



Work + Family: Employers Supporting Working Parents

Business leaders and Human Resource professionals can make an incredible contribution to the well-being of their employees by providing tools to help parents better nurture, educate and engage with children. Presenteeism affects working parents on a regular basis. Presenteeism describes the broad range of circumstances that occur when employees are physically present, but due to physical or emotional issues, are distracted to the point of reduced productivity. Presenteeism is estimated to be over seven times more costly to employers than absenteeism (Salzaret al., 2014). Employees worried about their child's well-being can fall into this category.



Employers interested in supporting employees and their children can find value in coordinating with like-minded businesses and community partners. An organization's support of parenting initiatives can come in many shapes and sizes. Among the most common:

- Programs that engage employees in the community (Volunteer projects, tutoring and mentoring programs with social-service providers and schools).
- Benefits for employees that include employee discounts for child care, and child care referrals.
- In-kind contributions to support broader initiatives for children and families such as free meeting space, computers, and product donation.
- Lunch & Learn series or webinars that provide parents with resources, and information so they continue to develop knowledge and skills and feel supported as working parents.
- Flexible workplace options offering parents the opportunity to adjust their schedules to meet the needs of their families while completing their duties at work.
- Support for mothers who are breastfeeding babies by designating a comfortable breastfeeding room and allowing employees reasonable break time to express milk.

The first three years of a child's life is when a child's brain develops critical functions that will affect their life-long well-being. Supporting working parents through this stage and as their children grow is a good business strategy that pays off with a solid ROI.