

Guide to **Family Forward Workplaces**



Business Smart. Family Friendly. Future Ready.

Executive Summary

Family Forward NC is an innovative initiative to improve children's health and well-being and keep North Carolina's businesses and workplaces competitive. It is employer-led change to increase access to research-based, family-friendly practices—big and small—that improve workplace productivity, recruitment and retention; grow a strong economy; and support children's healthy development.

Family Forward NC is fostering a community of employers who are inspired to support the health and well-being of our state's current and future workforce. It is led by the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF), a nonprofit organization dedicated to building a foundation of lifelong health, education, and well-being for every child.

Family Forward NC is business smart, family friendly, and future ready.

Business Smart.

Family-friendly workplaces provide a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining talent, increasing productivity and employee satisfaction, and reducing absenteeism.

Family Friendly.

Employees who work in family-friendly organizations are more satisfied with their jobs, more engaged with their work and less likely to leave the workforce. On top of that, family-friendly benefits have a direct, positive impact on children's and parents' health and well-being.

Future Ready.

Family-friendly business policies support children's healthy development, building a strong foundation for future learning at a critical time in childhood development. When we support young children in their earliest years, they grow into healthy kids who are ready for school and for life—and our communities, workforce and economy become stronger and more productive.



Our vision is a North Carolina where:

- Workplaces are family friendly.
- Children's healthy development is supported, especially children who face the greatest challenges in their early years.
- NC businesses are competitive.
- Our next generation workforce is successful.

In this guide, you'll find:

- Evidence-based guidance on benefits that positively impact child health and well-being and provide a positive return on investment for employers;
- Information about each benefit and its impact;
- Sample policies and case studies from North Carolina employers who successfully implemented family-friendly policies;
- Steps for how to get started when implementing new policies or enhancing existing ones.

Business owners, CEOs, human resource professionals, and employees can use this guide as a reference to start conversation and action within your organization. The guide has been designed for use in its entirety or by individual section, so you can choose the information that best meets your needs.

In addition to the guide, you can stay engaged with Family Forward NC in several ways:

- Access the resources on the Family Forward NC website, www.familyforwardnc.com.
- Sign up for our bi-monthly e-newsletter.
- Share your family-friendly policies with us so we can write a case study about your company or organization.
- Participate in one of our 2019 events—the Family Forward NC Summit, a workshop, or a webinar—designed to help you learn more about Family Forward NC and our research, ask questions, and learn from experts.

To sign up for the Family Forward NC e-newsletter, share your testimonial, or learn more about our upcoming events, go to www.familyforwardnc.com/stay-informed.

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Thank you to our Family Forward NC founding sponsor,
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina
 for making this work possible.



A woman with dark hair, wearing a white and black striped long-sleeved top and a grey skirt, is smiling while talking on a black smartphone. She is holding a brown tablet in her left hand. The background shows a modern office environment with a wooden desk, a white desk, and a potted plant.

Section One

Overview

About Us

About Family Forward NC

Family Forward NC is an innovative initiative to improve the health and well-being of children and their parents and keep North Carolina's businesses and workplaces competitive. It is employer-led change to increase access to research-based, family-friendly practices—big and small—that improve workplace productivity, recruitment and retention; grow a strong economy; and support children's healthy development.

Our Mission

The mission of Family Forward NC is to engage, support, and promote employers of all sizes and in all sectors in adopting family-friendly policies that improve child and family health and well-being and provide direct business benefits to employers.

Our Vision

Our vision is a North Carolina where:

- Workplaces are family friendly.
- Children's healthy development is supported, especially children who face the greatest challenges in their early years.
- NC businesses are competitive.
- Our next generation workforce is successful.

About the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation

The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation's mission is to marshal North Carolina's great people, ideas and achievements to build a foundation of opportunity and success for every child by the end of third grade.

NCECF is driven by a bold—and achievable—vision: Each North Carolina child has a strong foundation for lifelong health, education, and well-being supported by a premiere birth-to-age-eight system. We work to create the conditions that allow others to be most effective and leverage and enhance the assets of our partners so everyone can do what they do best. We are committed to creating an environment that brings many voices to the table to accelerate collaboration toward a common agenda and support a shared course of action. For more information about NCECF, please visit www.buildthefoundation.org

How to Get Involved with Us

In addition to the guide, you can stay engaged with Family Forward NC in several ways. Visit our site to sign up for updates or share your story:

www.familyforwardnc.com

Access



Access resources on our website.

About the Guide to Family Forward Workplaces

Our goal is to build a community of employers who are inspired to support the health and well-being of our state's current and future workforce. This guide details research-informed benefits that positively impact child health and well-being and provide a positive return on investment for employers. In addition to information about each policy and its impact, we've provided sample policies, case studies from North Carolina employers and concrete steps for how to get started when implementing new policies or enhancing existing ones.

How to Use This Guide

Throughout the guide, we've highlighted steps that businesses of all sizes and in all industries can take to make their organizations more family friendly. We've also incorporated data specific to employers of hourly and low-wage workers, who are less likely to have access to family-friendly benefits.

Not all policies within this guide are right for every employer; however, the variety of options provides something for everyone. We encourage human resource professionals, business owners, CEOs, and employees to use this guide as a reference to start or continue conversation and action within your organization. Perhaps that's a survey of employees to determine what benefits they would value most. Perhaps it's a review of existing policies to ensure they are based on best practice and research. Perhaps it's a commitment to consider (or re-consider) a paid parental leave policy or a lactation room to support breastfeeding mothers. Whatever it is, we encourage you to take the next step toward becoming a Family Forward workplace.

Sign Up



Sign up for our e-newsletter.

Participate



Participate in a workshop, webinar, or our Summit to hear from experts, ask questions, and learn more about Family Forward NC.

Share



Share your family-friendly policies and contribute to our case studies.

Our Process

This guide was informed by research and feedback from more than 1,000 employers and employees across the state, along with an Advisory Council of North Carolina business leaders and experts in children’s health, human resources, and workforce development.

We collected data and feedback in five ways:

1. Newly commissioned research of employers and employees across our state.

In November 2017, we commissioned research to uncover more than 300 North Carolina employers’ motivations behind the family-friendly practices they currently offer, the ones they want to offer and the barriers to offering them. We also surveyed more than 300 employees across the state about how they value family-friendly practices. For the full research report, go to www.familyforwardnc.com/new-research

2. Business roundtables in partnership with local chambers and Smart Start local partnerships.

Through online surveys and a series of roundtable discussions, we listened to and learned from more than 200 employers of all sizes and industries, community leaders, and economic development professionals in six diverse markets across North Carolina—Greensboro and High Point, Wilmington, Asheville, Lumberton, Hickory, and Rocky Mount—to discuss best practices for family-friendly workplaces and to understand the opportunities they see and the challenges they face.

3. The Family Forward NC Advisory Council.

The Family Forward NC Advisory Council is a group of prominent North Carolina business and community representatives and health experts who provided review and support of the guide and Family Forward NC.

4. Review of national research.

We conducted an extensive review of national research, news reports, and resources from business associations, health and wellness organizations, health care associations, and early childhood advocates. See page 87 for our source list.

5. Guidance from subject matter experts.

Throughout the process, we received guidance from our research advisor—Dr. Nina Smith, Assistant Professor of Human Sciences at NC Central University—and other subject matter experts to ensure the information we’ve included reflects best practice.



Dr. Nina Smith
Assistant Professor of Human
Sciences, NC Central University

Advisory Council Members



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Section Two

The Case for Family-Friendly Workplaces



A Snapshot of Working Families

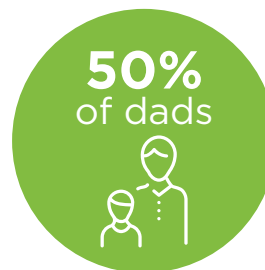
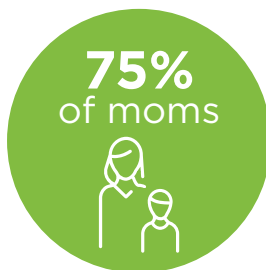
Families have changed.

But family-friendly policies have lagged behind. Many US and employer policies are based on an outdated model: a two-parent household, with one parent who works outside the home for pay. Today, only 68.9 percent of households include two parents¹, and only nine percent of all families—single-parent and two-parent—have one parent who cares for children full time.

That means the vast majority of families must work in a system that was created for a bygone era. Here's what that looks like for working parents and employers across the country.

As parents struggle to balance work and family obligations, employers are losing out.

Seventy-five percent of US mothers say they've passed up work opportunities, switched jobs, or quit to care for their children.²



Fifty percent of US fathers say they've passed up work opportunities, switched jobs, or quit to care for their children.³

Nearly 40% of parents nationwide say they've **left a job because it lacked flexibility.**⁴

The struggle is real and includes working parents in North Carolina.

Only **13%** of private industry workers nationwide have access to paid parental leave,⁶ and nearly a quarter of moms return to work just two weeks after having a baby.

Only **11%** of private sector workers in the South Atlantic region, which encompasses North Carolina, have access to paid family leave⁷

1 in 3 families nationwide spend **20% or more of their annual household income on child care**⁸ and North Carolina is the 11th least affordable state in the country for preschool-age child care.⁹

Hourly and low-wage workers are impacted the most.

Hourly workers make up 59% of the workforce¹⁰ but are



- less likely to have access to family-friendly benefits
- less likely to be able to afford unpaid leave or child care
- more likely to drop out of the labor force after giving birth.¹¹

Roughly 6 million American parents work in jobs that pay \$10.50 or less per hour.

Low-wage employees have the least access to family-friendly policies, which has significantly and disproportionately affected their health and economic security.^{12,13}

Working families struggle → declining birth rate → smaller future labor force

The US birth rate has dropped to an all-time low, which economists warn will affect long-term economic growth.¹⁴

Why are Americans having fewer babies?¹⁵



64% of adults say it's because child care is too expensive.



77% say it's because they have no access to or not enough paid leave.

Up to 5 million more workers would join the labor force if US businesses offered more family-friendly benefits like paid parental leave.¹⁶

The Case for Family-Friendly Workplaces

Business Smart.

Family-friendly workplaces have a competitive advantage: They attract and retain more top talent, and their employees are more productive and more committed.¹⁴ Plus, family-friendly employers benefit from reduced employee health care costs,¹⁷ a healthier work environment, and fewer employee absences.¹⁸

Employers of all sizes across North Carolina see family-friendly practices as an effective way to grow a more prosperous company, and employees both nationally and across the state say they are more likely to work for employers who are family friendly.

75% of employers

in North Carolina think family-friendly policies have a positive impact on their organization.¹⁹



73% of employees

in North Carolina would be more committed to their employer if they offered more family-friendly practices.²²



86% of US millennials, which now make up the greatest percentage of workforce,²⁰ **say they are less likely to leave an employer that offers paid parental leave.**²¹



94% of NC employees say that family-friendly policies help businesses attract and retain talent and keep companies strong.²³



Almost half of North Carolina employers planned to offer more family-friendly benefits in 2018.²⁴

Of more than 1,500 human resource officers surveyed by Ernst and Young in 2016,

71% said paid family leave positively impacted productivity, and 82% reported improved employee morale.²⁷

Family Friendly.

For children and families, the benefits of family-friendly workplaces are numerous and long lasting. They include positive impacts on health, development and well-being, financial stability, and future career success.

Children whose parents have access to family-friendly benefits receive much-needed support and time with their parents during the most critical years of human development. This leads to positive health outcomes, higher education attainment, and future career success. Parents who have access to family-friendly benefits also have improved health outcomes and are happier and more productive at work.

Family-friendly benefits increase positive outcomes and decreases negative outcomes for children and families.

Babies born to mothers with paid parental leave are:

- less likely to be born prematurely
- more likely to be born at a **healthy birth weight**

Parental leave of at least 6 months for mothers and two weeks for fathers:

- significantly **lowers a mother's risk** of postpartum depression and anxiety
- **increases paternal engagement** in caregiving throughout a child's life²⁸

For each additional month of paid parental leave, there is a **13 percent decline in infant mortality** for families from low- and middle income countries.²⁵

Children whose parents have paid parental leave, paid sick leave and other family-friendly benefits are more likely to have:

- well care visits and immunizations, especially for measles and polio²⁶
- **better test scores in school**
- **fewer behavioral or mental health problems**
- regular school attendance

Mothers who are able to breastfeed for at least 13 months in their lifetime have a **63 percent lower risk of ovarian cancer**.²⁹ Breastfeeding also lowers a woman's risk of:

- breast cancer
- high blood pressure
- type 2 diabetes

Given average child care costs in North Carolina, **a minimum-wage worker needs to work full time for 32 weeks just to pay for high quality care for one infant.**³⁰

When their employer offers child care reimbursements or child care on site—either full-time, part-time, or on a back-up basis—**low-wage workers are more likely to be able to afford child care and are less likely to drop out of the labor force after giving birth.** Predictable scheduling allows hourly workers to better plan for child care needs.

Future Ready.

To prepare our future workforce for success, we have to start in early childhood. Family Forward NC's focus on workplace policies that impact young children and their families is rooted in research on brain development and future success. During children's earliest years, their experiences are built into their bodies—shaping the brain's architecture and creating the foundation for future learning and health. In other words, everything a child experiences from birth impacts that child's ability to fulfill his or her potential.³¹

The early years are so defining that by the time a child turns eight, his or her third-grade reading outcomes can predict future academic achievement and career success. Decades of research have established what children need to build strong brains—health and development on track from birth, supportive and supported families and communities, and high-quality birth-through-age eight learning environments with regular attendance.

“American business depends on a strong workforce, now and in the future, to compete and succeed globally. But America is facing an unprecedented workforce crisis: a large and growing shortage of skilled workers. One root of this problem is that we've underestimated the importance of the earliest years of life.” — US Chamber of Commerce Foundation



Right now across the country, there are more jobs open than people looking for work.

This includes North Carolina, which has an **historically low unemployment rate of 3.7%** as of November 2018.²⁶ That makes finding talent difficult, so employers must do what they can to compete.

On top of that, North Carolina and the country are facing a growing skills gap.



By 2020 an estimated 67% of jobs in NC will require some post-secondary education. Currently, only 45.9 percent of North Carolinians meet this requirement.

Currently, the majority of NC children are not meeting key predictors of future academic success and higher education attainment.



39% of 4th graders scored below proficient in reading in North Carolina during 2017

as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress.



50% of employers reported difficulty hiring in North Carolina during 2017.³³



Only 30.6% of North Carolina high school students met ACT college readiness benchmarks in reading in 2016.³²

“The foundation for school, career and life success is largely determined through the development of cognitive and character skills beginning in children’s earliest years.”

—Nobel Laureate Economist, Professor James J. Heckman



Section Three

Family Forward Policies



What Makes a Workplace Policy Family Forward?

Each policy recommended in this guide has a research base that shows positive business impact for employers and a positive impact on children’s health and well-being.

Each policy is described in detail throughout this section. Benefits to employers and to employee and child health and well-being are highlighted, along with examples of how employers have incorporated these practices into their workplace.

Policies in this guide fall into five categories:

Paid Leave

For the purposes of this guide, we focus on paid leave only, as paid leave has more positive impacts on employers and employees versus unpaid leave. Types of leave included are parental leave (for birth, adoption or foster placement), sick and safe leave, and family and medical leave.

Flexible Work and Scheduling

Flexible work includes flextime, working from home or telecommuting, job sharing, part-time work, and predictable scheduling.

Health Benefits and Flexible Spending Accounts

Health insurance, wellness benefits, and flexible spending accounts are featured here.

Child Care

Child care solutions include backup and emergency care, child care referrals, on-site child care, child care consortiums, and subsidized or reimbursed care.

Accommodations and Support

This category includes support for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and babies at work initiatives.

Paid Leave

Parental Leave

Paid leave for the birth, adoption, or acceptance of foster placement of a child that is separate from vacation or sick leave.

Benefits to Employers ³⁴	Benefits to Children ³⁵	Benefits to Parents/Families ^{36,37}
<p>Increases or does not decrease productivity</p> <p>Improves recruitment</p> <p>Increases likelihood that new mothers will come back to work (and to same employer) and stay employed</p> <p>Increases likelihood that new fathers will stay employed</p> <p>Reduces turnover costs through increased retention</p> <p>Improves morale and job satisfaction</p>	<p>Increases birthweight</p> <p>Reduces infant mortality</p> <p>Improves health care</p> <p>Increases well-baby care</p> <p>Increases immunization rates</p> <p>Supports child development</p> <p>Increases educational attainment</p> <p>Increases IQ</p> <p>Increases test scores</p> <p>Reduces behavioral/mental health problems</p> <p>Improves regular school attendance</p> <p>Reduces teen pregnancy rates</p> <p>Increases wages as adults</p>	<p>Improves family incomes</p> <p>Increases initiation and length of breastfeeding</p> <p>Decreases maternal depression and stress</p> <p>Increases paternal engagement in caregiving</p> <p>Increases job satisfaction</p> <p>Builds healthier parent-child relationships</p> <p>Reduces wage gap between women and men</p> <p>Reduces wage gap between mothers and childless women</p> <p>Reduces stigma of taking leave</p> <p>Increases gender equality</p> <p>Workers are more likely to remain in the workforce, increasing family economic security</p>

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

The American Public Health Association, the Society of Maternal-Fetal Medicine, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Pediatric Policy Council recommend a minimum of 12 weeks of paid leave.

The American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology recommends a minimum of six weeks of paid leave.

The Better Life Lab, a program of the nonpartisan think tank New America, recommends a minimum of six months of paid maternity leave for maternal health and well-being and one year of paid leave, evenly split between parents, for infant health and well-being.³⁸

Range of Practices in the United States

Though the number of employers offering paid parental leave has steadily increased over the last five years³⁹, only **14 percent of private sector workers and 17 percent of public sector workers have access to any paid leave following a birth, adoption, or foster placement.**⁴⁰

For low-wage workers, the percentage is much lower—**just four percent for workers in the lowest 10 percent income bracket.**⁴¹ Access to leave also varies widely by industry. Thirty-seven percent of workers in the finance and insurance sectors have access to paid leave, but paid leave is available for only 19 percent of education and health care workers and six percent of restaurant and hospitality workers.⁴²

The United States is the **only developed nation in the world** and one of only a small handful of countries with no national paid leave policy. The other countries are Papua New Guinea, Suriname, and a few small South Pacific island countries.



Parents Say They Want More Paid Leave, Feel Pressured to Return to Work Too Soon

Offering family-friendly policies is a great first step toward becoming a Family Forward workplace. But ensuring your workplace culture allows parents to take advantage of the policies you offer is equally important. In a 2018 survey of more than 1,100 current and prospective parents, the majority of working parents say they contend with a lack of paid leave, pressure to return to work soon after a baby is born and stress over career consequences for taking time off.⁴³

Even with paid leave policies in place, parents say they feel pressure to return to work and suffer career consequences from taking leave.

Both mothers and fathers who have access to paid parental leave take an average of four weeks off. Major medical associations in the US recommend a minimum of six to 12 weeks of paid parental leave.

Parents who make \$100,000 or more are able to take nearly double the leave of parents who make less than \$100,000. On average, women making less than \$100,000 per year took an average of 17 days following a birth or adoption, and women making more than \$100,000 took an average of 30 days. On average, men making less than \$100,000 per year took an average of 15 days following a birth or adoption, and men making more than \$100,000 took an average of 25 days.

More than half of mothers (53 percent) and 36 percent of fathers surveyed say the leave offered by their employer is insufficient.

One in three parents feel they've been overlooked for a promotion as a result of taking parental leave.

One in five parents feel pressured to return to work early or not to take all the leave their employer offers.

For parents without paid leave, quitting their current job or leaving the workforce altogether is a real consideration.

Nearly one in three mothers (27 percent) and 10 percent of fathers who do not have access to paid parental leave plan to quit their job as soon as their child is born.

Fourteen percent of soon-to-be parents plan to quit their job for a new one with leave benefits.

For more on workplace culture, see page 76.

Sick and Safe Leave

Sick and safe leave refers to paid leave for employees to care for themselves or a family member during a temporary, short-term medical issue, such as illness; to attend to a critical safety need, such as domestic violence or sexual assault recovery; or for preventative health care, such as an annual well visit or a prenatal doctor appointment.

Benefits to Employers ⁴⁴	Benefits to Children ^{45,46}	Benefits to Parents/Families ^{47,48}
<p>Increases productivity</p> <p>Does not lower profits</p> <p>Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</p> <p>Reduces employee absenteeism</p> <p>Provides healthier work environment</p> <p>Reduces health care costs</p> <p>Workers recover from temporary disability, illness or injury more quickly</p> <p>Increases loyalty</p>	<p>Encourages use of preventative health care</p> <p>Children recover more quickly from illness and injury when parents are available to care for them</p> <p>Lowers risk for flu and other illnesses by encouraging children to stay home until they are well</p> <p>Allows workers to care for themselves and their children while in crisis situations, when children and parent health and well-being can be severely impacted. For example, children who experience domestic violence face a host of short- and long-term health issues, and safe leave removes concerns about losing a job while trying to leave a violent spouse or partner.</p>	<p>Encourages use of preventative health care</p> <p>Workers recover from disability, illness, or injury more quickly</p> <p>Lowers risk for flu and other illnesses by encouraging parents to stay home until they or their children are well</p> <p>Allows workers to care for themselves and their children while in crisis situations, when children and parent health and well-being can be severely impacted. For example, children who experience domestic violence face a host of short- and long-term health issues, and safe leave removes concerns about losing a job while trying to leave a violent spouse or partner.</p>

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

Workers with 10 or more paid sick days are more likely to access preventative health care services.⁴⁹

While it does not provide a recommended amount, the American Medical Association strongly encourages private employers to offer paid sick and medical leave and allow employees to use that leave to care for children when they are sick.⁵⁰

Sick and safe leave legislation for New York City, the state of Maryland, and the state of New Jersey **allow workers to accrue up to 40 hours of paid sick and safe leave each year.**

Range of Practices in the United States

Nearly **one in three workers—and seven in 10 low-wage workers—do not have access to paid sick leave through their employer.**⁵¹

A 2017 Bloomberg BNA survey shows that 37 percent of employers who offer sick leave have policies that include safe leave for victims of crimes, domestic violence, assault, or stalking.⁵²

Ten states have enacted paid safe leave laws. North Carolina does not have a safe leave law but does mandate that employers provide “a reasonable period of leave” for victims of domestic violence to obtain a court order or obtain relief. Under the NC statute, leave does not need to be paid.

As of 2015, federal contractors must provide at least seven days of paid sick and family medical leave to employees for preventative care, an existing health condition, illness, or injury.

The US is **one of the few developed, industrialized nations that does not require paid sick leave by federal law.**

Eleven states, along with 33 jurisdictions and the District of Columbia, have a law requiring employers to offer paid sick leave to employees. Other states, such as Georgia and Minnesota, have a “kin care law” that requires employers who offer paid sick leave to their employees to allow employees to use that time to care for family members. Neither the state of North Carolina nor any jurisdictions within the state have a sick leave law or a kin care law.

CASE STUDY

Katie Button Restaurants

Location: Asheville • Year Founded: 2008

In the food service industry, working while sick is often a fact of life:

- Nationally, nearly 90 percent of restaurant workers do not have paid sick time.⁵³
- Two-thirds of restaurant workers say they’ve cooked, prepared, and served food while sick.
- In a Centers for Disease Control study, 49 percent of food workers say they worked at least one shift while suffering from vomiting or diarrhea over the past year in part because they knew they would not be paid if they stayed home sick.

But at Asheville’s Nightbell, Curaté, and Button and Co. Bagels, hourly and salary employees can stay home with pay when they’re sick. Employees at these three popular, award-winning restaurants begin accruing paid leave after 90 days. Full-time employees are eligible for up to a week of paid time off initially, and up to two weeks after a year. Leave goes up to three weeks with six years of service or more. Managers accrue additional days.

According to a 2016 interview in *The Asheville Citizen Times*, Button said offering paid time helps attract workers and keep them longer. Paid leave also helps curb the spread of sickness to the entire staff.⁵⁴

“This helps us cut down on how quickly the flu or a head cold can pass through your fellow coworkers,” she said in the article.

Though Button admits in the article that the extra expense of providing paid time off may be too much for some restaurants, which often have very thin margins, offering paid time off provides her staff with peace of mind.

“It makes all of us feel good to be able to say to someone, ‘Hey man, you’re sick. Go home,’ and not have that thought that this guy has three kids at home,” she said in the article.

Family and Medical Leave

Family and medical leave allows employees to take paid time off to care for a long-term medical issue for themselves, their children, or a loved one or to address needs during a long-term absence from work, such as a military deployment.

Benefits to Employers ⁵⁵	Benefits to Children ⁵⁶	Benefits to Parents/Families ⁵⁷
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases productivity Does not impact profits Increases retention, reducing turnover costs Reduces employee absenteeism Provides healthier work environment Reduces health care costs Workers recover from disability, illness, or injury more quickly Increases loyalty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages use of preventative health care Children recover more quickly from illness and injury when parents are available to care for them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages use of preventative health care Workers recover from disability, illness, or injury more quickly

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

While it does not provide a recommended amount, the American Medical Association strongly encourages private employers to offer paid sick and medical leave and allow employees to use that leave to care for children when they are sick or injured.⁵⁸

The duration of paid leave that is necessary for employees to care for themselves, their child or a loved one, during a long-term illness or injury varies greatly, according to the World Policy Center.⁵⁹

- For **personal medical leave, six months is important to cover severe illnesses**, such as cancer that requires chemotherapy and/or radiation treatment. However, some workers may be able to return to work part-time or intermittently while undergoing treatments, and leave can be shorter for less serious injuries or illnesses.

- Paid personal medical leave should also be made available on a part-time and intermittent basis for workers in the chronic phases to encourage follow-up and ongoing care.
- **For children, parental presence is important for the full duration of the illness; however, during periods of recovery, this care can be split between parents or other close caregivers.** Employers should work with employees to determine an optimal schedule of paid time off based on the child's illness or injury.

Range of Practices in the United States

Just 15 percent of workers have access to paid leave to care for their own long-term illness or the long-term illness of a child.⁶⁰

As of 2015, federal contractors must provide at least seven days of paid sick and family medical leave to employees for preventative care, an existing health condition, illness or injury.

The US is one of the few developed, industrialized nations that does not require paid family and medical leave by federal law.

Twenty-eight percent of private industry workers and 70 percent of public industry workers have access to paid military leave.⁶¹

Under NC law, employers are required to offer unpaid leave for employees called into active or emergency military duty. The statute does not specify how much leave may be taken, but the amount of leave is typically determined by the length of the employee's military service. Paid leave is not required.

CASE STUDY

Deloitte⁶²

Location: Offices in Charlotte, Raleigh, Morrisville • *Year Founded:* 1845
Number of Employees: Over 84,000

Consulting firm Deloitte, with offices in Raleigh, Charlotte and Morrisville, recruits approximately 20,000 employees each year.

That means Deloitte is constantly evaluating ways to attract and retain talent. According to *Supporting Working Caregivers: Case Studies of Promising Practices*, a 2017 report from the ReACT Coalition, Deloitte discovered that “flexibility to meet both professional and personal demands emerged as a key factor in both recruitment and retention, particularly for high performers, and employee surveys revealed that eldercare—which requires flexibility—was increasingly among their personal responsibilities.”

With CEO Cathy Engelbert's support, the company expanded its family leave program in September 2016, allowing all full-time employees to take up to 16 weeks of paid time off annually for caregiving for new children and other family members, including aging parents. Employees may use the time all at once or periodically throughout the year.

In addition to paid leave, Deloitte provides 30 days of subsidized emergency backup dependent care, which includes adult relatives of employees, and the company also provide consultations for employees regarding eldercare needs, along with referrals to providers, coaching to help manage and navigate complicated systems and programs, and therapy for the stress that may accompany caregiving responsibilities.

“Flexibility to meet both professional and personal demands emerged as a key factor in both recruitment and retention, particularly for high performers.”

Parental Involvement Leave

Short-term paid leave that allows a parent to take an afternoon or a day off to attend a school performance or athletic event, volunteer at a child’s school or otherwise take care of a child’s needs.

Benefits to Employers ⁶³	Benefits to Children ⁶⁴	Benefits to Parents/Families ⁶⁵
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves productivity Increases retention Reduces complaints of discrimination towards employees with caregiving responsibilities Improves workplace climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves regular school attendance Improves grades and test scores Reduces behavioral/mental health problems Earlier identification of learning problems Improves likelihood of high school graduation Improves likelihood of attending college 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreases stress Increases engagement in children’s education

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

According to the National Education Association, children whose parents have time to support their social, emotional and academic development:

- **earn higher grades** and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs;
- **attend school regularly**;
- have **better social skills**, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school;
- are **more likely to graduate** and go on to post-secondary education.

Range of Practices in the United States

Under North Carolina law, workers are guaranteed four unpaid hours per year for involvement with children’s school activities.

Nationwide, 51 percent of small employers (50–99 employees) and 33 percent of large employers (1,000 employees or more) allow workers to take time off during the day to attend to important personal or family needs without losing pay.

SAMPLE POLICIES

Parental Leave

North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation: <https://familyforwardnc.com/sample-policy-parental-leave/>

Sick and Safe Leave

Template Policy from the Center for Law and Social Policy: <https://familyforwardnc.com/sample-policy-paid-sick-and-safe-leave/>

Family and Medical Leave

Template Family and Medical Leave Policy: <https://familyforwardnc.com/sample-policy-paid-family-and-medical-leave/>

Parental Involvement Leave

Template Parental Involvement Leave Policy: <https://familyforwardnc.com/sample-policy-paid-parental-involvement-leave/>

CASE STUDY

North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation

Location: Raleigh • Year Founded: 2013 • Number of Employees: 4

Every day, the staff of the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF) works to fulfill the Raleigh-based nonprofit's mission to build a foundation of opportunity and success for every child by the end of third grade.

But despite NCECF's focus on early childhood initiatives, the organization did not have a policy for paid parental leave until spring of this year. As a small nonprofit with a staff of four employees—all of whom have older children—NCECF had not had a pregnant employee on the team since the organization was founded in 2013.

Then Sumera Syed, who joined the staff part time in 2016 as NCECF's organizational manager, announced her first pregnancy, and Executive Director Tracy Zimmerman realized it was time to create a parental leave policy.

"Like many small businesses, we hadn't addressed the policy because we hadn't needed to," Zimmerman says. "However, once we had an immediate need, we wanted to create a policy that would not only help us keep Sumera, but would reflect research about policies that make a positive impact on child and family health and would help us attract and retain talent in the future as we grow."

"We wanted to create a policy that would reflect research about policies that make a positive impact on child and family health."

Now, NCECF offers 12 weeks of fully paid leave to mothers and fathers following the birth or adoption of a child. What's more, leave is available to full- and part-time employees who work at least 20 hours a week.

Because NCECF did not have a policy in place when Syed was first pregnant, she was nervous about whether she'd be able to continue to work for the organization after her baby was born.

"At the time, I was scared about the decision I would have to make between my career and my child," Syed says.

But Syed, who returned from her leave in June, says she is proud of NCECF for creating a policy that is comprehensive and inclusive of full-time and part-time employees.

"As a part-time employee, I am still 100 percent committed to the organization and want to grow and have lasting career plans," she says.



Sumera Syed and her son

SAMPLE BENEFITS AT NORTH CAROLINA EARLY CHILDHOOD FOUNDATION

- Employer paid medical insurance
- Paid time off and paid holidays
- 12 weeks of paid parental leave
- 401K retirement plan
- Life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance

CASE STUDY

Lulu Press

Location: Morrisville • Year Founded: 2005 • Number of Employees: 60-65

Lulu Press' offices are enlivened with floor-to-ceiling graphics and brightly colored conference rooms decorated by different departments. Although online customers may not see the space, they undoubtedly benefit from the creative and flexible approach that the Morrisville, North Carolina company takes to supporting its employees.

Founded by Red Hat co-founder Bob Young, Lulu is the world's first online self-publishing company. They provide free tools for authors of all ages to publish, print, and distribute books and have worked with more than 1 million authors in 225 countries. Authors receive 80 percent profit from print books, and 90 percent profit from ebooks, and books are printed on demand so authors don't have to keep track of their inventory.

Lulu was attractive to Karine Gnall, senior manager of customer experience. "During the interview process, I met other people who had families and seemed happy," she says, "I learned that there were policies in place that helped them as parents."

Flexibility is central to the company's approach to supporting the health and well-being of their team. "Happy, engaged employees are more productive employees," says Kris Phinney, Lulu's human resources manager. "It's a simple fact."

"Happy, engaged employees are more productive employees."

"We realize people have lives outside of work," says Phinney. "They may have children, aging parents, health issues.

If you can give someone flexibility to handle responsibilities that may be stressful in their lives—without them having to worry that they have to be at work exactly at 8 am—that goes a long way."

Core work hours at Lulu are from 10 am to 4 pm. Outside of these hours, employees can set their own schedule to accommodate appointments, school-drop off or pick-up schedules, and family needs. Telecommuting once a week is also an option after employees have been with the company for a year.

For both Gnall and Thomas Bridges, manager of the customer voice department for English speaking support, the volunteer policy stands out as particularly meaningful: each year, employees are paid to volunteer up to three days in the community.

Bridges has used the policy to spend more time with his children while providing additional support to Wake County Schools.

"Teachers do a lot for our kids every day," he says. "By being available to help out with field trips, I get to spend time with my children and help out the teachers and the school. I would have wanted to be a part of the experience regardless of the benefit, but to be able to use a paid volunteer day to help out is awesome."

Phinney understands that not every profession can have such flexibility, but says she would challenge anyone who raises cost as a reason to not provide more flexibility.

“You can’t take care of customers if you’re not taking care of yourself.”



Thomas Bridges with his family

“We have a relaxed environment,” Phinney continues, “But we strive to achieve here. Everyone is professional and respectful and understands what it takes to do the job. We’ve never had an issue with anyone taking advantage of our policies.”

The company has low turnover and the annual employee engagement survey consistently reveals a high level of satisfaction. If anything, both Gnall and Bridges have to convince younger employees on their teams, for whom working at Lulu may be their first professional job, that the company truly does support a work-life balance, and that they won’t be penalized for taking time off.

“I try to help my staff see the benefit of using their volunteer and vacation time,” says Bridges. “I tell them, ‘You can’t take care of customers if you’re not taking care of yourself.’”

SAMPLE BENEFITS AT LULU PRESS

- A medical, dental, and vision plan, with pharmacy coverage
- A Flexible Spending Account and Dependent Care Flexible Savings Account
- Access to a College Savings 529 Plan
- Short-term and long-term disability insurance, life insurance, and additional death and dismemberment insurance
- A paid time off policy that includes eight paid holidays, five floating holidays, three weeks of vacation, and three paid volunteer days annually
- Tuition reimbursement up to 100 percent for degrees and courses that are job related and up to 50 percent for courses that are more general or indirectly support employees

Flexible Work & Scheduling

Flextime

A flexible work schedule allows employees to choose when they work, as long as they put in their hours every week.

Benefits to Employers ⁶⁶	Benefits to Children ⁶⁷	Benefits to Parents/Families ⁶⁸
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases productivity Improves the bottom line Improves recruitment Increases retention, reducing turnover costs Reduces employee absenteeism Improves relationships with co-workers Increases morale, loyalty, commitment Increases overall job satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves physical and social emotional health, through parental stress reduction Reduces obesity Improves education, through increased parental engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves health Increases happiness and job satisfaction Reduces stress

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

A significant amount of research indicates that **flexibility in all forms is one of the most beneficial policies to help employees balance family and work.** Having some control over when or where to work allows workers to juggle the demands of long hours and care for children, according to the National Council on Family Relations.⁶⁹

Research in the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* shows that employees at Best Buy headquarters who could change their schedules based on their individual needs and job responsibilities reported getting **more sleep, felt less feel obligated to work when sick, and felt more likely to seek medical help.** Employees reported better sleep quality, higher energy levels, lower emotional exhaustion, physiological stress and work-family conflict and better overall health.⁷⁰

In North Carolina, about **eight in ten of all employees see flexible work hours and schedules as an important family-friendly practice.** Younger employees see them as more important.⁷¹

Nearly 40 percent of parents nationwide say they've left a job because it lacked flexibility.⁷²

Range of Practices in the United States

In a 2017 survey of more than 900 US employers with 50 or more employees, small employers (50-99 employees) were more likely than large employers (1,000 or more employees) to offer all or most employees the ability to change start and stop times.⁷³

Availability of workplace flexibility has grown slightly over the last five years. As of this year, just over half of all workers (55 percent) have flexibility during core business hours, and 27 percent have flexibility outside of core business hours.⁷⁴

Part-time workers have less access to flexibility overall (39 percent), as do less skilled and low-wage workers.⁷⁵ This can be extra stressful for low-wage workers, who are just as likely to have responsibilities for child care as high-wage employees, but have fewer financial resources and are less likely to have a partner or spouse who can share family work.⁷⁶

Working from Home/Telecommuting

Telecommuting allows employees to work from home or some other remote site some or all of the time.

Benefits to Employers ⁷⁷	Benefits to Children and Parents/Families ⁷⁸
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases productivity Reduces real estate and overhead costs Increases net worth Increases retention, reducing turnover costs Increases employee loyalty Employees can work more hours before experiencing work/family conflict Reduces employee absenteeism Saves money during emergencies and weather-related disruptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saves employees time Increases job satisfaction Reduces reports of physical and mental fatigue Offers large benefits for disabled or temporarily disabled workers

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

A significant amount of research indicates that **flexibility in all forms is one of the most beneficial policies to help employees balance family and work.** Having some control over when or where to work allows workers to juggle the demands of long hours and care for children, according to the National Council on Family Relations.⁷⁹

Research suggests that **telecommuter job satisfaction is maximized when telecommuting occurs at moderate levels—about two days per week.** However, each employee is unique, so employers should work with individuals to find the right fit.⁸⁰

Range of Practices in the United States

More than **double the number of employers offer telecommuting on an occasional basis than in 2005** (68 percent today, up from 34 percent).⁸¹

However, **only 33 percent of workers consistently telecommute on a part-time basis, and only 23 percent telecommute on a full-time basis.**⁸²

Part-time workers have less access to flexibility overall (39 percent), as do less-skilled and low-wage workers.⁸³ This can be extra stressful for low-wage workers, who are just as likely to have responsibilities for child care as high-wage employees but have fewer financial resources and are less likely to have a partner or spouse who can share family work.⁸⁴

Job Sharing and/or Part-Time Work

In a job share, two or more employees share a single position, each working a fraction of the necessary time. Job sharing allows employees to hold a position and still have time to spend with children or take care of other family responsibilities. A full-time employee might be allowed to shift to part-time—either as part of a job share, or simply as a reduction in working hours—and still continue in the same position. This shift can be temporary or permanent.

Benefits to Employers ⁷⁷	Benefits to Children and Parents/Families ⁷⁸
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases productivity Increases net worth Increases retention, reducing turnover costs Increases job satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases job satisfaction Provides more time to meet family needs

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

A significant amount of research indicates that **flexibility in all forms is one of the most beneficial policies to help employees balance family and work.** Having some control over when or where to work allows workers to juggle the demands of long hours and care for children, according to the National Council on Family Relations.⁸⁷

Keys to making a job share work, according to the *Harvard Business Review*:⁸⁸

- **Choose partners who can easily communicate and collaborate.**
- **Decide a model for dividing the work**—by task, or by day.
- **Communicate often and clearly.**
- Make sure **management is on board.**
- **Manage expectations** and be prepared to battle bias that employees who job share are less committed.
- **Give the process time** to work out any issues.

Though part-time workers have traditionally had less access to family-friendly benefits, more employers are recognizing the value of including part-time and hourly workers in their policies, especially paid leave.⁸⁹ Additionally, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) **recommends giving part-time workers proportionate wages and benefits compared with full-time workers,** along with proportionate credit for relevant experience needed to qualify for promotions, training programs, or other employment opportunities.⁹⁰

Range of Practices in the United States

Nine percent of employers have a job share policy—a percentage that’s held relatively steady for the past five years.⁹¹

Just under 18 percent of American workers are part-time, defined as working fewer than 35 hours per week.⁹²

Part-time workers have less access to flexibility overall (39 percent), as do low-wage workers.⁹³

This can be extra stressful for low-wage workers, who are just as likely to have responsibilities for child care as high-wage employees but have fewer financial resources and are less likely to have a partner or spouse who can share family work.⁹⁴

CASE STUDY

THE MULBERRY PARTNERS

Location: Durham and Chapel Hill • Year Founded: 2003 • Number of Employees: 4

As teenagers, Betsy Polk and Maggie Ellis Chotas made a pact. After working together on a high school English project, the two vowed to work together as adults. In 2003, Polk and Chotas made good on their pact and started The Mulberry Partners, an executive and leadership coaching and consulting firm in Durham and Chapel Hill. And, as co-presidents of the firm and later co-authors of the critically acclaimed book *Power Through Partnership: How Women Lead Better Together*, they also started a job share.

They just didn't call it that at first.

"We didn't think of our work together as a job share until we started writing our book," Polk says. "We always thought about our work as a partnership. As we were doing research on our own book, which included research on job share partners, we realized what we were doing was job sharing."

Chotas and Polk work with their clients to create a project to accomplish desired outcomes, collaborating to share responsibilities as needed. Sometimes, that means handing off work during a project. Sometimes, that means Polk will work more closely with one client, and Chotas with another. The key, says Chotas, is communication and clearly defined roles.

Clients appreciate that Polk and Chotas are able to seamlessly transition work and care for their needs.

"We want our clients to feel like we're always accessible. Working together, we never have to worry about saying no," Polk says.

For Chotas and Polk, job sharing has meant having flexibility and someone with whom to share the load.

"That's been huge," Chotas says. "When we started the business, we had very young children, and I was pregnant with my second at the time. Plus, we both were making transitions out of full-time positions. To know that we had each other was so amazing."



"We want our clients to feel like we're always accessible. When we started the business, we had very young children. To know that we had each other was so amazing. Working together, we never have to worry about saying no."

Predictable Scheduling

Predictable scheduling involves ensuring that employees have some control over their scheduled working hours, not changing work schedules without employees' consent, and/or giving employees advanced warning about changes to their work schedules.

Benefits to Employers ⁹⁵	Benefits to Children and Parents/Families ^{96,97}
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases productivity Increases retention, reducing turnover costs Reduces employee absenteeism Increases morale, loyalty, commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows employees to plan for child care, transportation, and budgets Leads to better child development outcomes because of more stability for childcare arrangements, which improves cognitive and behavioral outcomes and language development Lowers stress for parents and improves overall healthy behaviors

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

The National Women's Law Center, a nonprofit that advocates for equality and opportunity for women and families, recommends: ⁹⁸

- **Allowing employees to have input into their work schedule.**
- **Providing at least two weeks' notice of work schedule.**
- **Discouraging last-minute schedule shifts.**
- Expanding opportunities for part-time workers, including a **minimum hour guarantee and opportunity for promotion.**

This July, Oregon became the first state to pass a "fair scheduling" law, and several states, including North Carolina, have introduced predictable or fair scheduling legislation. North Carolina's proposed legislation would require employers to post work schedules 14 days in advance and would mandate a specified amount of "predictability pay" if changes are made to an employee's schedule within seven days of a shift.

Parents with fluctuating or nontraditional schedules, which encompasses about half of low-wage workers, have difficulty accessing high quality, affordable, licensed child care. Child care providers are typically unable to accommodate last-minute scheduling changes or variable hours and are much less likely to operate during evening and weekend hours.⁹⁹

Parents who face job scheduling challenges are more likely to use multiple child care arrangements. Experts agree that stability in child care arrangements is important for child development.¹⁰⁰

Range of Practices in the United States¹⁰¹

Almost three-quarters of hourly workers ages 26-32, who are more likely to have young children at home, report that their work hours fluctuate each month.

Forty-one percent of adults working in hourly jobs say they know their work schedule **one week in advance or less.**

About half of low-wage workers **have little or no control over the timing of their work hours.**

Part-time workers experience even more variability in hours and receive even less advance notice of schedule than full-time workers.

CASE STUDY

STARBUCKS

Location: Statewide • Year Founded: 1971 • Number of US Employees: 160,000

With more than 300 locations across the state, North Carolinians are never too far from their favorite Starbucks latte. And with a predictable scheduling policy launched in 2016, North Carolina's Starbucks employees have more control over when they work and how far in advance they know their schedule.

Starbucks, with more than 160,000 employees nationwide, instructs managers to take an individualized approach to scheduling, allowing for both schedule consistency and flexibility as needed.

"To get this right, partners [employees] and their managers work together to create schedules that are predictable, consistent, and balance the different needs of every partner," reads the company policy on the Starbucks website.¹⁰²

Employees are asked to provide their availability and preferred schedules when they are hired, and all employees receive an estimate of the number of hours they will receive. Schedules are posted at least 14 days in advance, and managers are required to give employees at least eight hours between closing and opening shifts. Additionally, Starbucks works with employees who commute longer than an hour to work to transfer them to a closer store when possible.

"To get this right, employees and their managers work together to create schedules that are predictable, consistent, and balance the different needs of every partner."

SAMPLE POLICIES

Flextime/Job Sharing

Template Policy for Flextime/Job Sharing: <https://familyforwardnc.com/sample-policy-flexitime-job-sharing/>

Working from Home/Telecommuting

List of Sample Policies from North Carolina Telework: <https://nctelework.org/sample-policies/>

Job Sharing/Part-Time Work

Duke University Abbreviated Schedule or Part-time Work Policy: <https://familyforwardnc.com/sample-policy-part-time-work/>

Predictable Scheduling

Starbucks: <https://news.starbucks.com/views/starbucks-approach-to-staffing-and-scheduling>

CASE STUDY

R. Riveter

Location: West End and Southern Pines (with contractors located across the country)

Year Founded: 2012 • Number of Employees: 37 FT employees; 36 contractors (known as Riveters)

Military spouses provide strength and support to their service members, enabling their husbands and wives to serve our country to the best of their ability. But that support often comes at the expense of the military spouse's own career.

On average, military families move every 2.9 years, which makes finding and keeping employment difficult for many military spouses. In fact, more than six in 10 of military spouses are concerned with finding full- or part-time work outside the home, and when they are employed, military spouses make less than their non-military peers. That leaves more than eight in 10 of military families concerned about their finances.¹⁰³ Enter R. Riveter.

Founded in 2012 by military spouses Lisa Bradley and Cameron Cruse, R. Riveter's mission is to create stable employment opportunities for military spouses by making and selling high quality, American-made handbags and other goods. In addition to 37 full-time staff, the company contracts with military spouses across the country—called Riveters in homage to the iconic Rosie the Riveter—to craft pieces of the handbags from their homes.

Bradley says she and co-founder Cruse have worked hard to build a business model that provides flexibility, independence, and a culture of “family first,” regardless of what that means to each employee and contractor.



Cheryl Duckett with her young family

For Riveters, who are provided with materials for the goods they make but use their own equipment and work from home, that means working during children's naptimes, in car pick-up lines, or whenever is most convenient, Bradley says. For employees, that means R. Riveter's workplace culture is one that embraces employees' family lives.

“Just knowing that you're coming to work with a lot of other individuals who put family first is comforting,” Bradley says. “For instance, I think in other employment situations, you would be concerned about taking a work phone call with a kid in the background. But that happens here, and it's no problem. We'd rather have you plug in without having to worry or stress about it. And that keeps the work moving more effectively and efficiently, too.”

On top of culture, telecommuting has been highly successful for the company. Though R. Riveter has a flagship store in Southern Pines and manufacturing and warehouse facilities in West End, many of the company's full-time positions are remote, and employees can plug in from wherever they are.

To make remote working successful, Bradley says employees have a shared digital calendar, which employees are encouraged to use and update frequently.

“Just knowing that you're coming to work with a lot of other individuals who put family first is comforting.”

“If it's not on the calendar, it doesn't exist,” she says. The company also looks for employees who are self-starters and can work forward without a lot of supervision.

R. Riveter's culture and flexibility have allowed the company to recruit highly qualified individuals who, as a result of their military lifestyle, may not otherwise be able to find employment.



Cheryl Duckett and family

“My kids and husband now see me in a different light. I’ve got a say in this company and where it’s going, and they notice that.”

“If I didn’t have R. Riveter, I would be unemployed,” says Cheryl Duckett, an executive assistant who’s worked for R. Riveter for nearly six years.

Since starting at R. Riveter, Duckett, who is currently stationed at Fort Campbell in Kentucky, says she’s moved twice and will move again in March.

After a stint as a stay-at-home mom when her three sons—now 11, 9, and 8—were younger, Duckett says it’s been so rewarding to find work she loves that allows her the chance to use her background in accounting and provides the flexibility to care for her family as needed.

“I had a sick child today who needed to stay home. If I had an office outside the home, I would have had to take a day off. But since my office is right around the corner, I can work. That’s a huge, huge thing,” Duckett says.

For Bradley, having people on staff like Duckett, who has “single-handedly developed the finance committee” is proof that the R. Riveter system works.

For Duckett, knowing that her job will move with her wherever she goes is invaluable and has allowed her to feel like she can have a meaningful career, which is something that makes both her and her family proud.

“My kids and husband now see me in a different light. I’ve got a say in this company and where it’s going, and they notice that,” she says.

SAMPLE BENEFITS AT R. RIVETER

- Flexible schedules and remote work opportunities
- Paid time off for full-time employees, with the ability to borrow from future time off for up to 40 hours each year
- An employee discount program
- Military leave, medical leave, personal leave, pregnancy and parental leave, jury duty leave, and bereavement leave.

CASE STUDY

SEPI Engineering and Construction

Location: Raleigh • Year Founded: 2001 • Number of Employees: 325

Founded by Sepideh Saidi, SEPI Engineering and Construction is a multi-disciplinary engineering firm based in Raleigh with branch offices in Charlotte and Wilmington. The firm provides a range of engineering, planning, environmental, and construction management services to clients in the education, private sector, local, state, and federal markets.

SEPI's core values of integrity, quality, collaboration, passion, creativity and community are reflected in both their approach to working with clients and their approach to creating a work environment that places the needs of their employees front and center. The company offers a range of traditional benefits, but it may be the less traditional benefits that set SEPI apart.

SEPI offers a flexible work schedule between 7 am and 6 pm and allows employees the ability to create their own schedule to meet their family needs—whether that be a doctor's appointment or shifting school schedules or an early arrival to accommodate traffic. An employee commits to a defined and consistent schedule, allowing managers to plan, but has the flexibility to create a schedule that best accommodates life outside the office.

"This policy is definitely one of our biggest competitive advantages," says Mariah Agsten, SEPI's human resources manager.

Additionally, employees benefit from a dress-to-your-day policy, allowing casual dress as long as it is fitting to the work environment. Instead of spending time and money on dry cleaning and new work clothes, employees can wear jeans—not just on Fridays, but every day not involving client meetings.

"You would not believe how much that one change has positively impacted the tone of our office," says Agsten. "People are more relaxed. They have more fun, and they work harder."

"You would not believe how much that one change has positively impacted the tone of our office. People are more relaxed. They have more fun, and they work harder."

The firm creates and adapts their policies by listening to their employees. They have an annual employee survey, benchmark their benefits against competitors in the industry, solicit input from managers and employees, and actively seek to subsidize or increase benefits when and where they can. The company also encourages an open-door policy. "Anyone can come and talk to me or Sepi at any time. We want to hear what people have to say," says Agsten. "And Sepi listens. Everything starts at the top with her; the tone she sets makes us who we are."

For example, when Robbie Kirk, assistant vice president of the Roadway Department in the Charlotte office, and his wife, Martha, started a family, he approached Saidi to discuss the paternity leave policy. He asked if they would consider extending the policy from one to two weeks. With 83 percent of SEPI's employees being male, and 32 percent being between the ages of 25 and 40, the change had the potential to impact a large number of staff members.

"Sepi was behind the change 100 percent," says Agsten. "She wanted to know what other companies were doing, so we did our research and it seemed like two weeks was much more competitive than is offered elsewhere. The policy change helped Robbie, but it also helped us a company, and there have been a handful of people who have taken advantage of the policy since it was implemented."



Martha and Robbie Kirk with their son, Fox

“My wife, Martha, went into labor on a Thursday night,” recounts Kirk. “I took a vacation day on Friday and then took two weeks of paternity leave, although I could have spread the time out if I had wanted to. Being with Martha and not having to rush back to work or use additional paid time off was a huge benefit. One week is barely enough time to develop a routine, but being there with my wife and our son, Fox, for that additional week helped us settle into a sustainable schedule.”

“SEPI unequivocally understands that human capital is her number one asset,” says Agsten. “It’s hard to put happiness into a return on investment that is a dollar amount. I think happy employees are much more productive. I’m more apt to plug in when I go home if I have to and our team puts in the time when asked. Through our surveys we know our people are happy, and implementing policies and practices that make a big difference in their happiness has not been hard.”

At the same time, the company is exploring better data capabilities to capture more information about how the investments in their employees translate into data. “We want to know how we can do even better,” says Agsten.

The investment appears to be paying off. “I don’t have any plans to leave SEPI and would be hesitant to go anywhere else that has lesser benefits,” says Kirk. “It’s a really good retention tool.”

SAMPLE BENEFITS AT SEPI ENGINEERING

- A medical, dental, and vision plan, with prescription drug coverage and access to a telemedicine network; a Health Savings Account; Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account; short-term and long-term disability insurance; an employer assistance program that provides counseling; and basic life insurance and additional death and dismemberment insurance
- Paid parental leave of four weeks, which begins two-weeks after a birth or adoption and is covered in part by short-term disability insurance and in part by the company
- Paid paternity leave of two weeks.
- Nine paid holidays per year; one floating holiday; and paid time off ranging from three weeks per year for new employees to five weeks per year for employees with five or more years of service
- Tuition reimbursement for continuing education to support professional development
- Opportunities for team-building, socializing, and for employees to get to know one another—including volunteering in the community

Forrest Firm

Location: Statewide • Year Founded: 2011 • Number of Employees: 45

When real estate paralegal and mother of two Christina McComas decided to leave the large corporate law firm she had been with for 17 years to join Forrest Firm, she admits she was a bit nervous. “It was definitely a leap of faith,” she says.

Her new employer was unlike any law firm she had ever worked for. However, after meeting James Forrest, the firm’s founder, she knew it was the right decision.

“Forrest has an entirely different vision for what a law firm can be,” McComas says. “I can be there for my children. I’m happy, and I’ve never looked back.”

Forrest Firm is a full-service corporate and business law firm and certified B Corporation with a team of 45 people in eight offices across North Carolina. The firm has been growing consistently and has been recognized for creating a work environment that values the health, well-being, and happiness of their employees as much as it values the needs of their clients.

When Forrest launched the firm in 2011, he had a successful background in corporate law but wanted to build a firm more closely aligned with his values. He started out working from home and kept an eye on overhead costs. As he grew, he attracted entrepreneurial attorneys who—like himself—wanted to work hard and be out meeting people, not necessarily sitting at a desk all day.

Forrest also wanted to create a family-friendly environment in his firm—an approach that is rare in the legal profession. Forrest Firm’s unique work-from-anywhere policy for attorneys and the family friendly, flexible approach for staff grew organically from the vision he had for his team.

“I am definitely more productive because of how I can structure my day.”

For attorney Leslie P. Lasher, who is pregnant with her second child, the set-up has been ideal. She works several days a week from home and heads into the office when necessary. “The firm offers a truly supportive culture that starts with senior leadership,” says Lasher. “Our founder does a great job of modeling work-life balance. He prioritizes time with his family and encourages us to do the same.”

Attorneys can structure their days in different ways. For instance, some fence off blocks of time when they’re with their family and then pick work back up later in the evening once their children have gone to bed.

“I am definitely more productive because of how I can structure my day,” says Lasher. “If my child has a doctor’s appointment or a school event, I can be there, and it’s not a problem. It’s not a secret if we’re spending time with our family.”

And, perhaps surprisingly for some, clients support the firm’s approach. “You’re not less of an attorney because you value your family,” says Lasher. “Our clients recognize that you can have a very sophisticated law firm that is structured differently. We respond within 24 hours, travel to meet our clients, and focus on their needs.”

Lasher has found that if she has an out of office message that lets people know she’s with her family on vacation or at an event, they’ll inquire. “My clients actually ask. They want to know how the event went or how vacation was,” says Lasher. “Our approach is building and fostering a deeper relationship with our clients. I’m not just drafting a contract for them.”

Forrest Firm’s offices are staffed full-time during regular working hours by office managers and paralegals, and attorneys are free to work or meet clients in one of the firm’s offices. To encourage connection, the firm uses cloud-based phone, computer, and chat platforms to communicate, and the full team meets in person from across the state periodically. In addition, a liberal travel policy encourages attorneys to visit other offices and get to know their colleagues across the state.

Christina McComas with her children



“It takes courage but it’s possible. Don’t be afraid to try something different.”

“We continue to think about ways to foster a team environment with people working remotely,” says Lasher. “For example, we’re very purposeful about discussing work and non-work issues via instant messaging to encourage community even if we’re not sitting right next to each other.”

McComas believes Forrest’s approach is an antidote to the physical, mental, and emotional demands that contribute to high turnover in the legal profession. “We all do our best to help the firm,” says McComas, “and we don’t have to sacrifice our families to do so. There is a lightness—a happiness—in our firm that I haven’t experienced elsewhere.”

Change is not easy, but Lasher is optimistic. “You have to be brave to create change in an industry that is so steeped in tradition,” says Lasher. “It takes courage, but it’s possible. Get feedback from your employees on what they like and what they don’t. Don’t be afraid to try something different.”

SAMPLE BENEFITS AT FORREST FIRM

- Major medical insurance, many options which are offered at no cost to the employee with both Flexible Savings and Health Savings Accounts
- Dental and vision, which is covered at 100 percent for the employee and their families
- Paid time off for staff, which includes paid personal/vacation days, paid community service days, and paid holidays
- Flex time program for staff; work from anywhere and open time off policy for attorneys
- 401(K) with firm match
- Celebrations for work and life milestones

Health and Wellness Benefits

Health Insurance and Wellness Benefits

Health benefits can include health and dental insurance, as well as on-site wellness centers, on-site fitness centers, subsidies for joining a gym, and/or health- and fitness-oriented programs for employees' children or spouses.

Benefits to Employers ¹⁰⁴	Benefits to Children ¹⁰⁵	Benefits to Parents/Families ¹⁰⁶
<p>Reduces payroll taxes and workers' compensation premiums, and employer contributions are tax-deductible</p> <p>Improves recruitment</p> <p>Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</p>	<p>Improves health through increased access to health care, including primary care, dental care, needed healthcare services, mental health care, prescriptions, preventive care, treatment for chronic conditions, and prenatal care (for mothers)</p>	<p>Improves health, through increased access to health care, including greater access to primary care, preventive screenings, ambulatory care, prescription medications and chronic disease care; greater medication adherence; and higher rates of diagnosis</p> <p>Reduces depression</p> <p>Improves self-reported health</p> <p>Improves family economic security</p>

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

Uninsured newborns are **more likely to be born at a low birth weight and are more likely to die** than insured newborns. Uninsured women are **more likely to have poor pregnancy and delivery outcomes**.¹⁰⁷

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends quality, **affordable health insurance for all children up to age 26** that includes coverage of essential pediatric benefits, such as prenatal and newborn care, postnatal home visits, preventive and wellness services, and urgent and emergency care, along with services for dental treatments, behavioral and mental health care, reproductive health, and treatment of substance abuse disorders.

In the 22nd Annual Best Practices in Health Care Employer Survey, insurance brokerage and advisory firm Willis Tower Watson says employers who are “best performers,” or employers who have lower than average health care costs, do the following:¹⁰⁸

- Take a broad view of health and wellbeing and design their workplace environment to make it **easier for employees to stay healthy and make healthy decisions**.
- Encourage employees to take advantage of **higher value/lower cost health care delivery models such as telemedicine**.^{48,49}
- **Analyze data to evaluate programs and assess performance**.
- **Offer their employees an account-based health plan**, which gives employees more accountability for their care decisions.
- **Use technology**, such as mobile apps or wearables, **to modernize employees' health and well-being programs and experiences**.

Range of Practices in the United States

Nearly all private employers in North Carolina with 50 or more workers (95 percent) offered health insurance to at least some of their employees in 2017. But only one in five (21 percent) of private employers with fewer than 50 employees offered health insurance in the same year. The majority of firms offering health benefits allow employees to enroll dependents, including children.¹⁰⁹

In 2017, private employers with fewer than 500 employees paid an average of 64 percent of health care premiums for their employee family coverage, and state and local governments with fewer than 500 employees covered an average of 72 percent of family coverage premiums. Private employers with 500 workers or more paid an average of 76 percent of health care premiums for employee family coverage, and state and local governments covered an average of 70 percent of premium costs.¹¹⁰

Relatively few employers (13 percent) offer health insurance benefits to part-time workers.¹¹¹

Health care costs are prohibitively expensive for many American workers. A survey of the Federal Reserve Board showed that 44 percent of Americans could not cover an emergency expense of \$400 or more, and only 30 percent of Americans with access to employer health insurance coverage are confident they can afford health care without financial hardship.¹¹²

Two out of three employers with fewer than 50 workers offer dental benefits, and 97 percent of employers with 50 or more employees offer dental benefits to their employees. Of those, 67 percent contribute toward the cost of the coverage.¹¹³

Forty-seven percent of firms with fewer than 50 employees and 82 percent of firms with 50 or more employees offer vision benefits to their employees. Of those, 54 percent contribute toward the cost of the coverage.¹¹⁴

In 2017, 63 percent of public sector employees and 39 percent of private sector employees had access to wellness resources and/or a general wellness program. Access varied widely by industry. Additionally, access was lower for lower-wage workers. Only 15 percent of workers whose wages were in the lowest 10 percent had access to wellness programs.¹¹⁵



Flexible Spending Accounts

A Health Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is a pre-tax benefit account in which employees put money into that can be used to pay for certain out-of-pocket health care costs, tax-free. A Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DCFSA) or dependent care reimbursement account, is a pretax benefit account used to pay for eligible dependent care services, such as child care, preschool, and before or after school programs.

Benefits to Employers ¹¹⁶	Benefits to Children ¹¹⁷	Benefits to Parents/Families ¹¹⁸
<p>Increases productivity</p> <p>Reduces payroll taxes</p> <p>Improves recruitment</p> <p>Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</p> <p>Eases administration</p> <p>Improves morale</p>	<p>Improves health, through increased access to health care, including primary care, dental care, needed healthcare services, mental health care, prescriptions, preventive care, treatment for chronic conditions, prenatal care (for mothers)</p> <p>Improves education and cognitive development by making child care more affordable</p>	<p>Improves health, through increased access to health care, including greater access to primary care, preventive screenings, ambulatory care, prescription medications, and chronic disease care; greater medication adherence; and higher rates of diagnosis</p> <p>Reduces stress</p> <p>Improves work/life balance</p> <p>Reduces depression</p> <p>Improves self-reported health</p> <p>Improves family economic security</p>

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

Employers who want to set up a health flexible spending account should:^{119,120}

- **Understand the benefits and the risks.** Tax savings and the ability to write off some administrative costs as normal business expenses make FSAs attractive to employers. However, employers should understand rules around reimbursing expenses, which can bring some risk.
- Get help. Employers should **use a third-party administrator to establish and manage accounts.** Record-keeping requirements can be extensive, and third-party administrators are relatively low cost. Plus, having an external administrator protects potentially sensitive employee health information by keeping that information away from coworkers.

There are four options to help you set up FSAs for employees:

- **Use an online software that also offers FSA benefits.** This is best if you're currently only doing payroll and want to add benefits with little additional expense.
- **Contract with a professional employer organization,** which allows you to give your employees benefits similar to those of a large company.
- **Work with a private insurance broker** that offers FSAs along with health insurance. This is best if you're already working with a broker and don't mind doing administrative work. Brokers likely won't manage enrollment paperwork and payroll deductions.
- **Use a large insurance carrier,** who also can help manage FSAs. This works best if you use a large healthcare company to provide your health insurance. You can ask your carrier to add on an FSA option.

Often, employees who do not sign up for a flexible spending account or dependent care account do not participate because they are confused about the benefit or unaware of it. Below are some guidelines to help educate employees on the benefits of each account.

- For FSAs:
 - » Healthcare.gov: <https://www.healthcare.gov/have-job-based-coverage/flexible-spending-accounts/>
 - » WageWorks: https://mybenefits.wageworks.com/FAQS/FSAFAQ/CONEXIS_Health_FSA_FAQs.pdf
- For dependent care accounts:
 - » WageWorks: <https://www.wageworks.com/employees/dependent-care-fsa/dependent-care-flexible-spending-account/>
 - » Investopedia: <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/pf/09/dependent-care-fsa.asp>

Range of Practices in the United States

Forty percent of all workers have access to an FSA. But only 11 percent of workers in the lowest income bracket have access to an account, whereas 70 percent of workers in the highest income bracket do.¹²¹

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 41 percent of all workers have access to a dependent care reimbursement account. But that includes only 13 percent of workers in the lowest 10 percent wage category, compared to 66 percent of workers in the highest wage category.¹²²

Per federal law, employees can contribute up to \$5,000 to dependent care accounts. Currently, employees can contribute up to \$2,650 for health flexible spending accounts; however, the number is expected to increase to \$2,700 for 2019.

SAMPLE POLICIES

Health and Wellness Benefits

2018 Bank of America Benefits Overview: <https://www.bankofamerica.com/content/documents/employees/new-hire-benefits-overview.pdf>

Flexible Spending Account

Goodwill Northwest North Carolina 2018 Benefits Summary: <https://familyforwardnc.com/sample-policy-flexible-spending-account/>



CASE STUDY

N2 Publishing

Location: Wilmington • Year Founded: 2004 • Number of Employees: 262

When N2 Publishing (N2) began searching for new office space in Wilmington, they took an unusual approach: they first polled their local team members to find out where everyone lived. They then looked for a location that was within one mile of the median of everyone's address. Although that placed the company in a more expensive area, team members had voiced the opinion that having a short commute was important to them, so Duane Hixon and Earl Seals, the company's founders, listened.

N2 creates more than 900 customized monthly magazines for communities around the country. The popularity of their publications is soaring; the company has experienced 220 percent growth in the last three years and added nearly 100 team members in the last two years.

Seals and Hixon founded N2 with the firm belief that a company can and should support the physical, financial, family, and personal/professional well-being of its team members. This belief in supporting the whole person is what drives the company's culture and benefits.

"It's hard to speak about culture and benefits separately—they work in tandem to create the team that we have. We are a people-first company," says Suzanne Baker, a benefits specialist.

Many of N2's newest team members are starting their own families, and the company has embraced this shift in their demographic in several different ways.

One of the most significant ways is through a partnership with Dockside Pediatrics—a membership-based direct primary care medical clinic in Wilmington that focuses on providing personalized pediatric care. N2 pays Dockside's monthly enrollment fee for each team member with children. The fee covers all well-child visits, unlimited sick visits, in-home newborn visits for the first two months, and unlimited access to a physician until a child turns 18. There are no copays for routine care.

For John Freshwater, a member of the Talent Acquisition team, and his wife, who had their second child on January 25, 2018, enrollment in Dockside Pediatrics has been incredibly valuable.

John Freshwater with his family



"For our first child, I remember going to a doctor's office for the newborn visits," says Freshwater. "It was worrisome to pack up a newborn and head into an office with other sick children. With our second child, a physician from Dockside came to our house."

Physicians from Dockside come to N2 for Lunch and Learns and are available to answer questions or concerns 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "My wife texts the physicians as often as she needs to and having that outlet has been very beneficial," says Freshwater.

Freshwater also takes advantage of another relatively new benefit, the Parent Support Group. "I can bring up any topic that might be stressing me out as a parent," says Freshwater. "It's a concerted effort on behalf of a bunch of people who have this feeling that maybe we don't really have it all together, so we try to give and receive as much information and encouragement from one another as we can."

Helen Walsh, product manager on the Technology team, started the Parent Support Group soon after having her second child. N2 was a younger company at the time and there weren't many other parents. She had helped the HR team create a guide for leadership on how to support team members coming off of parental leave, and through the process she realized she herself needed more support.

“When I came back to work, the group didn’t exist,” explains Walsh. “My team leader was fantastic, but it was still a difficult time. I was exhausted, worried, and parenting was all-consuming. I didn’t have enough of an outlet to share those concerns, and if you’re struggling in your personal life, it impacts everything.”

Soon after there was an explosion of new moms and dads and everyone started talking, sharing, and commiserating. “We were having all these side conversations and it was apparent that it would be fantastic if we could all just get together,” says Walsh.

And as for the cost to the company, it is minimal. The group meets once a month before work or during lunch hours.

Topics range from temper tantrums to making baby food to the holy grail for all new parents: sleep. The group is comprised of roughly equal numbers of men and women. And team members who are expecting a child or planning to have a child in the future are also welcome to join.

“Once I could discuss the worries of being a new parent, I could put that anxiety aside and focus on my job. It helped me a lot,” says Walsh.

Through the group, Walsh has met people in the company that she didn’t know before and she continues to receive positive feedback from attendees.

Adds Freshwater, “I’m a parent and a professional, and at N2 I can be both.”



N2 Parent Support Group

“It’s hard to speak about culture and benefits separately—they work in tandem to create the team we have. We are a people-first company.”

SAMPLE BENEFITS AT N2 PUBLISHING

- Medical insurance; Health Savings Account; access to voluntary dental, vision, accident, disability, and life and AD&D insurance; Dockside Pediatrics Care Program; nutrition counseling and health coaching; daily fitness classes and access to one-on-one fitness consultations
- 401K retirement plan; free financial planning services; first-time homebuyer program to supplement a down payment
- Annual marriage stipend to support counseling or marriage enrichment seminars
- Parent Support Group
- Two weeks of paid paternity leave and six weeks of paid maternity leave
- Dependent Care Reimbursement Account
- Paid time off commensurate with length of employment ranging from one to three weeks; eight paid holidays per year; two weeks off in December
- Leadership and professional training courses through N2 Academy
- N2 Volunteer Group
- Bimonthly Lunch and Learns

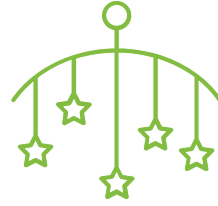
Child Care

American parents have serious trouble finding and affording high-quality child care.

UNAFFORDABLE CARE IS DEFINED AS MORE THAN 7% OF ANNUAL INCOME.¹²⁴

1 in 3 families spend 20% or more of their income on child care.

North Carolina's single-parent families spend an average of **41%**¹²⁵



Even with the high cost of care, the majority of early childhood teachers—even those with college degrees—earn unlivable wages.

THE AVERAGE WAGE FOR A CHILD CARE WORKER IN 2017 NC WAS \$9.86/HR.¹²⁷

30% of the workers in the child care industry turn over each year.¹²⁹



North Carolina's child care workers spend an average of 47% of their salary to put their own child in infant care.

The lack of affordable, high quality child care has a direct impact on business.

A 10 PERCENT DECREASE IN AVAILABILITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION REDUCES EMPLOYMENT OF MOTHERS BY THREE TO SIX PERCENT.¹³²

Employers nationwide lose \$4.4 billion each year due to employee absences or loss of productivity related to child care issues.¹³¹

Backup or Emergency Care

Backup and emergency child care programs are offered at an employer’s work site, in centers or in an employee’s home, and allow employees to continue working despite temporary disruptions in normal caregiving arrangements or when a child is mildly ill. Employers can negotiate rates with local child care facilities.

Benefits to Employers ¹³³	Benefits to Children and Families ^{134,135}
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases productivity Improves recruitment Increases retention, reducing turnover costs Reduces employee absenteeism Reduces “fill-in” costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces stress Improves work/life balance Emergency or back-up care may reduce risk of spreading illness when a child is mildly ill by encouraging parents to keep the child out of normal daycare or school Reduces financial burden when employer negotiates a lower rate

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

Employers who need extra support getting started may want to **enlist a child care resource and referral agency**. To find an agency near you, search the North Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral Council’s online directory: <http://childcarerrnc.org/directory.php>

Agencies can help by offering:

- On-site classes for employees who are parents.
- A review of employers’ organizational work-life culture and guidance developing family-friendly policies and procedures.
- Guidance on employer-sponsored subsidies to help employees afford the cost of child care.
- Assistance setting up and implementing on-site child care.
- Assistance developing an emergency plan for on-site child care in the case of inclement weather, natural disasters, or other emergencies.
- Help with child care referrals for parents.

Employers considering child care benefits should explore the tax benefits. Providing child care can be expensive, but many of the costs can be taken as a deductible business expense or as a tax credit.¹³⁶

Employers who are ready to get started can:

- **Provide employees with a list of emergency childcare facilities** in the area.
- Offer employees access to care through **an online membership service**.
- Contract with a child care company to **put a back-up child care facility on site**.
- **Offer access to a local child care facility** with reserved emergency spots or an in-house child care coordinator who can find emergency care.

Range of Practices in the United States

Ten percent of workers had access to any workplace child care benefit in 2017.¹³⁷

Four percent of more than 3,000 US Society of Human Resources Management members offered access to back-up child care in 2018.¹³⁸

Low-wage workers, who often have the greatest difficulty finding and paying for high quality child care, are less likely to receive child care benefits at work. Only two percent of workers whose wages were in the bottom 10 percent had access to any child care benefit in 2017.¹³⁹

More than eight in 10 working parents say they wish their employer offered some sort of child care benefit, and more than seven in 10 parents say their work has been impacted by unreliable care.¹⁴⁰

On-Site or Consortium Sponsored Child Care:

On-site child care is located at an employers' workplace. For consortium sponsored child care, employers join forces to finance child care run, often run by a contracted operator. Employers can subsidize the cost of care so employees can pay below-market rates, or employers can ask employees to pay full cost for care.

Benefits to Employers ¹⁴¹	Benefits to Children ^{142,143}	Benefits to Parents/Families ¹⁴⁴
<p>Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</p> <p>Allows tax credit of up to 25 percent of facility expenditures, plus 10 percent of any resource and referral expenditures, up to \$150,000 in a calendar year; business expense tax deductions for remaining child care facility expenses</p> <p>Improves employee performance and reduces absenteeism compared to when using off-site child care</p>	<p>Improves overall health</p> <p>Access to quality child care improves high school graduation rates, overall educational attainment</p> <p>Access to an on-site facility may increase breastfeeding duration, which offers a health benefits for children and mothers</p>	<p>Improves family economic security</p> <p>Saves employees time</p> <p>Highly ranked as a benefit, even by employees who do not have children</p> <p>Access to an on-site facility may increase breastfeeding duration, which offers health benefits for children and mothers</p>

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

Employers who need extra support getting started may want to **enlist a child care resource and referral agency**. To find an agency near you, search the North Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral Council's online directory: <http://childcarerrnc.org/directory.php>

Agencies can help by offering:

- On-site classes for employees who are parents.
- A review of employers' organizational work-life culture and guidance on developing family-friendly policies and procedures.
- Guidance on employer-sponsored subsidies to help employees afford the cost of child care.
- Assistance setting up and implementing on-site child care.
- Assistance developing an emergency plan for on-site child care in the case of inclement weather, natural disasters or other emergencies.
- Help with child care referrals for parents.

Employers should consult with legal counsel to **understand the regulations surrounding a child care facility on site**.

For a consortium sponsored child care arrangement, employers should set clear policies and procedures that ensure equity among coworkers and a location that works for the group.¹⁴⁵

Employers who want to establish an on-site child care facility should:^{146,147}

- **Start by talking with employees.** Employee input is vital to ensuring that child care options meet employee needs with regard to availability, affordability and accessibility.
- **Explore the tax benefits.** Providing child care can be expensive, but many of the costs can be taken as a deductible business expense or as a tax credit.
- **Identify a high-quality child care vendor** to provide the care.
- **Consider connecting with a provider currently operating an employer child care facility** to gain understanding of operational costs.

Range of Practices in the United States

Only 10 percent of workers had access to any workplace child care benefit in 2017.¹⁴⁸

Just three percent of more than 3,000 US employers surveyed by the Society of Human Resources Management offered access to a full-time child care facility (subsidized or un-subsidized) in 2018.¹⁴⁹

Low-wage workers, who often have the greatest difficulty finding and paying for high quality child care, are less likely to receive child care benefits at work. Only two percent of workers whose wages were in the bottom 10 percent had access to any child care benefit in 2017.¹⁵⁰

More than eight in 10 working parents say they wish their employer offered some sort of child care benefit, and more than seven in 10 parents say their work has been impacted by child care falling through.¹⁵¹



Subsidized/Reimbursed Child Care or Child Care Referral

Employers who reimburse or subsidize employees' child care pay all or part of approved arrangements and/or reserve slots at particular facilities for employees' children. Through child care referral, employers offer resources to parents to help them find child care in the area.

Benefits to Employers ¹⁵²	Benefits to Children ¹⁵³	Benefits to Parents/Families ¹⁵⁴
<p>Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</p> <p>Reduces employee tardiness and absenteeism</p>	<p>Improves overall health</p> <p>Improves education</p>	<p>Improves family economic security</p>

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

Employers can contribute up to \$5,000 to the cost of each employee's child care without the subsidy being added to the employee's taxable income.

Employers considering child care benefits should **explore the tax benefits**. Employers can deduct the amount of total subsidy provided to employees during the tax year.¹⁵⁵

When determining the amount to reimburse, employers should research total cost of child care in their community. The average yearly cost for infant care in North Carolina is \$9,255 per child, and the average yearly cost of care for a four-year-old is \$7,592 per child. Currently in North Carolina, the cost of child care exceeds the cost of tuition for an in-state public college.¹⁵⁶

Child care can be subsidized in a number of ways. Examples include:

- Subsidizing the cost of care at an on-site center.
- Paying membership fees for an online emergency or back-up care service.
- Contributing to employees' dependent care reimbursement accounts.
- Establishing relationships with child care providers and offering a discount to employees who use providers from the network.

Employers who need extra support getting started may want to enlist a child care resource and referral agency. To find an agency near

you, search the North Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral Council's online directory: <http://childcarerrnc.org/directory.php>

Agencies can help by offering:

- On-site classes for employees who are parents.
- A review of employers' organizational work-life culture and guidance on developing family-friendly policies and procedures.
- Guidance on employer-sponsored subsidies to help employees afford the cost of child care.
- Assistance setting up and implementing on-site child care.
- Assistance developing an emergency plan for on-site child care in the case of inclement weather, natural disasters, or other emergencies.
- Help with child care referrals for parents.

The North Carolina Partnership for Children's Smart Start network organizations also offer helpful resources for employers who wish to put together a child care referral list for parents. Find your local Partnership for Children here: <http://www.smartstart.org/smart-start-in-your-community/>

Here's an example child care referral guide from the Buncombe County Partnership for Children: <https://buncombepfc.org/finding-child-care/>

Range of Practices in the United States

Ten percent of workers had access to any workplace child care benefit in 2017.¹⁵⁷

Three percent of more than 3,000 US employers surveyed by the Society of Human Resources Management offered subsidized child care in 2018.¹⁵⁸

Low-wage workers, who often have the greatest difficulty finding and paying for high quality child care, are less likely to receive child care benefits at work. Only two percent of workers whose wages were in the bottom 10 percent had access to any child care benefit in 2017.¹⁵⁹

More than eight in 10 working parents say they wish their employer offered some sort of child care benefit.¹⁶⁰

Child care is unaffordable for seven in 10 families in the US, according to the US Department of Health and Human Services' definition of affordable care.¹⁶¹



SAMPLE POLICIES

Emergency or Backup Child Care

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina: www.familyforwardnc.com/sample-policy-emergency-and-back-up-child-care/

On Site Child Care:

UNC Rex Healthcare: <https://www.rexhealth.com/rh/careers/benefits/rex-child-development-center/>

Subsidized or Reimbursed Child Care:

YWCA of Cape Fear: www.familyforwardnc.com/sample-policy-subsidized-child-care/

CASE STUDY

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina

Location: Durham • Year Founded: 1933 • Number of Employees: 4,700

At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, employees don't have to miss a day of work when their regular child care falls through. Blue Cross NC offers its employees access to a 4,000-square-foot back-up and emergency on-site child care facility.

All employees receive access to the five-star on-site facility, managed by Bright Horizons, for 30 days per child from infants to age 12 at a subsidized rate. An additional 15 days are available at full cost. Three care rooms—one for infants and toddlers, one for preschool children and one for school-aged children—offer daily activities and curriculum along with breakfast and lunch. Blue Cross NC subsidizes the rest of the costs to operate the facility on top of what employees pay.

"There are those times when schools close, the babysitter doesn't show up or your childcare center closes," says Chief People Officer Fara Palumbo.

"The back-up center is a great way for parents to have a way to solve that emergency issue and still come to the office."

In addition to emergency care, parents can use their back-up care days toward summer and track-out camps offered by the facility. Additionally, new parents have access to 30 extra days of full-time care at the on-site facility when they transition back to work after their paid parental leave.

Christy Colgan, who manages Blue Cross NC's employee wellness program, says the transition back time, known as the TOT program, was invaluable with both of her two children.

She remembers feeling comforted by the fact that her oldest son, Connor, was close by during her first few weeks back at work. "Because he was just down the street, I knew that if I needed to go see him, I could go see him at any moment," she says.

Palumbo says the back-up child care facility is consistently ranked among the most valued benefits by employees at Blue Cross NC—especially the TOT program. And the TOT program is a natural transition back to work after parental leave. Blue Cross NC offers 12 paid weeks of leave to new mothers and new fathers following a birth or adoption of a child.

"You're home on leave. Now you have to make this transition back to work. And either you're not ready with your child care center or you're personally not ready to leave your child in the child care center that you've arranged," Palumbo says.

"With this program, you bring your child on site for four weeks and you have full time care. You can take breaks during the day if you need to, to go nurse your child, or just to visit your child."

Another benefit to help new parents are the lactation rooms, or mothers' rooms, located throughout the Blue Cross NC campus. In each room, employees have access to comfortable chairs, a locker to store equipment, a hospital grade breast pump, a mini fridge and a sink—everything they need to be comfortable during pumping breaks.



Christy Colgan and her son at the Blue Cross NC back-up child care center

Colgan, who breastfed both her children for the first year of their lives, says the mothers' rooms helped her reach her breastfeeding goal.

"I felt really fortunate that I had this really nice room that I could go to and take time to be away," Colgan says.

"One of my friends is a geologist, she's almost one of the only females at her office, and when she had her first child, she just had to (pump milk) in her cubicle, because there was really nowhere else to go."

Overall, Palumbo says the mothers' rooms, the paid leave for mothers and fathers, the backup child care center and other benefits for families, such as flexible work schedules or telecommuting options, help Blue Cross NC fulfill its company mission to improve the health and well-being of the company's customers and communities.

But beyond the benefits, it's the company culture of support for all employees—especially working parents—that makes Blue Cross NC a great place to work, Colgan says.

"It's not an easy decision to be a working mom. A lot of my friends who have kids...a lot of them stay at home, because when they look at it, they're like, 'If I'm going to spend half my paycheck on child care, I'd rather be at home with my kids,'" she says.

"I felt like I had the support to come back to work, and that I could be my whole self at work. I feel comfortable that I'm able to provide a great life for my kids and still be really present with my family every day."

"It's not an easy decision to be a working mom. I felt like I had the support to come back to work, and that I could be my whole self at work. I feel comfortable that I'm able to provide a great life for my kids and still be really present with my family every day."

SAMPLE BENEFITS AT BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF NORTH CAROLINA

- Twelve weeks of paid parental leave following a birth or adoption
- Back-up and emergency child care on site, along with access to emergency and sick care for dependents at an employee's home
- Fully-stocked lactation rooms to support breastfeeding mothers.
- Telecommuting, flexible work schedules, part-time work options available
- Paid time off for illness, vacation (employees have a general paid time off policy that can be used for either)
- Health, dental, vision insurance; life insurance; flexible spending account; dependent care reimbursement account (with employer contribution of \$500 per year)

CASE STUDY

YWCA Lower Cape Fear

Location: Wilmington • Year Founded: 1914 • Number of Employees: 75

For anyone who thinks having child care at work would be a tempting distraction, Katie Tate, chief program officer for the YWCA Lower Cape Fear, disagrees. “I usually try not to interrupt her school day,” Tate says of her daughter. “However, if they’re having a class party or it’s her birthday, of course I’ll be there and it’s easy.”

The onsite child care offered by the YWCA is a huge benefit in and of itself. Tate has been with the organization for nine years and has had two children during that time. “We are very fortunate to work for an organization that provides child care. Having my children go to the same place that I go every day is one less thing I have to worry about; it is one less stop in the morning and one less stop in the evening. Knowing that they’re in the building with me is comforting.”

But what really makes the difference is that for employees of the YWCA Lower Cape Fear, the cost of child care is subsidized. For a working parent with two children in child care, this can amount to more than \$7,000 in savings annually.

The YWCA advances their mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all through a remarkable array of programs, outreach, and events. For families in the community, the YWCA can be a life saver—a go-to for affordable, quality child care from infancy through adolescence—offering full day care, half day, after-school, and summer care—and parenting support for teens through grandparents.

The decision to subsidize their child care programs came about after Charrise Hart, chief executive officer, read the *Status of Women in North Carolina* report from the NC Department of Administration’s Council for Women & Youth. The report emphasized that what women really need to excel is pay equity.

“In the nonprofit sector, you may not be compensated as highly when compared to the corporate sector,” says Hart. “So, we asked ourselves, ‘How are we implementing our mission?’ With our mission to empower women, it starts with us. It starts right here at home.”

The YWCA decided to develop a policy that encourages employees to take advantage of the programming they have in place for the community, and any employee was eligible to sign up. Full-time employees receive a 50 percent discount off of youth programs and child care services, and part-time employees receive a 20 percent discount. Today, almost 40 percent of employees take advantage of this benefit.

“We want to make work-life balance easier for our employees,” says Hart. “You could have a three-year-old at the early learning program and a seven-year-old that’s picked up from school and transported to the YWCA for after-school care. You can take your children home at the end of the day at an affordable price. Nothing can beat what we offer, and I’m proud of that.”

“We want to make work-life balance easier for our employees.”

Pamella Spencer, program coordinator, has three children, two of whom are involved with the YWCA’s child care programs. Her 5-year-old daughter attends and her older son, who attended when he was younger, chose to return to the YWCA to fulfill his volunteer requirements as a freshman at Isaac Bear Early College. For Spencer, the program is ideal: payment for child care comes out of her paycheck as a deduction each month, and her daughter is cared for by her coworkers.

“The YWCA is a women’s organization and the majority of our staff are women,” says Spencer. “We have a strong network of support here. I’m glad that my children are surrounded by all of these strong women. We love the YWCA. That’s why we’re here.”

Tate and Spencer both agree that they have much stronger relationships with their colleagues as a result of having their children in child care at their workplace.



Coworkers Katie Tate and Pamella Spencer with their daughters

They also understand that having child care on-site is not feasible for all employers. However, what they do suggest is that employers could partner with a child care provider and offer subsidies for tuition, registration or activity fees.

“Child care is the biggest expense for families,” says Tate. “There are always ways employers can help out if they can be creative.”

Tate and Spencer both agree that they have much stronger relationships with their colleagues as a result of having their children in child care at their workplace.

“We have a strong network of support here.”

SAMPLE BENEFITS AT YWCA LOWER CAPE FEAR

- The YWCA has the oldest retirement plan for women in the United States. Full-time and part-time employees in the United States are eligible for retirement.
- Health insurance
- Life insurance
- Paid time off, including sick, vacation, and holidays
- On-site child care available
- Child care and aquatics discount for full-time and part-time employees

CASE STUDY

Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams

Location: Taylorsville • Year Founded: 1989 • Number of Employees: Over 900

The Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams corporate headquarters and manufacturing plant in Taylorsville, a rural town in Alexander county just north of Charlotte, may be one of the few factories in the country with a sand play area, a stage with a reading nook, and a garden for planting vegetables.

This American furniture company's factory is home to an on-site, education based, not-for-profit full-time child care facility open to Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams' local employees and members of the community, with space for 77 children from infants to age 12. It's also one of the few five-star child care facilities in Alexander County.

Chairman and CEO Mitchell Gold, who co-founded the company with President Bob Williams in 1989, said he and Williams decided early on that offering child care would be a core part of their benefit offerings for families.

"Somebody once told me that how you take care of a parent when they're having their child, especially their first child, really has an impact on that parent and really lets them think long term about who you are as a person, who you are as a company," Gold said.

"We recognized early on that we had employees with children, and they were distracted. They weren't giving us their full attention because they were worried about being finished in time to pick up their child, or having to go across town to get their child if something went wrong," he said.

By removing some of the company's working parents' stressors, Gold said Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams has a more engaged, loyal workforce. "Bob and I, early on, recognized that if you want loyalty from people, you have to be loyal to them. If you want respect from employees, you have to respect them.



Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams Chairman and CEO Mitchell Gold

If you want them to care about you, we have to care about them. All of these things are two-way roads," he said.

Gabrielle Sinclair, a first-time mom on the human resources team whose toddler currently attends the child care facility, said she is grateful for the chance to have her child closer to her while she works.

"There's a lot of angst and anxiety that goes along with being a first-time mom as it is, so knowing that your child is being well cared for puts those things at ease," Sinclair said.

"If you want loyalty from people, you have to be loyal to them. If you want respect from employees, you have to respect them."

SAMPLE BENEFITS AT MITCHELL GOLD + BOB WILLIAMS

- Medical and dental coverage; Flexible Spending Account
- Company matched 401K retirement plan
- Staff discount on all products
- On-site health center for employees and families
- On-site café serving breakfast and lunch
- On-site gym

Accommodations & Support

Support for Breastfeeding Mothers

Support for breastfeeding mothers includes a range of benefits:

- writing corporate policies to support breastfeeding women;
- teaching employees about breastfeeding;
- providing designated private space for breastfeeding or expressing milk;
- allowing flexible scheduling during work;
- providing high-quality breast pumps;
- and offering professional lactation management services and support.

Other policies outlined throughout this report also help to support breastfeeding mothers, including giving mothers flexible options for returning to work, such as teleworking, part-time work, and extended paid parental leave; and providing on-site or near-site child care.

Benefits to Employers ¹⁶²	Benefits to Children ¹⁶³	Benefits to Parents/Families
<p>Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</p> <p>Provides a three to one return on investment, largely from health care costs savings</p> <p>Reduces employee absenteeism</p>	<p>Reduces infant mortality</p> <p>Breastfeeding lowers child's risk of ear infections, respiratory infections, diarrhea, dermatitis, gastrointestinal disorders, asthma (young children), obesity, certain childhood cancers, and types 1 and 2 diabetes</p> <p>Increases parent-child bonding</p> <p>May increase IQ</p> <p>Reduces doctor and hospital visits</p>	<p>Breastfeeding lower mother's risk of breast and ovarian cancer, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes¹⁶⁴</p> <p>Improves family economic security¹⁶⁵</p>

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Association of Family Physicians and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists **recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, and breastfeeding with complementary foods through at least the first year.** All three recommend that breastfeeding continue as long as mutually desired by mother and child.

Under the Break Time for Nursing Mothers provision of the Affordable Care Act, **employers who fall under the Fair Labor Standards Act must provide all non-exempt and some exempt workers with a private place to pump milk that is not a bathroom.** Employers must also provide break time to pump. The law does not require employers to have a dedicated, permanent lactation space or provide payment for pumping breaks.



In *The Business Case for Breastfeeding: Steps for Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite*, the US Department of Health outlines four ways to support women who are breastfeeding while working.¹⁶⁶

- **Offer privacy to express milk.** If a permanent, dedicated lactation room or a private office is not available, a small, private space can be set up for a temporary lactation room. Women who are breastfeeding must express milk approximately every three hours to maintain a healthy supply for their infant, relieve discomfort and prevent mastitis, an infection in the breast. Milk must be stored in a refrigerator or cooler. Many companies provide a small refrigerator and/or a hospital-grade electric breast pump that makes pumping quicker and more efficient. In addition, electrical outlets should be readily available. Employees should never be asked to express milk or breastfeed in a restroom.
- **Provide flexible breaks.** Pumping sessions usually takes around 15 minutes plus time to get to and from the lactation room. Breastfeeding employees typically need no more than an hour per work day to express milk. If milk expression takes longer than expected, which can happen for a variety of reasons, many employers allow employees the flexibility to come in early or stay late, or to use a portion of their lunch period to make up time.

- **Offer education and expert guidance.** Providing breastfeeding employees with access to resources and a lactation consultant can help them feel more prepared to breastfeed and allow them to address any issues they have while trying to initiate or continue breastfeeding.
- **Provide ongoing support.** Supportive policies that enable women to successfully breastfeed while working send a message to all employees that breastfeeding is valued. Leaders should encourage supervisors to work with breastfeeding employees in making reasonable accommodations to help them reach their breastfeeding goals. Management should encourage other employees to exhibit a positive, accepting attitude.

Range of Practices in the United States

Approximately **49 percent of workplaces have a dedicated lactation/mothers' room, and 11 percent of workplaces offer lactation support services**, including counseling and education.¹⁶⁷



Breastfeeding Mothers Face Lack of Workplace Support, Stigma, Career Worries

Lack of workplace support for breastfeeding mothers leads them to face stigma about their choice, worries about career opportunities, and the pressure to stop before they're ready, leading to possible negative health consequences for both mothers and babies.

8 in 10 women in the US breastfeed their infants at birth **BUT ONLY 25%** breastfeed exclusively for the first six months of their baby's life WHICH IS RECOMMENDED BY ¹⁶⁸ MAJOR MEDICAL ORGANIZATIONS

Approximately 60% of US mothers stop breastfeeding earlier than they would like.

A top reason is lack of workplace supports such as schedule flexibility or accommodations to pump and store milk, along with concerns about support from employers and colleagues.¹⁶⁹ In a 2018 survey of more than 700 expecting mothers,¹⁷⁰ 62 percent said they believe there's a stigma associated with moms who breastfeed at work.

49% said they are worried that breastfeeding could affect their career growth.

Low-wage women are more likely to return to work earlier and to be engaged in jobs that make it more challenging for them to continue breastfeeding.¹⁷¹

More than 1 in 3 women surveyed said they've had a negative interaction with a coworker because of breastfeeding and pumping.

And nearly HALF of moms said they've considered a job or career change because of their need to pump or breastfeed at work.



Pregnant Worker Accommodations

Pregnant worker accommodations are work adjustments such as more frequent breaks or light carry duty that allow pregnant women to do their jobs safely, without jeopardizing their health or the health of their babies.

Benefits to Employers ¹⁷²	Benefits to Children ¹⁷³	Benefits to Parents/Families ¹⁷⁴
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases productivity Provides benefit to employee at no- or low-cost to employer Improves recruitment Increases retention, reducing turnover costs Reduces employee absenteeism Reduces health care costs Reduces litigation costs Increases diversity Increases safety Increases employee commitment and satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves unborn baby's health and safety, including lower risk of preterm birth, low birthweight or miscarriage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves mother's health and safety and lowers risk for miscarriage Improves family economic security

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists:

- It is **generally safe for a woman with an uncomplicated pregnancy to work** without adverse health effects to her or her infant.¹⁷⁵
- There is a slight to moderate **increased risk of miscarriage for women who do extensive lifting** for their jobs.¹⁷⁶
- Accommodations may be needed for women who are exposed to toxins such as pesticides and heavy metals, or in jobs that have an increased risk of falls or injuries.¹⁷⁷
- **Women with complicated or high-risk pregnancies also may need accommodations** for the health of themselves or their infant.¹⁷⁸

Most often, women need minor accommodations during work to protect their health while pregnant, according to a national survey of more than 1,000 US women who have given birth.¹⁷⁹

The survey, conducted by Childbirth Connection program of the National Partnership for Women and Families, found that:

- Seventy-one percent of women surveyed said they needed **more frequent breaks** during their pregnancy.
- Sixty-one percent of those surveyed said they needed a **schedule modification or time off to obtain critical health care**.
- A **change in job duties**, such as less lifting or more sitting, was needed by 53 percent of women surveyed.
- And 40 percent said they needed some other type of workplace adjustment as a result of a pregnancy-related condition.
- Pregnant women who hold part-time, lower-wage, lower-skilled or more physically demanding jobs are more likely to need some kind of minor accommodation at work. When requests for adjustments are denied, **low-wage workers are more likely to be forced to choose between their job and the health of themselves or their child**.

Range of Practices in the United States

The federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act prohibits workplace discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and requires that employers **treat pregnant women the same as other employees who receive accommodations for health-related reasons**. For example, an employer that provides light duty to other employees cannot deny light duty to a pregnant worker.

Employees with serious health conditions related to pregnancy also may have legal protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For example, a woman who develops gestational diabetes, a temporary condition triggered by pregnancy, may be entitled to take breaks to check her blood sugar or have a snack, just as someone with diabetes outside of pregnancy would.

Or a pregnant woman who cannot stand or lift because of severe back pain should be provided a chair or light duty assignment just as other employees suffering from severe back pain due to injury are accommodated.

Though 22 states have passed laws further protecting pregnant workers, North Carolina has not.

Despite federal and state laws, the National Partnership for Women and Children estimates that **nearly one-quarter of a million women are denied their requests for pregnancy accommodations each year**,¹⁸⁰ and the number of pregnancy discrimination claims filed annually with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has been steadily increasing for the past 20 years.¹⁸¹



Babies at Work

A babies at work program allows parents to bring infants to work with them—generally up to about six months of age or crawling.

Benefits to Employers ¹⁵²	Benefits to Children ¹⁵³	Benefits to Parents/Families ¹⁵⁴
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases productivity Lowers health care costs from increased breastfeeding rates Improves recruitment Increases retention, reducing turnover costs Increases customer loyalty Improves morale Increases teamwork and collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates better socialized babies Increases parent-child bonding Provides health benefits of breastfeeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowers child care costs Improves family economic security Creates social network/support for parents Reduces stress Provides more options for women Facilitates easier breastfeeding Enables working fathers to be more involved with their babies

Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

The national Parenting in the Workplace Institute (PIWI) says the key to a successful babies at work policy is to treat it as any other workplace policy—anticipating potential issues, addressing them ahead of time, and adjusting as needed.

According to PIWI, employers who want to implement a babies at work policy should:

- Make sure their babies at work policy **sets up specific guidelines for parents and coworkers**, such as designating a location where parents can go to breastfeed, a place for parents to take their baby if he or she cries for more than a few seconds, and a place where diapers can be changed and disposed of.
- **Clearly outline expectation of parents' work while babies are present**, along with expectations for work environment (for example, coworkers can't play with babies for long periods while ignoring their own work). Consider creative ways to keep the work environment professional. For instance, some employers ask parents to choose "designated alternate care providers," or one or two coworkers who volunteer to watch the baby for brief periods if the parent can't.

- Consider where babies will spend their time with their parents. At most organizations, babies stay with their parents in their regular work area.
- Typically, parents will bring whatever equipment is most useful for their baby and job situation, such as a portable crib for babies to nap in, although some employers limit the number of big pieces of baby gear. Parents can also make use of baby carriers.

Though PIWI says babies at work programs can work at most workplaces and with most jobs, locations or jobs that are physically unsafe for babies, such as a laboratory or construction site, will not work. However, some employers have temporarily moved parents away from physically risky locations or job responsibilities to allow their babies to come to work.

Range of Practices in the United States

Though 27 percent of US employers allow employees to bring their children to work in the event of an emergency, a true, formal babies at work program is relatively rare. Just three percent of employers have one.¹⁸⁵

SAMPLE POLICIES

Support for Breastfeeding Mothers

Aeroflow Healthcare, Inc.'s Lactation Room Policy: <https://familyforwardnc.com/sample-policy-breastfeeding-support/>

Sample Template Policy: <http://www.nmfamilyfriendlybusiness.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Breastfeeding-Sample-Policy.pdf>

Pregnant Worker Accommodations

Template Policy: <https://www.pregnantatwork.org/model-pregnancy-accommodation-policy/>

Babies at Work

Template Policy: <https://www.babiesatwork.org/resources>

CASE STUDY

WOMEN'S HEALTH INFORMATION CENTER, UNC'S NORTH CAROLINA WOMEN'S HOSPITAL

Location: Chapel Hill • Year Founded: 1998

Following a 10-week parental leave, Evelyn Bussell, a part-time childbirth educator for the Women's Health Education Center at UNC's North Carolina Women's Hospital and a full-time school library media specialist, brought her now two-year-old son to work for several months. She shares about her experience below:

"This worked for us in a few ways. Most of the time my whole family came to work with me. They would walk around the ground floor or outside until my son needed to nurse, at which time they would bring him to me—even during my class. I would then nurse him while continuing to teach. Sometimes I did this while standing and holding him; sometimes I did this while sitting; and sometimes I did this while wearing him in a wrap, sling, or soft structured baby carrier. On occasion, he would fall asleep nursing and I would simply continue to wear him while teaching. Then I would text my family to let them know to come get him when he woke up.

When he was closer to six-months old, we had a new educator that my boss asked me to observe. I would take my son with me, and we would sit in the back. He would "play" on the floor or I would wear him in a carrier and stand and could nurse him as needed. If and when he got fussy, I would take him out of the room.

All of this made returning to work there a lot easier until the point when I could be away from my son for extended stretches of time, as he never took a bottle and nursed on demand. As well, this showed new, expectant parents ways in which to nurse in public discreetly and multitask with a baby without compromising their care."

CASE STUDY

Aeroflow Healthcare, Inc.

Location: HQ in Asheville, offices throughout NC • Year Founded: 2000 • Number of Employees: 400

When Aeroflow Healthcare, Inc. announced an expansion of its maternity leave policy in November 2017, it was more than a nice, new perk for Megan Prestridge. It was life-changing news.

At nearly five months pregnant with their first child, Megan and her husband were struggling to figure out how they could financially afford to stay in their apartment once the baby arrived. At the time, Aeroflow, where Megan had worked for about nine months, offered two weeks of paid maternity leave. Megan knew she would need to take about a month of unpaid leave to care for her newborn on top of what the company previously offered.

“When I found out I was pregnant, it was a really tough time for my husband and I,” says Megan, a breastpump specialist for the durable medical equipment provider. “We just didn’t have enough.”

With both sets of parents in town, the couple decided they’d give up their lease in April when the baby was due, and “hop from parent to parent until I could go back to work.”

Then, Asheville-based Aeroflow announced its expanded maternity leave policy—from two weeks to six weeks for maternity leave, and two weeks of parental leave for fathers. That meant Megan would now get six fully paid weeks of leave.

“It was amazing. It was such a relief,” Megan says.

Aeroflow came through again when Megan was put on bed rest 27 weeks into her pregnancy. Her team leader allowed her to work from home until her daughter, Kara, was born on March 25 at 37 weeks. Thanks to the expanded leave policy and the ability to work from home instead of using leave while on bed rest, Megan and her husband were not only able to stay in their apartment, they were able to move to a new space perfect for their family of three.

The experience has made Megan, who returned back to work from leave in late May, incredibly loyal to Aeroflow and proud to work for a company that cares for its employees.

“I feel like by changing their policy for parents, Aeroflow was really living its motto: ensuring quality care from first breath of life to last,” she says. “They took care of my baby from her very first breath.”



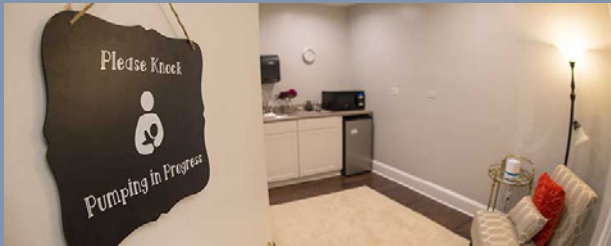
Megan Prestridge and her daughter, Kara

Daniel Polich, a senior recruiter for Aeroflow, helped the company navigate the creation and implementation of several new family-friendly policies over the past year. He says incorporating family-friendly practices is a conscious choice for Aeroflow as it experiences rapid growth.

“We’ve been listed as an Inc. 5000 fastest growing company...It has been a whirlwind,” Polich says. “And as we grow, we’re working on employee engagement and culture.”

Recognizing employees as whole people with families and lives outside of work is an important part of that culture, Polich says. “Employees need to be appreciated, and one of the ways we’re seeing that is through a need for families to be recognized. That’s something that strikes home pretty quick.”

In addition to its expanded maternity leave, which allows for paid leave following birth or adoption, the company of 400 employees nationwide added the following new policies: reimbursement for adoption costs of up to \$5,000 per child; reimbursement of up to \$300 for a birth or postpartum doula for families who have a newborn,



Aeroflow's lactation room

newly adopted or newly placed foster child; free breast pumps and breastfeeding supplies for eligible employees who decide to breastfeed; and one year of free diapers for the first year of a child's life or date of adoption or foster placement.

Additionally, Aeroflow built a pumping room for breastfeeding mothers at its Asheville headquarters, which is open to both employees and Aeroflow patients. With a comfy chair, a mini fridge, a sink, and a changing table, it's a space that feels welcoming to moms and their babies, Megan says.

"I use the pumping room twice every day," she says. "It's really comfortable. And on Fridays, my mom, who takes care of the baby, brings her there to feed. We can change her, and I feel like she's welcome here."

As a parent who works at Aeroflow, Megan says she feels valued, which makes her want to plan a career at the company she loves.

"I haven't felt the need to look for something else, and I have a lot of friends who are mothers and, depending on their employer, they are looking elsewhere, or they have to leave their job completely, which means they don't get to follow their career path," she says. "I feel like (Aeroflow) values me, and I feel like they value me as an employee and as a mom."

Attracting and retaining talent, along with increasing employee engagement, was a definite motivator for the company, and it's a strategy that's worked, Polich says.

"Employees need to be appreciated, and one of the ways we're seeing that is through a need for families to be recognized."

SAMPLE BENEFITS AT AEROFLOW HEALTHCARE, INC.

- Six paid weeks of maternity leave and two paid weeks of paternity leave following a birth or adoption
- Reimbursement of adoptions costs for up to 50 percent or \$5,000
- Reimbursement of up to \$300 for use of a birth or postpartum doula
- A dedicated lactation facility for mothers who wish to breastfeed or express milk
- A company contributed 401K retirement plan
- A one-year free subscription to diapers through the company's "Diaper Club" for the first year of a child's life or adoption placement
- Breast pump and breastfeeding supplies for mothers who wish to breastfeed their child
- Health, dental, and vision Insurance and optional life insurance
- Paid vacation, sick and paid time off (after 90 days of employment)



Section Four

Getting Started



For Employers

Are you interested in expanding your family-friendly benefits but unsure of how to get started? Below are practical steps you can take.

Know the law.

The first step is to understand federal and state laws that apply to pregnant workers or workers with caregiving responsibilities. See page 82 for a brief overview and links to more resources. Consult with your legal advisors to ensure compliance with federal and state obligations.

Assess your current benefits and consider best practices.

Check your current policies to make sure they are relevant and competitive (see page 80 for a worksheet to help get started.)

- Consider the research outlined throughout this guide on practices that offer the best business and health outcomes and determine whether your current benefits meet those guidelines.
- Research “best in class” lists such as the *Working Mother* magazine “100 Best Companies” or the Triangle, Charlotte and *Triad Business Journals’* annual “Healthiest Employers” and “Best Places to Work” to see what benefits those workplaces offer.

Determine who your employees are and what they want.

Family-friendly workplace policies are not “one size fits all.” Take stock of your employees’ needs and tailor your policies to fit what works best for you and them.

- Consider employee demographics—both for current employees and employees you want to hire.
- Conduct a survey of employees to determine which benefits they would most value. Make the survey anonymous to respect employees who may be pregnant or considering pregnancy and don’t yet want to tell their manager. For a sample of an employee survey developed by Family Forward NC, see page 78.
- Create a committee or review panel of employees and ask them for feedback on potential policy changes.

Consult online and organizational resources for help.

The following online and organizational resources offer help for determining what benefits to offer and how to implement them:

- Membership associations such as the Society for Human Resource Management (www.shrm.org) and Capital Associated Industries (www.capital.org) offer a variety of articles and resources, including articles and sample policies that can help craft a family-friendly workplace strategy. Both have membership fees. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) has a North Carolina chapter, which in turn includes local chapters, that offers more local resources, workshops and gatherings: <https://ncshrm.site-ym.com>
- The North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition, MomsRising and the NC Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health created a resource for offering a breastfeeding-friendly workplace: <https://www.ncbfc.org/making-it-work>
- Pregnant at Work (<https://www.pregnantatwork.org/employers/>) was created by the Center for WorkLife Law at the University of California Hastings College of Law. The website includes free webinars for employers, model policies, and accommodation ideas for common pregnancy complications.

- The Job Accommodation Network (https://askjan.org/disabilities/Pregnancy.cfm?cssearch=1928761_1) provides information on pregnancy accommodations.

Consider all costs, including the cost of doing nothing.

For many family-friendly policies, particularly paid leave, cost is cited as the top concern for employers. When factoring costs, consider:

- Some policies, such as accommodations for pregnant workers or babies at work, have no or very little associated costs.
- In North Carolina, 73 percent of workers say they would be more committed to their employer if their employer offered more family-friendly policies.
- For policies such as paid parental leave, the benefits have been shown to outweigh the costs for businesses of all sizes.
 - » A 2017 Boston Consulting Group study of 250 employers with paid leave policies found that paid parental leave helped or had no effect on the bottom line. Companies studied reported a positive return on investment, particularly related to other benefits they could provide.¹⁸⁶
 - » A 2016 Ernst and Young survey of more than 1,500 employers with paid leave benefits, including parental and family medical leave, showed that employers of all sizes saw positive business outcomes as a result:¹⁸⁷
 - * 82 percent reported better employee morale;
 - * 71 percent reported lower employee turnover;
 - * 63 percent reported increased profitability (including nearly half of employers with 100 employees or fewer);
 - * 71 percent reported improved productivity.
 - » Fifty percent of US fathers and 75 percent of US mothers have turned down work opportunities, changed jobs or quit altogether to care for their children.¹⁸⁸
 - » The cost of replacing an employee who leaves is approximately 33 percent of an employee's salary, or \$15,000 for a worker who makes \$45,000, according to The Work Institute's *2018 Retention Report*.¹⁸⁹

Below are three different cost calculators that can help employers estimate the costs of providing new benefits.

1. **Intuit:** This calculator shows how much an employee currently costs an employer beyond wages, including taxes and current benefits offered. <https://quickbooks.intuit.com/r/employee-cost-calculator/>
2. **Humana:** Humana has two calculators. The first gives you an overview of baseline monthly expenses, and the second helps an employer understand what benefits will cost for health, vision, and dental. <https://www.humana.com/employer/resources/budget-planning/cash-flow-calculator> and <https://www.humana.com/employer/resources/budget-planning/benefits-cost-calculator>
3. **TSheets:** This calculator gives an employer a true cost for an employee and provides an overview of labor costs, payroll taxes and overhead. <https://www.tsheets.com/resources/determine-the-true-cost-of-an-employee/>

Make sure employees understand what your policies are and how to use them.

Many times, employees are not fully aware of all the family-friendly policies that they have access to. Help educate employees by:

- Offering thorough and frequent tutorials or sessions that inform employees about ways to facilitate work-life balance.
- Creating HR manuals that are free of jargon. Spell out policies in layman's terms to encourage increased knowledge and use of current family-friendly policies.
- Writing down policies that aren't currently written. Doing so will clear up confusion, and it will help with any employee misconceptions that policies aren't available or are subject to change based on individual manager preferences.
- Providing educational resources to help employees determine how benefits can help them financially.



Create a family-friendly workplace culture.

Having family-friendly policies in place only goes so far if your workplace culture does not encourage employees to use those policies. To create a family-friendly workplace culture:

- Make sure leaders understand the value of family-friendly policies and communicating your commitment to being family friendly to employees at all levels.
- Set clear expectations for managers and ensuring that leaders throughout your organization:
 - » Understand how family-friendly policies fit into your organizational mission.
 - » Offer support and respect for employees who take advantage of workplace policies. If a new father asks to take paternity leave, his manager should support that decision without giving the employee a tough time about being out of office. If an employee works a flexible schedule and does not come into work until 9 am, a manager should not routinely set meetings at 8 am and expect the employee to attend.
 - » Model behavior by taking advantage of family-friendly policies when they need them.
- Celebrate your family-friendly policies both internally and externally. At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, for instance, the company awards two parents each year—one mother and one father—as the “Working Mother and Father of the Year.” Workplaces can also connect with national efforts to raise awareness such as the Moms Rising #IPumpedHere campaign to encourage use of lactation facilities.

For Employees

Are you an employee who wants to start a conversation with your employer about becoming more family friendly? Below are steps for how to get started.

Know your rights.

A first step is to understand federal and state laws that apply to pregnant workers or workers with caregiving responsibilities. See below for an overview, or visit the following websites to learn more. For legal questions specific to your circumstances, consult legal counsel and/or your HR representative.

- For pregnant workers: https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/pregnant_workers.cfm or <https://www.pregnantatwork.org/pregnant-women>
- For workers who are breastfeeding: <https://www.womenshealth.gov/supporting-nursing-moms-work/what-law-says-about-breastfeeding-and-work> and <https://www.healthcare.gov/coverage/breast-feeding-benefits>
- For workers who need time to care for themselves or a child or family member: <https://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/employeeguide.htm>

Make sure you understand your current benefits.

Review your current benefits with your HR representative or manager to make sure you understand everything your employer currently offers and how the details of each policy affect you. Some paid parental leave policies, for example, require employees to use vacation or sick time for a pre-determined period before the parental leave benefit kicks in.

- Ask for help to clarify policies that are unclear.
- Determine when you are eligible for policies. For instance, many employers require one year of employment before you are eligible for paid parental leave.
- Explore the financial benefits your employer offers, such as a Flexible Spending Account, which allows you to save money pre-taxes to spend on health care and other costs.

Talk with your manager or HR representative.

Approach a HR representative, manager or a company leader that you think would be supportive. Have a conversation with him or her about the policy changes you think could benefit both employees and your employer.

Build a business case of support.

If you want to encourage change or new policies within your own workplace, come prepared with data and support for why the policies you suggest will benefit your employer as well as you and your co-workers.

Employer Resources

Sample Employee Survey

Editor's Note: This survey is meant as a starting point and can be customized as needed.

We recognize the value of our employees and want to ensure that we offer the best workplace we can. To be most effective, we want to hear from you about which benefits work well for you and your family and where there may be gaps that our company should understand and seek to address. We want to ensure the best fit for the people who work here! Please take a few minutes to answer the survey.

1. What is your job title? _____

2. What is your age? 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 65+

3. If you have children, please share their ages: _____

4. Do you consider our workplace "family friendly?" Yes No

5. Please tell us why you think that. How can we provide a workplace that promotes work-family balance?

6. What are three things that our company does for employees that you love?

7. How satisfied are you with the current benefits offered?

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

8. Which of the benefits offered do you use or have you used in the past? Please check all that apply. *Note: Employers should list all benefits offered. Examples are parental leave, sick and safe leave, dependent care spending account, telecommuting, job sharing, lactation room, on-site gym, backup or emergency child care.*

9. Of the benefits you checked in Question 8, please rank them in priority to you and your family, with 1 being the most important.

10. Are there benefits not listed in Question 8 that you would use if offered?

- Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

11. Is there anything else that you would like to share? _____

12. Which best describes your race?

- Black
 White
 Hispanic (non-White)
 Asian
 Native American or Other Pacific Islander
 American Indian/Alaskan Native

13. What is your highest level of education?

- Less than high school
 High school or equivalent
 Some college
 College
 Graduate degree

14. What is your marital status?

- Married
 Single
 Divorced
 Other

Current Policy Assessment Worksheet

Editor's Note: Federal and state regulations apply to several of the benefits listed. An overview of requirements is included on page 82, Understanding the Requirements of Federal and State Law. Employers should seek legal counsel to understand their obligations. The information provided here is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

Family-friendly benefit	Current benefits offered (describe details of the benefit offered)	Are there federal and/or state laws and regulations?	Benefit cost per employee	Number of employees expressing interest in the benefit (use survey results)	Next steps
Maternity Leave		Yes			
Paternity Leave		Yes			
Sick and Safe Leave		Yes, in certain circumstances			
Family and Medical Leave		Yes			
Parental Involvement Leave		Yes			
Flextime					
Telecommuting					
Job Sharing and/ or Part-Time Work		Yes, for nonexempt workers			

Current Policy Assessment Worksheet (continued)

Family-friendly benefit	Current benefits offered (describe details of the benefit offered)	Are there federal and/or state laws and regulations?	Benefit cost per employee	Number of employees expressing interest in the benefit (Use survey results)	Next steps
Predictable Scheduling					
Support for Breastfeeding Mothers		Yes			
Babies at Work					
Pregnant Worker Accommodations		Yes			
Health Insurance		Yes			
Wellness Benefits					
Flexible Spending Accounts		Yes			
Backup/Emergency Child Care		Yes, as related to the child care facility itself			
Child Care Onsite		Yes, as related to the child care facility itself			
Subsidized/Reimbursed Child Care		Yes			
Child Care Referral Services					

Understanding the Requirements of Federal and State Law

When it comes to family-friendly benefits, employers and employees should understand the policies and worker protections that are required by state and federal law. Outlined below is a quick overview. Employers should consult legal counsel to determine their federal and state obligations. Information provided within does not constitute legal advice.

Leave

FEDERAL

Family Medical Leave Act

Employers are most likely familiar with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which requires private-sector employers with 50 or more employees, public sector employers, and public or private elementary and secondary schools to provide 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons.

- The birth of a child or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
- To care for a spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential job functions;
- Or for qualifying emergencies arising out of the fact that a spouse, child, or parent is a military member on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status.

Employees may be able to take 26 weeks of unpaid leave during a 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness when the employee is the service member's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin.

To receive FMLA, employees must have worked for an employer for at least 12 months and for at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period immediately preceding the leave. For more on FMLA, visit <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28.pdf>

FMLA is unpaid leave; there are no federal laws requiring paid leave following a birth or adoption. Similarly, there are no federal laws requiring paid medical leave (for an employee or a child) or parental leave.

Covered employers are required to notify workers about the FMLA, including displaying an FMLA poster, as detailed here: <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/posters/fmla.htm>

STATE

Five states currently offer paid caregiver leave policies, which covers workers following a birth or adoption, and 11 states plus Washington, D.C. offer paid sick leave policies. However, North Carolina does not require employers to give mandatory paid vacation, sick or medical leave (for an employee or a child) or parental leave.

North Carolina is one of a handful of states that offer leave for parents to attend school-related events and activities, though the leave is not paid. Employers must provide employees with four unpaid hours each year.

North Carolina also requires all employers to provide unpaid leave to an employee to obtain a protective order or other relief from domestic violence. The statute does not define what amount of time is allowed, only that it be reasonable.

Finally, employees who are members of the North Carolina National Guard, a National Guard of another state, or in the US Military are eligible for unpaid leave for active or emergency military duty. The statute does not specify how much leave may be taken.

Flexible Work

Currently there are no federal or state policies that address flexible work.

Accommodations

FEDERAL

Fair Labor Standards Act

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), employers must provide reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for one year after the child's birth, but employers are not required to pay an employee during that break time. Employers must also provide a place, other than a bathroom, for the employee to express breast milk. If these requirements impose undue hardship, employers with fewer than 50 employees may not be subject to these requirements.

For more, see: <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs73.htm>

Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Both the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, which is part of The Affordable Care Act, address pregnancy.

Under the PDA, employers with 15 or more employees may not discriminate against an employee who is pregnant, may become pregnant or has been pregnant. Employees are also protected from harassment at work because of pregnancy.

Additionally, employees may have legal rights to work adjustments that will allow them to do their job without jeopardizing their health:

- Employers must accommodate pregnant workers under the PDA and similar accommodations are given to other employees who have similar limitations that were not caused by pregnancy.
- Employers may be required to offer an accommodation under the ADA if an employee has a pregnancy-related medical condition such as cervical insufficiency, anemia, sciatica, preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, or depression, that meets the ADA definition of "disability."

For more resources, see: <https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/fs-preg.cfm>

STATE

North Carolina does not have additional laws that address pregnancy discrimination or accommodations. North Carolina does have a law allowing women to breastfeed in public and private locations—including government buildings—but does not have a separate law to address breastfeeding or expressing milk in the workplace.

Health Benefits

FEDERAL

Affordable Care Act

Though the Affordable Care Act (ACA) does not require employers to provide health benefits to employees, employers with more than 50 workers may face penalties if they don't make affordable coverage available. Employers are penalized if they do not offer coverage or do not offer coverage that meets minimum value and affordability standards.

For a flowchart of how employer responsibilities work under the Affordable Care Act, visit: <https://www.kff.org/infographic/employer-responsibility-under-the-affordable-care-act/>

STATE

There are no additional state laws addressing health insurance for workers.

Child Care

Though both the federal and state requirements exist for licensing and maintaining child care facilities, neither federal nor state law addresses whether employers are required to provide child care of any kind.

See <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Services/Licensing/Child-Care-License-Overview> for an overview of North Carolina's child care licensing requirements.



Section Five

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