

## Family & the Workplace

### Nicola Smith, 'We Are Resident'

Nicola outlined her recent artist residency exchange project; planning, creating and exploring the implications of artist residencies for families. The project involved a female artist with her young children having a short residency at Islington Mill in Salford, and a second female artist with her child resident at the Takaluti Arts Centre in Tampere, Finland. In both situations the artist's child/ren became involved in the artistic side of the project. The main objective of the project was to explore the advantages and barriers to an artist's children being present as part of a paid residency, looking at how family-friendly residencies are received in different countries.

### Cassie Raine and Anna Ehnold-Danailov, 'Parents in the Performing Arts' (PIPA)

Cassie and Anna told us about PIPA, which started 2 years ago and exists to raise awareness and find solutions to some of the problems parents face in the Performing Arts. The need for a sustainable change was recognised, a change that had to be led by the industry itself. 18 leading theatres and related organisations are on board as a consortium, and a UK-wide strategy is being created, based on their experiences as they try to adapt their practices. Job shares, flexible working hours, networking not limited to post-show gatherings, and theatres teaming up with childcare providers are just some of the methods being trialled. The results of these trials will form the basis of a Best Practice Charter for the industry, and it is hoped the work will expand in the future to include music, opera and dance.

#### Main points from the discussion that followed:

People can feel 'less of an employee' with kids.

With less time to work, artists often give more focus.

Caring responsibilities developed through having a family can bring new skills and levels of interpretation for artists.

Tutti Frutti Director explained how she successfully focuses on employees achieving the best life-work balance. She talked about a shift in mind set – simple changes can be the most helpful to individuals, e.g. laptops, working from home, leading to happy, hard-working and committed teams.

Everyone in the arts deserves the best work-life balance.

Being freelance is a major issue, particularly if there are two partners as one always has to compromise when there are kids.

The freelance workforce is huge (and growing rapidly) yet largely unsupported by the government.

Self-employed men have no paternity allowance.

UK Theatre are looking at a number of these issues, including better access to CPD.

ACT (Actors' Children's Trust) helps parents in theatre by providing financial support for a variety of costs – [actorschildren.org](http://actorschildren.org)

The Arts Council has a drive to support artists and emerging talent – all arts organisations need to do this too.