

## Childcare

*For many students, childcare issues seriously challenge their ability to be successful students. It is important to plan ahead, especially with children involved, so here are a few tips and resources to help you tackle childcare issues before they interfere with your success as a student.*

**Plan Ahead** - Make arrangements early! If you have children that require care while you are in class, try to secure care as early as possible before classes start. Most daycare centres have wait-lists for infant care and subsidized spots.

If you require subsidized childcare you can apply by contacting, Toronto Children's Services at 416-392-5437. It can take six months or more to be approved. Apply as soon as possible. For information of subsidized child care, please visit [www.toronto.ca/children/subsidy.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/children/subsidy.htm)

Inform Seneca early if there is a risk of a scheduling problem between your classes and your childcare. We may be able to help resolve a potential scheduling conflict. Contact the Counselling Department at 416-491-5050 ext. 2900 as early as possible and at least one month prior to the start of classes.

### Childcare at Seneca

There are daycare facilities at the Newnham and King campuses. To arrange a tour of Seneca lab schools daycare facilities at NH and King contact June at 416-491-5050 ext. 4710 or email her at [june.williams@senecac.on.ca](mailto:june.williams@senecac.on.ca)

**Get the support you need.** It may take a while before your children and family get used to your new role as a student. They will go through a transition just like you. You should make sure to discuss this transition with them. Think about what kind of support you need from your family then decide to ask for that support. Be very specific in asking for support (i.e. undisturbed time alone to study, grocery shopping, washing dishes or clothes, etc). Explain to them why going to school is important to you. Listen to what concerns they may have with understanding. Track positives with people and reward any actions you regard as positive, helpful, or supportive.



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## Being a Student AND a Parent

**Communicate with yourself!** Realize when you are just plain tired and also, when you have the most energy. Rest when you need to; congratulate yourself when you deserve it. When your child is capable of understanding what you need to get done, communicate with them. Say that you are in school, just like him/her. Lastly, let your professors of your unconventional student status on the first day of classes

**Staying in Touch.** At the start of each semester, tell your professors that it is important for you to keep your phone turned on during class so that your child or his/her school can reach you (nearly all phones have a vibrate option to tell you discreetly of an incoming call). Keep your phone's battery charged. If you can't afford a cell phone, investigate donation programs. Some organizations provide phones for use in emergency situations while others offer a minimal, affordable plan.

Remember that your responsibilities are different than those of traditional students. If your child needs you while you're in class, leave, or make arrangements for someone to help until you can be home. Regardless of whether or not you have a cell phone, provide your child's childcare/daycare center or school with your college department's telephone number. Your schedule is always accessible to department staff along with room numbers and class meeting times. If you're needed, a staff member can find you and deliver a message.

**Be gentle on yourself.** You are a motivated person, but don't let pride get in the way of accepting help. Rely on the kindness and goodness of trusted friends and family, and schedule your weeks to maximize your study time. Don't forget you are playing two leading roles here: one as parent, one as student. It's a hard balancing act, but one that is not impossible; even though professors will expect a satisfactory performance and your child deserves nothing but the best from their parent. Congratulate yourself for all of your hard work!

**Encourage other parents to go back to school.** Recognize the challenges as well as the importance of being a student, and offer assistance and understanding. The college enrollment process can be complicated with many forms and procedures to complete; but your experience can help make the difference between another parents' discouraging college start and an enjoyable, exciting new identity.