

UALC 2023 Professional Development Retreat
Checking In: Responding To & Inspiring Change
University of Utah J. Willard Marriott Library
Salt Lake City, Utah
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Seeing the Parent and the Professional: Exploring the Complexities of Academic Library Work-Life Balance

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Work-life balance. Burnout. Childcare. Parental guilt. The “second shift.” Academic librarians and library workers who are parents or caregivers of children may feel that juggling their personal and professional responsibilities can be overwhelming at times. This moderated discussion provides a place for attendees to connect and “check in” with each other and discuss these sometimes-conflicting roles in a supportive environment.

The scholarly record abounds with literature on topics related to parenting and careers, but there has historically been a lack of research on or stories about how library workers are impacted. Thankfully, this is starting to shift, with researchers and practitioners acknowledging how academic librarians’ unique situations provide related but separate challenges from other working parents, even those in academia. Regardless of increasing visibility in the scholarly record, being a working parent or caregiver can feel isolating and potentially discouraging. Attempting to validate these feelings, the presenters, both academic librarians with young children, will share some highlights from the literature. The bulk of the session will be a guided discussion on personal and institutional support – or the lack thereof. This session is open to any library worker who is a parent, a caregiver, or works with someone who is. We welcome you to join us to feel seen, supported, and to contribute to the conversation in multiple ways.

Learning Outcomes

Our session aims to be a place for academic library employees who are parents or caregivers of children to feel seen and validated.

Similarly, our session may allow colleagues of caregivers to gain ideas of how to better support their coworkers.