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Parenting During COVID-19

Guide to Navigating Child Care

This guide summarizes what is known about child care (thus far), potential strategies to consider for the upcoming months, and Cornell/community resources available. It has been a challenging time for Cornell employees caring for children. Please contact Work/Life in Human Resources if you have questions or need assistance at 607-255-1917 or worklife@cornell.edu. Help is available!

A. Stay Informed

- ❑ HR Guidance for Parents & Caregivers
- ❑ COVID-19 and Reactivation Plan
- ❑ Cornell Parenting Newsletter & Parent e-Lists
- ❑ Wellbeing Update from Work/Life, Wellness, and FSAP

B. Family or Group Child Care Providers

The Child Development Council of Tompkins and Cortland County coordinates family and group home child care services for Tompkins County and has child care referral specialists that may help you explore and obtain child care options. As part of their Child Care Resource and Referral Program, trained Referral Specialists maintain a database of licensed and registered child care providers to assist parents in finding care and are available to answer questions about child development.
Ithaca: (607) 273-0259, Cortland: (607) 753-0106

Types of Care

Licensed Family Care: Licensing regulations cover issues like the number of children that can be in a group, the number of child care providers required for each group, staff training requirements, sanitation, administration of medicines, food preparation and serving, safety hazards, learning

activities, background checks and communication with parents. A license may be issued after licensing staff complete on-site inspection(s) to ensure minimum standards are met.

Registered Family Child Care: The child care business is in the provider's home (one license to one provider per household)**.** Max number of children in care at one time is 10 (of the 10, 6 children may be preschool age or younger, 2 of the 6 preschool children may be under 24 months—provider's own children are included in the number of children in care)**.** Registered Family Rules and Information

Certified Group Family Child Care: Child care business is in a single-family home (one license to one provider per household—but provider may hire additional staff)**.** Max number of children in care at one time is 12 (16 upon prior approval by Office of Child Care—provider's own children are included in the group size) Certified Family Rules and Information

C. Child Care Centers

Child care centers have begun to re-open slowly according to Health Department and CDC guidelines and continue to have wait lists. Child care centers have been in direct contact with families who were already registered or enrolled with details concerning operating status. For non-enrolled families, many have information on their websites as well as applications for their waitlists. By request, they will do virtual tours for prospective families.

D. In Home Care Options – Babysitters, Nannies and Au Pairs

Often it can be beneficial to have an in-home provider. Depending on the skills and experience the provider brings, fees will vary widely. Below are some ways to connect with individuals who may be interested in providing care. Check out Cornell's guide to informal care to help you think through rates, questions to ask, etc.

Care.com: Cornell provides free, unlimited Care.com membership to help benefits-eligible employees locate and arrange care. Caregivers must be 18 years old to register at Care.com. Members are expected to screen care providers, conduct background checks, and follow other safety best practices. Those who post "job ads" tend to have better success finding a caregiver. Read this important guidance from Care.com before arranging care.

Profiles of caregivers on Care.com include potential caregiver's contact information, services offered, previous experience, and availability in the areas of babysitting, elder companionship, transportation, pet sitting, errands, house sitting, yard care, music lessons, tutoring, cleaning, and sports lessons.

Create an "Ad": When you create a job posting, state what you need with details and encourage individuals to contact you directly. Tell potential providers a bit about your family, include a photo, and share with them what they can expect if they provide care for your family (including any perks or incentives you may be able to offer).

> *Mom with infant seeking a nanny or nanny share option to begin immediately. I am seeking a childcare provider who is stable, reliable, warm and fun. My daughter loves books/reading, music, being outdoors and cuddling. Looking for a full time caregiver Mon-Fri between 8:00-5:00pm and*

occasional evenings or weekends. I work and live near Cornell and am open to have childcare provided at my home or share with another family and split time. Please contact me at (number or email). Thanks so much!

Two Cornell families with three children (ages 2, 4 and 4.5) are seeking a provider to provide care in a Quaran-team arrangement. Two families are partnering exclusively with each other for June, July and August and are seeking a childcare provider, nanny or nanny-share for our families. Care can be provided in either home or alternately in our homes (Newfield and Lansing) Monday-Friday between 9:00-3:30pm. Families have three friendly dogs in the household. Please contact me at (number and email) to begin a discussion. Thanks!

Get started with your membership:
1. Visit the HR website for details about the service.
2. Go to http://cornell.care.com/ to create an account with your Cornell employee ID number (the number found on your ID card, NOT your netID).
3. Post a position and/or search the directory for caregivers.

Babysitters Ages 14-17: Work/Life is encouraging individuals who are interested in providing care to fill out the information form here. They will be added to our database of possible informal caregivers. When families contact Work/Life, we will share contact information and availability with the understanding that parents will then reach out directly to potential caregivers for next steps.

Disclaimer: Cornell does not screen, manage, or endorse individual babysitters or hiring families. Cornell is not responsible for, and will be held harmless against, any liabilities, damages, expenses, causes of action, claims, or demands of any nature whatsoever, including any claims of negligence arising from or related in any manner to the use of this form or any situation as a result of babysitters and hiring families working together.

Student Employment: Another method to connect with students (who may not have employment or internship opportunities right now) who may be seeking child care jobs this summer is to list a position with the Cornell Student Employment office. These positions would be child care provider, nanny or nanny-share opportunities with local families. Families interview, screen, vet and consider these professional child care positions. Generally this approach is for steady care positions, not occasional babysitters.

Reach out to other parents on the Cornell e-lists for parents. These e-Lists are interactive and informational.

parents-undersix-L – information related to parenting children under the age of six - to join, email: parents-undersix-L-request@cornell.edu with "Join" in the subject

parents-k12-L – information related to parenting school-aged children - to join, email: parents-k12-L-request@cornell.edu with "Join" in the subject

Au Pair International: An Au Pair is a term for a child care provider who lives with a host family as part of an international cultural exchange program. To learn more about individuals that may be available and the required steps to be considered, visit: Au Pair in America

E. Summer Camps, Day Camps, and Residential Programs

Tompkins County Youth Services has reached out to every camp/program currently listed in the 2020 Summer Camp Guide. All caps and programs are struggling and doing the best they can to quickly make changes and adjustments or to make the hard decision to cancel their camps/programs this year due to COVID-19. Listings are being updated or deleted as soon as the information becomes available. Please contact the camp directly for more detailed information

There are differences between camps, programs, workshops, and classes. Official camps must be registered with the New York State Health Department and meet specific criteria. Some programs may be registered as school-aged child care programs through the Child Development Council but still call themselves camps. If you have any concerns or questions:

      1) speak directly with the director of the camp or program,
      2) contact Kristee Morgan at the County Public Health Department, 607-274-6688, or
      3) contact the Child Development Council at 607-273-0259 about camps operated by
      school-aged child care programs (SACCs).

F. Family Pods and Quaran-teams

A strategy some families are using is entering into a "family pod" or "quaran-team" exclusive partnership with one or two other families, rotating who provides the care. Work/Life is collecting a list of families interested in this type of care. Please worklife@cornell.edu to express interest and if you have a provider to share or know someone interested in providing care, encourage them to contact Work/Life.

When families are considering this type of arrangement, it is important to address the following questions:
  How will you determine who you select?
  Do you feel confident your pod or team will adhere to the agreement?
  What safety protocols will be needed?
  What logistics need to be mapped out like locations, food, bathrooms, cleaning, testing, use of masks, etc.

For additional information, visit:
PBS – How to Form a Quaran-team
Negotiating a Coronavirus Pod
You Can't Choose Your Family, but You Can Choose Your Quaran-team

G. Schools, Home Schooling, Pod Schooling

Some families are considering creating a pod schooling environment with a limited number of other families. In this arrangement, a select group of families would share the responsibility of teaching, or hire an individual to serve as the teacher. Please contact your district office for the most current information.

Home Schooling, Guide for Home Schooling

     Coordinated by TST BOCES – 257-1555 ext 7203
     Students must have an approved Individualized Home Instruction Plan (IHIP)
     Must submit quarterly reports

Ithaca Podschooling Facebook Page
Loving Education At Home in Ithaca
Unschooling.org
Resources for pre-K through grade 12
Requirements for homeschooling in New York State

H. Advertise Your Need for Child Care – Quick Checklist

- ❑ Care.com (using your Cornell benefit)
- ❑ Craigslist – specific section for child care
- ❑ Post to Cornell Parent e-Lists
- ❑ Nextdoor – connect with others in your neighborhood, post positions, etc.
- ❑ Mutual Aid Tompkins /Parenting
- ❑ Cornell Student Employment
- ❑ Ithaca Mama Facebook Group
- ❑ Inform Cornell's Work/Life Consultant (worklife@cornell.edu)

I. Parenting Resources

Tutors and Lessons: Many families are considering arranging in home lessons or tutoring while they are at home working. This can be a good alternative to keep children busy, productive, learning and engaged. Here are some ideas to consider:

Registration for **Cornell School of Continuing Education Summer Session** is now open. Browse dozens of online courses, available to interested high school students between June 1 and August 4. More than 40 intensive precollege programs give motivated high school students a taste of college academics.

Tompkins Cortland Community College is now offering Virtual Summer STEAM Camps, appropriate for ages 8-14. Choose any of the great cutting-edge courses with topics such as coding, game design, eSports, virtual reality and more.

STAY (Supportive Tutoring for Area Youth) is a program that has been developed in response to COVID-19 and the implementation of remote learning for both college students and local school districts. STAY will provide 1 on 1 virtual tutoring sessions for K-12 students throughout Tompkins County in an effort to support the education of students during this period of remote instruction. Parents interested in having their students matched with a Cornell tutor should fill out a form or email Bethany Resnick, K-12 Program Coordinator at brr7@cornell.edu with questions or to learn more.

Tompkins Families: Local resource for all families based within Tompkins, connect with multiple collaborative agencies and organizations with child development specialists and community workshops and training, Facebook page & Newsletter

J. Parenting Children with Special Needs

Resources for Children with Special Needs: (pdf) listing of numerous local services available.
Special Needs e-List (type "join" in the subject line): Connect with other Cornell families with special needs.

K. Child Care Grants

NYS Child Care Grant for Essential Employees
New York State is using a portion of CARES Act funding to provide free child care for income-eligible essential workers. Essential workers using a regulated child care provider will receive a scholarship for the cost of care as long as the funds to support it are available. If you are a parent who meets the definition of an essential employee and have child care needs, register here.

Cornell Child Care Grant Program
This grant supports the care needs of benefits-eligible Cornell employees. Every year the application period is open during the month of September and eligible applicants receive a grant via their Flexible Spending Account to use during the following calendar year. Learn More.

L. Managing Your Time & Schedule

There may be creative ways to adjust your work hours and workload to help you navigate child care/family life demands. Speak with your local HR representative, manager, and/or Work/Life in Human Resources to explore options. Commonly used strategies include:

1. Adjust start/stop times, using chunks of time that better align to your family's needs
2. Hybrid of remote work and on-site work
3. Staff may use paid time off in small increments each day or half/full days
4. Staff may use New York State Paid Family Leave for care of children with disabilities or to provide care to children with a serious health condition
5. Reduce your hours temporarily (subsequent reduction in pay/benefits)

M. Get Help: Contact Cornell's Work/Life Consultant

Consultative assistance is available to Cornell employees and students on topics related to parenting. Phone, virtual, and email consultations available: worklife@cornell.edu or (607) 255-1917 (please leave a message).

N. Articles

Double Bubbles - share the care childcare solution
Summer Resource Guide
Juggling Senior and Child Care in Summer
How to Work from Home with Kids
Preschools and child care might reopen soon. Should you send your kid?
Teaming up with another family may be the key to getting through this
Small Ways to Practice Self-Compassion Right Now
Managing Stress as a Working Parent During COVID-19
Managing Your Wellbeing: Empowering Yourself to Make Healthy Choices During Stressful Moments
Face Masks for Kids

O. In-Home Activities

Things to do that are fun and educational! Highlighted by the Cornell Parenting Webpage and Parenting Newsletter

- 100 Things
- At Home Learning Resources
- Wide Open School
- Families First Resources
- Stuck at Home Guide
- Educational Resources
- Fun at Home Activities
- Noggin

Equal Parts Podcast: Recent podcast subjects that may be of interest include 'Ideas for Summer Camp at Home' and 'Parenting During a Pandemic.'

Summer Care Resource Guide: The Summer Care Resource Guide is frequently updated and available on Care.com for all employees to access more information about caring for their children and households throughout the upcoming and unprecedented Summer.

Hobby and Online Tutoring Classes for Children: Employees can search by child's age, date, and category to find online and virtual classes for their children to participate in from home. Topics include Art, Dance, Sports, Language, and STEM -- to name a few. There is a cost associated with most of the online classes. Prices vary but are clearly outlined on the website.