

**A Work-Family Sourcebook for Employers**

**Supporting  
Employees  
with Child  
and Elder  
Care Needs**

**Portland State University  
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## Family responsibilities

# Why employers should care

Managing work life and family life has become a major issue for much of today's workforce. Work and family policies have emerged as key competitive factors for businesses in the U.S. labor market. Why is this? The answer is, in large part, the changing composition of the American workforce.

- More women, the traditional family care-givers, are entering or returning to the labor force.

Today, women comprise about 46 percent of the workforce, compared to about 37 percent in 1970. From 1996 to 2006 the number of women in the workforce is expected to increase by another 14 percent.

- The rising number of women in the workforce has resulted in an increase in the number of families where both the husband and the wife are working.

Between 1996 and 1997, the number of dual-worker families in the U.S. grew by 352,000, while the number of traditional families (in which only the husband works) declined by 145,000. In 1999, dual-earner families accounted for 63% of all married-couple working families, compared to 23% of married-couple working families in which only the husband worked, and 6.5% in which only

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*No one working a full-time schedule these days – not even a CEO – is immune to the enormous pressure of the demands of responsibilities of family needs.*

Leslie Faught  
*Employee Benefit Plan Review*  
February 1999

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the wife worked. The number of single-parent households also has increased dramatically. Reliance on a stay-at-home spouse to handle family responsibilities is not an option for most families.

- The aging of the American population has affected both employers and employees.

In the past century, the proportion of older Americans tripled. By 2030, 20% of Americans will be 65 or older, and they will outnumber children under 18. Previous definitions of “family” as consisting of parents and their children, and “dependent care” as care only for young children, are changing. The fastest growing age group in the U.S. is comprised of individuals aged 85 or

*[T]he rate of absenteeism has increased more than 14 percent since 1992. On average, absenteeism costs \$603 per employee . . . And more absences are now being attributed to family responsibilities and personal stress.*

Michelle Martinez  
*HR Magazine*, June 1997

*Until it hits home, it tends to be viewed as someone else's issue, but demographics will change that and put elder care on a lot more employers' radar screens... Elder care will be to the 21<sup>st</sup> century what child care was to the last few decades.*

Joyce Ruddock, Vice President  
Metlife's Long-Term Care Group  
*HR Magazine*, May 2000

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older. With advanced age, proportionately more people experience health problems and limitations and require assistance in performing activities of daily living. Almost half of people aged 85+ need such assistance.

Families are indeed providing help to their elders; about 80% of the care needed by elders is provided informally by family and friends. The 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce found that fully 42% of the U.S. workforce expects to provide elder care within the next five years. A 1997 study by the National Alliance of Family Caregivers (NAC) and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) found that just over 23% of U.S. households consisted of at least one person who was currently caring for, or had in the previous year cared for, a relative or friend who was aged 50 or over. About 64%, or 14.1 million caregivers, were employed full or part time. Of the caregivers nationwide, 41% also had children under the age of 18.

A study by Neal and colleagues of employees in 33 different companies in 1993 (N=9,573), similarly found that 42% of the employees who were caring for elders also were caring for children. This group comprised 9% of the sample of employees overall. People who have caregiving

responsibilities both for dependent children and frail or disabled parents have been dubbed the "sandwich generation," in that they are sandwiched between the needs of their children and their parents, and often, their jobs.

**In brief**, employers are seeing increasing numbers of employees of both sexes with one or more caregiving roles – for children, adults with disabilities, and/or elderly parents or other family members.

### **What are the work-related implications of employees' increased family responsibilities?**

Employees' caregiving responsibilities can have a variety of negative impacts on employees' work. Research has demonstrated, for example, that having these duties can be associated with decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, increased intentions to quit, decreased job satisfaction, increased mental and physical health problems, increased substance abuse, and increased stress and strain. This snapshot of today's workforce, its caregiving responsibilities, and the impact of those responsibilities demonstrates the need for employers to consider these issues.

**The Business Case:  
Why provide work-family support  
to employees?**

When companies support their employees in their efforts to manage both work and family, there can be many positive outcomes for both parties. For example, research has found that management's recognition of the importance of an employee's personal and family life is the most significant driver of employee commitment. In 1994, interviews conducted with human-resource vice presidents and directors of 71 Fortune 500 corporations, revealed the benefits that those companies accrued from their commitment to helping employees deal with work-family issues. The companies felt that such assistance improved recruitment and retention (mentioned by 41% of those interviewed), improved morale (mentioned by 21%), reduced stress that lowers productivity and service quality (mentioned by 18%), and helped companies to keep up with their competition (mentioned by 15%).

Indeed, findings from this study and others indicate the following benefits to employers of helping employees manage their work-family responsibilities:

- decreased absenteeism
- reduced turnover
- improved recruitment potential
- improved retention
- improved job satisfaction
- improved organizational commitment
- improved morale
- more consistent productivity
- improved physical and psychological well-being of employees.

Research has found that companies can get a \$3 to \$13 return on every \$1 invested in their benefits program, because such programs reduce the "hidden costs" that result when employees try to balance their work and family responsibilities.

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*We stick out our necks for them and they stick their neck out for us. They will work hard for you, they will stay with you, and you'll have a more productive workforce.*

Scott Mies, Director of Work/Life Benefits  
Fel-Pro Inc., quoted by Judy Greenwald  
*Business Insurance*, June 24, 1996

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These include costs due to unplanned absences; turnover/recruiting/retraining; extended caregiver leave; and workday interruptions.

For example, business experts consistently estimate that the cost of replacing an employee is one half his or her existing salary plus the entry salary of the replacement employee. These "hidden costs" can add up to 5-12% of the company's payroll.

A recent profitability analysis of the top 100 family-friendly companies concluded that offering an optimal family-friendly benefits package that is designed to match the demographic needs of the workforce can, in fact, increase profits. This study also concluded that the mere presence of a work-family benefit program had positive effects on organizational outcomes, regardless of actual employee use.

**Work-family supports and  
employers today**

As noted previously, some employers have recognized the need for greater work-family awareness if they are to remain competitive in the labor market. In a large-scale survey of corporations, an overwhelming number of survey participants (86%) agreed that they could not remain competitive without addressing work/life balance and diversity issues. At the start of the

*Options such as flextime, now almost taken for granted as employee benefits, double as perks in the current, highly competitive recruitment and retention war. In study after study, family-friendly policies have surpassed salary in the top 10 reasons to stay with or go to work for a company.*

*Training & Development, November, 2000*

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1990s, there were approximately 5,600 U.S. employers providing child-care support and about 300 providing elder-care support, and in 1994, 88% of large employers offered part-time work, 77% offered flextime, 55% provided child-care resource and referral, and 50% provided Dependent Care Assistance Programs (a program to reimburse dependent care expenses with pre-tax dollars).

A Society for Human Resource Management survey compared the percentage of employers offering benefits in 2001 vs. 1997, and concluded that more employers are offering virtually every type of family-friendly benefit. Still, many companies lag behind. In 1995, a survey of 34 firms located in a large U.S. city determined that while 61% had work schedule policies that were favorable for employees dealing with child care responsibilities, only 10% offered child care benefits, and over 36% had no child-care policy at all.

Another recent study that looked at employee access to work-life supports revealed that only half of the employed parents with young children in the study's sample had access to paid time off to care for a sick child; 80% had no access to employer-sponsored child care resources and referrals; 88% had no access to financial assistance

for child care; 69% had no access to dependent care assistance plans; and less than half had access to flexible work schedules.

In addition, this study found that many employees find the atmosphere or culture in their workplace to be non-family-friendly. Fewer than 40% reported feeling comfortable discussing work-family issues with their supervisors, and approximately 60% felt that their supervisor did not care about the effects that work demands had on their personal or family life.

In 1998, Consumer Clearinghouse concluded:

The nation's employers are not offering sufficient work/family benefits...to prevent workers from calling in at the last minute to take time off to deal with their family and personal needs...The result is businesses will lose hundreds of millions of dollars this year – up one-third from 1997...The cost to employers of unscheduled absenteeism per employee increased 32% to \$757 in 1998 from \$572 in 1997... "Family issues" led the reasons for unscheduled absenteeism, accounting for 26% of those unscheduled sick days...The cost of unscheduled absences should make it possible to demonstrate that implementing an appropriate mix of work/life programs will have a positive impact on the bottom line.

Despite the many benefits that accrue to employers and employees when family-friendly policies are instituted, some organizations may be hesitant to implement such policies because they do not know where to begin. This sourcebook should help an employer begin a strategic plan for instituting policies, benefits, and services that will help employees better manage their families and work demands. A happier, healthier workforce is more productive. Both the employer and the employees share the benefits.

## A special group: Employees in

# The sandwiched generation

This sourcebook is a product of a three-year study of working couples in the sandwiched generation, that is, couples who had children aged 18 or under and who were also caring for one or more aging parents. The study was undertaken to better understand the work-family situations and coping strategies used by these employees, who are particularly challenged due to their multiple family-care responsibilities.

In the study, the members of 309 couples from across the U.S. answered questions about the nature of their work and family responsibilities, the accommodations of work and family, or coping strategies, they used to juggle their many different responsibilities, and the effects of those responsibilities on them at work and in their family and personal lives. Funding for the study was provided by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

### **Who are dual-earner couples in the sandwiched generation?**

Based on the results of our study, the typical middle- to upper-income working sandwiched-generation couple consists of a 43-year-old man and a 41-year-old woman, both of whom are White. They have been married for almost 18 years. They each have about 15 years of schooling, and they have a median household income of about \$62,500.

They typically have two children aged 18 or younger in their household, with the youngest

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*The findings from our study indicate that between 9% and 13% of American households with one or more persons aged 30 through 60 are comprised of dual-earner, sandwiched-generation couples.*

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child being about 10 years old. The wife generally has primary responsibility for the care of the children. Both the husband and the wife have one or two living parents. Counting their parents-in-law, they are each helping two parents, providing a combined total of about 8.75 hours of help each week. The parent to whom they are providing the most help is a 72- to 73-year-old unmarried (usually widowed) woman whom they have been helping for about 8 years. Her income is adequate, her health is fair, and she lives independently. The tasks with which they are helping her are mostly instrumental, not personal, activities of daily living, such as transportation, shopping, house-keeping, managing money, and making care-related decisions.

The husband typically works in a nonprofessional managerial or technical position about 50 hours per week on a standard full-time schedule on a day shift, in a job he has held for almost 13 years. The wife works 38 hours per week on the day shift on a standard full-time schedule. She has held her job for 9 years. She is as likely as not to be in a

professional, managerial, or technical position. Although she is more comfortable than her male counterpart in talking about her responsibilities for children and/or parents at work, both she and her husband are more comfortable talking about their child-care responsibilities than about their parent-care responsibilities, and they are more comfortable discussing these issues with co-workers than with their supervisor.

### **How do they cope at work?**

The sandwiched employee in this study used several strategies to handle work and family responsibilities. The most common strategies used *at work* included reducing the number of hours worked (31% of wives, 17% of husbands), refusing or limiting travel (27% of wives, 23% of husbands), choosing a job that gave them more flexibility to meet family demands (24% of wives), and refusing or deciding not to work toward promotion (21% of wives).

### **How are they doing?**

These couples rated their overall health at 4.5 (between good and very good) on a six-point scale, which is somewhat low for persons aged 42-43. Both husbands and wives were experiencing higher family satisfaction than job satisfaction, and their life satisfaction was rated at 5.2 out of 7. Wives generally appeared to be faring worse than husbands, with a significantly higher level of depression, more worry about working less effectively due to concerns about their children or aging parents, and a lower level of performance in taking care of themselves (although husbands report low scores in this last arena as well; both husbands and wives scored an average of 3.5 to 3.8 on a scale from 1-6).

Wives also reported significantly greater work withdrawal behaviors (e.g., missing time from work, spending time on the telephone) than did husbands with respect to six of the eight measures. Alternatively, wives rated their performance as higher with respect to their role as a parent and their role as a caregiver to a parent.

*These results suggest that dual earner couples in the sandwiched generation are finding a way to manage their multiple role demands, but they implement a variety of strategies at work and at home in order to accomplish this. Especially for women, but for men, too, many of these accommodations are likely to have negative impacts on their mental health, their economic health, and their work performance.*

### **About the study**

Couples were identified through telephone screening interviews conducted across the continental U.S in spring, 1997. Specific criteria for selection in the study were:

- (a) the couple had been married or living together for at least one year;
- (b) one person in the couple worked at least 35 hours per week, and the other worked at least 20 hours per week;
- (c) there were one or more children 18 years of age or younger living in the home at least three days a week;
- (d) one or both members of the couple together spent a minimum of three hours per week caring for one or more aging parents or parents-in-law. The type of assistance provided to parents could encompass a wide array of activities, including transportation, shopping, hands-on care, assistance with finances, home maintenance, emotional support; and
- (e) couples have a combined household income of \$40,000 or greater. This criterion was stipulated due to the specific interest of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation in middle- and upper-income families.

Couples were surveyed twice, one year apart. In addition, focus groups with dual-earner, sandwich-generation couples were conducted locally. Quotations included in the next section are drawn from participants in the focus groups. The purpose of the groups was to learn the coping strategies used by these couples, and the things that made it easier or harder for them to arrange their work and family lives.

## Supporting employees

# What employers can do

**A**s noted earlier, there are several reasons why employers should consider providing family-friendly workplace supports.

- Offering family-friendly supports can increase the attractiveness of the organization to prospective applicants, improving the overall recruitment of employees, especially during tight labor markets.
- Employers who offer family-friendly workplace supports tend to have more loyal and happy employees.
- Providing such supports helps employees with work and family responsibilities better manage the stress that they experience from competing demands, leading them to be more effective employees.

There are a number of workplace supports that organizations can offer to help employees manage their work and family responsibilities. The feasible approaches for a particular organization will vary with the size and culture of the organization. The programs may or may not be intended specifically or exclusively for employees who have family responsibilities. Regardless, many if not most programs can be beneficial to, and are likely to be used by, employees in varying situations, and by additional employees whose situations change over time.

The facing page shows a matrix of various types of workplace support options. For ease of presentation, we have categorized these supports as *policies, benefits, or services*. On the following pages we present each option and describe its advantages and disadvantages. To obtain more detailed information about any of these workplace supports, please refer to the resources section at the end of this sourcebook.

## Policies

Policies provide guidelines, either formal or informal, for dealing with certain situations. Research indicates that flexibility in the structure of work (when, where, and how work is to be performed) is one of the most important and desired types of support that an employer can offer employees who have family care responsibilities.

Below we describe several policies that increase work flexibility. They include policies to:

- a. increase flexibility in the work schedule,
- b. reduce the number of hours worked,
- c. increase options for leave,
- d. allow flexibility in the place of work, and
- e. train managers in family-friendly policies.

### Increase flexibility in the work schedule

Two ways of increasing flexibility in the work schedule are to offer either compressed work weeks or flextime. The compressed work week is a work-scheduling method that allows an

# Workplace-based supports useful to family caregivers

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## Policies

### Flexible work schedules:

- Compressed work weeks
- Flextime
- Cross-trained employees

### Reduced work hours:

- Part-time employment
- Job-sharing
- Voluntary reduced time (V-time)
- Phased retirement
- Phase-in schedule after leave

### Options for leave:

- Sick leave (days, hours)
- Family leave
- Personal leave (earned time)
- Vacation leave
- Family leave (FMLA), unpaid or (preferably) paid

### Change where work is done:

- Telecommuting
- Relocation policies

### Management sensitivity:

- Management training in work/life issues

## Benefits

### Flexible benefits plans:

- Cafeteria plans
- Flexible spending accounts
- Dependent-care assistance plans

### Tax benefits:

- Earned-income credit
- Dependent-care tax credits

### Insurance:

- Health insurance
- Dental insurance
- Disability insurance
- Life insurance
- Long-term care insurance

### Employee-assistance programs:

- Substance abuse treatment
- Stress management
- Consumer counseling
- Crisis intervention
- Bereavement counseling
- Personal and family counseling

## Services

### Education on caregiving:

- Corporate libraries
- Newsletters and guidebooks
- Educational seminars
- Caregiving fairs
- Internet access

### Resources on caregiving:

- Dependent-care information and referral
- Case management
- Support groups
- Peer support
- Wellness programs

### Direct services:

- On-site child-care center and/or child-care program
- Adult day center
- Child/adult day-care consortium
- Subsidies, vouchers, discounts for child or elder care, including respite
- Sick and emergency care
- Before/after school, summer and vacation care
- Concierge services

### Community involvement:

- Stimulate care-related resources

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Adapted from Neal, M. B., Chapman, N. J., Ingersoll-Dayton, B., & Emlen, A. C. (1993). *Balancing Work and Caregiving for Children, Adults, and Elders*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

employee to work “full time,” but in less than the standard five days per week, eight hours per day. Some examples are four 10-hour days or three 12-hour days. Flextime involves a work schedule with flexible starting and quitting times. Typical flextime programs have core operating hours during which all employees must be present, with “bandwidths” at the start and the end of the work day, during which employees can vary their starting and stopping times. The bands may be changed daily, weekly, or monthly.

The flextime programs affording the most flexibility are:

- a. those with short core hours, large bandwidths, and lunch hours that can be lengthened or shortened,
- b. those that allow the banking, or saving up, of hours, and
- c. those that permit daily schedule variation.

#### Possible Advantages

- Decreased absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover
- Reduced need for employee overtime
- Improved employee morale
- Increased employee recruitment
- Can be implemented with relatively little cost
- Also benefit employees with no caregiving responsibilities, so perceived as fair

#### Possible Disadvantages

- Decreased morale among those employees unable to participate
- Difficulty of communicating program options
- Opposition from labor unions
- Increased complexity of scheduling

### **Reduce the number of hours worked**

Employees may be allowed to reduce their hours by working part time. Reductions can be facilitated by job sharing, voluntary reduced time (V-time), or phased retirement.

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#### **Sandwiched-generation respondent:**

*I just switched jobs a year and a half ago . . . I quit because both the girls got older . . . they were heavily involved with soccer, and my husband’s parents were going to move down, and I knew that I had to have a job that was flexible so I could be available for everybody.*

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**Job Sharing and V-time.** Job-sharing is when two people share one full-time position, with separate but related, or unrelated assignments, reflected on a single budget line. V-time involves an agreement concerning the number of hours to be worked, usually less than full-time, so that during some weeks more hours are worked than during others. V-time permits employees to reduce the number of hours they work (and consequently their pay) by 5% to 50% for some period of time, usually 6 to 12 months. Benefits and seniority are retained on a prorated basis. V-time can be particularly useful to employees with newborn or newly adopted children and to employees caring for adults or elders undergoing crises and needing additional time and attention.

#### Possible Advantages

- Improved recruitment
- Increased flexibility to adjust the workforce to fit the workload
- Ability to retain employees who may otherwise need to quit
- Ability to provide sufficient coverage for peak periods, thus improving productivity
- Increased range of skills and experience that can be brought to a shared position
- Increased continuity if one person leaves position (job sharing)
- Ability to avoid hiring temporary employees to cover for vacations and leaves (job sharing)

**Sandwiched-generation respondent:**

*Well, money's nice, but money's not what everybody's looking for... They [employees] want respect, too. And they want to feel like the company cares; if the company doesn't care, then why should you care?*

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- Allows employee additional hours to devote to caregiving
- Allows employee to continue working, which provides a break from caregiving

Possible Disadvantages

- Increased benefit costs
- Negative managerial perceptions of part-time workers as being less committed to their jobs than full-time workers
- Difficulty evaluating individual employees whose jobs overlap
- Difficulty restructuring many jobs to enable them to be held by two people

**Phased Retirement.** Phased retirement can be based on years of service or age and involves reduction of work hours prior to retirement. Some phased retirement plans involve placing the retiring employee in a mentorship position and having him or her train the replacement employee.

Possible Advantages

- Utilizes retiring employee's knowledge during training process
- Increases retention of employees faced with child- or elder-care responsibilities
- Meets needs of employees choosing to make a gradual transition to retirement

Possible Disadvantages

- Costs associated with developing a phased retirement program
- Possible need to change pension formulas

## Allow options for leave

Options that result in a reduced number of hours worked also include policies for time off. Such policies include those for sick leave, family illness days or hours, personal leave, and family leave. Time off from work may be paid or unpaid.

Sick leave and short-term disability insurance protect employees from the temporary loss of income when they become ill or experience a disability that prohibits them from working. Personal leave (days or hours) is time off that may be used for whatever personal or family needs the employee may have. Some workplace policy experts advocate replacing sick and family illness days with personal days.

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 is U.S. federal legislation that applies to organizations with 50 or more employees and provides employees 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to be used during a 12-month period to deal with child birth, adoption, or sick family members. Employees may take the 12-week leave consecutively or intermittently within that 12-month period. After taking leave, the employee returns to his or her job or to a job with equivalent pay and status.

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**Sandwich-generation respondent:**

*When [my child] was first born . . . my mom would call me . . . panic stricken, and she'd want me to come to help her, and you know, I couldn't drop what I was doing and go to her. There wasn't family leave then and I had a young child too, and I just never knew what to do. I found it very constricting to be working. That was the time when I just wanted to quit my job and just say "forget it."*

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Employers need to be aware that state as well as federal laws and guidelines apply to family and medical leave. Using the specifications that are the most advantageous to the employee will likely yield the most benefit to the employer as well, in terms of employee retention.

### Possible Advantages:

- Increased retention of employees
- Reduced caregiving-related expenses for employees

### Possible Disadvantages:

- Difficulty finding or training temporary replacement employees
- Leave is often unpaid or may involve a loss of benefits
- Employee may be reluctant to use leave due to fear of jeopardizing career advancement

## **Allow flexibility in work location**

Workplace flexibility involves doing paid work at home or at some other site away from the office. It is often referred to as flexplace, flexiplace, or telecommuting.

### Possible Advantages

- Increased recruitment and retention of workers unable or unwilling to commute
- Increased productivity due to fewer distractions
- Reduced costs for office space
- Reduced commuting for employees
- Employees are more available to their families

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### **Sandwiched-generation respondent:**

*From home I can dial into my office and get material right off my computer there, work on it at home, and then send it right back. So I can take my work home with me.*

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### Possible Disadvantages

- Need for alternative communication, supervision and evaluation techniques
- Resentment by employees whose jobs do not permit them to work off site
- Increased employee work-family conflict due to lack of physical boundaries between work and home
- Increased risk of employee burnout, since start and stop times for work are not specified

## **Train managers to be family friendly**

Management training is an indirect but very important form of assistance related to family-supportive policies. Although family-responsive work scheduling and leave policies may be in place, employees may not realize the benefits unless they are understood and appropriately implemented by supervisors and managers.

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### **Sandwiched-generation respondent:**

*The manager that I worked for was very helpful – he allowed me to job share so I could be home more often . . . I think that helped the family, having a manager who was aware that family was important.*

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Furthermore, many decisions about work schedule and leave are made informally. Thus, employers are urged to provide training to managers on the sensitive nature of work and family issues and the organizational policies that are available to help employees manage their responsibilities. Training managers to be friendly is the first step in creating a supportive work environment for employees.

### Possible Advantages

- Reduced turnover
- Increased employee commitment to the organization
- Decreased job stress and work/family conflict for employees

- Improved employee/management relationship
- Increased consistency with which policies are applied
- Documented supervisor training can be useful if an organizational policy needs to be legally defended

### Possible Disadvantages

- Increased cost associated with training
- Time away from work while training
- Managers may be resentful and unresponsive to training

## Benefits

Benefits are forms of compensation, direct or indirect, that provide (a) protection against loss of earnings, (b) payment of medical expenses associated with illness, injury, or other health care needs, or (c) paid released time for vacations or personal needs. Benefits may also include provision of payment (full or partial) for other services, such as legal, educational, or dependent-care services. The benefits reviewed below provide specific advantages to families with dependent care responsibilities and include cafeteria-style benefit plans, flexible spending accounts, long-term care insurance, and employee assistance programs.

**Cafeteria-Style, or Flexible, Benefit Plans.** The cafeteria approach involves employees choosing among a variety of benefits provided by the employer. Such plans recognize that individual employees' benefits needs differ depending on the employee's age, salary, and family status.

### Possible Advantages:

- Improved employee satisfaction with benefits
- Better cost management because employees can elect lower levels of coverage
- Offer benefits to employees with special needs without raising questions of inequity
- Allow employees to choose benefits that suit

their needs and those of their family

- Can result in reduced income taxes for employees, because certain expenses use pre-tax dollars

### Possible Disadvantages

- Complexities of benefit administration and communication
- Costs associated with administration and implementation
- Employee's use of salary reduction to fund additional benefits reduces Social Security retirement and disability benefits

**Flexible Spending Accounts.** Flexible spending accounts, also called benefit reimbursement accounts, are accounts in which employees can allocate either their own pre-tax dollars, credits, or flexible-benefits dollars given to them by their employer to pay for certain expenses not covered under the standard package. Examples include additional medical expenses, dental, legal, dependent care, or other expenses.

Typically, flexible spending accounts are made available to employees as one option of their cafeteria plan. Alternatively, as a service to employees, flexible spending accounts may be made available by employers independent of their benefits plan.

A dependent-care assistance plan (DCAP) is one type of flexible spending account where employees take pre-tax payroll deductions to pay for dependent care expenses that are work-related. The maximum allowable deduction is \$5,000 per year (\$2,500 in the case of a separate return by a married individual). Although dependent-care assistance plans may or may not involve direct employer contributions, these plans are available only when set up by employers for employees.

### Possible Advantages

- Lower employer-paid payroll taxes
- Employer contributions to employees' DCAPs qualify as a deductible business expense

- Stabilize work force by making dependent care more available to employees

### Possible Disadvantages

- Employer must report any DCAP distributions along with other wages
- Not all caregiving-related expenses are eligible for reimbursement; only expenses incurred as a result of the employee's working can be reimbursed
- Care must be provided by someone other than an employee's dependent
- Cost is difficult to anticipate (especially elder care), and unused dollars are forfeited at the end of the year

**Long-Term Care Insurance.** Another benefit is group long-term care insurance for employees and their spouses, and sometimes for their parents and parents-in-law, or retirees and their spouses. This insurance may be offered as an add-on option to a standard employee benefits package or as an optional benefit among others in a flexible benefits plan. Long-term care refers to care needed by persons of any age who have physical or mental limitations. Forty percent of those needing long-term care are between ages 18 and 64.

### Possible Advantages

- Long-term care insurance is now available as a group product, reducing the cost of premiums and making services more convenient
- The premiums are relatively low, especially for younger employees
- Competitive advantage to employers in terms of employee productivity, retention, and recruitment
- Public relations advantages

### Possible Disadvantages

- Difficulty of communicating need for the insurance and information about policy features
- The relatively high cost of premiums for older employees

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### **Focusgrouprespondent:**

*[T]here were several people who were caring for parents. It was like having a support group – we came to work and told “mom” stories. You know, “You won’t believe what my mother did now” . . . So it was very cleansing to go to work . . . you could trade stories.*

---

- Low rate of utilization
- Difficulty finding a stable carrier of group long-term care insurance

**Employee Assistance Programs.** Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) provide employees and their families with confidential professional services that address a wide range of personal and work-related problems, such as substance abuse, stress management, consumer counseling, crisis intervention, bereavement counseling, and personal and family counseling. EAP services address employee problems in a neutral setting, apart from supervisors. Employees may seek help themselves or they may be referred by their managers.

### Possible Advantages

- Reduced absenteeism
- Reduced on-the-job injuries that may be due to stress-related accidents
- Increased employee morale
- Increased productivity
- Confidentiality and worker integrity are maintained

### Possible Disadvantages

- The cost effectiveness of an EAP is more easily recognized in larger businesses than in smaller companies; smaller companies, however, may join together to make it possible to provide an EAP for their combined employees

## Services

Services are programs provided directly by or through the employer, which address specific employee needs. Services are a tangible form of help but are not direct compensation. Employer-supported services addressing employees' dependent care responsibilities can be organized into three broad categories that vary in the level of employer involvement and investment. These categories are (a) education, (b) information and referral/case management, and (c) direct services for care recipients.

### Education

Companies have developed a variety of educational programs or written materials to assist employees with caregiving demands. Some supports, such as providing internet access, require minimal resources and effort. Others, such as establishing a corporate library or holding educational seminars and caregiver fairs, may be somewhat more costly and time-consuming to organize.

**Providing internet access.** A tremendous amount of information on work-family issues is available on the internet (see the web resources we have listed in Section 5). Providing employees access to a computer and printer to get the information they need is a low-cost means of supporting employees with family responsibilities.

**Corporate Library.** Companies can include books, audio tapes, videotapes and other materials on caregiving issues in their libraries. These materials may then be checked out to employees through a corporate library.

**Newsletters and Guidebooks.** An effective way to inform a large number of employees about caregiving issues is through newsletters and guidebooks. Topics can include parenting, child care and elder care tips and information. Caregiving issues can be addressed in various ways, such as a single article in the company newsletter

or focusing an entire newsletter on caregiving concerns.

**Educational Seminars.** Many companies provide educational forums for employees. For child care, companies have offered presentations on topics such as prenatal health, parenting skills, latchkey kids, and how to choose good child-care services. Educational forums for caregivers of the elderly are becoming increasingly popular in the workplace. Since most employees are unprepared for the responsibilities of elder care, seminars can provide basic information about the aging process, caregiving concerns, and resources available.

**Caregiving Fairs.** Some businesses have implemented caregiving fairs, along the lines of health fairs, where employees may obtain information from a variety of different agencies and organizations at one time. Employees can stop at booths, talk to service providers, and obtain written information about specific community resources.

#### Possible Advantages

- Minimal interruption of work schedules
- Improved employee morale

#### Possible Disadvantages

- Difficulty organizing educational programs around the work schedules of all employees
- Unequal access to certain materials or programs

### Information and Referral/ Case Management

Some company-based programs are intended to inform employed caregivers about specific services that are available to them and their dependents and to help them locate these services. Programs that serve this function usually operate at two different levels: (1) information and referral and (2) case management.

**Information and Referral.** Also known as resource and referral, this service is a relatively inexpensive option.

The service is performed by an in-house employee assistance program (EAP), or more often by a contracted agency.

### Possible Advantages

- Streamlines the search for child/elder care
- Provides quick assistance when care arrangements change
- Improved employee recruitment, productivity and retention

### Possible Disadvantages

- Programs are dependent on the availability and adequacy of local elder-care and child-care markets
- Referral programs for elder care are not as widely available as those for child care.
- For small employers, in-house programs are not feasible, and contracted services may be expensive unless cooperatives with other employers are formed

**Case Management.** A more intensive and individualized service is case management, provided in house, or more typically, available through a contracted agency. Case management is particularly relevant to those employees with adult- and elder-care responsibilities who need help in assessing and addressing an elder's multiple needs. Case management involves a meeting between the interested employee and the care planner (usually a social worker and/or nurse) to conduct a needs assessment. An individualized care plan is then prepared and presented, outlining the needs, goals and resources of the employee and the adult or elder. Subsequent meetings review progress on the plan.

### Possible Advantages

- Relatively inexpensive and easy to maintain
- Increased employee morale, recruitment and retention

### Possible Disadvantages

- May not be accessible to all employees due to shift worked

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### **Sandwiched generation respondent:**

*The company that I work for is really, really supportive. Family is a number one priority . . . I've had family emergencies, and they're always . . . really willing to bend with me . . . They're very understanding. And there are also some really good informational lines through the company. There are places you can call, and there are different programs involved . . . children, elderly placement . . . We've been really fortunate with that.*

---

## **Direct Services for Care Recipients**

Increasingly, companies are helping employees to deal with their dependent care needs directly, by providing subsidies, vouchers, or discounts for particular services, such as alternative day care and respite programs, or by sponsoring on-site or near-site day-care facilities.

**Child-Care Centers and Programs.** Some employers have established day-care centers either at or near the workplace for their employees' children. Generally, the employer pays all or part of the expenses. Small employers can join together to share the costs of such programs.

### Possible Advantages

- Reduce commute time to and from the workplace
- Employees can have access to children during work hours
- Better employee recruitment
- Improved morale
- Improved community relations
- Lower absenteeism and turnover
- Families experience less stress related to child-care quality and affordability

Possible Disadvantages

- High start-up costs, especially for small businesses
- Difficult to predict center use and demand
- The inability of centers to serve the needs of all employees with child-care responsibilities
- Liability issues and concerns for “institutional care”
- Under-enrollment will increase operating costs

**Adult Day Care.** A few organizations sponsor day-care centers for the elderly. These centers provide supervision through social and recreational activities; some others provide nursing care.

Possible Advantages

- Reduce the stress suffered by employees with elder-care responsibilities
- Improved recruitment and public relations

Possible Disadvantages

- Same as for child-care centers above
- May be underutilized due to varying employee and elder needs

**Elderly Respite Care.** In addition to day-care arrangements for their elderly relatives, employees may also need respite from full-time caregiving for the times when they are at home. Respite care involves care by a substitute caregiver to assist an elder or adult with disabilities when the employee needs to take a break on evenings or weekends.

Possible Advantages

- Enables employees with intense caregiving responsibilities to take a needed break

Possible Disadvantages

- May be under-utilized, since it may not be known or understood by employee, or may be perceived as too expensive

**Subsidies and Vouchers.** Subsidies and vouchers involve employers in sharing the costs of a service provided in the community, such as child or adult day care.

Possible Advantages

- Employees can select their own care arrangements
- Increased commitment to the organization
- Increased morale and satisfaction

Possible Disadvantages

- Unexpected cost commitments
- Issues of equity may arise if subsidies or vouchers are available only to employees with lower incomes
- Inability of subsidies to address problems of lack of care or poor-quality care

**Discounts.** Discounts involve having employers make arrangements with particular vendors (for example, child or adult day-care centers) to offer care to their employees at a discounted rate, such as a 10% reduction. In other words, employees can purchase care at a reduced cost.

Possible Advantages

- Relatively low cost
- Limited liability
- Flexibility in meeting the needs of changing numbers of employees
- Minimal administration required
- Good publicity for the organization as the vendor promotes its services

Possible Disadvantages

- Discounts require the use of selected vendors
- If the allocated slots become filled, some employees’ needs will not be met

**Sick and Emergency Day Care for Children.** When their children become sick or when regular day-care arrangements disintegrate, employees often need to miss work. Some companies assist employees with sick children by helping to defray the cost of a care center for sick children. Most companies that offer this service pay 50% to 75% of their employees’ costs for sick or emergency care. Another alternative is to subsidize in-home professional care for these children.

Possible Advantages

- Reduces employee stress over finding alternate arrangements
- Reduces employee absenteeism

Possible Disadvantages

- Services can be difficult to locate
- Employees may still choose to be with sick children; service may be underutilized

## Other Workplace Supports

### **Exercise Facilities / Wellness Programs.**

Employees who have child- and/or elder-care responsibilities often do not take the time to look after their own health needs. Employers can help by sponsoring wellness programs or by providing exercise facilities on-site or club memberships at a reduced cost.

**Family Events.** Employers can demonstrate support for families by sponsoring events such as picnics for employees and their immediate families, or by offering trip packages or tickets to sporting events.

**Bring Your Children to Work.** Companies can sponsor a “bring your child to work” event to show support for families; or company policies may be flexible enough to allow bringing children to work if no other child care arrangements can be made. Important considerations are the safety, cleanliness and comfort of the work environment, as well as the availability of activities that may engage children.

**Facilities for Nursing Mothers.** Providing a clean, comfortable, private space with facilities (e.g., electrical outlets, running water, refrigerator, microwave, changing tables) for nursing mothers to express milk or nurse babies can assist nursing mothers who want to return to work.

**Overtime Policies.** Another way employers can be supportive of employees with caregiving responsibilities is to avoid mandating overtime.

**Relocation Policies.** Relocation policies can be reformed to become “family-friendly” by minimizing the number of required transfers. Organizations can also be supportive of transferred families by assisting in the search for child or elder care facilities or by providing job-finding services for the employee's spouse. In addition, policies against nepotism may be eliminated, allowing the hiring of spouses with appropriate qualifications.

**Technology.** Providing employees access to telephones (both on and off-site, e.g., cell phones), pagers, and the like can reduce stress for employees who are concerned about children, baby sitters, aging parents, elder-care providers, spouses or partners not being able to reach them in a crisis.

**Concierge Services.** Concierge services generally involve running errands for employees, such as picking up or dropping off dry cleaning, taking cars to the mechanic, and shopping. The intent is to reduce employee stress and allow employees to spend more time at work and/or more quality time when they are off work. Corporations may create an in-house concierge department or contract with existing concierge or errand services.

## 4

## Getting started

# Conducting a needs assessment

**A**s shown in the previous section, employers can assist their employees who have dependent care responsibilities in a variety of ways, and there are good reasons to do so. In determining how to get started, we suggest you consider the following points.

### 1. Don't get overwhelmed

It's okay to start small. Also, your company may already provide some of the workplace supports described here.

### 2. Take stock of the supports your organization currently offers

Review the list of workplace supports on page 9, and note which ones have already been implemented. Of those supports not offered, note the ones that seem most feasible now, in the near future, and in the longer term.

### 3. Review background information

This sourcebook arms you with considerable background information concerning (a) the changing American workforce and the growing numbers of employees with elder care needs, (b) the negative effects that caregiving responsibilities can have on employee performance, and the organizational benefits of providing family-friendly workplace supports, and (c) the various types of supports that employers have implemented. Section 5 in this sourcebook lists additional resources that may be helpful.

### 4. Assess the problem

Determining answers to questions such as “What are the family situations of our current employees?” will allow you to assess the specific needs of employees, as well as the potential benefits of various types of support options prior to developing and offering supports. The best strategy is to gather information about your organization's employees, their care arrangements, and how they are managing, and then use this information to determine which programs could be most useful.

#### 4a. Collect information about employees.

One method for collecting information involves administering a survey. To ensure equity, or fairness, it is important to determine and address the work/life needs of all employees, regardless of their family care responsibilities.

Typically, employee surveys are distributed via the organization's internal mail system. Advances in technology now allow surveys to be administered electronically, over the Web. Whatever distribution method is chosen, it is *crucial* that the survey preserve the anonymity of the employee, requiring no names or other specific information that would identify individuals. In organizations with small numbers of employees, this can be especially challenging.

To reassure employees of the anonymity of the data, you may wish to consider contracting with a third party and have employees send their completed surveys directly to them through the

U.S. mail; or you could have the survey administered over the Web by a third party. To help increase the response rate, have a cover letter signed by the CEO of your organization explaining the purpose of the survey, asking employees to participate and assuring them of the anonymity of their responses. To save time and resources, larger companies may wish to survey a random sample of representative employees.

The questions you ask in your survey will determine the types of analyses that are possible. Before you begin to develop the survey, think carefully about what conclusions you wish to be able to reach on the basis of your data. For example, you may want to know the percentage of employees who have dependent care responsibilities for children, elders, other adults with disabilities, for multiple types of dependents (e.g., the number of “sandwiched-generation” caregivers), or who have no caregiving responsibilities. If you wish to compare the needs and situations of other subgroups of employees, you must be sure to include demographic questions that will allow you to do this, such as employment status (full versus part time), shift worked (days versus others), worksite (if applicable), gender, and age. Identifying the specific questions you wish to have answers to at the outset will help assure that you gather all the information that you need.

**Pretesting your instrument – that is, having a few employees complete it, then provide you feedback regarding the clarity and relevance of the questions – is also a good idea. An excellent, easy-to-read book about doing surveys is Salant and Dillman's *How to Conduct Your Own Survey* (John Wiley & Sons, 1994).**

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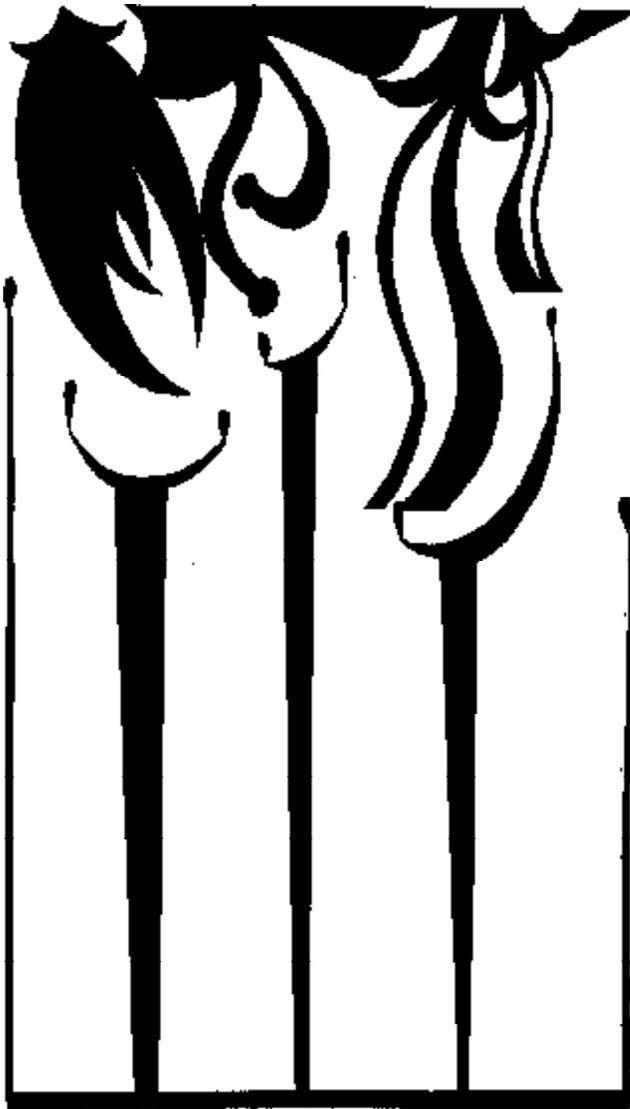
*The goal is to implement programs that are responsive to the needs of your company's workforce.*

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On the following pages we offer a sample needs-assessment survey instrument as a template. You may use it as is or modify it to best fit your organization's requirements. The final section of the survey contains a list of various types of support options that may be offered. Some employers may be concerned that the inclusion of this list could create unrealistic expectations on the part of employees for options that are not feasible from the organization's perspective. One strategy would be to conduct the needs assessment in two parts: first, establish the types of needs employees have, and second (after completing steps 4b and 4c below), assess the degree of employee interest in particular options.

**4b. Analyze the data to make inferences about needs.** Once completed surveys have been received, responses must be tabulated and analyzed. It is ideal to create a database of survey responses (without individual employee identification). Depending on the types of data you have gathered, there are a variety of analyses that you may conduct. You will probably want to know the basic characteristics of the employees who responded, the nature of their dependent care responsibilities, and the extent to which they are having difficulties combining their work and family responsibilities. One indicator of current and future dependent care needs is the average age of your workforce. Younger workforces tend to be most concerned with child care issues; older workforces with elder care.

Identifying subgroups of employees in which you are interested is one of the key aspects of gleaning results from your survey data. Narrowing the focus to subgroups often identifies more acute needs than what is apparent for the workforce at large. For example, for employees who have dependent children, you may want to examine the number and ages of the children. Employees with young children are faced with different demands than those with older children. For employees with responsibilities for disabled adults or elders, the number of disabled adults or elders they are



responsible for, the amount of assistance provided, and whether the person helped most lives nearby or at a distance are likely to be of interest.

Comparing the needs of subgroups may also be desirable. For example, you may wish to determine whether the dependent care needs of employees differ according to whether employees work full or part time, or on the day shift versus other shifts. If you have asked about particular types of supports that your organization is considering offering, you can analyze the data to determine the level of interest in these supports overall and on the part of the various subgroups of interest.

Employees' answers to questions such as the ease or difficulty with which they combine work with

family responsibilities, satisfaction with current care arrangements, concerns about performance at work due to family duties, and the types of accommodations they are making at work due to their family responsibilities (e.g., turning down promotions or travel, considering quitting) will tell you how pervasive work-family issues are in your workforce. Subgroup comparisons can be particularly helpful for determining which groups in your organization are facing the greatest challenges.

**4c. Think through possible solutions.** The types of supports an organization is able to offer depend on the size of the organization and the type of industry. For example, larger companies tend to be able to offer a wider variety of supports. Small businesses, however, can join together to form a large enough group so that the provision of certain benefits and services, such as group long-term care insurance or day care services, becomes economically feasible.

As your organization considers the range of options for helping employees better manage their work and family responsibilities, it is important that you be attentive to issues of equity. Resentment can form among subgroups of employees (e.g., those without dependent care duties) when programs are targeted toward specific other groups. Some types of support (e.g., flextime, telecommuting, paid time off, concierge services) may be beneficial and desirable to all employees. Your organization may want to consider a flexible “cafeteria-style” benefits plan, in which employees are allowed to assemble a benefits package that meets their personal needs by selecting from a variety of alternatives.

The preceding section of this sourcebook presented a variety of support options. Some of these supports are relatively quick, simple and inexpensive to implement, while others are more involved and costly. A company may respond initially by offering a few options and gradually progress toward a more comprehensive approach.

Our research and that of others has shown that employees with dependent-care responsibilities especially value flexibility in their work schedules and a “family-friendly” work culture in which supervisors and co-workers are sensitive to their needs. A fairly easy, inexpensive, and effective place to start is to train managers to be sensitive to the types of issues faced by employers with dependent care responsibilities. Work-family professionals to conduct this training can be found by consulting your own Employee Assistance Program staff or other EAP professionals, or by searching the web. Another low-cost option is to offer employee seminars on child- and elder-care-related topics. Small employers can get together and make these seminars available to their combined employees.

### **5. Implement, then evaluate**

Needs assessment and implementation of workplace supports should always be followed by evaluation to determine if employee needs and concerns are being addressed. A follow-up survey can be conducted to gather some of this information. Periodic reassessment of employee needs is also advisable. To assess the organizational benefits of new programs, you can use company records to compare outcomes (e.g., levels of turnover, absenteeism, tardiness) before and after implementation.

It is important to remember that informal characteristics of the workplace, or the organization’s culture, can affect outcomes as well as the formal policies, benefits, and services offered by the organization. Similarly, if employees do not make use of the formal supports available, these supports may not appear to have a positive impact (although sometimes, simply knowing that a support exists can improve an employee’s job commitment). Any policies, benefits and services offered must be vigorously and continuously marketed, or employees will not be aware of their existence and thus not be able to use them. Supervisors may be unaware of the support options available, or may be reluctant to permit their employees to make use

of them (e.g., to use flexible work arrangements). Training supervisors can alleviate these problems.

Routine monitoring of the changing benefits scene and public-policy developments related to dependent care will help keep your organization current and competitive. Some excellent websites for this purpose are listed in the next section.

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*Enlightened corporations are beginning to understand that social issues are business issues. They realize they can no longer separate themselves from what is going on around them. Ultimately, businesses can only be as successful as the communities, and the world, that they exist in.*

William Ford, Jr., Chairman  
Ford Motor Company  
*HR News*, November 28, 2000

***The following pages  
contain  
a sample  
needs assessment  
survey instrument***

## Employee Work-Life Survey

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Thank you for participating in this survey to determine employees' work-life situations and needs. Please answer the questions by circling your responses or by writing your answer in the blank provided. **All responses are anonymous.** Your name is not asked, and it will not be possible to link your responses to your name. We appreciate your frank answers.

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ years
2. What is your sex? 0 Male      1 Female
3. Which of the following best describes your marital status?
  - 1 Married
  - 2 Living with partner
  - 2 Single, never married
  - 3 Separated/divorced
  - 4 Widowed
4. Which of the following best describes your work schedule?
  - 1 Standard full time
  - 2 Flexible work hours
  - 3 Compressed work week (such as four 10-hour days or three 12-hour days)
  - 4 Job sharing
  - 5 Other part time
5. How long have you worked for this organization? \_\_\_\_\_ years (write 0 if less than 1 year)
6. About how many hours per week do you usually work? \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week
7. How many days per week do you usually work? \_\_\_\_\_ days per week
8. What shift do you usually work?
  - 1 Days
  - 2 Nights
  - 3 Swing
  - 4 Rotating
  - 5 Other \_\_\_\_\_
9. Are you on salary, hourly wage, or commission?
  - 1 On salary
  - 2 Hourly wage
  - 3 Commission
  - 4 Other: \_\_\_\_\_
10. How much flexibility do you have in your work schedule to handle family responsibilities?
  - 1 No flexibility at all
  - 2 Hardly any flexibility
  - 3 Some flexibility
  - 4 A lot of flexibility
11. In the past month, to what extent have the following areas of life been a source of stress to you?
 

No stress at all	Hardly any stress	Some stress	A lot of stress	Not Applicable
a. Your health				
1	2	3	4	
b. Health of other family members				
1	2	3	4	
c. Child care				
1	2	3	4	NA
d. Care for elderly or disabled adult family members or friends				
1	2	3	4	NA
e. Personal or family finances				
1	2	3	4	
f. Your job				
1	2	3	4	
g. Family relationships (include extended family)				
1	2	3	4	

12. Do you hold any other jobs elsewhere?

- 1 Yes      0 No

13. Circumstances differ and some people find it easier than others to combine work with family responsibilities. In general, how easy or difficult is it for you?

- 1 Very easy  
2 Easy  
3 Somewhat easy  
4 Somewhat difficult  
5 Difficult  
6 Very difficult

**Now some questions about your household:** If you live alone, please check here \_\_\_\_, then SKIP to Question 23.

14. What are the ages and relationships of the people who live in your household?

Please **circle the age** of any who are living with a physical or mental/emotional disability.

Spouse/partner's age: \_\_\_\_ years  
Children's/step-children's ages: \_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_;  
\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_

Others

relationship: \_\_\_\_\_; age: \_\_\_\_  
relationship: \_\_\_\_\_; age: \_\_\_\_  
relationship: \_\_\_\_\_; age: \_\_\_\_  
relationship: \_\_\_\_\_; age: \_\_\_\_  
relationship: \_\_\_\_\_; age: \_\_\_\_

15. Do you have children/stepchildren aged 18 or under who do not live with you?

- 0 No      1 Yes

16. Do you have children/stepchildren of any age living outside your household for whom you provide financial support?

- 0 No      1 Yes

If you do not have children age 18 or under living in your household, please check here \_\_\_\_, then SKIP to Question 19.

17. Please circle the one response that best describes your situation when your child is sick:

- 1 My spouse/partner cares for the ill child  
2 My regular child care provider (not spouse) cares for the ill child  
3 My child can usually take care of him/herself  
4 I have other arrangements for sick child care so that I do not need to miss work  
5 I am able to rearrange my schedule and make up the time later  
6 I am able to take paid time off work  
7 I take unpaid time off work  
8 Other (please explain):  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. For all of your children combined, how much, on average, do you spend each month on child care expenses? \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month

If you do not have a spouse/partner, please check here \_\_\_\_, then SKIP to Question 23.

19. Is your spouse/partner employed?

- 1 Yes, full time  
2 Yes, part time, due to family care responsibilities  
3 Yes, part time for other reasons (not family care)  
4 No, due to family care responsibilities – SKIP to Question \_\_\_\_  
5 No, due to other reasons (not family care) – SKIP to Question \_\_\_\_

20. About how many hours per week does your spouse or partner work? \_\_\_\_\_hrs/wk

21. What shift does your spouse or partner work?

- 1 Days  
2 Nights  
3 Swing  
4 Rotating  
5 Other \_\_\_\_\_

22. How much flexibility does your spouse or partner have in his/her work schedule to handle family responsibilities?

- 1 No flexibility at all
- 2 Hardly any flexibility
- 3 Some flexibility
- 4 A lot of flexibility

Now some questions concerning adult/elder care:

23. How many living parents, stepparents, and parents-in-law do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

24. Do you anticipate needing to help out these parents or other adults or elders in the next five years?

*By "help out" we mean everything that you might do to assist a frail or disabled person, such as shopping, home maintenance, transportation to appointments, providing emotional support, overseeing their finances, checking on them by phone, making arrangements for care, making meals, bathing them, time spent traveling to and from their residence, etc.*

0 No 1 Yes

25. Are you currently helping out any of your parents, stepparents, parents-in-law, or any other adults or elders with disabilities?

0 No – SKIP to next box 1 Yes

26. Overall, on average, about how many total hours do you spend each week helping out these adults/elders? \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week

27. On average, about how much of your own funds do you spend per month on care-related expenses (such as for hiring outside help, transportation expenses, telephone charges, financial support to the adult/elder)?  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month

**Please think now about the adult or elder whom you help out the most.**

28. What is this person's age? \_\_\_\_\_

29. What is his/her relationship to you?  
\_\_\_\_\_

30. About how many hours per week do you help him/her? \_\_\_\_\_ hours/week

31. About how many miles away from you does this person live? (Write "0" if he/she lives with you.) \_\_\_\_\_ miles

32. Which of the following best describes the help you (and your spouse or partner, if applicable) provide to this person?

- 1 I/we have been the only or main ones helping out
- 2 I/we have shared the care equally with others (e.g., person's spouse, siblings, paid care providers)
- 3 Others have been the main ones, with some help from me/us

33. Please circle the one response that best describes your situation when you need to take time off work to assist an adult/elder:

- 1 I never need to take time off from work for this reason
- 2 I am able to take paid time off work
- 3 I am able to rearrange my schedule and make up the time later
- 4 I take unpaid time off work

Other (please explain):  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you have no child-, adult- OR elder-care responsibilities, please check here \_\_\_\_, then SKIP to Question 38.

34. How comfortable are you talking with co-workers and with your supervisor at work about your responsibilities for children and disabled adults/elders? (Circle 0 if you do not have co-workers or a supervisor).

	Comfortable talking about <b>children</b>						Comfortable talking about <b>disabled adults/elders</b>				
	Not at all	Just a little	Some-what	Very	NA		Not at all	Just a little	Some-what	Very	NA
a. Coworkers	1	2	3	4	0	a. Coworkers	1	2	3	4	0
b. Supervisor	1	2	3	4	0	b. Supervisor	1	2	3	4	0

35. Because of your responsibilities for children or disabled adults/elders, in the past month, how many times have you had to, or chosen to:

	Due to responsibilities for any of your <b>children</b>	Due to responsibilities for any of your <b>disabled adults/elders</b>
a. Miss a day's work	_____ times	_____ times
b. Arrive late at work	_____ times	_____ times
c. Leave work early	_____ times	_____ times
d. Spend time at work on the telephone	_____ times	_____ times

37. How often have you worked less effectively, in the past month, because you were concerned or upset:

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Most or all of the time
a. About your child(ren)	1	2	3	4	5
b. About your adult/elder(s) who need care	1	2	3	4	5

38. Because of your child, adult/elder care responsibilities, in the past year, have you:

	0	1
a. Worked reduced hours?	No	Yes
b. Worked a different shift from spouse/partner so that one adult is at home most of the time?	No	Yes
c. Quit a job?	No	Yes
d. Chosen a job to give you more flexibility to meet your family needs?	No	Yes
e. Refused to relocate?	No	Yes
f. Refused or decided not to work toward a promotion?	No	Yes
g. Refused or limited your travel?	No	Yes
h. Had your parent(s) or parent(s)-in-law live with you to make it easier for you to help them?	No	Yes
i. Had your parent(s) or parent(s)-in-law live with you so they can help <u>you</u> out?	No	Yes
j. Participated in a support group for parents or for caregivers to elders	No	Yes
k. Other (related to your work or family) _____		

38. Below is a list of workplace supports that have been offered by some employers. For each of these supports, please indicate whether you (1) currently use it, (2) would use it if it were available and you needed it, or (3) would probably not use it even if it were available and needed.

	<b>Currently use</b>	<b>Would use if available &amp; needed</b>	<b>Probably would not use</b>
a. Flexible benefits/cafeteria plan	1	2	3
b. Flexible work hours	1	2	3
c. Jobsharing	1	2	3
d. Option to work at home/telecommute	1	2	3
e. Unpaid leave to care for a family member	1	2	3
f. Personal time off or other paid leave to care for a family member	1	2	3
g. Family health care insurance	1	2	3
h. Pension/retirement plan	1	2	3
i. Program to set aside pre-tax dollars to pay for child care	1	2	3
j. Program to set aside pre-tax dollars to pay for elder care	1	2	3
k. Subsidy for child care	1	2	3
l. Subsidy for parent care	1	2	3
m. On-site child care center	1	2	3
n. On-site adult daycare center	1	2	3
o. Resource and referral services for child care	1	2	3
p. Resource and referral services for elder care	1	2	3
q. On-site support groups on family-related issues	1	2	3
r. Seminars on work and family issues	1	2	3
s. Employee assistance program (EAP)	1	2	3
t. Wellness program	1	2	3
u. Social/family activities	1	2	3
v. Stress management programs	1	2	3
w. Other work-life benefits or programs	1	2	3
(Specify) _____			

39. Is there anything else that you would like to add related to your work-life situation or needs?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS SURVEY!**

## Reaching out

# Resources and references

**B**elow are lists of internet websites, books and reports, and human-resource management-related articles offering information on family-friendly work practices for employers. For each website, the address is listed along with a brief description of what the site has to offer. Many of the websites have lists of their own, as well as others', publications. This list of resources is far from all-inclusive; rather, it provides a gateway for gathering additional information.

## Websites

### Professional Associations

*Alliance of Work/Life Professionals:*  
[www.awlp.org](http://www.awlp.org)

The Alliance of Work/Life Professionals is a membership organization for professionals, with the mission to promote a healthier balance between work and personal life.

*The Society for Human Resource Management:*  
[www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org)

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the largest human resource management association, with more than 160,000 members throughout the world. In the U.S., there are over 480 affiliated SHRM chapters. Among the services provided are education and information, conferences and seminars, government and media representation, and online services and publications. Read the current *HR Magazine* (the journal of SHRM), discover the latest HR news, and get HR tips of the day.

### Work/Life Benefits & Consulting Firms

*Artemis Management Consultants:*  
[www.artemismanagement.com](http://www.artemismanagement.com)

*Ceridian Performance Partners:*  
[www.ceridianperformance.com](http://www.ceridianperformance.com)

*Managing Work and Family:* [www.mwfam.com](http://www.mwfam.com)

*WFD:* [www.wfd.com/](http://www.wfd.com/)

*Work and Family Connection:*  
[www.workfamily.com](http://www.workfamily.com)

*Working Solutions:*  
[www.working-solutions.com](http://www.working-solutions.com)

*Work/Life Benefits:*  
[www.worklifebenefits.com](http://www.worklifebenefits.com)

*Work & Family Benefits, Inc.:*  
[www.wfbenefits.com](http://www.wfbenefits.com)

These are examples of consulting firms specializing in work/life issues. Typically, they offer programs and services to organizations to help them become flexible and supportive of workers with family and personal responsibilities. Most provide child- and elder-care resource and referral services to organizations' employees. Most sites have other products, as well, and sections on work/life news

### Concierge Firms

*Circles:* [www.circles.com](http://www.circles.com)

*The Gift of Time:* [www.thegiftoftime.com](http://www.thegiftoftime.com)

*Triangle Concierge International:*  
[www.triangleconcierge.com](http://www.triangleconcierge.com)

These are examples of companies that provide organizations with concierge services for their employees and customers.

## Products and Technical Support

*Family Friendly.com:* [www.familyfriendly.com](http://www.familyfriendly.com)

This website has a section on how to become a family friendly company and one to find out what companies offer various family-friendly programs.

*The Human Resource Professional Gateway to the Internet:*

[www.teleport.com/~erwilson/links.html](http://www.teleport.com/~erwilson/links.html)

Named as one of Windows' 101 best business sites, this site has hundreds of links related to human resource issues and companies with HR-related product and services. A treasure!

*The National Institute of Health (NIH) Work and Family Life Center:*

[www.nccam.nih.gov/wflc/](http://www.nccam.nih.gov/wflc/)

This website represents a vast resource for employers and employees alike. Although the site is intended for its own employees, it acts as a clearinghouse for information about work/family issues, with sections on career counseling, computer resources and internet sites, resource/referral services, and much more.

*National Report on Work & Family:*

[www.bpinews.com/hr/pages/rwf.htm](http://www.bpinews.com/hr/pages/rwf.htm)

This site offers a newsletter that includes case studies and covers a wide range of family-friendly policies. The newsletter may be too costly for some companies, but free issues are available.

*United States Office of Personnel Management:*

[www.opm.gov/wrkfam/](http://www.opm.gov/wrkfam/).

This Family-Friendly Workplace Advocacy Office provides government-wide leadership and technical assistance to agencies in the use of comprehensive family-friendly programs.

[www.workfamily.com](http://www.workfamily.com)

This website is a subscription service designed primarily for professionals and researchers, but it also includes free information for the general public. Included are a Q&A forum, lists of family-friendly organizations, and links to a host of other related websites.

*Workforce Online:* [www.workforceonline.com](http://www.workforceonline.com)

Workforce Online is an online human resources magazine that covers work and family issues.

## Research/Government

*The Boston College Center for Work and Family:*  
[www.bc.edu/cwf](http://www.bc.edu/cwf)

The Center for Work and Family is a research organization dedicated to increasing the quality of life for working families by promoting responsive workplaces and communities. This website provides information on research projects in the area of work and family, with links to other websites and resources.

*The Conference Board:*

[www.conference-board.org](http://www.conference-board.org)

The Conference Board is a non-for-profit, non-advocacy worldwide business membership and research network. Founded in 1916, its purpose is to improve the business enterprise system and to enhance the contribution of business to society. Its membership includes more than 3,000 companies and other organizations in 67 countries. Among other resources, the website lists Conference Board conferences, allows keyword searching of its database of publications, and provides ordering information.

*Families and Work Institute:*

[www.familiesandwork.com](http://www.familiesandwork.com)

The Families and Work Institute is a not-for-profit research organization that conducts policy and worksite research and provides services such as evaluation, technical assistance, and business advising. Read press releases and announcements, and order the institute's publications.

*U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics:* <http://stats.bls.gov>

Specific sites:

USDL 98-217.

[<http://stats.bls.gov/newsrels.htm>]

USDL 99-339.

[<http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.t05.htm>]

USDL 00-172.

[<http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/famee.nr0.htm>]

*U. S. Department of Labor:* [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)

This site contains a library, statistics, descriptions of many programs and services, and links to related sites.

### *U.S. Office of Personnel Management: Family Friendly Workplace Advocacy Office:*

[www.opm.gov/wrkfam](http://www.opm.gov/wrkfam)

This website has a Question and Answer section on family-friendly workplace initiatives. It also lists publications and has a section on telecommuting.

### *Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor:* [www.dol.gov/dol/wb](http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb)

Through this site, join other employers in monthly virtual work and family conference calls.

## Websites for Employees

[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

Site of the American Association of Retired Persons.

<http://boomersint.org/bindex.html>

This site contains a wealth of information for "Baby Boomers," including discussions and articles about caring for elderly parents.

[www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)

This website of the Family Caregiver Alliance (FCA) provides information on topics related to caregiving for elders and adults with disabilities. A public policy section tracks legislation relevant to caregiving, a resource center locates services; also find a news bureau, a research registry, and an on-line support group. FCA's research centers offers diagnoses, statistics, and other adult/elder-care links.

[www.caregiving.com](http://www.caregiving.com)

This site is for persons providing elder care, offering advice and guidance, and an online support group. Get three free issues of Caregiving magazine. There is a new section for human-resource professionals.

[www.careguide.com](http://www.careguide.com)

This site provides resources for anyone seeking child-care or elder-care help. Open to members only, but membership is free. The site lists 90,000 child-care facilities and 70,000 elder-care facilities by city and state. Information offered for financing and insurance, nutrition, disease and more.

[www.elderweb.com](http://www.elderweb.com)

This award-winning site, in existence for seven years, is one of the oldest and largest elder care resources

on the web. It is a research site for professionals and family members, with thousands of on-site and off-site articles on legal, financial, medical, and housing issues, as well as policy, research, and statistics. It includes over 6,000 reviewed links to long-term care information, as well as an expanding library of articles and reports, news, and events.

<http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/1749/listindex.html>

This is an e-mail support group for caregivers in the sandwiched generation.

[www.mainstayfunds.com/viewer/wsh-nyl.nts/nyl/pfwhsa.html](http://www.mainstayfunds.com/viewer/wsh-nyl.nts/nyl/pfwhsa.html)

<http://www.limitedmaturity.com/education/planning/sandwich.html>

These two sites offer financial information for caregivers, plus resource lists.

[www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org)

The website of the National Council on the Aging provides a wealth of information.

<http://www.benefits.checkup.org/>

This recently created site identifies federal and state assistance programs that elders may be eligible for, and provides instructions on how to apply for them.

<http://www.nfcacares.org/>

Website for the National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA) "strives to minimize the disparity between a caregiver's quality of life and that of mainstream Americans"; offers articles, statistics, services locations, and more. Membership in NFCA is necessary to gain access to some resources.

[www.parentsplace.com](http://www.parentsplace.com)

Provides a wealth of practical information, plus interactive Q&A section. Parents' Place has hundreds of bulletin boards, ranging from relationships, to children's health, to work-related topics. Chat sessions allow virtual discussions.

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