

**Summary of Work and Family Interface in Academic Medicine
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Panelists

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Background

- Family responsibilities, especially child rearing, disproportionately affect the careers of female faculty.
- Compared with men with children, women with children have;
 - modestly lower career aspirations
 - similar job descriptions
 - greater obstacles to an academic career
 - less institutional support
 - slower self-perceived career progress
 - lower career satisfaction. (Carr 1998)
- Among Yale Medical School graduates from 1922-1999, 35% of those without children felt that they had had to choose between medicine and motherhood, and 46% said that they could not be both good mothers and good doctors. (Potee1999)
- For women with children or other familial responsibilities, pursuing a demanding professional career will always be a balancing act that is affected by many things, such as whether a pregnancy is difficult or relatively easy, whether children are healthy or have special needs, the availability of high-quality child care, the career path and supportiveness of one's spouse, and the presence of extended family or friends who can lend a hand in crisis. It is wise to avoid the impulse to be a superwomen and "do it all," pragmatic choices have to be made. (Palepu and Hebert 2002)

Comments from Panelists during the Session

Challenges

- Lack of Peer mentors
- Finding good childcare
- Support when children are sick
- Diverse personalities of children with specific needs
- Carving out time to meet each child's needs
- Taking care of partner – Divorce risk with dual career
- Carving out time for partner
- Overcoming fear of not keeping up with male colleagues
- Less time for work ambitions
- Overcoming feelings of incompetence as mother and scientist
- Younger children sense that mom is gone working
- Older children – logistics of their busy lives, activities, transportation
- Home maintenance – especially when absent from home
- Realizing you can't do it all

What strategies did not work for you? Any regrets?

- Over committing
- Failed to communicate needs and schedules to partner
- Traveled too much
- Making a work choice that had more impact on my family than anticipated
- Trying to multi-task too much

Strategies that worked:

- Create fun family time
- Learning to say "No" and "I can't"
- Include children in work life when possible (travel, visit work)
- Include kids in activities you enjoy (camping)
- Be there for the big stuff, they will remember
- Find ways to stay connected with them through out the day (packing lunches, phone calls)
- Communicate with partner – Ask for help
- Set boundaries between work and family time
- Don't give up everything for your kids (maintain personal/professional activities for yourself)
- Limit ambitions at times, recognize strengths and success always

Personal Scarifies:

- Hobbies (reading, art, athletics mentioned) – let go of intensity but devise strategies to include children (baby jogger) or delay (art in retirement)
- Personal Balance
- Replaced by gratitude for having children

How can we receive help from our workplace?

- We can reach out to our colleagues and form support groups
- We can ask to work from home one day a week....ask for support from our supervisors/chairs.
- Onsite child care

Recommendations for Junior Faculty

Know what your expectations are of yourself and expectations others have of you
Determine what you can let go of both at work and at home
Articulate what is important to you at, family and work
Get rid of “I should”
Lower expectations of what you can and can not accomplish (i.e. home cleanliness)
Build in flexible time into your work day to attend to “other life”
Husband/partner training – negotiation is key
Be honest with yourself about what stage in your children’s lives you want to be most involved
Value and financially support good childcare, value their opinion
Work electronically from home when possible

Comments from audience:

-It is important to choose our partners wisely
-Some of us are single parents
-Pay your nannies well, pay for benefits, value their opinions and don’t be threatened by them regarding their relationship with your children.
-OHSU needs childcare. Not all can afford nannies. Other universities have provided an on-site facility for sick children which significantly decreased time away from work.
-It is possible more than we think to work from home. We can streamline our work.

Suggested Strategies for Promoting Work/life Balance at OHSU

- Onsite daycare for children of OHSU employees
- Onsite urgent daycare for sick children of OHSU employees.
- Lactation; time and rooms readily available, widely advertised to faculty
- Faculty development for institutional leaders on how to promote and mentor junior faculty members and trainees in the area of work-family balance.
- Institutional support and guidance for part-time career tracks
- Formal child care needs assessment to determine the number of faculty member that have children, care arrangement and values
- Confidential counseling (life coach) and resource list for OHSU parents juggling personal and career decisions
- One-on-one advising about maternity leave planning that extends beyond FMLA policy from individual who understands the impact of leave on salary, performance pay, benefits
- March Wellness center - on site childcare
- Comprehensive exit interview process for departing faculty
- Competitive award program providing modest amounts of flexible research funding for junior faculty who are also responsible for care of family members.
- Peer mentoring on Work-life balance
- Parenting classes for professionals focusing on work-life balance
- Financial Planning Seminars and Resources

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