



SC22

Dallas, TX | hpc accelerates.

# The Elephant in the Room: Balancing Parental and Work Responsibilities

Scott Callaghan

Southern California Earthquake Center

University of Southern California

# My perspective



# As a parent

- Postpone the need to balance - take your parental leave!
- Create a schedule
- Consider modifying work hours around kid time
  - Outside-the-home care may finish mid-afternoon
  - Kids may have early bedtime
- Manageable to-do lists
  - Tasks of varying focus, in case you're supervising kids
- Kids provide natural work-life balance



# As a parent with kids at home

- No, really, create a schedule!
- Have a defined office space
  - Physical reminder to all of when you're at work
  - Helps with context-switching
- Expectation and boundary setting, both with kids and employers
  - Times when you are and aren't available
  - Special activities during meetings and uninterruptible time



# How to support your colleagues with kids

- Be supportive, even if you have difficulty relating
  - You may not understand why something is difficult – give your colleague the benefit of the doubt
  - Hours – may respond at unusual times
  - Zoom meetings – may not want to be on camera
- Look for opportunities to praise your colleagues' work
  - Fighting stereotypes about commitment to work



# Conclusions

- All employed parents feel the same conflict you do
- Many have complex feelings about work
  - Relief – opportunity for break from kids
  - Guilt – ‘a good parent wouldn’t be working’
  - Lack of motivation – work may not feel as important as before
  - Resentment – taking time away from your kids
- Self-care: can’t pour from an empty cup
- Don’t be afraid to ask for what you need
- Modeling to your kids that you are a complex human



# Thanks!

