Baby Boom! Norton School Family Grows by 11 Sons, 3 Daughters

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It's tempting to suspect that there's something in the water at the Norton School of Family and Consumer Sciences [1].

In just a little over two years, a whopping 14 babies have been born to current faculty, staff and graduate students in the school. Eleven of the new additions are boys.

And another little one? a baby girl? is set to arrive in July.

"We are blessed to have all these babies join the Norton family," said Jana Hawley, director of the school, which is part of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences [2]. "We think it ironic, however, that it is the School of Family and Consumer Sciences that has realized this unusual baby boom."

In a school filled with researchers working on issues involving parents, children and families, there will surely be no shortage of advice for Norton School parents to share as their babies grow older.

Take, for example, Norton faculty member and new dad Timothy Ottusch, who does research on how parents develop expectations for their child to go to college. College may still be a ways off for Ottusch's 5-month-old son, Teddy, but in a few years, that research might come in quite handy.

An assistant professor of practice in family studies and human development, Ottusch joined the UA faculty last year. After his job interview at the Norton School, his future colleagues joked with him about how many babies had recently been born in the school.

Two days after he was offered the job, Ottusch and his wife found out they were expecting their first child.

Ottusch said it has been helpful working with so many other parents to whom he can turn for support and advice as a new dad. He said he can see Norton School play dates in the future, when the kids are older.

"It's been really nice. Most faculty here are in the same position of having little ones at home, so there's a really good understanding that everyone has family obligations," he said.

Sabrina Helm, an associate professor in the school, gave birth to her son, Jake, in February 2017.

Now 47 years old, Helm was surprised to learn in 2016 that she was pregnant with her first child. She was the 10th person to have a child in the Norton School baby boom, and one of
eight first-time parents on the list.

"It's helpful to have people in the same boat," Helm said. "It's fantastic, because we get good advice on things like day care."

Leslie Allen, an administrative assistant in the Norton School whose son, Jordan, will turn 2 this summer, said having so many parents of young kids in the school has been a fun way to build camaraderie.

"Our babies always pop up in conversation because they're around the same age," she said.

Allen said Hawley has been very supportive of the new parents in the school, many of whom have taken advantage of flexible work arrangements and the UA's six weeks of paid parental leave.

The school also held a picnic at Gene C. Reid Park in the fall, to bring together employees and their kids. Allen says she hopes there can be more events like that in the future.

Here are all the Norton School babies born between late 2015 and today. (One more baby, Joseph, was born in November 2016 to Norton School systems administrator Guy Perkins and his wife, Jessica. Perkins has since left the University.)

- Anya was born in December 2015 to family studies and human development doctoral student Jacy Farkas, who also is a manager of the UA's Sonoran University Center for Excellence in Disabilities Education, Research and Service, and Andy Farkas.
- Emmett was born in February 2016 to research scientist Madeleine DeBlois and assistant professor of musicology and Daveen Fox Endowed Chair of Music Studies Matthew Mugmon.
- Nicholas was born in May 2016 to associate accountant Amanda Zaman and Paul Zaman.
- Noelle was born in May 2016 to accountant David Reeves and Christine Reeves.
- Jordan was born in July 2016 to administrative assistant Leslie Allen and Hyrum Allen.
- Grant was born in August 2016 to assistant professor Katie Zeiders and Adam Zeiders.
- Jacob was born in October 2016 to assistant professor of practice Adam Clark and Christina Clark.
- Theodore (Theo) was born in November 2016 to assistant professor of practice Darin Knapp and Ashley Knapp.
- Jake was born in February 2017 to associate professor Sabrina Helm and Bill Barnett.
- Hutchison was born in May to Caitlyn Francis, office assistant for the Take Charge America Institute, and Ross Francis.
- Jasper was born in May to Torey Ligon, program manager for the Take Charge America Institute, and Travis Smith.
- Evan was born in June to associate professor Russel Toomey and Danielle Flink.
- Theodore (Teddy) was born in October to assistant professor of practice Timothy Ottusch and Stephanie Ottusch.
- Heemansh was born in February to Payal Khosla, a doctoral student in family studies and human development, and Devesh Khosla.
- Associate professor Melissa Barnett and Josh Hoblitt are expecting a baby girl, due July 18.