

Mothers in Science

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Families and Careers in Physics

25th November 2014



physics and family

career in physics

- studies 2000 - 2006 in Hamburg
- diploma thesis 2005/6 at H1 - experimental particle physics
- PhD thesis 2006 - 2010, FLC - detector development
- since 2010 DESY Fellow, FLA-ILC - accelerator development

family and kids

- husband Michael@DESY - IT & Belle
- Bastian born in March 2011 (3 yrs 8 months)
- Philip born in May 2013 (1 yr 6 months)

parental leaves

Bastian - March 2011

- Feb - Sept 2011
- Michael: two months after birth
- Oct 2011 - Oct 2012: 10 hrs/week
- Michael: month 10 and 11
- since Oct 2012: 25 hrs/week

Philip - May 2013

- Apr - Sept 2013
- Michael: three months after birth
- Oct 2013 - Oct 2014: 8 hrs/week
- since Oct 2014: 20 hrs/week

daily life

- alarm at 7am
- Michael@9am: kids to Kindergarten (5 hrs/day)
- almost 5hrs work as physicist
- me@2pm: kids from Kindergarten
- afternoon with children
- dinner around 6pm
- eventually silence around 8pm
- remote work (about 2 days/week)

DESY as employer for families

- full flexibility possible
- parental leaves or part time work fully accepted without bureaucratic problems
- remote work possible and accepted
- many meetings and conferences on-site

- only short term contracts, tenure becomes not easier with family
- salary worse than in the world outside

part time working in science

advantages

- work appreciated, for it still increases scientific output
- supervision of PhD students perfect (reading@home)
- working more efficient
- thinking about science: good balance for life with kids

disadvantages

- 8-10 hrs/week too less, better than nothing
 - much of time needed for communication
 - most meetings not visitable → not visible for colleagues
- 20 hrs/week better
 - not much time for social contacts to colleagues
 - abrupt roll change twice a day difficult
- possibility and willingness to travel drop

hints and tricks

- for former PhD students: consider shift of beginning of your Mutterschutz
→ 12 complete months before used to calculate Elterngeld
- for fathers: use possibility of parental leaves
- for repeaters: end your Elternzeit I before Mutterschutz II
→ full salary 6 weeks before and 8 weeks after the birth
- Betreuungsgeld: as soon as no more Elterngeld is paid, until any kind of day care used
- since August 2014: 5 hrs/day Kindergarten free for kids older than 12 months
- one morning without work very useful: household chores, shopping, even sometimes recreation

personal summary

- family and scientific research is a perfect combination but it was a decision against a tenure position
- German science funding is not family friendly
- Frauenquote not helpful

