

We are submitting for your review, a set of guidelines to address the issue of student parents/guardians bringing children to the learning environment. In response to increasing concerns and incidents, it is necessary for the university to provide guidance that is fair and equitable, and that ensures consistency throughout the institution. Often, parties involved have not been given consistent nor appropriate guidance on the issue. These guidelines are intended to guide each individual case and are not intended as policy. Please review our attempt to provide some clarity and consistency on the issue by reading the attached document and providing any feedback by February 15.

Sincerely;

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Guidelines for Student Parents/Guardians and Children on Campus

General Guidelines

University of California Davis, is a [family-friendly](#) campus guided by the [Principles of Community](#) which embraces “the richness contributed to our lives by our diversity.” UC Davis aims to provide equitable access to a diverse and inclusive learning environment.

The University has policies to ensure the health and safety of all individuals on campus. For purposes of these guidelines, “children” are defined as minors accompanying a student parent/guardian. Beyond safety concerns, there are guidelines in the [Faculty Guide](#) that are specific to maintaining an effective learning environment including “[disruptive behavior](#)” per instructor discretion. For an effective learning environment, it is typically not appropriate for non-student, minor children to be present on a frequent or continuing basis. However, faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to acknowledge that student-family needs and responsibilities may, in some circumstances, necessitate the presence of a child in a learning space for a limited amount of time.

Pairing these underlying policies and practices with the spirit of the Principles of Community, these guidelines are intended to foster respect for the educational needs, health and safety of all parties impacted by the presence of non-student, minor children in the UC Davis learning environment (classrooms, laboratories, study spaces, department offices, etc.).

These guidelines strive to balance the needs of the student parent/guardian with the goals of instructors and are offered to inform the process.

Considerations

The following factors must be taken into consideration when establishing the parameters of children’s presence in the learning environment.

- UC Davis has established [various policies](#) to ensure the health and safety of all people on campus as well as policies aimed at minimizing risk.
- Children are not permitted in areas with high-risk safety concerns.
 - [PPM 290-32](#) Minors in University Facilities
 - UCOP [Minors in Laboratories and Shops](#)
 - [PPM 290-56](#) Chemical Safety
- A parent/guardian must accept full responsibility for the child’s safety and for any damage to property or injury to persons that is caused by the child’s presence.

Preserving an Effective Learning Environment

UC Davis strives to provide equitable access and inclusion for student parents/guardians while maintaining an effective learning environment for all. A child’s presence has the potential to disrupt the proceedings either directly (due to behavior) or indirectly (class material is often not appropriate for a minor and the instructor might feel obligated to pedagogically adjust accordingly). A student parent/guardian should refrain from bringing children into the learning environment as a standard practice.

Children in the learning environment may be considered on an impermanent basis when alternative arrangements are impractical or impossible, such as the illness of a child care provider, loss of a child care provider, or school closure. Children who have a contagious illness should not be brought to a learning environment.

Defining “Disruption” Equitably

Instructors are responsible for their educational environment and have the authority to determine what they deem “disruptive” in the classroom setting, as well as an obligation to inform students of this determination. Generally, disruptive behavior is defined as any behavior that hinders the ability of instructors to teach or students to learn. A proactive approach to defining and communicating what constitutes “disruption” in a learning environment lessens the likelihood of confusion and conflict.

The most important aspect of determining “disruptive behavior” is to be equitable in definition and enforcement. The focus should be on the level of disruption, not the specific cause of disruption. The instructor may ask a student to remove any children from any class at any time if those children meet the predetermined and communicated classroom definition of “disruption” established at the first class session. The Office of Student Support & Judicial Affairs publication, [“Establishing Classroom Etiquette and Dealing with Disruption”](#) provides ways to set the stage for a positive classroom experience as well as examples of disruptive behaviors. Consistency and equity are the most important considerations when determining if a child in the classroom is being disruptive. The disruption must meet or exceed the established parameters. For example, a nursing baby may make noises while eating but if this level of noise is otherwise tolerated in the classroom this circumstance must be accepted as well.

Tips for Students:

- Do not plan on bringing your child to class as a usual situation.
- Before or on the first day of class, talk to your class instructors about the possibility of bringing your child to class from time to time when other arrangements could not be made. Assure them that you will be respectful of them and other students in class and intend to leave should your child become disruptive.
- Establish open and frequent private communication with your instructors regarding child care issues.
- Consider the age and development of your child. An easy-going infant can easily sleep through an entire class while a newly-mobile toddler may not have the ability to be still and quiet. Older children can usually quietly entertain themselves, but exposure to course subject matter may be of concern.
- Invest in a sling or carrier for babies; large strollers can be cumbersome in a small space.
- In a large classroom, try to put some space between you and others to lessen the chance of disruption.
- California law protects breastfeeding in public. Try to be discreet while nursing in a classroom setting to minimize disruption.
- Consider the type of class. A lab or place with animals, food or machinery is not a safe nor appropriate place for a child. Classes with in-class group work are also not appropriate learning environments for most children. Do not bring a child on a scheduled test/exam day.

Tips for Instructors:

- Recognize that UC Davis is a family friendly campus that utilizes the Principles of Community to guide our decisions and direction. Consider the diversity and inclusion principles of UC Davis.

- Check any personal bias you may have concerning children in the classroom and student parents/guardians with children while pursuing their education. Are students less “serious” if they are a parent/guardian?
- Ensure equity when you determine “disruptive behaviors” in your classroom.
- Include a clear statement of your classroom standards and expectations, including what you consider “disruptive” in your syllabus. Devote time during the first class to review this information.
- Set parameters of when it would be appropriate to leave the learning environment due to a child causing disruption. Discuss how the student can receive information they may miss if they must leave class.
- Encourage open communication with student parents/guardians before the possibility of a student needing to bring a child to class on a future occasion. Indicate your understanding of the situation and willingness to start a dialogue with the student parent/guardian. This is an opportunity to problem solve with the student.
- Aim to find a middle ground that meets your needs as an instructor, the needs of the class participants, and the needs of the student parent/guardian.
- Ensure confidentiality of student requests and situations.
- Strive to consider each situation separately, considering all factors of the individual situation/request. Consult with others in making difficult decisions.
- Seek advice during the decision-making process from various campus units:
 - Your Dean’s Office
 - Harassment & Discrimination Assistance and Prevention Program
 - Academic Affairs
 - WorkLife and Wellness
- Refer to [OSSJA suggestions](#) concerning disruption.

Additional Options and Information:

- Consider having a mutually agreed-upon facilitated conversation with the student parent/guardian through the [Office of the Ombuds](#).
- Ensure the student parent/guardian is aware of campus resources found on the WorkLife and Wellness [Student Parent Resource Page](#). UC Davis provides [Child Care Grants](#) and Loans for Undergraduate and Graduate Students. Additional financial assistance for child care can be found on the WorkLife and Wellness [Child Care/Financial Assistance](#) page.
- Units that can provide guidance include:
 - Harassment & Discrimination Assistance and Prevention Program
HDAPP: <https://hdapp.ucdavis.edu/> (530) 752-9255
 - Academic Affairs (TBD)
 - WorkLife and Wellness: worklife@ucdavis.edu
- Remember the goal is to balance the needs of the students in the class, the student parent/guardian involved, and the instructor.