

Balancing Career and Family – Tips for Parental Leave

Dear Scientist,

Congratulations! You are expecting a child and considering how to balance career and family. Making a plan and knowing your resources are important steps. Here are some tips that may help.

PLAN YOUR LEAVE ... AND YOUR RETURN

- Communicate your intention to return to work after parental leave (boss, colleagues)
- Communicate when you would like to leave *and* return, and whether full or part time
- Discuss with your boss how your projects will continue in your absence and how you can have input while away; discuss any authorship issues
- Clarify financial impact of taking leave and, if necessary, plan alternatives
- Identify important contacts and allies (e.g. colleagues, equal opportunity officer, etc.)
- Identify concerns you might have, and consider possible solutions or who you need to talk to
- Let your boss know if your plans change

STAYING CONNECTED DURING PARENTAL LEAVE

- Ask to be kept on mailing list(s) for seminars, talks, conferences, job opportunities, etc.
- Keep in touch with your boss
- Attend lab meetings or other lab events from time to time if possible

CHILDCARE

- Apply for a Kita voucher and arrange childcare early (Kita search by neighborhood: <https://www.berlin.de/sen/jugend/familie-und-kinder/kindertagesbetreuung/kitas/>)
- Kitas near Charité Campus Mitte:
 - [Fröbel Kindergarten Charité Mitte](#)
 - [Fröbel Kindergarten mittendrin](#)
 - [Ina Kindergarten Habersaathstraße](#)
 - [Kindertagesstätte Pelikan](#)
- What emergency childcare options (e.g. KidsMobil) are available to you or your partner?
- Ask if childcare is available at conferences, meetings, events you would like to attend
- Find out about campus parent-child rooms (e.g. [Charité Eltern-Kind-Zimmer](#))

RETURNING TO WORK and CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Ask if your institution offers stipends for women returning to work after parental leave. The Charité, for example, annually offers the [Lydia Rabinowitsch Stipend](#).
- If you took time off during a qualification or evaluation phase, or while working on a third-party funded project, you are usually eligible for an extension. Consult the applicable organization for current policies and procedures.
- Consider indicating your “academic age” on application/evaluation documents. Academic age represents your years of active research, taking into account time off for parental leave and part-time work. Many employers will use academic age (rather than your biological age) to evaluate publication and third-party funding performance, and putting this information in a prominent place makes it easier for them to do so. (See also <http://naturalscience.careers/de/lebensalter-oder-akademisches-alter/>)

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact kimberly.mason@charite.de.