

## Guidelines for Student Parents/Guardians with Children on Campus

### General Guidelines

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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, which includes “[disruptive behavior](#)” per instructor discretion. For an effective learning environment, it is typically not appropriate for 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 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

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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

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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

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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.

Consistency and equity in definition and enforcement 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. The focus should be on the level of disruption, not the specific cause of disruption. The measure by which it is determined what constitutes disruption generally in a classroom setting is the same measure that should be used when determining whether a child poses a disruption in class. When assessing what constitutes disruption, some common comparators are students eating in class, rustling papers, side discussions, use of cell phones/texting, and so on. To the extent such behavior is tolerated in a class, a child posing no greater disruption should be likewise tolerated. The instructor may ask a student parent/guardian to remove any children from any class at any time if those children are disruptive.

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.

## Tips for Student Parents/Guardians:

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- 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 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.
- Consider investing 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.
- Consider the type of class. A lab or place with animals, food or machinery is not a safe place for a child. Classes with in-class group work are also not appropriate learning environments for most children.
- Contact the instructor as soon as possible to make arrangements if you do not have child care on a scheduled test/exam day.

## Tips for Instructors:

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- 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. Do you believe that students are 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.
- Encourage open communication with student parents/guardians before the possibility of their need 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 parent/guardian.
- Set parameters of when it would be appropriate for the student parent/guardian to leave the learning environment due to a child causing disruption. Discuss how the student parent/guardian can receive information they may miss if they must leave class.
- Aim to find a middle ground that meets your needs as an instructor, the needs of all class participants, and the needs of the student parents/guardians.
- Ensure confidentiality of student parent/guardian requests and situations.
- Strive to consider all factors of the individual situation/request.
- California law protects breastfeeding in public.
- 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:

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- Consider having a mutually-agreed-upon facilitated conversation through the [Office of the Ombuds](#).
- Explore the WorkLife and Wellness [Student Parent Resource Page](#).
  - UC Davis provides [Child Care Grants](#) for student parents/guardians.
  - 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 <https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/programs/work-life/index.html> (530) 752-7643
  - WorkLife and Wellness: <http://worklife-wellness.ucdavis.edu> (530) 754-8791
- Remember the goal is to balance the needs of all students in the class, the student parent/guardian involved, and the instructor.

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