed for parents of children between the ages 2 to 10-years-old to encourage literacy and love of language, math and numeracy skills, and some of the dispositions of learning such as problem solving, curiosity and flexible thinking.

For the on-line module, the facilitator was available to respond to personalized questions during the submission period which was within 10 days of each workshop's start date. The module remained available for parents to access until the end of the Fall term.

Parenthood Through Surrogacy

This was an informal information webinar for prospective parents led by experienced legal and mental health experts specializing in the field of fertility. In this session, the following was discussed:

- Legal steps involved in growing a family through surrogacy
- Pitfalls and trouble spots to keep in mind when considering surrogacy
- Emotional and social considerations of intended parent(s) embarking on surrogacy for family-building

Talking about Racism at Home

The Manager of the office participated as a speaker for this webinar that occurred in June and was offered by ARCDO. The description for this webinar is as follows:

As conversations about racism impacting Black, Indigenous, Asian and many racialized communities increase in mainstream media, how are we translating this discussion into our personal lives particularly with children? Join us as we discuss different techniques and strategies parents can engage in to discuss current events and overall conversations about the reality of race and racism with their children.

Mindful Parents: Resilient Children

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2020 HR & EQUITY REPORT

In this webinar, the facilitator Sara Marlowe, MSW, RSW shared mindfulness and compassion practices for in-the-moment parenting challenges.

A nine-week on-line discussion group was facilitated by the Canadian Mental Health Association and titled: **Living Life to the Full**. This was a mental health promotion course based on the principle of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT). The course was intended to help participants gain skills and knowledge for coping with stress, and various life challenges.

“It’s okay not to be okay” – Managing Parenting Pressures During a Pandemic

This webinar discussed some of the pressures parents are experiencing as families try to work, study, live and play in close quarters and constant company. The facilitator, Rebecca Higgins has worked in community and social services for over 17 years, specializing in mental health education since 2010, validated the struggles, and reflected on shifting expectations during a pandemic and considered strategies for navigating this difficult time without adding additional pressures or lists to the participants.

Studying at Home with Children

This webinar was offered to students and discussed strategies for working/studying from home with children. The facilitator was a Learning Strategist (and mother) Cristina Peters from the Academic Success Centre at U of T.

Talking with Parents and Caregivers about Sexual and Gender Diversity in Children, Youth and Families – An Introduction

In the webinar, the terms sexual and gender diversity were described, and the various ways these diversities may express themselves in children, youth and families was explored. This session also introduced a gender-affirmation model of care (gender expansive parenting and caring). The workshop was facilitated by an individual from The 519.

Parenting Through the Storm

This webinar happened during the ‘Celebrate It’ activities in October 2020 and was geared towards parents of a child who is struggling with anxiety, depression, ADHD, an autism spectrum disorder, or a related challenge. This webinar was based on interviews with more than 50 parents who have walked this walk and who were eager to share their best advice with other parents. The webinar was able to address these issues and allowed the participants to feel anything but alone. After the 1 hour presentation, the facilitator was available for 30 minutes to answer questions. Ann Douglas is a Canadian best-selling parenting author and facilitated this webinar.

Black Like Us: Parenting from a Black Father’s Lens

This webinar looked at parenting from the lens of Black fathers and what it means to parent Black children during a time of Covid-19 and Anti- Black racism. The webinar discussed strategies, tools, and resources available to support Black children around education, policing and mentorship. The facilitator was Brandon Hay (MES), founder of the Black Daddies Club.

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2020 HR & EQUITY REPORT

Elder Care: Understanding the Rights of Family Caregivers for Seniors in LTC Homes

During this pandemic, the rights of caregivers to visit family and friends in long-term care (LTC) have been increasingly unclear. This webinar explored the rights of caregivers during COVID19, particularly about visiting loved ones in LTC both when an outbreak is occurring and when it is not. Participants also learned the governing legislation and regulations, how to navigate blockages with LTC administration and what your rights really are. The facilitator was Laura Tambllyn Watts, president and CEO of CanAge, Canada's Seniors Advocacy Organization. She also teaches at the University of Toronto, where she is also a Fellow of the Institute for Lifecourse and Aging.

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

The Sexual Violence Prevention & Support Centre and the Family Care Office offered a three part webinar series that was co-developed with Dr. Nadine Thornhill, an educator specializing in child and adolescent sexuality. The series covered: Teaching Children About Consent, Teaching Tweens About Consent, Teaching Teens About Consent. These pre-recorded webinars are posted on the Sexual Violence Prevention & Support Centre website with links from the Family Care Office.

Training, Outreach and Information Sessions

- The Family Care Office provided videos for various outreach sessions in late August and early September 2020 including events with Student Life Residence Life Training and Student Life Mature and Transfer Student Orientation, School of Graduate Studies (SGS), Transitional Year Program (TYP), OISE, UTM O-Week and Student Family Housing.
- We attended outreach sessions virtually for the Be Well UTM Fair 2020, Faculty of Law and for UTSC Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Performance Indicators

Participation:

- This year the office handled 1904 cases: 449 students (103 undergraduate students and 346 graduate students), 1288 employees (765 staff, 428 faculty members, and 95 postdoctoral fellows), 138 department consultations and 29 'other' that include visiting faculty, other institutions, alumni and members of the community. (please see Table 1 in the appendix)
- This year 73 workshops and webinars, 7 family events including 5 on-line family events with one event with the U of T Library occurring 13 times, 2 on-line workshop modules,

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2020 HR & EQUITY REPORT

5 discussion groups with 2 on-line groups, and 1 event were sponsored or co-sponsored by the FCO. Just over 1900 students, staff, faculty and postdoctoral fellows attended these activities.

- Our office space was used by approximately 28 students, staff and faculty for the Student Parent Lounge and/or for breastfeeding/pumping before mid-March 2020.
- The Child Care Reimbursement for Extra and Co-curricular Activities fund was accessed only once before mid-March 2020.
- The 'Types of Inquiries' we received in 2020 reflects the pandemic. In 2019, of the total number of cases, we received 32 inquiries on balancing work, study, and family, flexible work arrangements and academic problems. This increased in 2020 to 99 cases on these same issues. Students and employees were having difficulties during the pandemic balancing their family responsibilities with their work and/or studies. As our library was no longer available as of mid-March, it is no surprise to see the number of inquiries drop from 3% to 0.7%. (please see Table 2 in the appendix)
- There has been a steady increase in our blog users and e-newsletter subscriptions. (please see Table 4 in the appendix) In September 2020, we added Instagram to our social media. Statistics on Instagram usage will be provided next year.

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 20th year, the Office met by appointment with **209** prospective and newly appointed faculty and followed up **42** 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 usually assists with a welcome/orientation event for new faculty and their families in August, however, due to the pandemic this did not happen this year. After March, appointments were done using Zoom, MS Teams and by phone. During the pandemic, a 'COVID-19 Resources' template was added under "Announcements" on the main page, and on the "Planning your Move" page of the Faculty Relocation Service website. Sections of the COVID-19 Resources page include Accommodations, Car Service from the Airport, Grocery Deliveries, Restaurants, Health Insurance, Hospitals, Pharmacies and Other COVID 19 Resources.

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2020 HR & EQUITY REPORT

Testimonials/Quotes

That was a great and informative session.

Staff member who attended the workshop – ‘Teaching Kids About Consent’

Yesterday's webinar was incredibly helpful as are these documents. Thank you for making a potentially confusing process so clear.

Faculty member who attended the webinar – ‘Faculty Pregnancy/Parental/Adoption/Primary Caregiver Leave Planning’

I wanted to send an email of thanks for your thorough presentation last Monday that answered all my questions. I am very appreciative for your and the Family Care's help with support and resources.

Staff member who attended the webinar – ‘Staff Pregnancy/Parental/Adoption/Primary Caregiver Leave Planning’

I want to thank you for letting me join the Expectant Parents Group that took place last term. Without having attended that weekly workshop, I would have never met my assigned midwife at Riverdale who attended my giving birth at home and made it happen so diligently.

I also appreciate so much having attended Dr. Newman's breastfeeding seminar, that has brought a completely new insight into the motherhood and breastfeeding the baby has been so successful. I learned to be resilient and managed through the pain of breast engorgement at the beginning because I was so confident that breast milk is so important and every mother can do it after that seminar.

Undergraduate student who used the Family Care Office and its resources/workshops.

I am writing to express my gratitude to you. ... I went to you as soon as we found out we were pregnant. I went to your panel for new student parents and got access to a lot of support from you. The baby was born in May 2020 during the pandemic crisis, we are healthy and happy. ... Thank you so much for your assistance during my pregnancy.

PhD, International student who used the Family Care Office and its resources/workshop.

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2020 HR & EQUITY REPORT

Thanks very much. It was a great session!

Faculty member who attended the webinar – ‘Elder Care: Understanding the Rights of Family Caregivers for Seniors in LTC Homes’

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2020 HR & EQUITY REPORT

Appendix

TABLE 1: Direct Service - January 1 to December 31, 2020

Undergraduates	103
Graduate students	346
Post-doctoral fellows	95
Staff	765
Faculty*	428
Departments	138
Other**	29
TOTAL	1904

* 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

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2020 HR & EQUITY REPORT

TABLE 2: Types of Inquiries - January 1 to December 31, 2020

Pregnancy and/or parental leave	45.3%
Child care facilities; children's programs; schools; babysitting	16.4%
New faculty; relocation	10.4%
Balancing work, study, family; flexible work arrangements; academic problems	5.2%
Other (general information and services etc.)	4.1%
Caregiver Leaves	3.7%
Relationships; support groups; counselling	3.1%
Medical; health	2.8%
Financial aid; child care subsidy	2.7%
Housing	1.9%
Student pregnancy	1.7%
Legal assistance	1.1%
Library	0.7%
Elder care	0.5%
Emergency assistance; abuse	0.3%
Parenting	0.2%

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2020 HR & EQUITY REPORT

TABLE 3: Kit Stats - January 1 to December 31, 2020

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 229 kits were distributed electronically.

Type of Leave Kit	Number of kits distributed
Pregnancy Leave Kits for Faculty & Librarians	18
Pregnancy Leave Kits for Staff	146
Pregnancy Leave Kits for Postdoctoral Fellows	7
Parental Leave Kits for Faculty & Librarians	19
Parental Leave Kits for Staff	29
Parental Leave Kits for Postdoctoral Fellows	9
Primary Caregiver and Adoption Leave for Faculty & Librarians	0
Primary Caregiver & Adoption Leave for Staff	1

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 150 booklets requested from January 1 to March 31, 2020. As of mid March 2020, booklets were provided electronically to those candidates that were seen virtually.

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2020 HR & EQUITY REPORT

Table 4: Social Media and Website Inventory of Users from 2013 to 2020

Social Media	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Twitter Followers	524	623	713	857	971	1017	1078	1127
Facebook Likes	156	204	257	301	321	359	397	421
FB Parent Exchange	268	340	453	501	518	522	562	564
Blog Users	2,583	3,805	5361	6065	7210	13,139	45,900	59,231
E-Newsletter Subscription	820	1282	1814	2225	2611	2852	3247	4310