



Parenting in the Workplace Institute

Bringing New Life to the Workplace

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Return on Investment From a Babies-at-Work Program

Higher Retention Means a Better Bottom Line

Allowing parents to bring their babies to work for the first several months of life greatly increases employee retention, especially among mothers. The direct replacement costs of one employee can be up to 50% to 60% of their annual salary, and the total costs of turnover are estimated to be between 90% and 200% of an employee's salary.¹

Costs to Replace an Employee Include:

- Loss of Employee's Knowledge of Company
- Loss of Employee's Skills
- Advertising for New Employee
- Interviewing Time for Job Candidates
- Training New Employee
- Down Time While New Employee is Learning the Job
- Time Spent by Other Employees Orienting a New Employee
- Time Spent by Other Employees Covering Extra Work Until a New Employee is Trained

Mothers Return Earlier from Maternity Leave, Resulting in Cost Savings

Companies with baby programs have found that mothers frequently return from maternity leave much earlier for greater financial stability as well as to benefit from the social network of the workplace. Parents value the intellectual stimulation and professional satisfaction from their work, as well as being able to stay with their babies at the same time.

Costs of Extended Leave For Organizations:

- Paying Temporary Employees
- Increased Workload for Other Employees
- Lower Morale for Employees Handling Extra Work
- Risk of Work Not Being Completed
- Risk of Errors By Those Covering Parent's Job

¹ <http://www.shrm.org/about/foundation/research/documents/retaining%20talent-%20final.pdf>

Increased Morale and Teamwork

Baby-inclusive companies consistently report substantially higher morale as a result of the baby program, especially for employees who are in the vicinity of the babies. They also report higher levels of teamwork and collaboration as a result of the program. In numerous studies, higher morale is consistently linked with higher productivity.

Higher Dedication to Employer and Long-Term Productivity

Companies with baby programs report that mothers are more dedicated to their jobs when they can bring their babies to work. This results from gratitude toward the organization as well as from mothers being able to avoid the emotional and hormonal trauma of being separated from their babies at very young ages and incurring exorbitant day care costs. Both mothers and fathers in structured baby programs work very hard at their jobs to ensure that the baby program will be maintained, and they tend to become very efficient as they learn to balance baby care with work tasks. This higher efficiency and increased dedication to the organization results in higher long-term productivity by participating parents.

Increased Breastfeeding Rates Among Participating Mothers Decrease Health Care Expenses

Mothers who can bring their babies to work are much more likely to successfully breastfeed their babies. Returning to work and being separated from their baby in the early weeks or months of life is a primary reason that many mothers either don't initiate breastfeeding at all or wean earlier than the six months of exclusive nursing recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and numerous other health organizations.

Increased breastfeeding rates directly reduce health care costs and sick days taken:

- For every 1,000 babies who are not breastfed, there are more than 2,000 additional doctor visits, 600 more prescriptions, and 200 more hospitalization days.
Health Care Costs of Formula-feeding in the First Year of Life. Thomas M. Ball and Anne L. Wright. Pediatrics; Vol. 103, No. 4; April 1999; pp. 870-876.
- Mothers of formula-fed babies need to take about twice as many sick days to care for sick children as do mothers of breast-fed babies.
Comparison of maternal absenteeism and infant illness rates among breast-feeding and formula-feeding women in two corporations. Cohen R, Mrtek MB, Mrtek RG. Am J Health Promot.; 1995 Nov-Dec;10(2):148-53.

Minimal Liability Risks

Parents maintain responsibility for the baby's safety and welfare, resulting in very low liability risks for an organization, particularly if the program is limited to babies who are not yet crawling. Many companies have parents sign legal waiver forms, and some insurance companies will cover a babies-at-work program under their general liability coverage or provide a rider for the program.