

Dear [conference / workshop organizer]:

As an attendee of your meeting [and attendee of your society], I am writing to ask for your support in making this event and as attainable as possible to young women and dual career couples who are often limited due to dependent-care restraints.

A recent survey showed that professional travel for faculty (primarily women) who provide the primary dependent care within a family remains a constant professional hurdle for women who seek tenure in the Science, Technology, and Mathematics disciplines. It remains a challenge to mid-career women faculty and other women who wish to remain competitive throughout their careers. The cost of childcare at a meeting runs \$150-250 / day using a professional nanny. The additional cost of bringing a child to a meeting varies with the price of airline tickets but runs on the order of \$500 or more. Some children require that a familiar caregiver travel with them while others are comfortable with new on-site providers. These expenses are generally not reimbursable on faculty grants, due to restrictions of federal and state funding.

Quite often we find that conference organizers and even small professional societies with interests in promoting women are unsure about how to help. The arrangement of on-site child care, most appropriate for large organizations (and implemented regularly, for instance by the American Chemical Society) may not be appropriate for smaller groups. Other ideas you may wish to consider in the future include:

- developing a list of available, reliable providers near the conference
- providing small childcare assistanceships to attendees demonstrating need
- arranging an electronic b-board for attendees to your conference who may be willing to split the costs of a professional nanny
- making sure that children are welcome and safe in the public areas/eating rooms surrounding the conference itself
- providing comfortable nursing stations for new mothers

I hope this letter has served to make you aware of the issues facing women scientists traveling for professional reasons.

Sincerely,