Calling all families
by Sarah Ducamp, PhD and Kimberly Wong, PhD

With the holidays fast approaching, we like to take a moment to acknowledge our families, and this quarter’s newsletter is dedicated to all the hard-working parents and soon-to-be parents in the BCH postdoctoral community!

Each year, a portion of the Postdoctoral Association Annual Survey is dedicated to understanding the parenthood life as a postdoc. Our 2019 Annual Survey was launched in September. It has been designed by the Postdoctoral Association (PDA) to better identify our community needs. The data we collect is vital to understanding issues plaguing our postdoc community and learning how the PDA can advocate for better benefits or working conditions. If you didn’t participate yet, the survey is open until December 15 at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2CV9P95.

By November 18th, among our 179 respondents, 29.0% reported to be parents (n=49, including 22 women and 27 men). This result is similar to our 2018 survey, where 32.7% of our 385 respondents reported to have kids. Similarly, most of them reported to have one child (67%, n=31). The remaining parents have two (28%, n=13) or three children (4%, n=2).

To give a face to these statistics, you will find in this newsletter, an interview with five parent-research fellows (page 2). They nicely share with us a part of their life. They are representative of our parent-postdoc community and to their challenges.

An important portion of those parents have to find a daytime care solution for their kids. The associated cost is often difficult to face considering a postdoc salary.

Do you utilize any of the following daytime childcare arrangements?

How much do you currently pay for childcare each month? (total cost for all children)

Change in PDA Leadership!

We are thrilled to announce the promotion of former Career Development co-Chair Hani Harb, to PDA co-President. Our former co-President, Sarah Hersman, had stepped down as co-President in October after obtaining an industry position. The PDA members would like to thank her for her service and please welcome Hani to the Executive Board! Congratulations to you both!

We are also welcoming three new Career Development committee co-Chairs, Caroline Schuster, Abhijit Mondal, and Sreya Ghosh! The current co-Chair Manoussa Fanny accepted a new position in industry. Thank you for all your service!
How does childcare affect BCH postdocs?
by Colette Bichsel, PhD and Julie Sesen, PhD

American families face ongoing struggles when it comes to the ever-rising cost of child care. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), child care is considered affordable if it costs families under 7% of their pre-tax income. However, in Massachusetts, child care can cost over $20,000 on average, a daunting figure for many postdocs to consider (https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/MA). We asked five postdocs how child care options affect them financially, and what improvements would most improve their work-life balance.

How many children do you have, and how old are they?
DP: Danielle Peterse, Ph.D. (Vascular Biology) We have one little boy, he is almost 3 months old.
AW: Anais Wanet, PhD (BIDMC) One kid, 18 months.
HH: Hani Harb, Ph.D. (Immunology) I have 1 child and she is 2 years old.
SL: Silmara de Lima, PhD (Neurosurgery) One child, 5 years old.
EJ: Erin M. Johnson-Venkatesh, PhD (Neurobiology) 2, I have an 8 year old and a 4 year old.

What kind of childcare do you have, for children below school age? (nanny, family care, BCH childcare, other?) Where is it located?
DP: We found a great in-home family day care. A caretaker takes care of maximum 4 children at the same time, and often less than 4. It is located in East Somerville, close to where we live. It’s actually only a 5 minute walk from our apartment to the daycare.
AW: Family Care, 75 Saint-Alphonsus Street, Roxbury (next to the Longwood T stop on green E line).
HH: I visit BCH childcare, located in Brookline.
SL: I had family support until she was 2.5 yrs old, after that I had to put her in a daycare. Both her previous childcare and her current school was/is in Brighton.
EJ: I have private daycare for my 4 year old. He is in a pre K class at a daycare center located in Brookline village.

How much is the monthly cost? Do you receive a subsidy or any cost defrayment?
DP: We pay in weekly intervals. It is around $270/wk for 3 days of daycare (it’s $10 per hour). No subsidy.
AW: $325/week, so around $1,400/month. No subsidy, other than the $5,000 dependent care FSA*.
HH: I pay $2,000 monthly, after a $393 subsidy.
SL: For daycare it was $1,600 (one of the cheapest I found). No subsidy.
EJ: $350 a week. No subsidy.

For children at school, what extra costs do you have? (nanny, after-school programs, etc.)
DP/AW/HH: n/a
SL: After-school programs.
EJ: We have both before school and after school care at my son’s elementary school. This is an additional $8290 a year. Plus, during the summer we use a full time summer camp which is about $2900 for most of the summer.

Did you apply for another childcare? If so, why didn’t you get it?
DP: I applied for one other in-home day care, but they never responded to my calls. Most day care centers don’t allow part-time day care, so we would have to send our little one for 5 days, even though we only needed 3.
AW: Yes, in another family daycare but it was full.
HH: We applied for other childcares but the BCH childcare exceeds in its quality of services and the quality of teachers.
SL: No.
EJ: No.

*A Dependent Care FSA (DCFSA) is a pre-tax benefit account used to pay for eligible dependent care services, such as preschool, summer day camp, before or after school programs, and child or adult daycare. It’s a smart, simple way to save money while taking care of your loved ones so that you can continue to work. Find out more information at https://www.fsafeds.com/explore/dcfsa
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BCH Childcare</th>
<th>Bright Horizon</th>
<th>LMA Childcare Center</th>
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<td>6 wk to 6 yrs</td>
<td>2 mo to 5 yrs</td>
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<td>$1854/mo for preschoolers</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Short waitlist</td>
<td>Outdoor play area (rooftop terrace)</td>
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<td>Daily outdoor exploration</td>
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<td>Use sign language</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Landmark Building, and other</td>
<td>395 Longwood Avenue</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boston locations</td>
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<td><a href="http://child-care-preschool.brighthorizons.com/ma/boston/landmark">Bright Horizon</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.lmaccc.org/">LMA</a></td>
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<td>(617) 355-6006</td>
<td>(617) 450-0790</td>
<td>(617) 632-2755</td>
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**Are you satisfied by your childcare? What improvement would have the strongest impact for you?**

**DP:** He’s going to start this week, so I’m curious how he will be doing. Improvements I’d like would be 1, Have more flexible options for daycare (half days, part-time, after hours, we’re still postdocs after all); and 2, Get a more decent price for daycare at children’s hospital for postdocs (currently it’s >50% of our salary which would going to daycare)

**AW:** Extremely satisfied, but longer hours at night would be better (daycare closes at 5:30 pm).

**HH:** The childcare is amazing. The teachers are very well trained and educated. The quality of service exceeds our expectations. The amount of love, care, education and manners they show to the babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers is something rarely seen. But the subsidy should be increased to help research fellow that their salary merely covers the cost of living in Boston. The costs of the daycare just increased this month but the subsidy remains the same. We endure extreme financial stress because of this issue and we need to cut out of our savings monthly to cover the expenses.

**SL:** Now she’s in school, but having a childcare subsidy from the Institution/PI we work for would have the strongest impact. The postdoc salary can’t afford childcare costs.

**EJ:** Yes. Things aren’t too bad now. It was really expensive when my kids were younger. Also, the daycare is a mile away, which isn’t bad, but closer daycare would be even better.

**How could the Postdoc Association help?**

**DP:** Probably having some guidelines for expectant parents (when to start looking for daycare, what are average prices in different neighbourhoods, what to do when the daycare unexpectedly is closed for the day and you have to come to work, where to apply for government subsidies...)

**AW:** By sharing a list of all daycares in the area, with contact information and price and possibly a list of volunteer parents happy to share their feedback.

**HH:** I believe that the PDA can help in shedding more light on the financial problems that we face here as postdocs.

**SL:** I wish the PDA could fight for this cause and suggest for PIs and/or the Hospital’s administration for more support, such as childcare stipends for postdocs with kids or a childcare in the Longwood area.

An Institution like BCH that has in its logo “Until every child is well” should look after their employees children as well. They should either offer a childcare with more spots (the childcare they have has very limited number of spots and cannot satisfy all employees), or based on the employees salary they could offer some kind of stipend for postdocs with kids. Another option is to have the PI and Institutions that provide money for research including this type of budget in the funds, in case the PIs have post docs with kids working for them.

**EJ:** There used to be a program at children’s that would help you find lower cost/high quality daycare. Especially when you are looking for care for the first time, having some kind of help is nice.
Useful information for new parents
by Julie Sesen, PhD and Kimberly Wong, PhD

Childcare options

• **Children’s Hospital Child Care Center** – Children’s Hospital has an excellent affiliated daycare center, that is available to Categorical track residents (though there is a long waiting list). It is directed by Donna Warner (donna.warner@childrens.harvard.edu) and is located 21 Autumn Street, just a short walk from Children’s Hospital. It is open year round on weekdays from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM. Phone: (617) 355-6006.

• **Bright Horizons Family Center at Landmark** – [http://www.brighthorizons.com/](http://www.brighthorizons.com/) The center is located at 401 Park Drive, 4th Floor West, Boston, MA 02215, only a few blocks from the medical area. is open weekdays from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM and serves children from infancy to preschool. Phone: (617) 450-0790. The hospital has a contractual relationship that reserves 20 slots for BCH employees.

• **The LMA Family Childcare Network** – [https://www.masco.org/working/child-care-resources](https://www.masco.org/working/child-care-resources) A network of licensed family childcare providers who provide childcare in their homes for families who work in the Longwood Medical area. Network Family Childcare Providers with varying vacancies are in the following towns: Brookline, Roxbury, Milton, Hyde Park, Needham, and Dorchester. Contact Nina Dickerman (ndickerman@nurturyboston.org), Director, Family Child Care Institutional Services Nurtury, directly at (617) 695-0700 x244. Nina can also direct you regarding the Bromley Heath Center in Jamaica Plain, as well as other Nurtury owned centers.

• **Backup Care** – The hourly cost of adult and childcare through Care.com back-up care is now only $7.50/hour! Once the care is complete and the hours have been confirmed, your credit card will be charged for your hourly co-payment. You may use up to a combined total of 15 days of backup child care and adult care per year (October 1 through September 30). Sign up using your Boston Children’s Hospital email address at bch.care.com. A similar benefit through Care.com is available to UHAT residents through BMC. Last-minute care for work related needs such as school snow days, sick days, school vacation, or if your normal child or adult care falls through are included at $6.00/hr for in-home child and adult backup care, and $10.00/day/child for in-center backup childcare. You may use up to 10 days per year in any combination of backup care.

• **Au Pair Services** – Cultural Care Au Pair (CCAP) is the largest Au Pair company in the world, with more than 90,000 au pairs in the U.S. CCAP is offering a $500 discount to employees new to their program. They also offer our employees customized consultations and webinars at no cost. For more information, please contact a program consultant at 800-333-6056 x 3605.

More information can be found at: [https://bcrp.childrenshospital.org/program/the-personal-touch/family-friendliness/](https://bcrp.childrenshospital.org/program/the-personal-touch/family-friendliness/)

Back to work after a Maternity Leave

BCH and its Lactation Support Program offers breastfeeding classes on the first Tuesday of every month from 1PM to 2PM in the Hale Family Center for families in the Main Lobby. The class covers topics such as:

- Guidelines for pumping and transporting breast milk
- Breast pumps: Will your insurance cover one?
- Transitioning back to work after maternity leave
- How to talk to your supervisor about pumping breaks

For registrations and more information, please contact Kimberly.Barbas@childrens.harvard.edu. [http://web2.tch.harvard.edu/lactation/mainpageS31516P4.html](http://web2.tch.harvard.edu/lactation/mainpageS31516P4.html)

Boston Children’s Employee Lactation Rooms

Boston Children’s Hospital provides employees with private, comfortable lounges for nursing mothers to express their milk during work breaks. These rooms have hospital-grade electric breast pumps, which require a personal kit for individual use. The pumps and rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Unfortunately, there is a clear lack of lactation room availability in research buildings (Karp, CLS), where many Postdocs work. We recognize that this is a pressing issue. The PDA Executive board is work-
Parental Leave Policies: Know your rights!

The BCH Research Fellows (RF) parenting leave policy is explained in the RF Policy Manual (last update: 2016). The federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 provides an eligible employee with up to twelve weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons. Consequently, BCH allows to RF up to a total of 12 weeks of unpaid leave, contemporaneously to birth or adoption.

Nevertheless, the RF must have at least 6 month of continuous service and should notify their PI at least 30 days in advance.

The manual discusses financial support during a Parenting leave. Benefits-eligible RFs employed by the hospital (>50% salary from BCH or NRSA funding) may be eligible for short-term disability insurance benefits and contact the Human Resources service center for information. Additionally, several circumstances can provide financial support (fellowship program > 24 months, 12 months of continuous service in the PI’s lab, etc.). For eligible RF, the birth parent or the primary caregiver of the newly born or adopted child are eligible for up to 8 weeks of base salary. The manual doesn’t provide that much of information for RF that are not employed by BCH and doesn’t discuss the case of newly recruited postdoc being in the process of creating family.

Parental benefits vary greatly between institutions. Notably, Harvard Medical School provides postdocs with up to 13 weeks of paid maternity leave for birth mothers, either at 75% or 100% of regular base pay depending of RF years of service. Non-birth parents are eligible for up to four weeks of paid parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child. Lastly, Massachusetts state adopted the Massachusetts Paid Family Leave Act (PFMLA). As early as Jan 1, 2021 and July 1, 2021, employees can request up to 12 weeks of job-protected paid medical (including child-bonding or health issues) and family leave, respectively. These funds can be used to supplement other benefits, such as partial salary coverage by employers or short-term disability. Furthermore, if an employer terminates a covered individual within six months after taking leave, there is a presumption that the employer engaged in unlawful retaliation.

In 2020, it is a goal of the BCH PDA co-presidents to prioritize family benefits in their discussion with BCH administration to make sure these policies are made available to all BCH postdocs!

2. A PI may not require the Research Fellow to work during a Parenting Leave
3. HR Employee Service Center: 617-355-7780, HREmployeeServiceCenter@childrens.harvard.edu http://web2.tch.harvard.edu/hrsc/index.html
Every year around September, the Mentoring committee asks you to rate your PI/mentor. This is a way to learn more about the kind of mentors we have at BCH and to highlight the Exceptional Mentorship of the 2 Best Mentors of the year (a young PI and a more established PI). This year you were more than 100 postdocs to respond to the “Rate Your Mentor” survey and the winners of the Best Mentor Awards were announced during the All-Star Mentoring event.

Gus Cervini, Vice President of Research Administration did us the honor of announcing the awardees and read some of the moving testimonies that postdocs submitted with their nominations:

Timothy Yu, MD, PhD (Division of Genetics and Genomics) is the recipient of the “Young PI” mentorship award now renamed to the “J.F.P. Ullmann” award in memory of our dear fellow friend who passed away suddenly in February.

Lois Smith, MD, PhD (Department of Ophthalmology) is the recipient of the “BCH Postdoctoral Association” award.

Stay tuned for the next “Rate your Mentor” survey that will be launched in September 2020 and get the opportunity to highlight your PI next year!

Couldn’t make it to this event?

Here is what you missed!

For the 7th Annual All-Star Mentoring edition, the Mentoring committee put together 15 mentors from different fields. Starting with exceptional mentors from academia: Maria Lehtinen (BCH PDA Best Mentor 2018), Marsha Moses (BCH PDA Best Mentor 2014), Chris Walsh (BCH PDA Best Mentor 2017), Paul Rosenberg (BCH PDA Best Mentor 2018) and Ivan Zanoni (BCH), Rafael Luna (BC), and Caroline Sokol (MGH). We also met with Judith Fleming who is the Ass. Director of the Translational Research Program, Lina Williamson who is the co-founder, President & CIO of the Translational Medicine Accelerator, Angela Eggleston who is Senior Editor for Nature and Bill Braunlin who is a patent agent at Sunstein Kann Murphy & Timbers. And last but not least, mentors from industry: Claire Galand (Agenus), Michael Ackerman (Novartis), Eric Perkins (Addgene), and our sponsor Chris Gould (BioLegend).

The Annual All-Star Mentoring event is one of the star events from the BCH Postdoc Association and gives you the opportunity to meet in small group with inspiring mentors. Here are what postdocs think about this event:

“It was great to talk to senior PIs from my department.”

“The mentoring events over the years have given me an opportunity to meet some of the greatest scientists in the area, and to hear about their often very interesting career trajectories. (...). I think that the diversity of mentors that the PDA finds is great, you can speak with people who all sort of started out on the path that you are on, but who went in completely different directions, from industry scientists to clinical academic research PIs to editors of journals.”

“I attended the All Star Mentoring 2 years in a row and both events were awesome! Having the opportunity to sit and meet with such great mentors from academia, industry and other paths is a windfall! This is the only chance we have to talk with them about their feelings, their journey, their opinion about postdocs and last but not least, their advices to pursue your career! This event is an inspirational event more than a scientific event! I love it!”

We hope to see you next year with new mentors for the 8th Annual All-Star Mentoring event!
Publications from BCH Postdocs


Ryann Fame, Lehtinen lab (Pathology) published: “Concerted metabolic shift in early forebrain alters the CSF proteome and depends on cMYC down-regulation for mitochondrial maturation” in Development 2019. http://dev.biologists.org/content/early/2019/09/26/dev.182857


Awards to BCH Postdocs

Georgios Ntolkeras, Fetal Neonatal Neuroimaging Science Center (FNNDSC) was accepted to the “AES Fellows Program” by the American Epilepsy Society. http://meeting.aesnet.org/program/aes-fellows-program


Ilaria Barone, Lipton lab (F.M. Kirby Neurobiology Center) won the ”TS Alliance Post Doctoral Award”. http://www.tsalliance.org/researchers/grants-and-funding/

Shayan Hosseinzadeh, Kiapur (Murray) lab (Orthopedic Surgery) was chosen as a “New Investigator Recognition Award (NIRA)” finalist by the Orthopedic Research Society Scientific Program Committee for his work on “Altered Capital Femoral Physis Morphology Is Associated With Increased Risk Of Cam-type Femoroacetabular Impingement In Children And Adolescents.” http://tinyurl.com/vagmr2w

Travel Awards: October -December Round

And the winners are...
Ari Tabaac, Tojo Nakayama, Michelle Maciag, and Ai Wern Chung. Congratulations!

The next round of travel awards will be announced in the Spring, stay tuned!
Recent Events
- Elevator Pitch Workshop, Sept 24.
- Data Science: An alternative path for biomedical scientists, Oct 15.
- Pubnight with BCH Young Professionals (BCHYP), Oct 17.
- All-Star Mentoring Night, Oct 24.
- 3rd Annual Science Carnival, Nov 8. Thank you to all the volunteers for sharing your science with the patients and families!
- The Art of the Phone Interview, Nov 19.

Upcoming Events
Keep up to date on upcoming events with our calendar: [https://tinyurl.com/BCHPDAcalendar](https://tinyurl.com/BCHPDAcalendar)

- BCH Postdoctoral Holiday Party, Friday, Dec 13, 6-10pm @ TMEC266 atrium, 260 Longwood Avenue. Get tickets here: [https://tinyurl.com/PDAHolidayTickets](https://tinyurl.com/PDAHolidayTickets)
- Merck Networking Event, Rescheduled to January 2020! Look out for sign-ups!
- Stress Management Workshop, TBA

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Newsletter formatting: Kimberly Wong

If you want to submit comments, articles or ideas for future newsletters, please contact: Postdoc-publicaffairs@childrens.harvard.edu

Follow us to find out more about our great events and postdoc community!

Leaving soon? If you or a labmate recently moved on from your postdoc, please invite them to join our Alumni network! Send us your personal email address at postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu to register as BCH Alumni and share your career path with the postdoc community!