Working Parents: Trends and Strategies For Support

Jennifer Sabatini Fraone
Boston College Workforce Roundtable
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Center Mission

The Center for Work & Family works with progressive employers to develop a learning community focused on enhancing the employee experience. As a university-based center, we provide a bridge linking research and practice to foster innovative, evidence-based, workforce management practices.
Center Members include...
Organizational responses to COVID-19 Caregiving Crisis

- Ask for and listen to caregivers' needs
- Provide flexibility - Focus on results, not schedules
- Caregiving benefits and supports - assess how your company can help with childcare and eldercare
- Developing the future workplace - smarter policies and practices
- Show empathy and understanding - create a culture of support
- Continue to evaluate what's working
## BENCHMARKING SUMMARY: COVID-19 SUPPORTS FOR WORKING PARENTS

**November 2020**

Briefly share what steps your organization has taken or plans to take to support your working parents, particularly mothers who now have increased responsibilities at home.

### Flexibility
- Communication around all the flexibility options available
- On-going remote work (some through next June)
- Flexible start/stop times, Sunday work, night work
- Reduced schedule while maintaining full benefits (80%)
- Extended Caregiving Leave (partially or fully paid)
- Hybrid model - some days at home, some days at office
- Part-time work and job share options
- Compressed work week
- Sabbatical - encouraging use for caregiving reasons
- Leave bank - vacation time or PTO donated by other employees

### Well-being and Mental Health
- Promotion of existing EAP and counseling services
- Workshops and virtual events on resilience, stress, mindfulness and other wellbeing topics
- Telehealth services for physical and mental health
- Frequent pulse surveys and touch points
- Checking in and simply asking how employees are doing each week
- Wellness initiatives that offer services, tips, and hacks to reduce stress, balance home, family, getting enough rest
- Promoting appreciation, recognition, well-being and self-care activities, workshops, resources
- Assistance navigating the healthcare system
- Ergonomics support for remote working

### Leadership and Culture
- Messages of understanding and validation from top leadership
- Regular town hall meetings or blogs from leaders to express support
- Transparency around return to work plans
- Review and enhance benefits to ensure they are inclusive of all employees and their caregiving needs
- Encourage authentic conversations and storytelling
- Reaffirming commitment to diversity, inclusion, and women’s advancement
- Training for managers on empathy and support for caregivers during this crisis

### Access to Care Support
- Access to Care.com or other caregiver platforms
- Back up child care in home or at center (paid or discounted)
- Elder care resources and support
- Support for children with special and unique needs
- Babysitting co-op where employee teams/older children can offer services to other parents with young children
- Virtual homework help - 24/7 access to online tutors for kindergarten through college (paid or discounted)
- Executive coaching and dual career couple coaching

### Financial
- Subsidies for child care, tutoring, babysitters (some subsidies available to all, some based on income or hardship)
- Additional back up care days paid for by company
- Discounts on tutoring and enrichment programs
- Dependent Care FSAs (COVID as critical incident allowing changes)
- Concierge Services

### Community Support
- Intranet boards/social media groups for caregivers to connect with each other and share ideas and solutions
- Caregiver ERGs/business networks providing support and education
- Parent gatherings and virtual programming
- Women’s groups programming to help connect with each other, find support, and reboot

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**COVID-19 SUPPORTS FOR WORKING PARENTS**

We asked Roundtable members to share what steps their organizations have taken or plan to take to support working parents.
Types of Support for Caregivers

FLEXIBILITY:

- Communication around all the flexibility options available
- On-going remote work (some through next June)
- Flexible start/stop times, Sunday work, night work
- Reduced schedule while maintaining full benefits (80%)
- Extended Caregiving Leave (partially or fully paid)
- Hybrid model- some days at home/some days at office
- Part-time work and job share options
- Meeting-free Fridays or other uninterrupted time
- Encouraging use of PTO or sabbaticals for caregiving
- Leave bank - Vacation time or PTO donated by other employees

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING:

- Promotion of existing EAP and counseling services
- Workshops and virtual events on resilience, stress, mindfulness and other wellbeing topics
- Telehealth services for physical and mental health
- Frequent pulse surveys and touch points
- Checking in and asking how employees are doing each week
- Wellness initiatives that offer services, tips, and hacks to reduce stress, balance home, family, getting enough rest
- Promoting appreciation, recognition, well-being and self-care activities, workshops, resources
- Assistance navigating the healthcare system
- Ergonomics support for remote working
Types of Support for Caregivers

**LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE:**

- Messages of understanding, validation from top leadership
- Regular town hall meetings, storytelling or blogs from leaders to express support
- Transparency around return to work plans
- Review and enhance benefits to ensure they are inclusive of all employees and their caregiving needs
- Adjustment of goals and performance measures as needed
- Reaffirming commitment to diversity, inclusion, and women’s advancement
- Training for managers on empathy and support for caregivers during this crisis

**ACCESS TO CARE SUPPORT:**

- Access to Care.com or other caregiver platforms
- Back up child care in home or at center (paid or discounted)
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- Support for children with special and unique needs
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Types of Support for Caregivers

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT:**
- Subsidies for child care, tutoring, babysitters (some subsidies available to all, some based on income or hardship)
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**COMMUNITY SUPPORT:**
- Intranet boards/social media groups for caregivers to connect with each other and share ideas and solutions
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BCCWF Tip Sheets

Guidelines for Employees Working Remotely

Set Yourself up for Success

- Establish a daily routine. For example, showering and getting ready for the day, preparing a meal before you start your work, or short walk over lunch.
- Create a daily plan. This will help you avoid disruptive info. Use sticky notes as reminders for deadlines. Setting goals is helping on reaching them. and to stay motivated.
- Use the big 5: Mike. Every day focus on big projects that is important for you to complete. 5 medium things that need to be done. 10 small tasks to finish.
- Take breaks. Taking at least 5 min. breaks is important when it’s time to break your productivity and focus.

Communicate Effectively

- Communicate regularly with your manager and colleagues. Use regular check-ins to update others on your progress, and to solicit feedback.
- Let your manager know about the competing responsibilities you have and that you’re committed to helping in both. To maintain your productivity as much as possible.
-Be an active participant in virtual meeting platforms and conference calls.
- Regularly give and receive feedback. When sharing feedback to your colleagues, ensure it’s specific, constructive, and empathetic. Use your feedback to discuss outcomes and actions.

Maintain Balance and Well-Being

- Set aside specific times when work does not interfere with family time, and when family does not interfere with work. Lock down time in the morning and evening. This can benefit both you and your family, and can also help with productivity.
- Set working hours and try to stick to them. Having your home workspace together makes it very easy to disconnect. Disconnect work. Taking time off will recharge minds and make work more productive. It helps to disconnect physically, actively, exercise, and sleep more regularly.

Managing Remote Workers

Communication is key

As a manager, be accessible to all of your team members. Video conferences using tools like Zoom or WebEx can keep remote employees from feeling isolated. Monitor progress and give feedback. Create regular “check-ins” to ensure that everyone stays on track. Communicate frequently and clearly, and keep the lines of communication open.

Focus on results

When evaluating productivity and performance, managers need to create a system that is focused on objectives rather than time constraints. Realistic and effective assessment, understand that employees working from home may be juggling multiple responsibilities, including caregiving, and they may need flexibility around the hours they work.

Set clear expectations

Don’t leave remote workers trying to read your mind. drowning abilities, unfortunately, is the role of the remote manager to provide a sense of structure through clear values, responsibilities, process objectives, and performance measurements. Create ways remote workers can monitor their performance and not always have to wait for your feedback.

Provide regular feedback and inspiration

Remote workers should be recognized and rewarded for their successes. Individuality and publicism, let remote workers know how their work is important. To the bigger picture - how it contributes to the success of the unit, the division, the organization, and the wider community. Make an effort to normalize and coordinate virtuallain.

Encourage work-life integration strategies

Remote workers can be very fluid in their boundaries between their own professional lives, because their office is in the home. Encouraging employees to try to keep this routine and establish a space that is work-space specific can help with it. Employees should feel like they are able to “switch work off” to relax and recharge at the end of the day.
Thank you!

jennifer.fraone@bc.edu

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