Parenting & Caregiving

Support your child’s learning during extended school closures with these resources:

At Home Learning Resources

Guidance to Support Working Families

For Managers

Parents and caregivers of adults are facing many unique challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Below you will find Cornell and community-based resources to assist you.

Cornell Work/Life has created a Facebook page specifically for Cornell parents: Cornellians Parenting During COVID-19: Family Support & Networking. The page is designed for Cornellians with caregiving concerns/needs and Cornellians interested in being hired to babysit, nanny, tutor, teach, etc. It provides a forum for connecting and sharing info and resources related to family life during COVID-19 (particularly child care and schooling).

Parenting Resources

[accordion]

Child Care

Cornell Resources

Find Babysitters, Nannies, & Other Caregivers with Care.com

Cornell provides free, unlimited Care.com membership to help benefits-eligible employees locate and arrange care. Find resources like sample contracts and nanny tax guides.

Learn more and start your membership today!
**Cornell Child Care Grant**

[Cornell University’s Child Care Grant](#) helps you pay for your child care expenses by granting awards of up to $5,000 a year, tax-free. It has an annual application period each September for the following calendar year.

**Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account Changes:**

If you are enrolled in a DCFSA for 2021, and your child care needs have changed due to COVID-19 – either due to a change in provider or a change in projected expense – you may make a change in your DCFSA election, on a go-forward basis, within 60 days of that change in need. There is a special enrollment form required. Please contact the HR Services and Transition Center, [hrservices@cornell.edu](mailto:hrservices@cornell.edu), 607-255-3936.

**Faculty Dependent Care Travel & Back-up Care Fund**

Cornell’s Faculty Dependent Care Travel Fund program normally offers eligible faculty reimbursement for indirect, qualified, short-term, dependent-care expenses due to eligible professional travel.

Given current restrictions on travel, the program has been temporarily modified to support faculty on the promotion track who incur back-up childcare expenses as a result of care disruption due to COVID-19. Please see the [website](#) for more details.

**Work/Life Consultation and Support:**

Cornell’s Work/Life Consultant [Diane Bradac](mailto:sdb39@cornell.edu) is available to talk with you about dependent care, locating providers, nannies and babysitters, parenting children with special needs, and more. Call 607-255-1917 or email: [sdb39@cornell.edu](mailto:sdb39@cornell.edu).

**Cornell Child Care Center (CCCC):**

The [Cornell University Child Care Center](#), managed by Bright Horizons Family Solutions, provides care for Cornell faculty, staff, and students with children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. Visit their [website](#) for additional information or arrange to take a tour. 150 Pleasant Grove Rd, Ithaca, 607-255-1010, Email: [cornell@brighthorizons.com](mailto:cornell@brighthorizons.com)

**Community Resources**

**Alternative Child Care**

If your child is healthy and you are seeking a care provider, you may use these resources to locate care, though options are limited. If there are no health limitations, consider sharing caregiving responsibilities with other families by rotating who provides care for the children. Also, visit the [Resources](#) page for additional family life support and consider joining a Cornell Parenting e-List or Newsletter for updates and connecting with other families who have care concerns.

- [Care@Work by Care.com](#) – Cornell provides benefits-eligible employees and retirees with a free membership to Care@Work to help you locate babysitters, pet sitters/walkers, elder/adult care providers, and individuals to run errands. You may post a job or search the directory for a care provider. Providers are not endorsed by Cornell.
- Cornell Work/Life Consultant – may advise you on work/life issues, especially related to caregiving. Phone, virtual, and email consultations available [worklife@cornell.edu](mailto:worklife@cornell.edu) or 607-255-1917

**Child Development Council of Central New York, Inc.**

*Information about regulated child care -- including centers, school-age child care, family & group child care programs*

The Child Development Council provides child care resource and referral services to help you explore regulated child care options. Tompkins and Cortland County are home to a number of child care centers and home-based programs. Your search criteria (location, size, age of child/ren, cost, etc.) will be used to identify programs that may meet your needs. The Council can also assist families access child care subsidies, and maintains an emergency scholarship fund for child care
payment. Request a consultation by calling 607-273-0259.

Not in Tompkins County? A network of organizations called Child Care Resource and Referral can provide more specifics about your location/county. Contact the Child Development Council to locate a program where you live.

**Child Care Idea: “Family Pods” & “Quaranteams”**

A strategy some families are using is entering into a “family pod” an 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 email 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 health protocols will be needed?
- What logistics need to be mapped out like locations, food, bathrooms, cleaning, testing, use of masks, etc.

**Hand in Hand Domestic Employers Network**

Hand in Hand offers resources for best practices when hiring a nanny, caregiver, or house attendant. View sample contracts, checklists, and more.

**Schooling & Tutoring**

**Cornell Resources**

**Math & Science Help**

Cornell's Department of Mathematics offers an array of programs to support K-12 students, including an Ithaca High School Math Seminar, Math Explorer's Club, Math Clubs & Circles, Math Tutoring, Girls’ Adventures in Math, competitions, workshops, a family mathematics program, an e-newsletter, and more. Details are available at https://math.cornell.edu/k12-enrichment.

**Tutoring for K-12 Children by Cornell Students (Discounted for Cornell Employees)**

Student Agencies Tutoring (SAT) is a student-run tutoring company composed of and managed by Cornell students. They offer educational support in K-12 learning and standardized test and college application preparation.

Through a partnership with Cornell Human Resources, SAT is extending a 20% discount on any of their packages to Cornell-affiliated families. To learn about available packages, how tutors are hired and vetted, and/or request services, visit the website. Note: Cornell does not vet, screen, hire, or endorse tutors associated with SAT.

**Community Resources**

**Schools, Home Schooling, Pod Schooling**

Some families have created 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) and must submit quarterly reports. For additional information, check out:
SEPTA (Special Education Parent Teacher Association) is an organization of families, caregivers, teachers and staff who support kids with developmental, learning, and behavioral differences. We encourage you to consider joining SEPTA for the school year for additional support, information, and resources. Join or renew online here.

New York Public Library

New York Public Library card holders (all residents of NY State are eligible) can receive free virtual one-on-one tutoring in subjects of math, science, reading/writing, social studies, and foreign language.

NYC Department of Education

NYC Department of Education offers an extensive list of resources for students in all grades and circumstances (from K-12, English-learning, and special education). Find reading materials, activities, lesson plans, mental health training, physical activity curricula, career preparation, and much more.

Frequently Asked Questions

My children’s school or child care is closed. Can I bring my children on-site to be with me while I work?

The presence and care of children at a university worksite create significant safety and liability considerations for the university. While the care of infants and children at the worksite is not permitted (Visitors at the Worksite policy), supervisors are encouraged to be flexible in arranging work schedules, granting time off, and/or permitting remote work.

Managing Work Hours / Work Load

Strategies for Managing Time/Schedules

- Staff (including exempt employees) may use paid time off in small increments each day or half/full days as needed.
- Nonacademic employees may use New York State Paid Family Leave (NYSPFL) for the care of children with disabilities, or to provide care to children with a serious health condition. NYSPFL can also be used to provide care to parents and spouses/domestic partners.
- Adjust your start/stop time (when and which days you work) – use chunks of time that better align to your availability if possible. Consider leveraging the entire week, not just Monday through Friday.
- Formally reduce your hours temporarily (subsequent reduction in pay) – hours must be at least 20 per week to sustain health benefits.
- If you are hourly, you may informally and occasionally report fewer hours worked than normal without using HAP/Vacation time to offset. You will not be paid for these hours. Discuss this with your supervisor and/or HR representative in advance.
- Discuss your work goals and priorities with your supervisor – some work projects/tasks may be better aligned with your current situation than others.
- Take an unpaid leave of absence for up to three months.

The Cornell Flexibility in the Workplace Policy states that remote work cannot be a substitute for ongoing child care needs. In light of COVID-19, remote work may occur while dependents are present if their school or child care is closed and alternative care is unavailable, under the following guidelines:

- Cornell is not responsible or liable for the health and safety of your dependents while you are working remotely, or for your health and safety while you are delivering care to your dependents. It is up to the employee to determine whether work can be conducted safely.
• If a dependent is ill and requires ongoing attention, and you are not able to perform work, employees may need to use Health and Personal (HAP) time away from work. HAP guidelines are being relaxed during this period to also accommodate well children who are home due to school and childcare closures. Nonacademic employees may also be covered by New York State Paid Family leave, which provides paid leave to care for a covered family member’s serious health condition for the care of children with disabilities. Please visit the website for more information.
• Employees are expected to determine what they can reasonably accomplish while dependents are under their care (whether healthy or ill), and the amount of time they expect to be able to work.

Communications & Networking

Cornell Work/Life has created a Facebook page specifically for Cornell parents: Cornellians Parenting During COVID-19: Family Support & Networking. The page is designed for Cornellians with caregiving concerns/needs and Cornellians interested in being hired to babysit, nanny, tutor, teach, etc. It provides a forum for connecting and sharing info and resources (particularly child care and schooling) related to family life during COVID-19.

Cornell Resources

Big Red Writes:

Big Red Writes (BRW) is a Cornell pen pal program for employees, retirees, students, alumni, and K-12th grade children of employees. Cornellians can request a pen pal from a specific constituency or will be assigned a pen pal at random, and can choose email or USPS mail. Participants are expected to write to their pen pal a minimum of once per month.

Cornell Parent Newsletter:

The Parent Newsletter provides helpful tips, events, activities, and services of interest to Cornell faculty, staff, students, and retirees who are parents and/or grandparents. Click here to add your email to the newsletter distribution list.

Cornell Parent E-Lists:

Consider joining a Cornell Parent e-list to connect with other parents. There are specific lists for parents with children under age six and parents with school-age children, as well as a list dedicated to selling/buying child-related items.

• parents-k12-L – information related to parenting school-aged children (no classifieds permitted). To join, email: parents-k12-L-request@cornell.edu with “Join” in the subject
• parents-undersix-L – information related to parenting children under the age of six (no classifieds permitted). To join, email: parents-undersix-L-request@cornell.edu with “Join” in the subject
• parents-classifieds-L – buy, sell, or exchange child-related items (restrictions apply, see guidelines). To join, email: parents-classifieds-L-request@cornell.edu with “Join” in the subject

Additional Resources:

• Top Ten Things You Should Know If You Are Having A Baby at Cornell
• Equal Parts Podcast: Care@Work’s Equal Parts podcast is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and through the link provided. Recent podcast subjects include ‘Talking to kids about politics and the election’ and ‘Staying sane and compassionate during a stressful year.’

Community Resources

• Tompkins Families: Local resource for all families based within Tompkins County. Facebook page & Newsletter
• IthacaMama Facebook Group – engage with local families on child care and parenting.
Safety

- Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
  - Pregnancy & Coronavirus
  - Handwashing: A Family Activity
  - Older Adults & Coronavirus
- Household Child Safety Products – from the Healthy Neighborhood Program

Upcoming & Recorded Events

Upcoming Events

Check back for more upcoming events!

Find additional local and campus events and activities in the Cornell Parenting Newsletter and the Cornellians Parenting During COVID-19: Family Support & Networking Facebook page.

Recorded Events

Children & COVID-19: A Conversation with Dr. Jeffrey Snedeker (originally presented August 27, 2021)

[accordion]

Caregiving for Adults

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Cornell Resources

- Cornell Adult, Senior, and Caregiver Connections Facebook Group - a place for adults, seniors, and caregivers who are caring for a parent, spouse, or loved one, to find support, information, and inspiration.
- Cornell Caregiver Support & Education Network Meetings - Caregivers come together monthly to share the challenges, joys, and resources of caregiving. Registration is required. Email worklife@cornell.edu and a Zoom link will be sent prior to the meeting.
- Cornell Work/Life Consultant – can advise you on work/life issues, especially related to caregiving. Phone, virtual, or email consultations available worklife@cornell.edu or 607-255-1917.
- Staff may use New York State Paid Family Leave (NYSPFL) to provide care to parents and spouses/domestic partners as well as children with serious health conditions or special needs.
- Cornell provides free, unlimited Care.com membership to help benefits-eligible employees locate and arrange care. 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 in finding a caregiver.
- Video: Palliative Care and Hospice Services with Deb Traunstein

Community Resources

- Tompkins County Office for the Aging (other Counties) – 607-274-5482 - assists older persons and adults with long-term care needs.
  - Project CARE - a friendly visiting program that provides in-home support to family caregivers as well as direct help to frail, homebound older adults.
  - Instructional Videos For Family Caregivers In The Home
- Caregiver Action Network - caregiving experts are available 8:00 AM – 7:00 PM ET, 855-227-3640
- Love Living at Home - resources for older adults who desire to live in the homes and neighborhoods they love.
- FoodNet Meals on Wheels - Meals on Wheels ensures that seniors have access to adequate nutrition even when family support, mobility, and resources are lacking.
- Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) - promotes independence through a variety of programs and services.
- Cancer Resource Center - resources and groups for caregivers of those with cancer.
- **Caregiver Support - USAGov** - information to help you care for your loved one with special medical needs, including programs for family members of veterans and people with disabilities.
- **Brain Injury Association of New York State** - provides advocacy and support to people and families living with brain injuries.

Questions or Suggestions

wellbeing@cornell.edu