

If you are new to the Department of Earth Sciences and have children, or if you are thinking about starting a family, you will find supportive attitudes backed-up by family-friendly policies. We hope you find this quick reference guide useful.

The Department welcomes flexible working to assist parents with their childcare arrangements. The core hours in the department are 10.00 am until 3.00 pm. Children are welcome at departmental social events. When necessary, staff can bring children in (which may just require a risk assessment due to insurance purposes), or work at home as events dictate (sickness of child, problems with childcare, nursery training days, etc). The Researcher's Common Room was explicitly modified during the design of our new building in order that it should be safe for children. There are also baby changing and rest/private feeding facilities available within the department, accessible to both Mums and Dads.



Family leave

The University policies on maternity, paternity and adoption and parental emergency leave can be found on the Family leave section of the University Personnel Services website.

If you are employed by a college, your entitlements may be different from university employees. Each college has its own set of policies with respect to parental leave that may differ significantly from one another so it is advisable to contact your college as soon as possible.

Earth Sciences Carers Fund

We recognise that parents with young children, or those with caring responsibilities, can find it very difficult to take opportunities to attend seminars or present work at conferences, yet these are important things to do for research, teaching and career development, and to foster networking and collaboration opportunities. The Department of Earth Sciences is now offering discretionary funds of up to £250 (per event) to help towards increased caring costs resulting from such activities.

This is open to all members of staff and postgraduate students, particularly those in the early stages of their career, who are attending conferences, seminars and courses.

More information, including the carers fund application form, can be found on the [SharePoint site](#).

Nurseries & Childcare

The University has four nurseries in Oxford and has subsidized places at other nurseries in and around Oxford. Childcare services offers information and contacts.

Some colleges have nurseries on site, including Somerville, St Anne's, Wolfson, Balliol and Christchurch. College members have priority places though waiting lists remain a feature.

Other sources of information on childcare:

- [Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- [Oxford Montessori Schools](#)

Childcare can be expensive; the University offers two schemes which help parents save tax and national insurance on their childcare costs:

- [Salary Sacrifice Scheme](#)
- [Childcare Voucher Scheme](#), which can be used to pay for nursery fees, holiday play schemes, child minders, nannies, etc for children under 16.

Schools

[Oxfordshire County Council](#) offers information about applying for a place at a local school. The [OFSTED website](#) offers information about standards at your local school. If you are interested in private schools you must contact them individually.

Networks for parents, especially to all those new to Oxford

[New Parent Network](#) - Helpful to people new to Oxford.

[Oxfordshire Family Information Service](#)

[Oxford Women's Network](#) – Networking forum open to all women in the University.

[New to the University](#)

[Oxford University Newcomers Club](#)

[Living in Oxford](#) - Lots of information about the museums, the festivals, the parks and gardens, cinemas and theatres in town.

[Daily Info](#) - lists daily events in Oxford.



Members of the department are regularly involved in outreach to families and schools, as shown here at the Museum of Natural History.