



**Thoughts on managing a successful
laboratory and a (relatively) happy family**

Sue Wessler
University of Georgia



The Gathering Storm (NAS report) does not recommend fixing the leaky pipeline as a way to significantly increase the number of Americans practicing cutting edge science.

My experience – perception is that it is too difficult to run a lab while raising a family.

The solution is usually to chose a non-tenure track research or teaching position (back seat to husband's career).

A family friendly job and we should promote it as such

A job that can change as we change

- build a lab to a size that works

- research, teaching, administration

For postdocs, graduate students and undergraduates

Planning ahead:

- your partner, husband

- where to live/work

Planning ahead:

- your partner, husband

 - do they want children?

 - will they contribute equally to parenting?

 - will they be fully supportive of your career choice?

Planning ahead:

- where to live/work

 - affordable housing?

 - affordable, available childcare?

 - significant commute?

 - family-friendly department?

Contrary to what you may have heard... being a professor is a great job if you want to be a mom...

- flexible hours (only have to be there to teach)
(a privilege that can be abused)
- good pay (especially in a low-cost town/city)
- can take long vacations to cool places
- the "job" is diverse - you can find what fits
(research, teaching, administration, writing)
- male colleagues are usually more reasonable than
the average!

Synergy between lab and family....

- helps keep the job in perspective
 - kids are hard work but easy on the brain
(home recharges your battery)
 - more resilient (?)
- helps develop organizational skills
- helps develop interpersonal skills (more forgiving?)

Random thoughts:

- Don't be shy about asking for a raise
- Don't try to be a soccer (hockey!!) mom - you have something different to offer your child
- Put your needs before those of your University/company
- Exercise regularly, eat and sleep well - stay sane!
- Speak up - no one cares about you as much as you care about yourself (except perhaps your parents!).

A tough act to follow...



