



## Conference Child Care Planning Guidelines

Providing child care for your conference on campus requires advanced planning. Conference planners should begin several months before the conference is scheduled to take place.

To get started, you may contact Work/Life Consultant, who is in the office of Work/Life Services (255-1917, [emw76@cornell.edu](mailto:emw76@cornell.edu) or [worklife@cornell.edu](mailto:worklife@cornell.edu), 395 Pine Tree Road, Suite 130). The consultant will provide the conference planner with a list of questions that should be asked of the hosting organization and of the potential attendees. The results of those questions will help conference planners determine which child care option would be most appropriate for the given event.

Sample questions include:

- What are the ages of the children that will need care?
- How many children of each age group will there be?
- What are the dates and times that child care will need to be provided?

In order to answer these questions, the conference planner should communicate with potential conference attendees to gauge their interest in utilizing child care if offered (ideally several months in advance). Many of the on-site child care companies will assist you in doing this as part of their fee.

### **The two primary options for conference child care are:**

- Hiring a company that specializes in on-site child care.
- Using the Cornell Dependent Care Consultant to advertise and contact various sources of individual child care providers.

### ***Hiring an on-site child care company***

Hiring a company that specializes in on-site child care is an ideal option if care is needed for ten or more children. Typically, these companies offer a variety of services, which include pre-planning, promotion, registration, quality/experienced staffing, stimulating/fun activities, and more. Costs for these services range in price depending upon the age of the children, number of children, and the times the care will be provided. Infant care is the most expensive, decreasing in cost, as the children get older. The number of staff needed to meet New York State ratio guidelines is greater if the children are younger.

An example of the costs associated would be:

- 15 children with an age range of 18 months to five years old, with no more than 4 of them being younger than 2 years old
- Six days, nine and a half hours each day

- Approximately \$10,000.

Conference planners that plan ahead may find a sponsor who will subsidize all or part of the cost of care for the attendees. Conferences may also opt to subsidize the care, or possibly have the parents pay the full cost themselves. Parents will need to know the cost of the child care available before they commit to registration. On-site child care companies can help conference planners determine what the various cost scenarios would look like so that the planner can communicate those to the parents.

There are certain responsibilities of the hosting conference in regards to child care when hiring an on-site child care company. Below is a list of the items generally required by the company for you to provide:

- Space for the program: most companies require 75 square feet per child. The room must be available to the provider the day before the program begins.
- Nearby rest room facilities
- Ability to leave the program set up and secure after hours
- In house phone or walkie talkie
- Mini refrigerator
- Meal arrangements for the children (or parents can be responsible for meals for their own children)
- One guest room at a nearby hotel for the program manager
- Parking for the staff
- Tables, chairs, trash cans
- Cribs and high chairs as needed (company can arrange for rentals)

The advantage to using an on-site child care company is the convenience of having everything thought out and taken care of by the company including registration, set up and clean up, management of the child care, staffing, safety and security, fun activities, supplies and equipment. The disadvantage might be the cost of the program, but with a participating sponsor, the costs could be substantially reduced.

If this type of conference child care is of interest to you, the Work/Life Consultant can contact on-site child care companies for proposals. Once the conference planner has decided on a particular company, the consultant will make the contact and give them the name of your conference child care planner as the point of contact from then on. The consultant is available to assist the planner if they have any questions or concerns.

#### ***Using the Cornell Work/Life Consultant for individual care providers***

This option is ideal if the conference attendees will only be needing child care for a few children total. The consultant has access to various methods of locating informal child care providers. These types of child care arrangements can take place in the parent's hotel room, at the provider's home, or at a child care center.

Space in local child care centers, including the Cornell Child Care Center is typically at capacity level. The local centers may have available openings on any given day or time period, but usually those spaces are due to last minute cancellations and may not be ideal for conference attendees who are planning ahead.

Many of the individual care providers on the consultant's list are Cornell students, with some staff, retirees, postdocs and a few from the Ithaca community. The consultant posts the potential child care positions and once responses are received, the consultant will send a list of potential care providers to conference parents so they may contact the child care providers directly and make their own arrangements.

Parents should consider where the care will be provided, whether the provider will need transportation, the hours/days the care will be needed, whether the provider has the necessary equipment (crib, high chair, stroller), etc. Arrangements would need to be made for the rental of equipment if it is not available through the provider. Parents should get at least two references on the child care providers that they are considering. Cornell does not screen these care providers or perform background checks.

Child care rates of pay are based on a number of different factors. The parent might consider paying providers with special qualifications more than those that do not. Parents should adjust the rate of pay if they are asking the provider to watch a single older child who can entertain him/herself compared to asking the provider to watch more than one child and to transport, feed, bathe and put them all to bed. Also keep in mind your child(ren)'s temperament and personality. A more challenging child should result in a higher rate of pay. Infants generally require more care and should also receive a higher rate of pay. Generally, the average child care rate is anywhere from \$10.00-\$15.00/hour based on the above criteria.

The advantage of using the consultant to find care options is that the parents have more control over who is going to be providing care for their child and the cost of that care. They have the opportunity to "interview" potential providers, which may or may not be something that they would like to invest their time in doing. A disadvantage to using this option is that care is not as reliable. And, the provider they select may not be available at all of the times needed during the conference.

To discuss your plans for your conference please contact Cornell's Work/Life Consultant at 255-1917, [emw76@cornell.edu](mailto:emw76@cornell.edu) or [worklife@cornell.edu](mailto:worklife@cornell.edu).

**Disclaimer:** Cornell University assists the Cornell community and campus visitors with locating care arrangements for dependent care needs. Cornell does not screen providers and makes no representations regarding them. Providers are not employees of Cornell and are hired directly by the client. Cornell also does not screen clients and makes no representations to providers regarding them. The clients and providers acknowledge that Cornell is not responsible for, and will be held harmless against, any injury, loss, or other damage arising from the clients' and helpers' use of the Cornell University's dependent care locator service.