Family-friendly return to work initiatives

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Some numbers

  - 17%/47% of women aged 25-34/35 - 44 have children
  - 90% of women work additional hours each week
    - Work to “get all work done to proper standard”
  - 50% of women (more in astronomy I expect) are expected to travel, average of 3 times per year

- UK National Childbirth Trust 2008 Survey of women returning to work concerns:
  - 60% concerned about childcare
  - 56%/53% Missing child/Child missing them
  - 33% concerned about perceptions of their boss
  - 28% concerned about ability to be a good employee
  - 15% concerned about ability to continue breast-feeding
Issues returning to work

- Childcare
- Caring responsibilities/desires and travel
  - Cannot/Unwilling to leave young child behind when travelling
  - Travel with young children not easy!
- Effect on networking - astronomy happens at the pub
- Reduced working hours
  - Drop-off in productivity
- Coping with unpredictable nature of small children
CSIRO Ruby Payne-Scott Award

• Up to $35k awarded to a parent returning to work after at least 18 weeks of leave to be primary carer for newborn child

• Named after Ruby Payne-Scott, CSIR researcher forced to resign in 1951 after her marriage became known because of her pregnancy

• May be used to pay for:
  • research assistant
  • “buy-out” from projects to commit time to research
  • funding visitors’ travel
  • funding meetings
  • partner/nanny travel
CSIRO Ruby Payne-Scott Award

- Some examples of recent Astro usage:
  - NMc-G:
    - 4 weeks in Europe (ASTRON & Uni Bonn) including partner travel
    - Brought DVs to Sydney & ran “Diffuse Gas in and Around the Milky Way” workshop
    - 4 weeks in US, including funding to bring collaborators to NRAO
  - Brooks/Feain: Recent ALMA Community Workshop ++
- Application statistics: 1st year 10 applied, 6 awarded. 3rd year 6 applied, 5 awarded
  - Meets need or just poorly advertised?
- CSIRO committed as part of the WISE Summit April 2011 to increase the number of Payne-Scott Awards

Friday, 13 May 2011
Payne-Scott Thoughts

- Payne-Scott funds useful to the rest of the community
  - More support staff for organising meetings would be useful
- Application simple, easy - but may be necessary to apply while still on leave
- Would be helpful to string the funding out over 2 years
- Increased flexibility - use P-S to pay for nanny at home?
- Flexibility to apply for grant anytime in first 3 years back at work?
Childcare support: $15,000 per annum for childcare costs

Family rooms. A suite of offices, comprising private rooms in which to breast-feed infants, express and store milk, and offices that can be used by parents while caring for their infants and children.

Meeting and travel support.

Additional time for contract renewal.

Technical support while on maternity leave.

Family-friendly meeting times (start after 9:15, end before 4:30)
UNSW Vice Chancellor’s Childcare Support Fund for Women Researchers

- $500 for conference attendance within the Sydney metropolitan;
- $1,000 if child/ren is to accompany the woman researcher for Australian conferences
- $2,000 if the child/ren is to accompany the woman researcher for conference attendance overseas.

Available once per year and for children up to 18

http://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/equity/childcare_support_fund_vc.pdf
University of Sydney Brown Fellowship


• Brown Fellowships for University researchers “whose careers have been interrupted by the undertaking of sustained primary caring duties” (can be child-rearing or other caring responsibilities).

• Provide academic staff with relief from routine teaching and administrative responsibilities, and research only staff with funding to secure technical assistance, for up to two semesters.

• Fellowships provide up to $60,000 per fellow at $30,000 per semester ($25,000 in teaching relief/technical assistance and $5,000 in research support).
Monash University’s Populate & Publish Policy


- The grant aims to provide assistance to female academics engaged in teaching / research positions who have taken maternity leave by providing an untied grant of $15,000 to be used for any research-related purpose.

- Examples include: teaching relief, research assistance, and the purchase or maintenance of research consumables.

- The grant must be spent within two (2) years of the date of its award.
• Can sacrifice 12 weeks of the 26 weeks maternity leave to fund:
  • Conference leave
  • Convert job to part-time
  • Study leave
  • Employ research or teaching assistant

• Forces you to choose your child vs career - these grants should be about enabling both
Thoughts on useful things

• On-site childcare
• Flexible work hours, encouragement to work from home
• Travel support for up to (and beyond?) preschool-age children
  • Drawing the Payne-Scott out over 2 years would be useful
• Extend return-to-work grants to fathers who take substantial time out for caring
• Family friendly office space
Thoughts on useful things

- Recognise, appreciate and acknowledge staff working reduced hours
  - Don’t schedule a meeting on a day you know one of your key staff won’t be there
  - Don’t expect part-time staff to attend all meetings, 80% time usually means 100% time overhead, so less pro-rata time for research
- Help metrics recognise the reduced work hours
  - Promotion cases should ask everyone what fraction of FT they work
- Mentors needed
Summary

• A large fraction of women entering/at the mid-career level have children

• Balancing family and work is a universal challenge but falls largely to women

• Most universities and research institutes have some programs in place to help people returning to work
  • Some good, some mediocre
  • Most focus on enabling relief or travel
  • Should there be more programs, extensions to current programs?

• What else is needed:
  • Work flexibility
  • Recognition of part-time work day-to-day and in metrics
  • Family-friendly work places & observatories