

Majority of Businesses Believe They Offer Adequate Benefits to Support Working Parents

Accommodations Cause Potential Friction for Other Workers

Latest Results from The Harris Poll

OKLAHOMA CITY, Aug. 10, 2022—U.S. hiring decision-makers report roughly 50% of their workforce, on average, are working parents, and in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, 82% of these hiring managers say their company offers enough benefits to working parents to make them feel accommodated and supported.

This is according to a recent survey from The Harris Poll commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.

With the next few weeks marking the start of the third school year since the onset of the pandemic, school closures added additional pressure and tension on the shoulders of working parents—possibly more so for working mothers than fathers. Nearly 4 in 5 hiring decision-makers (79%) agree that working mothers have faced more challenges than working fathers—around a third (34%) strongly agree.

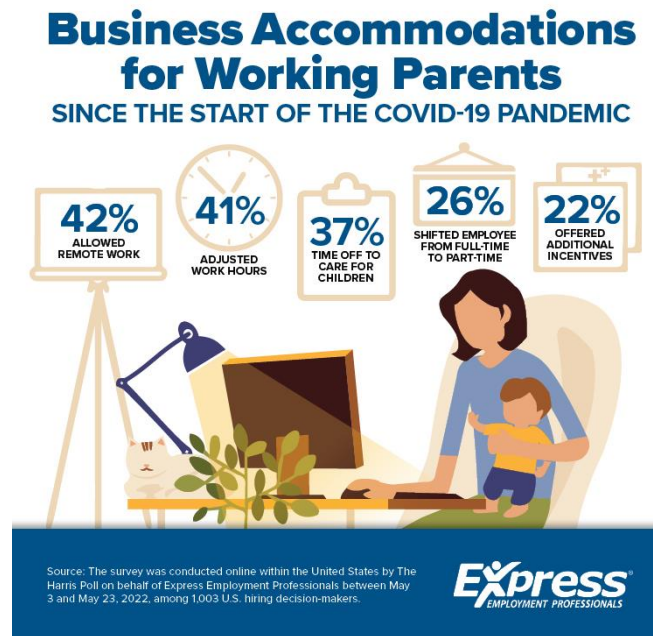
More than half of companies (55%) currently offer paid leave, including paid maternity (39%), paternity (31%) and/or even paid parental leave for parents fostering and/or adopting (22%). Flexible work hours (43%), flexible work location (34%), unpaid parental leave (31%) and/or the ability to work part-time (31%) are also offered at many companies.

Increased Benefits Since Pandemic's Inception

Specifically, since the start of the pandemic, around 2 in 5 U.S. hiring decision-makers with working parents in their workforce report the company has allowed working parents to work remotely (42%), adjust their work hours (41%) and/or taken time off to care for their children (37%).

Around a quarter (26%) say their working parents have shifted from full-time to part-time work.

Some companies have even offered additional incentives to parents (e.g., a daycare stipend, financial resources for adoption) (22%), and/or offered/increased the amount of employee parental leave (20%) in order to help retain current employees or attract new ones.



Tension Among Those Without Children

However, companies may need to be mindful of those in their workforce who are not parents, as two-thirds of U.S. hiring decision-makers (66%) feel accommodating working parents causes tension between them and those who aren't parents.

Challenges Across the Country

The rising cost and availability of childcare are some of the biggest struggles for many working parents, according to Kay Meyer, an Express franchise owner in south Texas.

“Childcare continues to be a struggle for many working families, especially single parents,” she said. “The expense of high-quality childcare, coupled with increasing housing costs, is putting a significant squeeze on families.

“We recently hired an internal team member who was able to take advantage of full-day pre-K through their spouse’s employment via our local school system. On the other hand, we lost out on hiring a different candidate who was wanting to transition from remote work to an in-person job due to lack of childcare access.”

In Jacksonville, Florida, Express franchise owner Mike Brady agrees that “hands down, the cost of daycare and after-hour care impacts working parents who are part of the workforce. Coupled

with work-life balance, there are multiple layers for them to collaborate with their employer to manage.”

The Value of Working Parents

Working parents are an integral part of the workforce, Brady adds, because, with the high rate of employee turnover, the sound investment is to retain working parents and work to accommodate in some areas, as appropriate and reasonable, versus having to replace and retrain a new employee.

“More often than not, working parents are more reliable because they have children,” he said. “In this labor market, a reliable employee is always valuable.”

Beyond the scope of the office, Meyer asserts that all parents are working parents.

“Those who work for a paycheck not only make a financial difference in the lives of their families, but they also make important contributions to all aspects of our economy,” she said. “In a time when our country remains near full employment and generational shifts continue to influence who is working, it’s important to find ways to ease the burdens of childcare and support those families with school-aged children.

“One of the ways we do that in our office is to make sure that everyone on our team is encouraged and supported in their attendance at meet-the-teacher nights, parent-teacher conferences, school programs and parent-teacher organization activities.”

As for those workers who don’t have children, Brady says there have been a small number of negative remarks about working parents for tardiness or missed work. But for Meyers, she encourages an approach of “we are all in this together” for the overall economy.

“Every segment in the labor force is incredibly important, and in this instance, companies are wise to offer some flexibility to working parents to help ease the labor shortage,” Express Employment International CEO Bill Stoller said.

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between May 3 and May 23, 2022, among 1,003 U.S. hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in the U.S. who are employed full-time or self-employed, work at companies with more than one employee, and have full/significant involvement in hiring decisions at their company). Data were weighted where necessary by company size to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

If you would like to arrange for an interview with Bill Stoller to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena Hollander, Director of Corporate Communications and PR, at (405) 717-5966.

About Bill Stoller

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment International. Founded in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the international staffing franchisor supports the Express Employment Professionals franchise and related brands. The Express franchise brand is an industry-leading, international staffing company with franchise locations in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

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