

The Australian Sociological Association Conference 2018

Supporting Conference Participation for Primary Carers

This year's TASA conference provides a range of initiatives to better support conference attendees who are pregnant, breastfeeding and/or caretaking.

They have been devised by the Local Organising Committee, in consultation with Deakin University's Equity and Diversity Office and TASA, to promote conference accessibility and address the career disadvantages experienced by delegates who are parents to young children.

The strategies outlined in this document are in accordance with Deakin University's Child Safety Policy: https://policy.deakin.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=223&_ga=2.8987837.908038966.1526255219-862685421.1486430081

1. Provision of childcare

Option 1

Name of service: Deakin & Community Childcare.

Website: www.daccc.org.au

Location: On site. Deakin University, Burwood Campus.

Hours: 7.45am-6pm.

Eligibility: licensed to care for children aged between 12 weeks - 7 years old. Note that the centre's programs are designed for children aged up to 5, therefore older children might find the offerings limited.

Availability: The centre is licensed for 60 children. Currently, there are 5 places available on 19, 20, 22 & 23 November. The centre is at capacity on 21 Nov with no places available – alternative childcare arrangements will need to be made on this date. Places are not guaranteed and TASA delegates are strongly encouraged to secure a placement for required days asap.

Cost: \$125 per day.

Process for enrolling: Full enrolment required, including completion of an enrolment form, names of 2 emergency contacts and certified documentation of full immunisation. It is recommended attendees register children as soon as possible to ensure a placement. Attendees should contact the centre via the email or telephone number provided below and let one of the directors know that they are attending the TASA conference. Enrolment must be finalised at least one week before day of commencement.

Key Contacts: Sally Young, co-ordinator; Diane Duncan & Sheridan Corke, deputy co-ordinators.

Email: daccc@optusnet.com.au

Tel: 03 9888 0202

Option 2

Name of service: Melbourne's Leading Nanny Agency

Website: <http://www.melbournesleadingnannyagency.com.au/#/home>

Location: Onsite or offsite.

Hours: Casual, flexible, varied, one-off, short term care options. Day or night.

Eligibility: All ages, from newborn through to teens.

Availability: delegates are strongly encouraged to register well in advance so that a suitable carer can be matched to their needs.

Cost: \$23-45 per hour plus \$25 booking fee.

Process for enrolling: Register with the organisation. \$75 one off fee.

Email: Tel: 03 9576 7000

Option 3 (conditional)

Name of Service: Crechendo

Website: <http://www.crechendo.com.au/>

Location: onsite

Details: the company will set up and run a crèche onsite. If there is a critical mass of children attending the TASA 2018 conference, and strong interest, the LOC will investigate this option on behalf of parents. Numbers will determine if this is an economically viable option for parents over the other paid childcare options available.

2. Including children and caregivers

For some carers, like single-parents, low income attendees, carers of children with special needs or infants, the use of paid childcare services may not be feasible. The following options may support these cohorts to attend.

Children can attend sessions with caregivers if there is minimal disruption to speakers and the audience.

While prams cannot be brought into sessions, infants can be brought in baby slings to be near carers.

Seats will be reserved for caregivers with small children near the back exits of auditoriums to support leaving and re-entering the venue.

Coloured pencils and paper available at the registration desk for children to bring into sessions. Children can bring their own small toys or electronic devices to quietly occupy them (use of headphones is encouraged).

Subject to prior notice, registrants can bring along an additional caregiver at no extra cost – partner, friend, grandparent – to care for children while the delegate presents and attends sessions. Conference catering for the carer can be selected at registration.

Children are welcome to attend any social events in the company of the parent.

Breastfeeding women encouraged to breastfeed during sessions and events. For those who prefer to breastfeed in private, a parent rooms is available.

To meet Deakin's child safe standards and ensure children are not subject to inappropriate content, parents are encouraged to check abstracts prior to attending sessions with children and accept all responsibility for the care and supervision of their child.

3. Parent room and baby change facilities

Deakin's parent room is located in Building P (P1.14), approximately 3 minute walk from most of the conference rooms/venues. It provides baby change facilities; a comfortable chair and a highchair; a sink, microwave and fridge for storing and heating milk and children's food; a small play area for young children; toys and books; a lockable door for privacy. Access cards will be made available for collection at the registration desk. Additional baby change facilities can be found in the toilets of buildings BC, C, H, X, and V (the library). Download the campus map for accessibility details: <http://www.deakin.edu.au/locations/melbourne-burwood-campus>

4. Dedicated room ('kid space') for children and carers

In addition to the parent room, the conference venue will provide a dedicated 'kid space'. This room offers a place for multiple carers and children to gather during conference hours. It is the place to store prams, bassinets and other gear that children need in close proximity to the conference sessions. Here children can watch programs, eat meals, play etc. under parental supervision. Toys and activities will be provided.

5. Pram access

For those driving to the conference and bringing a pram, we recommend parking in the carpool area in car park 6, level 2, as it has no stairs.

Lifts allow attendees with prams or with other mobility needs to access the conference venue. See Deakin's accessibility map: <http://www.deakin.edu.au/students/health-and-wellbeing/disability-support/access>

6. Conference scheduling

Thematic Group convenors and the Local Organising Committee will endeavour to meet the time needs of carers. If your caring responsibilities impact on when you are able to present, please contact the session organiser/Thematic Group convenor and provide a rationale and preferred times.

7. Social networks

A Messenger group has been established for parents and carers to connect before and during the conference – to arrange shared childcare, organise playdates, share tips, recommendations etc. Search for the group name 'TASA 2018 Parent & Carer Network' in Messenger to request to join the conversation. The group administrator is Kim Toffoletti – contact Kim on kim.toffoletti@deakin.edu.au with any inquiries.

8. Family accommodation options

There are a number of accommodation options suited for families (serviced apartments, multiple rooms) listed on the TASA conference website at discounted rates for delegates.

9. Pregnant women

Pregnancy can limit women's ability to fully participate at conferences. The 'kid space' can offer a place for pregnant women to rest. Quieter seating options are available at the nearby library (Bldg V) and university grounds.

Please note when registering if cooked food options are needed at mealtimes to meet health recommendations to avoid pre-made foods/salads/soft cheeses etc.

References

Calisi, M & a working group of Mothers in Science (2018) Opinion: How to tackle the childcare-conference conundrum, *PNAS*, March 5. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1803153115>

Rademaker, L (2017) Bringing a baby to a conference, Australian Women's History Network Blog, <http://www.auswhn.org.au/blog/baby-conference/>