

NEWS

Spectrum Launch: Child care at SfN; interview tips; Neuropixels course

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Child care: Some **describe it** as the work that makes all other work possible. That's the case for **Vaishnavi Shankar**, a postdoctoral researcher in **Eric Klann**'s lab at New York University and the mother of a toddler. The on-site **child-care services** offered at the upcoming annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience (SfN) in San Diego, California, are making it possible for her to attend the meeting for the first time to present a poster.

Shankar shifted into neuroscience research in 2019 after graduate school, so she hasn't yet had many in-person interactions with the neuroscience community. Traveling to San Diego will be an important opportunity to make those connections, she says.

On-site child care is one way that conferences can help with the "childcare-conference conundrum," described in a **2018 paper**. The puzzle is this: To advance in their field, researchers typically have to present their work and network with colleagues at conferences. But "primary caretakers of dependent children face inequitable hurdles to fully attending and participating in conference activities because of responsibilities related to pregnancy, breastfeeding and caretaking," the authors wrote.

Things have since improved for parents attending conferences, says the paper's lead author, **Rebecca Calisi Rodríguez**, associate professor of neurobiology, physiology and behavior at the University of California, Davis. The year after the article came out, for example, SfN provided improved rooms for nursing parents, equipped with lockers and changing tables, Calisi Rodríguez says.

And the rise of virtual conferences during the pandemic has made meetings more accessible for researchers who can't travel — either because of child-care responsibilities or for other reasons, Calisi Rodríguez adds.

The current options still aren't perfect. For example, although SfN's on-site child care is a welcome accommodation, Shankar says, the service isn't cheap — \$100 per day, per child. “NYU has some scholarships we can apply for, so we're hoping we can get some kind of refund,” she says. Not every early-career researcher will have that option, however.

“It's still holding up barriers,” Calisi Rodríguez says. “But it's a step in the right direction.”

Whether you plan to attend SfN or not, read on for additional guidance and resources for early-career researchers, which we compile each month in *Spectrum Launch*.

If you're bound for San Diego:

- We offered tips for attending in-person conferences — from how to network to how to pace yourself — in this past edition of ***Spectrum Launch***.
- And for more helpful information about how to get the most out of presenting a poster, I recommend this great *Science* **article**.
- Lastly, Twitter users brought their A game when asked for **SfN advice**, including these gems from **Susan Leemburg**, a researcher at Charles University in Pilsen, Czech Republic:

Wear comfy shoes, bring a jacket for Hall H, on't get the conference pretzels (there's a Ralph's not too far from the conf center), enjoy the madness and don't forget to take some time off. There's slightly too much science.

— Susan Leemburg (@SusanLeemburg) **October 25, 2022**

Jobs and funds:

- The International Society for Autism Research offers a **new type of membership** for early-career researchers, which costs \$110 per year (compared with \$200 per year for full membership).
- **Claudia Lugo-Candelas**, assistant professor of clinical medical psychology at Columbia University, is hiring a postdoctoral researcher to investigate “how perinatal experiences shape the developing infant brain,” she **tweeted**.
- For potential postdocs interested in studying the mental health needs of the caregivers of children with neurogenetic conditions, **Bridgette Kelleher**, associate professor of psychological sciences at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, **is hiring** for her lab.

- And for those looking for a career in brain imaging, **Damien Fair**, director of the Masonic Institute for the Developing Brain at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, is **hiring a postdoctoral researcher**, too:

Post-doc position at Univ of Minnesota w/ yours truly and **@stevenmnelson** conducting precision neuroscience MRI at 7T and 10.5T focused on cognition and development. Give us a shout \$65,000/yr ... let's negotiate!<https://t.co/g3XLSicSqH> <https://t.co/Gt5BGprP3U>

— Damien Fair (@DrDamienFair) **October 26, 2022**

- The team behind the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development study is hiring a **full-time research assistant**, tweeted **Dylan Gee**, associate professor of psychology and psychiatry at Yale University.
- Need funding? Johns Hopkins University manages a regularly updated list of **early-career funding opportunities**.
- Keep an eye on this **Twitter thread** for job opportunities in neuroscience.
- And the Society for Neuroscience hosts a **job board** of both academic and non-academic positions. Interested applicants who plan to be in San Diego later this month can connect with employers for one-on-one interviews.

Recommended resources:

- For early-career researchers hitting the job market for the first time, figuring out what to do during the interview process can be tricky. This **video** on interviewing for an academic job (recorded from a 2020 workshop), by **Jessica Schleider**, assistant professor of clinical psychology at Stony Brook University in New York, and **Kathryn Humphreys**, assistant professor of psychology and human development at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, offers helpful insights.
- And here's a **relevant tip** from **Ran Blehman**, associate professor of genetics at the University of Chicago in Illinois:

It's the season again, so here's my top advice for anyone applying to faculty positions: create a personal website! Doesn't have to be a big undertaking -- even a single page with your information, CV, publications, and research focus can go a long way.

— Ran Blehman (@blehman) **October 18, 2022**

- Did you know that **all lectures** from the 2022 University College London Introduction to Neuropixels course by **Matteo Carandini**, professor of neuroscience, are available on YouTube? Step up your experiment game in just five hours of online learning!
- A new manifesto aims to improve the work lives of early-career researchers in academia, according to an October *Nature* **Career News article**.
- The pandemic likely delayed graduation for many Ph.D.s, according to **survey data** released in October by the U.S. National Science Foundation.
- **Kristen Bottema-Beutel**, associate professor of special education at Boston College in Massachusetts, has **words of wisdom** for any early-career researchers feeling down about feedback they've received:

A game changer for me when I was a doctoral student was realizing that when professors gave me extensive critical feedback, this was them taking me and my work seriously.

— Kristen Bottema-Beutel (@KristenBott) **October 20, 2022**

- What kind of advice do mid-career researchers wish they had received when they were younger? “You need to work hard. Do what you love. Don’t worry if people disagree with you,” says **Leslie Rissler**, program director at the National Science Foundation, in a **new episode** of *Nature*’s career podcast.
- And for anyone preparing to sit down to a holiday meal with relatives in the next couple of months: We **see you**.

Explaining your PhD project to your family pic.twitter.com/FTSfxzrewU

— Björn Schumacher (@schumacherbj) **October 21, 2022**

Any suggestions for how to make this newsletter as useful as possible, or recommendations for what topic we should cover next? Send them to angie@spectrumnews.org.

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