

FAMILY CARE OFFICE: 2017 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 maternity/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 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 every Thursday afternoon to students living at Student Family Housing; providing on-location office hours every 4- 6 weeks on the UTM 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, as it works with existing university policy, procedures and publications for 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
This year we have had to hire for a new Education Advisor and Communications Project Coordinator, and an Information Officer as both current staff members left for secondments.
- Provided an academic service learning opportunity in the Winter 2017 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 organizing the workshops and evaluating the program.
- Provided a Community-Based Service-Learning (CBSL) placement to two undergraduate medical education students. Students are engaged in and contributed to the work of the Family Care Office by participating in ongoing activities that support our mission and by developing a program that aimed to educate parents of young children about nutrition.

Significant Changes and Achievements in 2017

- Changes occurred in the Federal Government's implementation of Employment Insurance for Maternity and Parental Benefits, and to the Employment Standards Act relating to family leaves. Firstly, there was a change to the wait period for EI that has required collective agreements and employment policies be adjusted (the government has provided a grace period for this to occur). Secondly, by early December, there were provincial and federal changes that increased the length of time an individual can take for parental leave, and changes were made to caregiver leaves. As a result, a new graphic was designed to explain the waiting period change, notification of leave forms were adjusted and updated, and the workshops held for staff and faculty are being adjusted.
- A **Parental Grant** was established by the School of Graduate Studies in the summer of 2017. As funding for graduate students who start a family is often limited, this was welcome news as our office had raised the issue with SGS, the Vice-President Human Resources and Equity, and the Vice Provost, Students. We will now work with graduate students who are planning a family to make them aware of this new funding option.

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- The Family Care Office website was transferred and is now hosted in the Human Resources & Equity server environment, and is designed using Word Press.
- Similarly, the Faculty Relocation Service website has also been transferred and is hosted in the Division of the Vice President and Provost server environment, and is designed using Word Press.

Programming Highlights for 2017

- **Parenting in Today's World: Understanding Indigenous Past & Present Realities and Inclusiveness**

This was a 6-session discussion group that provided an opportunity to learn about Indigenous past and present realities and how to speak about these realities with your children. Participants had the opportunity to learn about Canada's diversity issues including its impact on racialized and Indigenous people and ongoing indigenous colonization. As well, participants were able to gain some knowledge and language to introduce their child to Indigenous history and present concerns, and concepts of identity, racism, and cultural differences.

- This year's **Orientation for Students with Family Responsibilities** occurred on a Saturday in early September, and was open to a student's partner and their children. Child care and lunch was provided free of charge and the event was held at OISE and used the ELC at OISE for childminding. Staff from various U of T services such as Accessibility, Academic Success Centre, Graduate Conflict Resolution Centre, GradLife, School of Graduate Studies, Woodsworth College, Co-Curricular Record and Hart House attended. A student discussion panel also occurred.
- Our office established a **Graduate Student Parent Circle**. This is a group for graduate students who have or are about to have children. The students will have the opportunity to share resources, get support and enjoy relaxing craft activities. This program is a collaborative initiative of the Family Care Office, Graduate Student Union, Grad Life and Hart House.
- Offered a Separation and Divorce Discussion group for individuals without children and those who are parents. This group was led by an Associate Professor with the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. This has led to the development of an upcoming

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discussion group (March 2018) - **Under the Iceberg of Separation and Divorce: A Discussion Group**

- As part of the **March Break** activities, a session on **African Drumming** was held and was well attended.
- Our **Women's Wellness Series** offered jointly with Student Family Housing and the Community Safety Office provided 4 workshops to the residents of Student Family Housing and this year a Saturday session, and a webinar was offered. The topics were: Learning to Let Go: The Healing Power of Forgiveness; Wen-Do Self Defense for Women; Stress Management; Exploring Power Dynamics in the Home (webinar).
- The **Life Management Series** for 2016/17 covered: Effective Study Skills, Self Care (webinar), Stuck in the Middle, Advocating for Oneself & One's Family through Letters & Email, Stress Management (Webinar), Negotiating Time for Family — Strategies for Bringing up Family in Discussions with your Supervisor (webinar). We were happy to provide several webinars and to have partnered with Academic Success Centre, Health and Wellness, and the Graduate Conflict Resolution Centre.
- The lunch & learn **Baby & Toddler Talks: Developing Resilience to Deal with Challenges of Parenting Young Children** was offered as a workshop and webinar. The focus was on developing resilience as a parent of young children.

Training, Outreach and Information Sessions

- The Director of Family Programs and Services attended a HR Managers/Directors & Officers meeting in November to provide an update on the ESA/EI changes to family leaves. The offices and staff were directed to the Family Care Office for more information.
- The Manager, Family Care Office and the Director, Family Programs and Services attended a New Academic Administrators lunch in late June to promote the Faculty Relocation Service.

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- The Manager co-presented with 4 other institutions (McGill, University of Prince Edward Island, University of Saskatchewan and Université de Montréal) at the CACUSS 2017 Conference. The presentation was titled: Towards a Family Friendly Campus: Improving the University/College Experience for Students with Family Responsibilities

As a result, an article was written in University Affairs, and our office has been consulted on options to improve the college experience for students with family responsibilities.

- The Family Care Advisor and Outreach Coordinator participated on the TYP Admissions Committee in May.

- This Fall the Family Care Office was featured in the Bulletin:

[Ask an expert: Kaye Francis shares five Family Care Office resources](#) at your fingertips to help you with family matters in the busy month of December and beyond.

Performance Indicators

Participation:

- This year the office handled **2104** cases: **588** students (90 undergraduate students and 498 graduate students), **1212** employees (641 staff and 504 faculty members, and 67 postdoctoral fellows), **239** department consultations and **65** 'other' that include visiting faculty, other institutions, alumni and members of the community. (please see Table 1 in the appendix)
- This year 75 workshops, 8 family events, 5 events and 6 discussion groups were sponsored or co-sponsored by the FCO. These activities were attended by just over 1700 students, staff, faculty and postdoctoral fellows.
- Our office space was used by approximately 86 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 accessed 4 times by students.
- There has been a 19% increase in our blog users in 2017 and a 17% increase in our e-newsletter subscriptions. Our Twitter followers has also increased by 13%. (please see Table 4 in the appendix)

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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 17th year, the Office met by appointment with **217** prospective and newly appointed faculty and followed up **35** 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.

Testimonials/Quotes

“Thanks for all your support you guys are amazing! I’m not sure what I would do without your guidance.”

(Staff member with regards to the support she has received for maternity leave planning)

“...in 2016 entering into UofT my family and I were homeless and you helped me out with getting some advice. From that we were able to get the ball rolling and it eventually ended up with me getting some treatment at the school for my depression and anxiety. Thank you so much for all of that. It was so very helpful especially since it led me to my current treatment at CAMH for group therapy...”

(Undergraduate student parent)

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Appendix

TABLE 1: Direct Service - January 1 to December 31, 2017

Undergraduates	90
Graduate students	498
Post-doctoral fellows	67
Staff	641
Faculty*	504
Departments	239
Other**	65
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, 2017

Maternity; parental leave	28%
Child care facilities; children's programs; schools; babysitting	24%
New faculty; relocation	13%
Financial aid; child care subsidy	4%
Housing	4%
Caregiver Leaves	3%
Library	3%
Medical; health	3%
Student pregnancy	3%
Balancing work, study, family; flexible work arrangements; academic problems	2%
Relationships; support groups; counselling	2%
Legal assistance	1.5%
Elder care	1%
Parenting	0.4%
Emergency assistance; abuse	0.1%
Other (general information and services etc.)	8%

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TABLE 3: Kit Stats - January 1 to December 31, 2017

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 **330** kits were distributed electronically.

Type of Leave Kit	Number of kits distributed
Maternity Leave Kits for Faculty & Librarians	44
Maternity Leave Kits for Staff	259
Parental Leave Kits for Faculty & Librarians	51
Parental Leave Kits for Staff	28
Adoption Leave for Faculty & Librarians	0
Primary Caregiver & Adoption Leave for Staff	4

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 **635** booklets requested during this year.

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Table 4: Social Media and Website Inventory of Users from 2013 to 2017

Social Media	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Twitter Followers	524	623	713	857	971
Facebook Likes	156	204	257	301	321
FB Parent Exchange	268	340	453	501	518
Blog Users	2,583	3,805	5361	6065	7210
E-Newsletter Subscription	820	1282	1814	2225	2611