I do believe this a needed policy. Hopefully its implementation will be accompanied by the college's commitment to expand childcare - especially in the evening and especially for drop-ins. I have students all the time who miss class because they don't have childcare. Community colleges should be leaders in this commitment to make as seamless as possible the relationship of adults returning to school and for providing childcare options for these adults.

Is this policy in use now? Please!! I am at the front desk at Capital Center. Is there some way of showing I have the authority to remove screaming, crying, unruly children and parents from the building?

There are no exceptions to the restriction of children from a classroom when a student/parent brings them and they are not creating a disturbance? I'm a bit surprised at the absolute nature of this restriction. It will probably result, on occasion, in a student/parent deciding to stay home with a child and miss class when the student/parent cannot find and/or afford a babysitter.

Excellent work! We have struggled to help harried parents understand that we really cannot accommodate children in the Computer Resource Centers, and have a sign posted. Still, several times each term, we get requests from parents to allow their children to accompany them in the lab. Unfortunately, since we still don't have a child care facility at Cascade, alternatives are limited. Regardless, it is great to see your work on an official college policy that we will be able to refer students to.

Thank you for sending out this draft. It is great to have clear guidelines around this topic. But I also think that whenever children are present it is a gift to their environment. So I personally would like to see a statement in this policy that PCC welcomes children in areas where it is safe and appropriate.

I do have one (perhaps not small) concern. If I am reading the document correctly, there would seem to be a complete ban on children (under age 16 and fully supervised by a parent) in the classroom. Is there an assumption that such children are inherently or inevitably disruptive? If so, that is not my experience at all. Such a ban can, for a single parent (unable to find childcare on a given day, maybe a public school planning day) mean that the student will be unable to attend class. In the past I have welcomed children to my classrooms under such circumstances and the kids actually add to the learning environment. If they become disruptive, obviously, the parent can take them out for a walk, etc. Is a complete ban on kids in all classrooms necessary?

What if the instructor does not direct the student to remove their children from a class? Last Winter, a student brought her two grade schoolers into our weight training class and the instructor just let it go -- the kids were unruly and the weight room really isn't the greatest playground in the world. My concern is that all faculty be informed, especially the part time faculty who are out of the loop on so many policy decisions. Thanks,

Thanks to the committee for working on this. Coincidentally, we are currently clarifying with Risk and Safety our policy concerning children not in the child care program, in the playground areas. The policy is in alignment with what your committee is recommending - that we will not allow unregistered children to play in these playgrounds for health and safety reasons. When your policy is finalized, will you be sending it without the large angular letters? My printer refused to print it and I'd like to post the policy. Thanks.

I'm personally happy that the Library isn't mentioned as an automatically "banned" area. I think the behavioral expectations outlined in the policy provide the Library with sufficient grounds to govern this area.

I was a little disappointed not to see anything in the document pertaining to children on our shuttle busses. We have an ongoing problem with parents not controlling their children on the busses. We don't have seat belts and my drivers are always concerned that in the event of minor accident or a sudden braking that children will be injured and the college will be liable.
Anyway, most of the policy made plenty of sense, but there was one thing that raised an alarm bell for me. The policy held that even accompanied children cannot be in classrooms. I can understand this in a chemistry lab or something, but a social science or math or English class? I don't understand why.

While it doesn't happen very often, periodically over the years I have had a mother bring a child into the classroom - usually when school is cancelled for whatever reason. In fact, I did it once or twice myself when I was taking courses here years ago because I didn't want to miss class and couldn't afford a babysitter. It has never been a problem. I have welcomed the children in as long as they have been non-disruptive, and truthfully I've never had a disruptive child in the class. In case of disruptive behavior, of course the instructor would have to put a stop to it.

But no one, in my fourteen years of experience here, has ever abused the privilege. There was one night class years ago once where a mother brought her son repeatedly - and even then it wasn't a problem. He actually wrote a report for me and I graded it! (He got an A-). Everyone was kind about it, and clearly it made attendance possible for the mother. It is my life philosophy to extend a helping hand when possible, especially when, in this case, it doesn't undermine the intent of the classroom.

So in short, I find this restriction excessive, and I hope that you will pass my concerns on.

Does this policy mean that an instructor who is providing a lecture is not to allow an older, quiet child, say 14 or so, to visit that classroom with their parent? That seems restrictive to me.

Having had some experience with this (as a single parent with a sick child and as an instructor with children in the classroom), I feel the need to include my opinion in the discussion. I don't see and have never experienced any harm in having a child present in a classroom with their parent or guardian as long as there is no disruption to the class environment and the children are in no danger of being harmed (such as in an auto repair class, etc). I teach sociology so the children are only in danger of being struck by a stray theory bouncing off a wall.

Seriously, some people with children do not always have quick and easy access to affordable day care, especially in emergencies such as the child being sick and unable to attend school, etc. On rare instances when parents need to care for the child we should be as accommodating and compassionate as possible.

I have had several classes where, on rare occasions, a child was brought in by a parent. I don't remember any ill effects on the class if the child was able to quietly amuse themselves while the more boring events of instruction played out around them. And at times they were a pleasure to have around, especially when they were old enough to take part in some of the discussion and add a child's valuable perspective.

Greetings -I don't want to send a bulk e-mail. I've been with the college over 18 years and it has been my understanding all along that children cannot be in class if they are not registered. There are serious insurance and liability issues, such as in extreme cases if there were a disaster, search and rescuers would not know that the child was in there. Perhaps some sort of clarification could be sent out to all the bulk e-mailers?

It's my opinion that some of the language in the proposed policy seems a little contradictory or unclear. I've included the passages below. The 3.2 statement that children "ARE NOT permitted" in classrooms .... is solid & clear. However, in 3.5 it sounds like they ARE permitted unless one or more of the listed conditions is present -- in which case it is the instructor's responsibility to direct their removal. So that makes it sound like it's the instructor's call whether children are permitted in the classroom & not that, as the first statement said, they are not permitted.

While I do agree it should be left up to the instructor, can you imagine a class where 10 extra kids are there? Even 5? It could become an issue with the seating capacity for a room too. I would hate to allow someone to bring a sick child because they couldn't go to school and the parent had to bring them with?

I have taught for seven years at PCC and over that time I have experienced several instances where a single mother was faced with the choice of either bringing her child to school or not being able to attend my class. I have always allowed these women to let their child sit quietly in the back of the class so that the mother could continue her education. I have made it clear though that if their child became a nuisance and disturbed the class that the child would
no longer be welcome. I would hate to lose this flexibility in dealing with my students. I believe that it is the instructor who is in the best position to make the "on the spot decision" as to what is best for both the student and the class as a whole.

I have had occasion to have students with child care issues bring their children to class. I have never had more than one at a time and the parents brought coloring or reading for the children. There was no distraction. I suggest that the policy allow for parents to bring children to class if they are well behaved; if not then the child would be excused -- and probably the parent would need to leave. I have a feeling that the children would understand the situation and cooperate with their parents.

The ENNL Department at Rock Creek would also like to say that although we recognize why a child should not be in a chemistry lab or welding class, it should be left up to the individual instructor whether or not a child is permitted into a (lecture) classroom. There should not be a blanket policy restricting children from classrooms at least not until PCC is willing to provide drop in childcare for those many (many) days when students in K-12 have the day off. Because our program has required attendance, we feel restricting children from class on those teacher inservice days would create an unnecessary hardship for our students and would also have a negative result on retention. We ask that the draft be changed to allow the instructor the freedom to respond to this situation at his or her own discretion.

I am a little concerned to find children banned entirely from classrooms, as I occasionally have a student who, due to a child care emergency, faces the choice of either bringing the child along or missing important information in class. In such (rare) cases, I would rather not enforce the child-free policy, as long as the child is not disruptive.

I'm thinking back to a meeting I had at SE where a child was sitting outside of Mimi Maduro's office in the hall unattended. I do know that there was concern on the part of the staff that the child had been left alone. Staff periodically went out into the hallway to check on the youngster.

I know that the staff felt that children should not be there as anyone can walk into the building. I think that whatever the decision, it should apply to all. If we don't do that then it becomes discriminatory in my view. There's also the consideration regarding course content. If I were in a class where, for example, the war in Iraq was being discussed, I'm not so sure it would be appropriate for my child to be in the room.

That hasn't happened yet to me in terms of having **so** many kids at once. Usually the only students who bring their kids in are the ones who can't afford childcare or who don't have a regular childcare provider (mom and dad switch off...ah, I remember those days). Personally, mildly sick kids don't bother me. Parents are usually competent enough to know when a kid is too sick to leave the house. This issue (children in the classroom) really hasn't been a very big problem for me or any of my colleagues in the ENL dept here at Rock Creek. Personally, as a mom, I'd rather see a child in a classroom than an unattended one left in a hallway (I saw a 5 or 6 year old hanging out by himself yesterday). I'm afraid that if we try to be too restrictive, more of our students will leave their children unattended when caught between needing childcare and having to give a speech or take a test.

....Last week an instructor did not allow a mother to bring her two boys in to a class, which resulted in the children riding their skateboards (unattended) between the CC and HT buildings. The boys were trying to jump the stairs along the exterior side of the pool (HT Building) when I stopped them to learn that their mother was attending a class and they did not know which one. Similarly, during the time I was a student here a biology instructor allowed a mother to bring her child into a lecture. The attention drawn to the student by the instructor was a huge distraction for me but I never thought to say anything. The instructor gave the little girl crayons and paper and checked in with her periodically throughout the two hour time period.....

.....I sympathize with all my young, single parents who are trying so hard to get an education. I'm a parent and I know how unreliable childcare can be. But the answer is not just to allow children in class or even on campus. I have seen unsupervised children roaming the halls and have had to be the "tough guy" and tell parents with small children that they couldn't have the child in class--it is very distracting and *not* ok to ask other students to put up with a small child who is bored-- or sick -- for a two and a half hour class.....What is desperately needed is a drop-in babysitting center on each campus, during class hours...
I think you have done a very thorough job of crafting this policy. Obviously we cannot have children in the shop for safety, but the other issues of importance you have outlined apply as well. Our poor ADHD students have enough distraction already!

I do not find the arguments for a firm blanket policy either logical or compelling. WADR to Mr. Black’s negative experience with having children in one of his classes, I did not get why it was so negative. My students do not appear to have any trouble voicing their concerns and it seems patronizing to assume this to be universally true. As an attorney I particularly do not like it when a policy is implicitly blamed on “the lawyers” (increased liability??).

Could we provide a free drop in center so that parents a place to take their kids while they attend to library research, or waiting in line to completer school business? Many of our students are a packaged deal meaning they have kids, we should try to accommodate them.

1) I have had registered sex offenders (re: minors) in my classes and have been notified of such (I believe that it is required that I be notified). There is no reason to deny these students with troubled pasts a college education, and obviously I cannot allow (legally or ethically) a child to attend a class in which this situation exists. And I don’t want to be put into the position of saying, “Well, yes, I allow children into my other classes, but not this one.”

2) On the few occasions in the past when a student brought her/his child to class, usually because child-care arrangements fell through, I allowed the child to attend because I wanted to accommodate the student. It has never worked out satisfactorily. ….

3) Finally, in my classes we have adult conversations, and some of the topics and/or discussions are just not appropriate for children. …

I sympathize with students who have child-care problems, however, I don’t regard the recognition of the rights of the rest of the students as “punishment” to those who have chosen to reproduce. Nor is it punishment to recognize the safety issues of children on a college campus…. But college classrooms are not child-care facilities.

While I certainly agree there are some settings & situations on campus where it would not be appropriate for children to be, there are many others where, on an occasional basis when child care arrangements have fallen through or the kids’ school is not in session, our students have had no other choice but to bring their kids to class.

Although I sympathize with parent’s plight over the child care issue; a major part of what PCC prepares students for is the world of work. Children are NOT allowed in most working environments and should not be allowed in our class rooms either.

Why can’t the policy regarding whether children are allowed on campus or in the classroom be decided on a case-by-case basis? It’s clear from the discussion that childcare issues pose a significant barrier to student retention and at this time, PCC provides no childcare alternative for children of students. Some instructors are fine with the occasional child in the classroom, others are not. Why can’t the policy remain flexible?

I believe daycare at PCC is a privilege to be earned, not a right. Seems to me that parents who want a day care facility at PCC should be involved in a quid pro quo arrangement; Three or fewer hours of childcare per week in exchange for one regularly scheduled hour of caring for other student’s children. Miss your scheduled hour and owe the coop an additional on-call hour next week! Miss either too often (3 times in a term?) and loose your privileges for the term!! And have to make up your missed time when you return next term!!!