

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
August 24, 2024
Chicago, Illinois**

**SAA Executive Committee: Childcare Policy
(Prepared by: Helen Wong Smith, President)**

The Society of American Archivists (SAA) Executive Committee is making a motion that the SAA will no longer offer childcare reimbursements or referral services to its Annual Meeting attendees. All information about this will be removed from the SAA website.

BACKGROUND

The practice of providing childcare at the annual conference was in support for women archivists¹ with a resolution presented by Mary Janzen providing childcare at the annual conference in the 1970s². 1985, the Council assessed each annual meeting attendee \$2 to support childcare³. At their January 1993 Council Meeting, guidelines were adopted for childcare at annual meetings to preclude the need for yearly Council involvement in pricing, based upon the principle that SAA will continue to subsidize this service through an assessment of all meeting registrants and that participating parents will pay the balance⁴. That year, SAA subsidized child care at the conference hotel, costing parents \$1 per hour per child⁵. This practice of subsidizing child care through registration continued, and arrangements were made through a vendor.

In May 2014, the Council agreed to allocate up to \$6,000 in childcare subsidies at the conference on an experimental basis. However, challenges in securing a vendor to provide these services is evident in the program of the 2014 conference: “We’re exploring options for offering onsite child care at the conference hotel.” A section on the Child Care Options in the August 2015 Staff Report on the Annual Meeting noted that after following up with 17 individuals who desired additional information, none required these services. It was decided not to offer a child care center or organized co-op, and staff would respond to requests for reimbursement. The proposed FY 2016 Budget noted

¹Hefner, Lori “The Committee on the Status of Women Turns 20” *Archival Outlook*, May 1993: 18. ISSN 0091-5971

² *Archivist Outlook*, November 1996: 11. ISSN 0091-5971

³ Kenney, Anne R. “SAA Is Us: Promoting Participation in the Work of the Society.” *The American Archivist* 56, no. 2 (1993): 342–47. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40293735>.

⁴ *Archival Outlook*, March 1993: 12. ISSN 0091-5971

⁵ *Archival Outlook*, July 1993: 12. ISSN 0091-5971

an expense of \$1,000 to support childcare, which did not include costs associated with providing for an onsite childcare center. Conference registration “*The policy for childcare services for registrants at the SAA Annual Meeting is currently under review*” appeared that year. The subsidizing budget vacillated between \$500 and \$1000 in FY 2017 - 2021.

DISCUSSION

The Resolution was passed when the only mode of participation was in-person and intended to increase participation from women who were the primary caregivers. Given that we now offer a virtual meeting option, if childcare is a barrier, the virtual meeting is an option.

Childcare is outside the mission and vision of SAA.

The legal council advises SAA against offering or recommending any childcare service for liability reasons. Our insurance carrier does not cover such liability, and any claims against SAA will cause our policy to be dropped, requiring us to seek a new policy at a significantly higher price.

While it was included as an expense against the Annual Budget (2016 - \$6,000, 2017 - \$1,000, 2018 and 2019 - \$500, 2020 - 2021 - \$1,000), the nominal fee to all registrants has not been assessed in these years.

The effort to address requests for childcare or reimbursement increases staff workload.

Most hotels provide childcare recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

THAT the SAA Council approves discontinuing the policy for Childcare Services for Registrants at SAA Annual Meetings

Support Statement: Both legal counsel and insurance carrier advise against providing recommendations for liability reasons. The process of reimbursements places an unnecessary burden on staff when virtual participation is available.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: The proposed recommendation does not impact SAA's strategic priorities.

Fiscal Impact: No fiscal impact