

## CHILDCARE AT UUCA

Having paid childcare staff allows us to offer high quality care and peace of mind to the families that use our childcare services. Whether it is a regular Sunday morning, a church event, or an evening covenant group for young families, parents can be assured that their children are being cared for by loving, attentive, and conscientious staff. In the early years, our most important work in religious education is to encourage in the child a deep foundational sense of trust and belonging in the faith community.

### Our UU Philosophy on Caregiving

This “primal stage” of faith development lays the foundation for all later growth and development around faith; it is essential that we support the development of young children’s positive feelings around coming to church and the fun and learning they experience here.

#### Ratios

Ratios allow us to see at a glance whether there are more children present than we can adequately care for. Ratio guidelines vary depending on the age of the youngest child present. Group size is the maximum number of children in one group (which includes both rooms in the case of our nursery/preK care). All children who are in nursery/preK care should have their age be part of the sign-in process so that the following ratios can be observed closely.

- 1) When any baby younger than one year is present, the total ratio of children under the age of 12 (in both childcare rooms) to adults (over 18) should never exceed 5:1.
- 2) If a baby 12-18months old is the youngest child present, the ratio should not exceed 6:1.
- 3) If a toddler 19-23 months old is the youngest present, the ratio should not exceed 7:1.
- 4) If a child 24-36 months old is the youngest child present, the ratio should not exceed 8:1.
- 5) At no time, regardless of ages of youngest child, should the ratio exceed 9:1.

### Types of Childcare at UUCA and Guidelines for Congregational Access to Care

#### Sunday Mornings During Worship Services

Childcare is a given except in rare situations. Babies and PreK children may be signed in to care no earlier than 9:00 for first service and should be picked up by 10:30. For second service, drop-off begins at 11:00 and children should be picked up by 12:30. For single-service Sundays (including summer), care begins 15 minutes before the service begins and children should be picked up 15 minutes after the service ends.

#### Sunday Mornings Between Services

Childcare is available during coffee hour (between services: 10:30-11:00am) for kids age 10 and younger, ONLY for parents attending choir practice, RE trainings, committee meetings, or meetings with staff (not social groups). Parents needing care during coffee hour MUST check in with religious education (RE) staff, sharing where they will be, when leaving their child and sign their children into child care.

### Congregational Events

These are UUCA-sponsored events that everyone is invited to. Childcare is a given. RE staff in conversation with senior staff team makes decisions about what events constitute congregational events.

### Churchwide Childcare

Special event, meeting, activity, or group organizers may wish to offer childcare for their members. We recognize the importance of childcare in helping support young families become more engaged and involved in congregational life. At the same time, our commitment to paying childcare staff a living wage, having at least two adults with children whenever possible, and keeping child-to-adult ratios low means that we must adopt guidelines that balance stewardship and family support.

1. Childcare requests must come from an event organizer to the LRE Coordinator at [lrec@uuasheville.org](mailto:lrec@uuasheville.org), to ensure that caregivers are available.
2. All child care will take place at UUCA. For special occasions when an event is happening off site that cannot be held at UUCA, event planners will make arrangements to come to UUCA before the event to let child care staff into the building and make sure that the child care staff have emergency contact information for the event leader or coordinator.
3. It is the responsibility of the event planner or designee to arrive at UUCA when child care is scheduled to begin to unlock the door to RE Commons and give access to the building to the child care staff. Childcare staff will lock the doors to RE Commons when they leave.
4. Written childcare requests must be made at least three weeks before the event; earlier if possible. This allows us to give our childcare coordinator time to recruit workers.
5. After approval of the request for childcare, publicity (with requests for RSVPs) from activity organizers may begin.
6. All event organizers who publicize the opportunity for childcare should use wording to this effect: *Childcare available with RSVPs by (insert date no less than one week before event date) for four or more children under the age of 11. Please RSVP (with children's names and ages) to the LRE coordinator at [lrec@uuasheville.org](mailto:lrec@uuasheville.org)*  
Organizers may wish to make personal contacts with parents who may need care to help make sure the four-child minimum is met in a timely manner.
7. One week before the event, the LRE Coordinator will let the event organizer know whether RSVPs were received for at least four children. If fewer than four children need care, event organizers may wish to consider the following options, and will inform the LRE Coordinator if they wish to pursue either option.
  - a. Providing one adult volunteer to assist ONE paid UUCA caregiver for the duration of the event. Said volunteer must complete background before the event and will work with the LRE Coordinator to ensure completion of necessary documentation. All childcare providers must be background checked for any childcare taking place at UUCA.
  - b. Parents may arrange childcare on their own and request reimbursement for said care at a rate of \$10/hr for one child or \$15/hr for two or three children. Parents must have previously RSVPd to request care for the children in question. To seek reimbursement, contact the LRE Coordinator. Please have a receipt for childcare with date, time, and names of children signed by the paid caregiver.

<b>Revision History</b>	
Responsible Staff Member: Minister of Faith Development	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of revision</b>
February 2016	Created
January 2017	Updated section on church wide childcare regarding off site events and building access
May 2018	Updated language regarding off site events
November 2018	Updated timing for childcare requests, age of children eligible for childcare, and procedure for locking up when childcare is over