Building Strong Families

Options for Employers
Family-Oriented Programs and Policies

Family-oriented work policies come in all sizes and shapes. This list is a sample of options that some employers have already done.

Changing the Corporate Culture: Making the Workplace Family-Friendly

1. Establish a work and family committee or task force.
2. Assess employee needs through surveys or focus groups.
3. Provide flexibility in work hours and other policies to meet the individual needs of employees.
4. Communicate policies in writing and through staff development programs.
5. Train managers and supervisors to be sensitive to work/family issues.
6. Designate a work and family program manager.

Work Time/Place Options

1. Flexible schedules
2. Compressed work week (such as four, 10 hour days)
3. Part-time employment (with pro-rated benefits)
4. Job sharing
5. Overtime flexibility
6. Flexiplace: telecommuting and/or work at home

Counseling Program Options

1. Employee assistance programs (alcohol/drug abuse counseling and/or treatment programs, family counseling)
2. Stress reduction seminars
3. Relocation assistance for working spouses of employees

Dependent Care Options

1. On-site child or eldercare center
2. Near-site child or eldercare center
3. Contract for slots in existing child or eldercare centers
4. Information and referral assistance for locating child care or eldercare
5. Recruitment and training of family day care providers
6. Funds or other support for extended hours at near-site dependent care centers for employees who work extended hours or evening/night shifts
7. Emergency child care services; care for mildly ill children
8. Transportation to after-school recreation/child care programs
9. Help with start-up costs for outside child care or eldercare center
10. Vouchers or direct subsidies to employees
11. Dependent care handbook to assist employees in locating child or eldercare services best suited to their needs
12. Summer camp program

**Leave Options**

1. Flexible vacation options
2. Use of sick leave to care for sick immediate family members
3. Personal leave - specific amount (paid)
4. Personal leave - flexible (unpaid)
5. Paid parental leave
6. Extended unpaid parental leave (job-guarantee; continuing benefits)
7. Return from parental leave on part-time basis
8. Leave bank (annual and/or sick leave)
9. Flexible leave for teacher conferences or other school events
10. Bereavement leave
11. Nursing breaks

**Information/Seminar Options**

1. Employee orientation programs that include information on family-supportive policies and programs, management training programs, strategic plans and annual reports
2. Eldercare counseling and referral services
3. Parenting seminars
4. Parent support groups
5. Computer bulletin board information exchange
6. New parent seminars
7. Parent resource center with books, videos, and magazines on parenting, child care and caring for the elderly
8. Worksite health promotion programs

**Telephone Access Options**

1. Telephone for routine/emergency family calls
2. "Short" long distance calls for family emergencies
3. Calling home from business trips
Financial Support Options

1. Flexible benefit plans
2. Health and dental care insurance for dependents
3. Reimbursement for adoption expenses
4. Tuition assistance for college or private schools
5. Scholarship programs for employees' children
6. Reimbursement for extra child care or eldercare costs for travel or overtime work
7. Employee financial assistance fund for financial crises

Miscellaneous Options

1. Develop children-at-work policies (for snow days; other emergencies).
2. Address family concerns in recruitment interviews.
3. Make uneven career paths acceptable.
5. Postpone relocation for family reasons.
6. Support family picnics/holiday events.
7. Provide nursing space.
9. Encourage developers to include child care and eldercare in space where you rent.