



earlymattersgreateraustin

A Historic Coalition on Early Education

FAMILY-FRIENDLY
Workplace Toolkit

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Adapted from The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit
www.familyfriendlycolorado.com/toolkit

Disclaimer: Each employer wishing to implement a family-friendly policy should review the policy with their legal counsel to ensure the policy properly fits their situation and specific legal requirements. Early Matters Greater Austin does not provide legal advice.

Introduction

Early Matters Greater Austin (EMGA) is a group of business leaders who recognize that a broad set of socially and economically valuable skills critical for a skilled and dynamic workforce start developing in children's very first months, build over time, and are critical determinants of academic and economic success. Investments now in early learning are critical to preparing the workforce of tomorrow. Currently, less than half of students in our region enter kindergarten prepared to learn¹. This is stunning — kindergarten readiness is highly predictive of academic performance in third grade. Bottom line: if children don't do well in their early years of education, their high school graduation rates plummet. Each year we allow this to continue, the quality of Austin's skilled workforce declines sharply. Leadership from the business community can change this trajectory. EMGA engages business leaders to mobilize and unite the business community to lend experience, influence, and voice to change this trajectory. We believe that investments in early childhood learning are critical to preparing the workforce of tomorrow.

Endorsed by



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“No success at work is worth failure at home.” - Earl Maxwell
St. David's Foundation CEO



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Foreword

Early Matters Greater Austin envisions a community where every child, beginning at birth, has the opportunity develop the social, emotional, and intellectual skills needed to succeed in school and in life. Healthy beginnings and high-quality early learning for all children can change the economic trajectory of our region. We can build a better workforce for tomorrow while simultaneously supporting the workforce of today. The purpose of this toolkit is to help employers support their employees through proven family-friendly practices and policies.

The Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit outlines evidence-based practices for employers to consider implementing within their organizations and provides resources in the greater Austin area to share with employees and their families. Early Matters Greater Austin thanks the business leaders who are the founding members of our Steering Committee and their commitment to help Austin businesses create family-friendly environments, supporting a dynamic workforce for today and tomorrow. Please join us in promoting these best practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mark Williams

Chair, Early Matters Greater Austin

I. The Advantages of a Family-Friendly Workplace

Ask CEOs about the secret to their success and many say they find the right people at the right time and help them do their best work. Others say they treat their employees like family, earning their loyalty and dedication. Ask employees about working for a family-friendly employer and many say that they feel happy, healthy and supported at their job.

THE IMPORTANCE TO EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

According to the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, the region is experiencing near full employment and continued solid growth. With this success comes challenges for businesses, most notable of which is that in a low, unemployment environment, competition for talent is high, making it difficult to recruit and retain talent.

Research indicates family-friendly workplace practices result in increased productivity, improved loyalty and commitment, and resilient, happier and healthier employees. Bottom-line benefits to employers include improved on-boarding, less turnover and lower absenteeism. In addition, family-friendly practices allow your employees to invest in their children - your future workforce. Research also shows the first five years of a child's life is a crucial window for healthy development, with long range impacts that depend on all of us. Family-friendly employment can help parents build safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments for young children.

Austin thrives when our children thrive because they are our future citizens, workforce, and leaders. Employers of every size and industry in every corner of our region can play an important role



in assuring all children reach their full potential. Even though most employers are not directly involved in raising children, their support for family-friendly workplace practices is good for business and good for Austin.

THIS TOOLKIT is designed to help employers explore the benefits of family-friendly workplaces, assess current business practices, identify opportunities for potential change, and connect employees with local family resources. We believe that supportive policies and practices increase organizational productivity and support the physical and emotional health of employees and their families. We hope you will consider how these options may be incorporated at your business.



FAMILIES ARE CHANGING

Fifty years ago, more than half of American children were growing up with married parents, a father employed full-time and a mother who was not in the workforce.

TODAY, ONLY ONE IN FIVE CHILDREN LIVE IN SUCH A FAMILY.

Over the past 50 years, households in which all adults are employed outside the home has increased from 40 percent to more than 60 percent.

IN AUSTIN, MORE THAN 60% OF ALL CHILDREN UNDER AGE 6 HAVE ALL AVAILABLE PARENTS IN THE WORKFORCE.²

Gender norms have changed. A growing number of fathers are taking on the role of the primary caregiver.

IN THE PAST 25 YEARS, THE NUMBER OF FAMILIES WITH A STAY-AT-HOME FATHER AND A WORKING MOTHER HAS DOUBLED.

ONE IN FIVE SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE RAISING A CHILD.

Except in cases where a specific legal relationship is defined in law or tax code, this toolkit uses a broad definition of “family” and we encourage you to do the same.

A CHALLENGE AND AN OPPORTUNITY

Several studies indicate that family-friendly benefits and practices can lead to many important organizational outcomes. Employees are multidimensional; they have personal lives, family responsibilities, and competing demands on their time and attention. Family-friendly employers have a competitive advantage to attract and retain skilled employees. Increasingly, the millennial workforce expects family-friendly policies and practices at the workplace. In fact, 83% of millennials say that they would leave their jobs for one with more family-friendly benefits³. In a competitive employment environment, it's essential for employers to position themselves for success.

These practices lead to an increase in job satisfaction and engagement, diversity, employee referrals, and the attraction of the right people to the organization. This is good news for employers concerned about costs associated with implementing such practices. These practices can also decrease many negative outcomes such as - absenteeism and turnover. Participants in a robust study reported that offering work-life benefits and practices had a 57% reduction in employees' stress levels. The greatest impact on positive employee outcomes occurred when organizations offered benefits AND fostered a culture of organizational work-life support.

II. Menu of Family-Friendly Workplace Options



HEALTH BENEFITS



VOLUNTARY LIVING WAGES



PAID LEAVE



**SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES IN
CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES**

child care



FLEXIBILITY

in location and hours



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES



CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

that enhance family economic security



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

corporate social responsibility



HEALTH BENEFITS

NOTE: The following is a general description of some common benefit options. It is not intended to be legal or tax advice. Consult your CFO or tax specialist.

HEALTH INSURANCE

What it is

Health insurance is a core benefit that contributes to the financial stability and well-being of employees and their families.

Benefits of implementing this

The ability to offer health insurance helps attract and retain top talent. It helps keep employees healthier, happier and more productive. Preventive care reduces absenteeism and lost productivity. Family-friendly employers make every effort to provide health benefits.

Tips and Tools

Even for employers who already provide health insurance, it's worth looking at adjustments that may provide lower premiums, lower co-pays, or smaller deductibles, based on employee needs. Employees may be struggling to pay family premiums, be putting off appointments to avoid co-pays or be unable to afford care due to large deductibles. If so, there may be different options that are more suitable to employees at your organization.

Small Businesses

Texas insurance law defines a small employer as a business with 2 - 50 employees, regardless of how many hours they work. Small employers can choose whether to offer health insurance to their employees. If they offer health insurance, it must be available to all employees working 30 hours or more per week and their dependents. Most insurance companies require at least 75% of a small employer's full-time employees to participate in the health plan.⁵

Businesses with 25 or fewer full-time equivalent employees that pay at least 50 percent of premiums and pay average annual wages less than \$50,000 may be eligible for a tax credit. To get the tax credit, the business must buy coverage through the federal Small Business Health Options Program. For more information, visit [HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov)'s program overview page. More information about small employer health insurance in Texas is available here through the Texas Department of Insurance.

DENTAL AND VISION INSURANCE

What it is

While some health insurance includes dental and vision, they are more frequently offered as additions to regular coverage. There are separate, standalone plans for vision or dental benefits that can be used on top of a health insurance plan as a form of supplemental insurance. There are even dental and vision insurance "packages" that offer benefits for both.

Benefits of implementing this

As with other health insurance, dental and vision insurance allow employees to receive preventative care for themselves and their families. Preventative care reduces absenteeism. Insurance also lessens the potential risk of a major expense that jeopardizes family economic stability.

Details

The two most popular voluntary benefit programs for employees are vision and dental insurance.

CAFETERIA PLANS

What it is

Cafeteria Plans — also called reimbursement accounts, flexible benefit plans, or Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) — are authorized by Internal Revenue Code Section 125 and provide a tax-advantaged way to pay certain out-of-pocket health care expenses and work-related dependent care expenses.

Benefits of implementing this

A cafeteria plan can include the following benefits:

- Accident and health benefits
- Adoption assistance
- Dependent care (including child care) assistance
- Group-term life insurance coverage
- Health Savings Accounts

Details

For descriptions of a range of taxable and non-taxable benefits, see IRS Publication 15-B, Employers Tax Guide to Fringe Benefits (www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-publication-15b) and consult your CFO or tax specialist.⁶

SHORT-TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE

What it is

Short-term disability insurance provides financial help to individuals who are temporarily unable to work because of illness, injury or pregnancy. “Short-term” means a person’s absence from work cannot be permanent and is usually limited to two years.

Benefits of implementing this

Disability claims related to pregnancy and childbirth are steadily increasing and account for approximately 15% of new disability claims for female wage earners. This benefit is important to the financial health of families and allows employees to access these products regardless of whether the employer or the employee pays for it.⁷

Details

- Typical plans are inexpensive to institute
- If you can offer it as a paid plan, you can offer it on a voluntary or employee-paid basis
- Short-term disability plans are increasingly being used for expectant mothers; ensure that the plan begins before conception
- Depending on the outcome of birth, the coverage the plan offers can vary, so take note of that

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (EAPS)

What it is

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are voluntary, work-based programs that offer free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals and follow-up services to employees who have personal and/or work-related problems.

Benefits of implementing this

EAPs have been found to have business benefits, including increased productivity of employees and decreased absenteeism and greater retention.⁸

Details

- Some EAPs offer employees access to hotline 24 hours a day
- EAPs address a broad range of issues including substance abuse, stress, grief, family problems, and psychological disorders
- EAPs can provide referrals to child and elder care resources



Greater Austin 2-1-1 Navigation Center:

This service can connect individuals to more than 30,000 nonprofit and government resources. Anyone can contact the Navigation Center by simply calling the free 2-1-1 hotline. Call specialists carefully listen to each individual’s situation, then access information about the appropriate services for that individual using the 2-1-1 Texas database. The database is also accessible for individuals at www.211texas.org



VOLUNTARY LIVING WAGES

LIVING WAGES

What it is

A living wage is one that covers the necessities for life: food, water, housing, health care, education, clothing, transportation, and child care. It is not the same as the minimum wage because it is calibrated so that employees can meet their basic needs based on costs in a specific community while maintaining a decent standard of living.

Benefits of implementing this

Financial security supports a family's physical, social, and emotional health. For parents, basic resources provided by a living wage and supportive benefits allow them to parent effectively even under stress.

The current minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour for a full-time employee, amounting to only \$15,080 per year. According to City of Austin calculations, a living wage in our community is nearly double that at \$15 per hour or \$31,200 per year. A single parent making minimum wage earns below the federal poverty line and well below a living wage in Austin.⁹ The living wage chart shows the hourly rate an individual must earn to support their family if they are the sole provider and are working full time. (The state minimum wage is the same for all individuals regardless of how many dependents they may have.)



Details

- Businesses see a decrease in employee turnover when implementing a living wage: Turnover costs an employer at least 150% of the employee's base salary. For example, it costs \$28,500 to replace an employee that earns \$15,000 a year, but a \$2 wage increase would only cost the employer \$4,160 per year.¹¹
- Higher wages attract more qualified and productive workers: By offering a living wage, employers will be able to recruit more qualified employees. In the end this will result in increased productivity and efficiency.
- Employee morale leads to increased business productivity: If employees feel that they are valued and fairly compensated for their work, then employees show up and work hard.

Details

- Stay informed about cost of living changes in your community on a regular basis. Calculate the cost benefit of living wages with costs of employee turnover.



| Hourly Wages | 1 Adult | 1 Adult 1 Child | 1 Adult 2 Children | 1 Adult 3 Children |
|---------------------------|---------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Living Wage (State of Tx) | \$11.87 | \$24.62 | \$27.69 | \$34.95 |
| Poverty Wage | \$5.00 | \$7.00 | \$9.00 | \$11.00 |
| Minimum Wage | \$7.25 | \$7.25 | \$7.25 | \$7.25 |

| Hourly Wages | 2 Adults (1 Working) | 2 Adults (1 Working) 1 Child | 2 Adults (1 Working) 2 Children | 2 Adults (1 Working) 3 Children |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Living Wage (State of Tx) | \$19.67 | \$23.27 | \$26.12 | \$29.51 |
| Poverty Wage | \$7.00 | \$9.00 | \$11.00 | \$13.00 |
| Minimum Wage | \$7.25 | \$7.25 | \$7.25 | \$7.25 |

| Hourly Wages | 2 Adults (1 Working Part Time) 1 Child | 2 Adults | 1 Adults 1 Child | 2 Adults 2 Children | 2 Adults 3 Children |
|---------------------------|--|----------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Living Wage (State of Tx) | \$17.17 | \$9.84 | \$13.13 | \$15.32 | \$17.78 |
| Poverty Wage | | \$3.00 | \$4.00 | \$5.00 | \$6.00 |
| Minimum Wage | | \$7.25 | \$7.25 | \$7.25 | \$7.25 |

For detailed information about the individual expenses that are included in the living wage estimate please reference the MIT Living Wage Calculator at livingwage.mit.edu¹⁰

- Use the Family Budget Calculator to understand the real expenses families are facing in relationship to wages: <http://familybudgets.org/>¹²
- The Living Wage Network: The network is composed of certification programs that recognize employers who pay a living wage, significantly impacting the lives of tens of thousands of low-wage workers across the country. <https://www.livingwagenetwork.org/>¹³



PAID LEAVE

There are many different forms of paid leave that employers can choose to offer for employees.

PAID TIME OFF (PTO)

What it is

The combination of one collective “paid time off” versus tracking sick, vacation, and personal time off for employees.

Benefits of implementing this

Employees can determine how best to use their paid time off, and are more likely to arrange absences in advance and less likely to call in sick when they need time off for personal business.

Details

- It reduces record keeping for employers
- It may reduce unscheduled absences

SICK LEAVE

What it is

Paid time off for employees that specifically covers them in times of sickness.

Benefits of implementing this

In a family in which all adults are working, parents without paid sick leave face difficult decisions when their children are ill. If a parent misses work, he or she endangers the family’s financial stability.

Tips and Tools

- It gives employees time to recover from their own illness or care for sick children
- They can use the time to seek preventative care. It reduces the risk of spreading disease and serious illness between employees.
- It increases employee morale and overall job satisfaction.
- It reduces “presenteeism,” a condition in which employees are present but unproductive at work due to illness.
- Healthy workers are safer and less likely to be injured on the job.

VACATION LEAVE

What it is

Paid time off offered to employees for vacation.

Benefits of implementing this

This time off allows employees to recharge mentally and physically and enables families to rest and spend time together.

Details

- Employees with paid vacation leave have lower rates of stress and depression.¹⁴
- The Society for Human Resource Management has found that employers who encourage employees to take vacation time see a reduction in turnover, workers compensation claims, and health care costs, as well as an increase in productivity.¹⁵
- Some employers require employees to take a minimum amount of vacation time each year.¹⁶

PERSONAL LEAVE

What it is

Paid time off which is designated for “general leave” purposes, such as functions for children and appointments.

Benefits of implementing this

Supporting parents through paid personal leave is closely connected to children’s academic achievement and behavioral health.

Details

- This family-friendly benefit directly impacts both the employee and the child.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE

What it is

Paid time off for new parents.

Benefits of implementing this

Partial or fully paid parental leave makes families more financially stable, and gives birth mothers the ability to take sufficient time to recover from childbirth.

Details

- It allows time to bond with and care for a newborn or newly adopted child
- It helps brain development for the child
- It helps lay a solid foundation for healthy relationships and the ability to learn
- Parents become less likely to require public assistance a family's income is less likely to drop below the poverty level
- Research on the benefits of paid family leave show:

-Improved employee retention -

Women with paid family leave are 93% more likely to be working one year after the birth of a child than those who take no leave.

- **Better talent attraction** - In a Deloitte survey, 77% of workers said that paid

family leave policies sway their choice of employers.

- Reinforced company values -

Company leaders frequently cite improved paid family leave policies as reinforcing the organization's core values.

- Improved employee engagement -

In an Ernst & Young survey, more than 80% of companies with paid family leave reported a positive impact on morale. More than 70% reported a boost in productivity.

- Enhanced brand equity -

Improving paid family leave policies attracts media attention. This can be particularly true for early movers in an industry or for companies offering new or more expansive policies.





FAMILY, FASHION, PHILANTHROPY

“ My family is my world, and I created a company culture that allows me to put them first. That may mean I show up to the office in sneakers because I’m running to a soccer game right after a board meeting, or my designers might get an email from me at midnight because I put off a project until the boys went to bed. And I believe every parent deserves the same work-life balance. That’s why in our Kendra Scott pillars of Family, Fashion and Philanthropy, Family comes first. It always will. ”

-Kendra Scott

Kendra Scott’s family-first belief has driven her to ensure that all of her employees have the same opportunity to arrange their lives around their families. Notably, the company offers paid family leave for both primary and secondary caregivers, even to employees who haven’t been with the company for a full year. Primary caregivers receive a full twelve weeks and secondary caregivers receive six weeks of paid leave. This has been critical for a business where 95% of their employees are women. The headquarters reflects the family first culture - there is a mother’s room, where moms can freely pump breast milk and store it in the fridge, a game room which is used frequently by employees’ kids on days that kids come to the office with them, and a section in their monthly employee newsletter to celebrate and recognize parents who return from parental leave. Kendra Scott actively pursues ideas and options to incorporate the same principles beyond corporate headquarters but also into distribution center and retail locations. This includes hosting Bring Your Kids to Work event on school holidays when retail stores are open.





In 2017, Boston Consulting Group (BCG) released, “Why Paid Family Leave is Good for Business,” highlighting five imperatives in designing paid family leave:¹⁷

- **Practices reflect company values.**

There is a clear trend toward inclusive practices — equal amounts of paid leave for male and female parents, covering birth, adoption and surrogacy for both salaried and hourly workers. Providing paid leave to care for ill family members ensures that everyone, not just parents, has access to the benefit.

- **Amount of leave is not the only value driver.**

While the trend is toward more time off, flexibility — offering non consecutive weeks off or the option to take longer leave at less pay — may be equally important to employees.

- **Leaders set the standard.** Leaders encourage using the opportunity by taking time off themselves when they need it. As visible champions, they can foster a sense of normalcy for paid family leave.

- **Support systems are crucial.** Smart support systems consider employees who are out on leave and those covering them while they are gone. These include human resource processes and checklists for managers handling leaves and systems that help employees ramp down before they go on leave and ramp up once they return.

- **Measure success.** Just a small number of metrics are needed to measure the success. Include statistics on usage, employee replacement costs, retention rates among employees who take paid family leave and employee perceptions of the program.



SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES

More than 26% of full time employees in Austin have children under age 5, and almost 70% have one or more children under age 18. Practices that support caregivers in meeting the needs of their family members will enable them to stay in the workforce and to be their most productive while at work.¹⁸

CHILD CARE

All parents want high-quality, reliable care for their children but juggling a job, child care and family responsibilities can be a struggle. Employers can support employees through this process by offering an array of benefits and resources. Benefit offerings can range from resource-intensive strategies such as on-site child care, to less resource intensive ones such as information and referral services.

Do you know how access to child care is affecting caregivers?

- Access to quality child care increases a parent or caregiver's likelihood of completing postsecondary education, raises labor force participation rates, increases productivity, and helps businesses attract and retain talent.¹⁹
- The Federal Reserve reports that nationally, child care and other family obligations are the dominant reasons for why people are not working, other than retirement
- Child care is also a significant expense for Austin families. The costs of trained personnel, safe facilities, and well-balanced meals account for the high cost of providing care. Unlike the K-12 system, in which the costs of a child's education are covered by public funding, working parents assume the cost of child care. Thus, a significant portion of a family's income is spent on child care. Average yearly tuition for infant care (younger than 12 months) in Austin is \$9,474, which

equals 10% percent of the median family income. This share climbs to 31% in single-parent households and would account for 63% for a single parent making minimum wage. This is well out of reach for many families^{21, 22}

- It can be difficult to find an opening at a center or child care home, particularly for an infant. Significant population growth in our region has consistently surpassed the available capacity of child care facilities and far surpasses the capacity of high-quality facilities
- Only about half of all child care facilities are licensed, and only 6% of all child care facilities are accredited for quality. The City of Austin Office of Performance Management reports that more than 50% of respondents on the 2017 Citizen Survey indicated that they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with access to affordable high-quality care²³
- Consistent child care also saves employers money. Almost half of parents are absent from work at least once due to child care issues, missing an average of 4.3 days over a six month period. It is estimated that child care breakdowns leading to employee absences cost U.S. businesses \$3 billion annually²⁴

The resource section of this of this toolkit offers detailed information related to eligibility and process for accessing child care subsidies, Head Start, and Pre-K programs, as well as information to help guide parents to identify high-quality care providers in the community.

“Improving access to child care goes hand in hand with fostering workplace gender diversity and helping parents enter and advance in the workforce while enabling companies to strengthen their bottom line.”

- International Finance Corporation²⁵

ON-SITE CHILD CARE

What it is

Child care provided at the place of work for parents.

Benefits of implementing this

A survey by the Early Care & Learning Council reports that when companies provide child care, employee absences decrease by up to 30% and job turnover declines by as much as 60%.²⁶

Details

- Though it can be a costly benefit, the cost can be recouped every year through retention
- KinderCare Education at Work and Bright Horizons both offer corporate benefits partnerships including on-site child care models that are committed to high quality nationally accredited programs.

- **Bright Horizons Solutions At Work** | brighthorizons.com

- **KinderCare Employee Sponsored Child Care** | kindercare.com

- United Way Success By 6 is a resource for information about local non-profit high quality child care providers with potential interest in on site partnerships. unitedwayaustin.org

CHILD CARE VOUCHERS, DISCOUNTS OR REFERRALS

What it is

A method for employers to provide easily accessible resources for publicly funded programs.

Benefits of implementing this

Engaging in a corporate partnership with a high-quality child care provider to provide a tuition discount and/or priority enrollment for their staff may be the most cost-effective solution for businesses wanting to support parents.

Details

- Services can be provided through a corporate benefits partnership with high-quality child care centers.



Austin Diagnostic Clinic has provided on-site high quality child care at its North Austin location for more than 20 years. High property costs and leases in Greater Austin are an obstacle for many child care programs, so ADC has partnered with KinderCare to provide a very generous lease agreement that makes providing high quality, affordable and accessible care for employees more feasible. By considering potential partnerships with facilities, employers can create a feasible child care situation for employees.

- **These are available through** KinderCare and Bright Horizons who have established corporate models

- **Early Matters Greater Austin** can help connect businesses with Austin area child care programs that would be interested in partnerships.

- Concierge services such as HappiYoungstr and JuiceBoxHero offer consultation services for businesses to add to employee benefits packages. These can include services to assist caregivers with accessing child care, after school and summer camp programs.
- OR companies may offer a child care vouchers/subsidies for parents
- OR companies may invest in a child care assistance fund for employees
- Arming HR or other staff with information to assist parents with referrals to reliable resources can help reduce stress and reduce time lost away from work. Please refer to the Resource Guide in this Toolkit.

The City of Austin offers income-eligible child care assistance of up to \$100 per week per child to city employees with children under the age of 13. In addition, the City offers a youth camp scholarship for all employees with children ages 5-12 regardless of household size or income.

CHILD CARE BENEFIT PLANS AND TAX STRATEGIES

What it is

Using tax-advantaged strategies to help employers support working parents and affordable child care.

Benefits of implementing this

With child care, investing wisely on the front-end reduces the costs of remediation down-the-road.

Tips and Tools

- “Cafeteria Plans” offer a menu of benefits tailored to meet the needs of employees while reducing income tax withholding, FICA, and unemployment taxes.
- Employees can set aside up to \$5,000 in pre-tax income for child care expenses.
- “Dependent Care Assistance Programs” allow employers to fund a portion of an employee’s child care expenses.
- Employers can contribute towards an employee’s child care expenses (up to \$5,000).

BACKUP OR EMERGENCY CARE

What it is

The availability of short-term support for employees when regular child care falls through, such as when providers are sick or during unexpected school closings.

Benefits of implementing this

This offering allows employees to continue their regular work schedules when something unexpected comes up.

Details

- Employers can provide in-home or center-based care for children who



are mildly ill or recovering from health problems that keep them from attending school or child care.

- Backup care can be provided on site or through relationships with third party providers like KinderCare, Bright Horizons or Care.com.
- Unfortunately, the Austin area currently offers very limited opportunities for backup, emergency, or nontraditional hour care. **This is an opportunity for businesses to serve as leaders in developing these opportunities.**

ELDER CARE

While these policies and practice focus on young children, many employees are part of the “sandwich generation” facing caregiving responsibilities for aging family members. Many of the same benefits and policies may be considered for employees caring for a family member of any age.

“It’s so difficult to balance work and family life. We believe that providing family-friendly policies and practices is the right thing to do. As a result, our employees are engaged, loyal, and committed to achieving our strategic goals.”

- Lynette Caldwell, Texas Mutual Senior VP of Human Resources

Texas Mutual strives to make a stronger, safer Texas for its customers and communities including its employees. The company’s core focus areas include safety, wellness and education in addition to extensive family-friendly policies; Texas Mutual designed their new corporate headquarters in Austin to include space

for on-site child care for employees and community members. In addition to this amazing benefit, the company has other family-friendly offerings that cultivate a balanced life for employees. For nearly 1,000 employees they offer a generous benefits package that includes health, vision and pharmacy; free flu vaccinations for employees, their spouses and their children; company-paid short and long-term disability; and a company-paid Employee Assistance Program. Paid leave policies consist of paid vacation, sick and holiday leave. A unique feature of the sick leave program is that employees may convert up to 96 unused sick leave hours to vacation hours at a rate of 2:1. Their benefits include a tax-free Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account that employees may contribute to for dependent child care or summer camps. Employees who can perform their jobs at home may work remotely one or two days a week. If remote work is not feasible, employees have flexibility to work from home occasionally to take care of personal business as well as flexibility to make up time missed to attend to family needs and events. In addition, Texas Mutual offers flexible return-to-work schedules for new parents. This may include working from home initially, and/or returning to work on a part-time basis. Employees may also use sick leave to care for their spouse, child or parent.





FLEXIBILITY

A CULTURE OF FLEXIBILITY

In this context flexibility is defined as allowing work to be done outside of the traditional Monday through Friday, 9-to-5 schedule or in locations other than the office. Employer practices that allow flexibility in the time or place work is performed are helpful to employees in balancing their work and personal responsibilities. In addition, a recent review of research demonstrates that “well-chosen and well-designed flexible work arrangement practices typically pay for themselves and in some cases can enhance business performance and increase profitability”²⁷

In a study of over 400 employers in North America, work flexibility for employees was rated as the most popular benefit available at organizations today and that such benefits would be a serious consideration in deciding whether to take a job with higher pay that lacked flexible work access. Employers also rated work flexibility as most impactful on organizational attraction and retention. A 2016 survey of more than 1,000 working parents who were expecting their first child or who had a first child under age two found that about half had changed jobs, many taking a pay reduction in exchange for greater flexibility.²⁸

In 1990s Deloitte instituted a flexibility initiative aimed at improving retention of women. By 2003 retention rates of women and men were approximately equal, and the number of women in leadership positions had increased from 14 to 168.²⁹

“ From the time we started planning for a new corporate office, it was important to Texas Mutual’s senior leadership that employees have safe, convenient and high-quality child care available in the area. Primrose School, an early education center for infants and young children, will make their home in our new building. The addition of the school to our new headquarters will offer convenient access to child care for employees, as well as a resource for our new neighbors in and around the Mueller development. ”

- Lynette Caldwell, Texas Mutual Senior VP of Human Resources

A truly flexible workplace needs both supportive practices and supportive managers. Options by themselves accomplish little if managers subtly or overtly discourage employees from using flextime, working from home, or taking family leave. Employees must know they can succeed at the organization, whether or not they use the flexibility offered. In addition, leaving flexibility up to individual managers can result in a culture of inequity that harms employee morale and may ultimately undermine the family-friendly environment that is intended.

TIME FLEXIBILITY

What it is

Allowing employees to have flexible scheduling with their job.

Benefits of implementing this

Modifying work hours is probably the most widely implemented family-friendly policy in the United States and is used by employers of all sizes and industries with smaller organizations leading the way in regards to flexibility. Time flexibility can improve attraction and retention of employees while improving efficiency and productivity in some industries with very minimal or no impact on cost.

Details

- Common types of time flexibility

-**Occasional flexibility:** Allowing employees to come in later or leave earlier than usual to tend to infrequent personal matters, such as meetings at a child's school. Employees make up the time rather than taking leave.

-**Alternate schedule:** An employee's regular schedule may start earlier or later than other employees to accommodate personal demands schedules.

-**Core hours:** The employer sets core hours when employees must be at work or in the office. Otherwise, employees are allowed flexibility in

completing their work day. If core hours are set from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., employees must work those hours but may start work earlier or finish later.

-**Compressed work week:** Employees work four 10-hour days in a week or nine 9-hour days in two week.

-**Part-time work:** Offering part time options allows employers to attract and retain employees who aren't able to work more traditional hours/shifts. The opportunity to reduce hours can be mutually beneficial when employees are preparing to retire or coming back from parental leave.

-**Job sharing:** Two employees work part-time, sharing a single position, receiving full or pro-rated benefits. This may allow an employer to retain two employees who wish to reduce hours when a part-time position is not feasible. Job-sharing employees also bring two sets of skills and twice the knowledge. They can check each other's work and provide continuity on sick days and during vacations.

- Flexibility isn't only for higher wage jobs. Retailers have successfully implemented flexibility for front-line service jobs.
- Cross-training, allowing employees to swap part or all of a shift, and letting employees take leave in small (1-2) increments are strategies that benefit employers as well as employees.³⁰
- Manufacturing companies have adopted flexibility strategies such as compressed work weeks, alternative shift arrangements, shift swapping, flexibility in start and stop times, and employee input into break times.³¹



“ Having a seven-year-old and a full time job is not always easy. Working for Saucedo has allowed me to always be there for my son. From allowing me to leave early to coach his two baseball seasons, to staying home with him when he’s sick, they’ve always supported me. Family is a big part of this company, and I couldn’t be more happy to call myself an employee of Saucedo Industries. ”

- RJ Castillo - Inventory Manager, Saucedo Industries

Saucedo Industries is a local small business that launched less than five years ago in 2013. With a workforce whose average age is between 24 -27, they aspire to incorporate family-friendly policies and practices that they can sustain and scale as they grow. Fully paid parental leave is available to employees - four weeks for fathers and eight weeks for mothers, as well as four weeks for parents who adopt a child. Employees on the office team have the opportunity to bring their newborn infant to work for up to six months or when the infant becomes mobile. In addition, while employees work on a consistent schedule, they are open



to working with employees and offering flexibility to accommodate parents as needed. Chief People Officer Priscilla Saucedo notes they strive to have a workplace culture that is all about people bringing their “whole self” to work, and the leadership team makes it a priority to have the resources necessary to be supportive of all team members at all life stages. They aspire for even more family-focused benefits as their business continues to grow and prosper.

“ My husband and I founded this company with one simple idea - to create a workplace that we ourselves would want to be a part of. The company was, and continues to be, a vehicle for bettering our lives and the lives of our employees. Our culture is one that is all about building community and our employees and their



families are a part of that community. Finding smart, sustainable ways to be flexible and supportive of our employees and their families is something that will always be core to who we are as an organization. ”

- Priscilla Saucedo, Chief People Officer, Saucedo Industries

LOCATION FLEXIBILITY OR “TELEWORK”

What it is

Giving your employees the ability to work from home or off-site.

Benefits of implementing this

In many industries, this benefit costs employers little to nothing to implement, and might be offered regularly or on occasion.

Details

- Working at home allows employees to spend less time commuting, so they can enjoy more time with their families.
- It also reduces commuting costs and stress.
- Occasional telework can be a good solution when an employee has a minor illness or an appointment near home, allowing them to take less time away from work.
- It is important to note that working from home should not be considered a substitute for dependent care (children or elders).
- Successful employers and teleworkers recommend establishing clear expectations, including an employer telework policy and individual telework agreements that specify work hours and who will pay for equipment, office supplies and internet access.
- Employers who have successfully implemented telework arrangements often document increases in productivity, reductions in turnover and lower overhead/real estate costs.
- An additional benefit is having productive employees able to work offsite in cases of bad weather or major traffic disruptions.

STABLE, PREDICTABLE SCHEDULES

What it is

The ability for employees to have a standardized, reliable work schedule making it easier to schedule child care and other activities outside the work place.

Benefits of implementing this

Creating a stable schedule with a consistent number of hours and offering as much advance notice as possible of schedule changes reduces emotional and economic stress on employees and their families.

Many employees, particularly low-wage and part-time workers, have schedules that change, sometimes dramatically, from week to week. Moreover, they often don't know what their schedules will be until a few days in advance or schedules may change last minute.



These situations create problems for employees and their families, including:

- Employees who are counting on full-time work struggle to make ends meet when they don't work 40 hours in a week.
- When employees spend money on transportation and child care, they can actually lose money when they are sent home before working a full shift.
- When an employee is expecting full-time work, or expecting a certain schedule, they aren't able to take a second job.
- Students who work part time aren't able to plan their classes (or keep their jobs) without predictable schedules.
- Child care providers may be unwilling to save a place for a child that doesn't attend regularly, so parents with unpredictable schedules may need to find new providers.

Detail

- Employers who offer stable, predictable schedules save on reduced turnover and associated recruitment and training costs, and see an increase in employee morale and engagement.
- A recent study of GAP demonstrated that more predictable and consistent hours aren't just compatible with profitability, they can significantly improve a store's bottom line. Sales in stores with more stable scheduling increased by 7%. Labor productivity increased by 5% and it's estimated that Gap earned \$2.9 million as a result of more-stable scheduling during the 35 weeks the experiment was in the field.³³
- There are several scheduling software tools available as apps:

- branchmessenger.com
- crewapp.com,
- joinhomebase.com
- myshyft.com/
- wheniwork.com



“ We support each other and everyone’s family because to us, that is an extension of our own family. ”

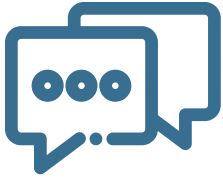
- Rose Ann Garza, Director of People Operations

With more than 650 employees at 8 locations in the Austin Metro area, **Kerbey Lane Cafe** has committed to supporting employees at a level above and beyond many in the restaurant and retail sectors. To address scheduling challenges, all management schedules are released four weeks in advance and all hourly schedules are released two weeks in advance. Scheduling like this allows team members to pick up or give up shifts as needed. Comprehensive health benefits are available to all team members, even those who are part time, as well as an EAP that provides assistance and information to employees seeking child care or elder care support. In addition to competitive wages for all positions, Kerbey Lane strives to offer opportunities for cross training and promotion. All team members have access to free financial planning and financial literacy training. Finally, Kerbey Lane Cafe partners with the United Way for Greater Austin for quarterly volunteer opportunities to benefit local high-quality child care centers in ATX!

“ Throughout my experience with cancer, the Kerbey Lane team was conscientious of my needs as a person and as a mother. They provided a level of support I did not realize I needed. My workplace was continually flexible, generous, and thoughtful. It opened an avenue of healing for me and aided in my remission, I am certain. Even without having cancer, Kerbey Lane has been supportive of my family from day one – providing me and my son a level of care I had never experienced. As a team member, I am so happy (and grateful!) to be part of this organization. ”

- Employee





SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

LACTATION (BREASTFEEDING) SUPPORT

What it is

An established protocol for breastfeeding mothers who need comfort and support when they return to the workplace.

Why you should implement it

When breastfeeding mothers feel comfortable expressing milk at work, they are more likely to return to work after maternity leave and often return to work sooner. Breastfeeding has substantial health benefits for mothers, lowering their risk of diabetes, heart disease, breast cancer, depression, and ovarian cancer and helping them recover more quickly from childbirth. Breastfed babies are healthier, which means mothers are less stressed and less likely to miss work. Because breastfed babies get sick less often, one-day absences from work are half as common among mothers who breastfeed.

Details

- It is important to note that not all mothers are physically able to breastfeed or choose to breastfeed. Above all else, every employee's needs and privacy should be respected.
- While not part of legal requirements, but as a practical matter, nursing mothers also should have a chair, a door that locks, an electrical outlet, access to a sink and a place to refrigerate breast milk. Workplaces of all sizes and in a variety of sectors (including manufacturing and retail) successfully accommodate nursing mothers.
- Other options employers can consider:

-Allowing the nursing mother to take break time to go to the baby.

-Allowing a caregiver to bring the baby to the workplace for feeding.

- Texas offers a Mother-Friendly Worksite Program and Certification. This program provides minimum criteria for a Mother-Friendly Worksite designation and maintains a listing of Texas Mother Friendly Worksites. It also recognizes employers who develop and maintain policies to proactively support employees in combining working and breastfeeding.

<http://texasmotherfriendly.org/>

- Austin Public Health (APH) can help you transition to a mother-friendly worksite through free technical assistance. In addition, APH offers the Chronic Disease Prevention Mini-Grant opportunity. These competitive mini-grants of up to \$2,500 support healthy nutrition, mother-friendly, physical activity, or tobacco prevention projects at workplaces and other locations.

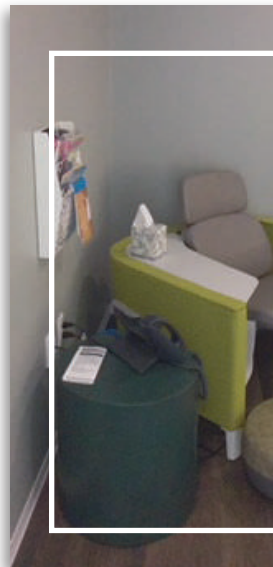
Contact (512) 972-6472 or healthyplaceshealthypeople.org

“ IBM has always believed that our people are the key to our success, and this includes our working mothers who tirelessly commit themselves to both their families and career. ”

-Diana Adams, IBM HR Partner

What it is

IBM is an industry leader in family-friendly programs for employees with comprehensive benefits and additional supportive practices and events. IBM provides 12 weeks paid leave for fathers/partners/adoptive parents and up to 20 weeks for birth mothers and up to \$20,000 in Adoption and Surrogacy Assistance Plan reimbursement. They host a free annual Lactation Course for employees, spouses and domestic partners that includes tips



EXPECTANT AND NEW PARENT PARKING

Designated parking spaces for expecting and new parents.

Benefits of implementing this

This is a matter of safety for expecting parents, especially when the pregnancy causes additional health challenges or the weather is inclement.

Details

- New parents benefit from having more space to unload children and the ability to get in and out more quickly.

INFANTS-AT-WORK

What it is

A written “Infants at Work” policy supports parents who want to bring babies into the office or workplace. Policies establish parameters and expectation to ensure that babies are not disruptive to coworkers and that all employees effectively complete their work.

Benefits of implementing this

Allowing parents to bring their babies to work for the first several months of life greatly increases employee retention, especially among mothers. Companies with baby programs have found that mothers frequently return from maternity leave much earlier for greater financial stability as well as to benefit from the social network of the workplace, resulting in cost savings. Baby inclusive companies report higher levels of teamwork and collaboration as a result of the program that is consistently linked with higher productivity. This higher efficiency and increased dedication to the organization results in higher long-term productivity by participating parents. Finally, surveys

have shown that management and co-workers generally report positive impacts on workplace culture with very little disruption of operations and productivity.³⁴

Details

- A clearly written policy outlines parent responsibilities and co-worker expectations and generally provides guidance on the age of babies permitted at work.
- Written policies often clarify with “until the infant reaches the age of 1 or starts to crawl, whichever comes first.”
- Many companies have parents sign legal waiver forms, and some insurance companies will cover a babies-at-work program under their general liability coverage or provide a rider for the program.
- To learn more about this practice, visit the Parenting in the Workplace Institute (PIWI) web site at www.babiesatwork.org to find resources on the implementation of formal programs in which parents can bring their children to work and care for them while doing their jobs and for a Infants and Work policy template.³⁵



for successful breastfeeding and pumping at work, and they partner with UPS to provide breast milk delivery services for new moms who need to travel for work. IBM Austin holds a “Gold Worksite” designation from the Texas Department of State Health Services for being a mother friendly worksite. They have two beautiful Lactation Rooms that are outfitted with comfortable chairs, breast pump bases, a full kitchenette with refrigerator, and access to Wi-Fi and phones.



situation of having several of her most valuable, senior female employees starting families at the same time. Many of these women were hesitant about finding full-time child care and returning to work so soon after giving birth. She was concerned that some may not choose to return at all.

Gay also knew that the cost of replacing employees can be staggering (6-9 months' salary on average according to SHRM). She recognized that T3ers would continue to start families for years to come and she didn't want to be faced with this same challenge over and over again. As a potential solution, Gay asked the group of new moms if they would be interested in bringing their babies into the office with them. T3 & Under was born. Now 23 years and more than 100 babies later, T3 & Under is still flourishing. It's a great way for T3 to show its support of family and work-life balance and alleviates some of the stress and anxiety associated with being a new "working parent".

T3 & Under

- Both moms and dads are welcome to take advantage of the program
- Babies can join the program whenever their parent returns from leave and graduate from the program at 6 months of age
- Parents can bring their babies as many as 5 days a week, but many choose to alternate days or even utilize the program every other week
- Several dads have joined the program once their partners return from parental leave at other companies

- T3 has a dedicated space in its Austin office to support the program
- The T3 & Under suite includes personal office setups, pack and plays, a mini fridge, changing table, diaper genie, bottle warmer, noise machines, and other amenities to make it as comfortable as possible
- T3 offers reserved parking spots for T3 & Under participants or our pregnant moms during their last trimester
- T3 understands that it is nearly impossible to sustain a full workload while participating in T3 & Under, so they do our best to throttle workloads, starting at 10% the first week back in the office and maxing out at 80% during last week of the program

Life is just one virtuous circle—which includes work, family, and a person's individual interests and pursuits. We believe at T3 that when we understand each staff member, we realize that policies that can help them move from one phase of life to the next, we get a more motivated, high performing



and engaged team. High performing teams lead to the best work. That is why it is not only the right thing but the best business decision to include family-friendly policies in the workplace.

- Gay Gaddis, Founder & CEO



T3's family-friendly environment helped me transition into my new life as a mom and working parent. From 12 weeks of full pay parental leave, to bringing my daughter to work with me until she was 6 months old, to allowing a flexible work schedule, T3 helped me adjust to my new reality mentally, financially, and emotionally.

**NEW PARENT
SUPPORT GROUPS**

What it is

Access to a support network through the workplace.

Benefits of implementing this

Caregiver support groups are a workplace option that can reduce employee stress.

Details

- Some employers host “lunch and learn” workshops with topics such as parenting or stress reduction.
- Small employers might consider working together to host such groups workshops.
- Partners in Parenting (PIP) improves the well-being of Austin’s new parents so they are confident, connected, and have the tools to blossom into their full potential. The proven 10-week program connects parents of babies with peers, trained facilitators, and experts so they can share the joy and weather the storms of new parenthood together. PIP believes that we build the foundation for healthy families by supporting parents in this early phase of parenthood. To find out more about how to create an in-house PIP group or to gift your employees a PIP group in their neighborhood please reach out to info@pipaustin.org.

Resource and Referral Support for Additional Parent Resources

In the Greater Austin area there are a number of other resources for parents with young children, including home visiting, early intervention, and parent education resources for families including matching resources with income eligibility. The United Way for Greater Austin’s 2-1-1 Navigation Center has the most up-to-date resource and referral program. This call center can meet all language needs and assist employees in matching needs with available resources.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT ENHANCE FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY

This section focuses on family-friendly practices that eliminate common barriers to career development for caregivers and that support re-entry to work, career advancement trajectories, and education and training opportunities.

Barriers to career development often include:

- Reluctance among employers to hire or promote women of childbearing age.
- Creating a “mommy track” or “daddy track” with long-term consequences for working parents who take a pause in their careers for the birth of a new child.
- Developing promotion schedules and earnings trajectories that penalize a working parent for pausing to stay home and bond with a child.
- Inadequate paid parental leave for either men or women, which may contribute to inequity.
- Offering parental leave to certain employees only, whether only to women or only to employees that are at a certain level of pay.

RETURN-TO-WORK / RE-ENTRY SUPPORT

What it is

Some companies are beginning to offer ‘returnships’ — internship programs to attract talented job seekers who have taken career breaks and need to revamp their skills.

Benefits of implementing this

In a competitive employment market, businesses may benefit from nontraditional ways to find diverse technical talent, especially through women returning to the workforce. While women’s labor force participation has increased substantially in the U.S. over the second half of the 20th century, this growth has stagnated and reversed since 2000, with participation falling by 3.5

percentage points. Notably, the drop has been widespread for women ages 25 to 54. Mothers with children younger than 18 are less likely to participate in the labor force now than they were in 2000.³⁶

Employees returning to the workforce are known to bring bringing a professional maturity, commitment, and stability.

Tips and Tools

- Re-entry internships enable companies and professionals to assess fit before entering into a permanent arrangement, in the same way that internships do for college graduates.
- Return to work programs often incorporate skills training, coaching, peer support, and opportunities in paid project assignments.
- Multiple organizations provide partnership opportunities with businesses to develop, pilot, source for, present in and publicize re-entry programs:

- irelaunch.com
- pathforward.org
- reachire.com

- According to a 2016 Manpower survey, 84% of millennials anticipate taking a break at some point in their career – so developing programs now may help meet future needs.

IBM's Tech Re-Entry Success

In 2016, **IBM** launched a 12-week reentry program. Created in collaboration with the iRelaunch and the Society of Women Engineers, IBM's Tech Re-Entry program is an annual, 12-week internship open to technical women who've taken a career break and are looking to re-enter the workforce. These participants receive an executive mentor to help them in their transition back to work with a goal to bring these women into permanent IBM positions. IBM Executives note the assets these employees can bring - returnees have fewer job relocations because many already own a home, are less likely to go on maternity leave or have special child care needs and have years of professional experience. While few companies have formal reentry programs as part of their diversity initiatives, IBM notes this strategy is effective at attracting skilled employees.³⁷



SUPPORTING EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

What it is

Tuition Assistance Program is a program, generally run through an employer's human resources department, where employees can take college courses paid for by that employer. Employers typically start the process by supporting courses or programs that are job-related, or degrees that can be reasonably expected to lead to a position at the company with more responsibility. Many employers have a service requirement

(the student-employee must agree to stay with the company for a year or more after completing course work or earning a degree or else must repay some or all of the tuition assistance).

Benefits of implementing this

Employer benefits of tuition reimbursement and other continuing education supports result in more qualified employees, which many employers agree can be hard to come by. Employees who take advantage of tuition reimbursement tend to stay with the company longer. In addition to improved employee retention, the employer may have more employees who are easily promotable, saving them money on recruiting new employees.³⁸

Tips and Tools

- Employee tuition reimbursement program costs are tax-deductible up to \$5,250 annually. For employers that choose to offer a \$5,250 benefit, after the tax benefit, costs are very low to the employer to offer employees this perk.

UPS Earn and Learn

UPS has a successful strategy of hiring part-time employees and turning them into full-time employees. Most full-time UPS employees started at the company as part-time or non-manager employees, including managers and executives. Part-time employees of UPS are eligible to receive up to \$5,250 in tuition assistance per year up to a lifetime maximum of \$25,000 that enables them to upgrade their skills. Eligibility begins on the date of hire.

“ The company's strong commitment to promoting from within means we're constantly training today's part-time employees to become tomorrow's executives. ”

City of Austin

The Tuition Reimbursement Program promotes the City's goals of improving customer service and investing in the workforce by providing financial assistance to employees who take job-related, City career-enhancing credit courses at accredited, degree-granting schools and institutions. The Tuition Reimbursement Program is not intended to provide assistance for staff development training or continuing professional education.

OTHER SUPPORTS FOR EMPLOYEES

There are a variety of other supports specifically targeted for employers to assist employees in overcoming obstacles that are barriers to financial stability for themselves and their families.

Transportation

- Metro Works: Getting to and from work in Central Texas traffic can be challenging and expensive. Some employers promote carpooling or help pay some of the costs. MetroWorks For Business is a bulk discount program that lets businesses offer employees discounted access to public transit www.capmetro.org/MetroWorksBusiness/³⁹

Workplace classes to develop skills

- English At Work: The Literacy Coalition of Central Texas offers English @ Work in the workplace. English @ Work seeks to maximize human potential by sending paid instructors into workplaces across Central Texas—a unique approach to bringing English lessons to those who are motivated to learn and prepared to succeed. Instructors use curriculum customized to the workplace and to students' job descriptions. www.willread.org/englishatwork⁴⁰

Emergency Loans

- A Federal Reserve survey last year found 44% of Americans had difficulty covering an emergency expense of \$400.⁴¹ Many low-income workers lack credit history and access to credit cards or bank loans. Employer-sponsored small loans are increasing, often managed by payroll deductions that create high rates of repayment. Often financial institutions and credit unions can assist in implementing an emergency loan program for employees.





COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

Family-friendly employers often also support initiatives in the community level that promote the health of families as part of their corporate social responsibility.

What they are

Involvement strategies can include corporate volunteering, workplace giving, and community investment initiatives. Businesses often align their philanthropic and volunteer efforts with core values so directing donations, volunteer time and even in-kind services that benefit

organizations meeting family needs in the community can reinforce the culture of a family-friendly workplace.

Benefits of implementing them

Companies have an opportunity to tap into their employees' passions, and employees increasingly report that they find their job more fulfilling when they have opportunities to make a positive impact on society and the environment. In addition, for-profit companies are seeing the business benefits of positioning their brands "for purpose," as consumers want and expect companies to address social justice issues.⁴²

Details

- Offer events for families in the workplace that help children understand aspects of their caregivers' role and business.
 - IBM** holds an annual "Take Our Children to Work Day"
 - Kendra Scott** plans special events for employee's children on school holidays that don't align with retail holidays.
- Support local community causes that are identified as important to employees and their families, and partner with organizations to host a family-friendly volunteer event.
- Engage with United Way for Greater Austin to become a corporate partner, hold a workplace giving campaign, coordinate a corporate volunteer activity, or coordinate, or participate in a Family Day of Caring event with employees and their families.

Early Matters Greater Austin is a business leader's one-stop resource for identifying family-friendly community involvement strategies that align with business interests, capacity, and time in the Greater Austin Area. Business leaders are invited to join as an Early Matters Greater Austin Champion to stay informed and connected. earlymattersgreateraustin.org



P. TERRY'S

BURGER STANDS

“ Our premise from the very beginning has been to treat people fairly,” Terry said. “It’s the right thing to do, and we’re going to keep doing it. ”

P Terry’s recognizes that many employees in the fast food industry may live from paycheck to paycheck without discretionary income. For that reason, the business provides interest free loans to all employees which can then be paid back over a period of time through paycheck deductions. This can be instrumental in helping a family through an emergency expense from something, such as a car repair which can sometimes destabilize a family’s economic well-being.

Employees at P. Terry’s also get a free meal for each shift they work and an annual holiday bonus of \$10 for every month worked. In addition, the company bakes a custom birthday cake for each employee.

P Terry’s also generously focuses corporate philanthropy through “Giving Back Days” that happen once a quarter. On these days they donate a day’s profits at all 14 P. Terry’s Burger Stands restaurants to a local nonprofit organization that provides direct services to the community.



“ Austin is our home and we feel very much a part of the community. It is very important to us that we give back to the city that has treated us so well. ”

III. GETTING STARTED

Here are some steps to making voluntary family-friendly changes in your workplace.

DETERMINE YOUR GOAL

What is the benefit to your organization to become more family-friendly? Is there a problem that needs solving? If so, use this problem as a starting point. You may also consider other changes as you continue the process. Family-friendly practices will be more sustainable if they are grounded in your business strategy. Remember that family-friendly strategies are proven to contribute to employee recruitment, retention, and engagement when determining your goal.

PULL TOGETHER YOUR TEAM

A representative team or task force will provide more complete information and will help create buy-in. The team should be representative of your workforce today and the workforce you seek to recruit. It should represent all departments and employment levels or job functions (when feasible). Create a job description so team members understand their roles and commitment to the process. Demonstrate your commitment to this process by including senior management on the team. These managers should be engaged while giving the team the freedom to express their opinions and identify employee needs. Make sure the expected outcome is clear and that the team feels confident that the work they do and the suggestions they make will be valued and implemented.

COMPLETE AN ASSESSMENT

WHAT IS CURRENTLY IN PLACE?

Through a partnership with Health Links,⁴³ Early Matters Greater Austin offers regional businesses access to an interactive Family-Friendly Workplace Assessment (FF+). This online survey is a tool for business executives and human resource professionals to measure the “family-friendliness” of their workplace. It takes approximately 20 minutes to complete and upon completing the

assessment, an individualized impact card is generated, scoring results by section and providing suggestions for additional resources. Early Matters Greater Austin can work with employers to review their individualized Impact Card. earlymattersgreateraustin.org

WHAT ARE EMPLOYEE NEEDS?

Determine what your team needs to know to move forward. If you identified a specific problem in the first step (Determine Your Goal), the team will need to gather data related to this question. For example, if management is concerned about turnover, the team will gather data on employee satisfaction and reasons for leaving.

Ask employees what their challenges are and what would help them. People may be more candid on an anonymous survey. If you already conduct surveys or have existing anonymous feedback methods, use these. In small- to mid-size organizations (fewer than 50 employees), it may be difficult for information to be truly anonymous. Even asking about the ages of children may make survey respondents identifiable to others. If your organization can afford it, you should consider bringing in a third party to conduct the survey.

PRIORITIZE ISSUES AND RESEARCH POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Use the resource guide in this toolkit as a starting point to explore options in more depth. You don't need to re-invent the wheel. Also, consider look at offerings by competitor organizations and industry benchmarks.

Determine a set of criteria for how your organization will prioritize issues and recommendations. For example, one hospital system chose to divide their recommendations into three categories:

- Celebrate - Strong practices that can be celebrated
- Promote - Under-utilized options and practices that can be promoted
- Review current practices in context of employee needs and best practice evaluation

- Think long and hard prior to implementation about the sustainability of the work-life offerings. Will it be something your organization can support in the long-term? Negative impacts such as turnover or decreased engagement may arise if the offering is receded. Make sure not to raise hopes by offering a potential solution publicly that leadership hasn't approved.

Consider the core values of your organization along with the business goals you developed when you started this process.

CREATE A PLAN

Agree on what to implement and create a realistic timeline that focuses on high priorities and low-hanging fruit.

- Consider categorizing recommendations into a cost/impact grid. The low-cost high-impact recommendations are likely to come first, while high-cost low-impact ideas may be tabled as unattainable. Determine how you will implement the new program or policy. Depending on what you are trying to implement, you might consider a pilot phase and then evaluate effectiveness and costs prior to full implementation. Having a high work-life support culture is more important than a high number of offerings

- Calculate ROI. Implementation and utilization costs are often cited as a major consideration factor and barrier for offering benefits or policies. However most organizations do not measure outcomes of benefits or know that family-friendly benefits pay for themselves. Citing costs as a limitation to benefit implementation without knowing how to measure outcomes or understanding where your costs lie is a missed opportunity to actually demonstrate and determine ROI in attracting and retaining employees. The Society for Human Resource Management hosts a free, online calculator that allows employers to calculate absenteeism or turnover costs for free. This "Investing In People Calculator" also estimates how much might be saved by implementing a specific work-life program. You can find the calculator at www.hrcosting.com/hr/.⁴⁴

Plans should include:

COMMUNICATION/MARKETING:

Your implementation plan will need to include steps for communicating or marketing to employees and decision-makers.

- Communicate the offering on the intranet, internet, and through information sessions for your



employees. A benefit or policy can only be utilized and enjoyed if your employees know about it.

- Ensure that recruiters and hiring managers are aware of the details surrounding the new offerings. Encourage them to communicate these benefits and policies to all applicants and new hires.
- Be transparent with all stakeholders about the costs and expectations of the offering.
- Communicate benefits equitably across corporate and remote locations throughout the year. Employees may not focus on the benefit until they run into a situation in which they need the support; ensuring benefits are top of mind is important.

EVALUATION

Build evaluation into your implementation plan. Monitoring and periodic evaluation provide an opportunity to tailor a policy or program and gives you the greatest chance for sustained success. For example, if you want to see the impact of back-up child care on absenteeism, measure absenteeism pre-implementation and measure again after an appropriate period has passed.

- Collaborate with others in your organization who routinely work with data, such as those in finance or R&D.
- Work with business leaders to identify their most important metrics, and then

actually use those metrics.

- Search for industry benchmarks to understand how the measured outcomes fare against others.
- Seek out qualitative data. Interviews with employees about their experiences are a valuable way to gather feedback.
- Make ongoing improvements to the offerings based on the data collected, if needed.

IMPLEMENT

Remember to use your communication plan and collect key data as you go, that way you'll be able to evaluate and ground your policy/program with examples of success. A few key reminders, whether you are rolling out a pilot concept or a complete program

- Provide employees and managers with support.
- Create and foster a culture of promoting benefit use to maximize utilization.
- Communicate expectations of how best to use the offered benefits to your employees.
- Offer employees training on how to best maximize the benefit. In many cases, it may not be enough to give an employee the option to work from home without training on how to best manage their time. Not all employees are self-directed and excel at time management.
- Train managers on the details and expectations of the benefits and policy offerings.
- Survey employee needs regularly and listen to their feedback to ensure the new policy/ program is working for all employees.
- Communicate options to employees on a regular basis to ensure awareness of your family-friendly workplace options.
- Participation and modeling from senior leadership is crucial. A family-friendly boss serves as a role-model. If employees see leadership occasionally shifting hours or using technology to work remotely, they may feel more comfortable asking to do the same.
- Be sure to follow through with evaluation plans.





IV. Resource Guide

NATIONAL RESOURCES

FAMILIES AND WORK INSTITUTE

(FWI) is a nonprofit research-to-action institute dedicated to providing research for living in today's changing workplace, changing family and changing community.

familiesandwork.org

Review their Workforce & Workplace Research and explore the rest of their site for more guides and resources on adapting workplaces to meet the needs of employees and their families.

PARENTING IN THE WORKPLACE INSTITUTE

(PIWI) Researches and provides resources for the implementation of formal programs in which parents can bring their children to work and care for them while doing their jobs.

babiesatwork.org

MOMSRISING.ORG

Is an on-the-ground and online grassroots organization of more than a million people who are working to achieve economic security for all moms, women, and families in the United States. Visit their site to learn about family-friendly workplace policies and other related topics.

ZERO TO THREE

Works to ensure that babies and toddlers benefit from the early connections that are critical to their well-being and development. This website provides connections to comprehensive resources for information new families. **zerotothree.org**

MAMAVA

Is a business dedicated to transforming the culture of breastfeeding. They sell a variety freestanding "lactation suites" in various forms that can be purchased for private and public spaces as well as rental for inflatable lactation pods for events. **mamava.org**

TEXAS RESOURCES

TEXAS MOTHER FRIENDLY WORKSITE PROGRAM

Mother-Friendly Worksites are businesses that proactively support employees who choose to breastfeed their infants. Creating and implementing a Mother-Friendly policy is both simple and inexpensive. Their step by step guide can help a business get started.

<https://texasmotherfriendly.org/program/getting-started>

TEXAS WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN

(WIC) is the special supplemental nutrition program that supports income eligible women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or had a baby within the last six months as well as infants and children up to their 5th birthday. This includes food, nutrition classes, breastfeeding support and more. **texaswic.org**

CITY OF AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY RESOURCES

Expectant Parents and New Babies:

CENTERING PREGNANCY

Is prenatal care that includes the mother's regular health check-up with additional time for learning and sharing. Groups start after the first trimester. Expectant mothers meet with a healthcare provider and other women who are due near the same time for 10 sessions throughout the pregnancy. Contact Centering Pregnancy Coordinators at **(512) 978-9435**

TEXAS FAMILY CONNECTS

The first few days and weeks home with a new baby can be a challenging time for all families, and research indicates that more than 90 percent of families can use some additional support. In Texas in particular, new families are moving to our state at a growing rate and may be far from their traditional support structures such as family and friends. Texas Family Connects can help them navigate this difficult time and ensure the newest addition to their family is thriving in a healthy and safe environment. Through Family Connects, all families have the opportunity for a trained, registered nurse to visit them at home within the first three weeks. These nurses conduct comprehensive strengths and needs assessments for each family and can provide immediate assistance, such as safe sleep support, or make warm referrals to other programs in our community that can provide more intensive and ongoing support for families, such as health care appointments, child care services, parenting support groups and financial and social supports that promote family functioning and child-wellbeing. This program will launch at St. David's South Hospital in September 2018. **512-225-0363**
familyconnects@uwatx.org

PARTNERS IN PARENTING

Supports all of Austin's new parents so they are confident, connected, and have the tools to reach their full potential. PIP offers parenting support through PIPsqueaks groups for any new parents to attend with their babies. At each weekly meeting, the families in the Groups share their highs and lows, process the experience of becoming new parents, and learn tips and resources through weekly topic discussions and guest speakers. Groups meet in the homes of groups during the day or in the evening. Each meeting includes time to focus on the babies' development and a break time for informal socializing and connecting with other parents. Partners in Parenting is interested to partner with businesses as part of their maternity/ paternity package for employees through a small program fee (approx. \$125). **pipaustin.org**

MOM'S PLACE LACTATION SUPPORT CENTER

This program is a specialized breastfeeding support clinic and training center where mothers can receive free services and return as often as needed. It is grant funded through Health and Human Services Commission and Texas Department of State Health Services. Additional services include: lactation consultations, breastfeeding support & education, and weight checks for baby. To make an appointment, call **(512) 972-6700**. For the toll-free Breastfeeding Hotline, call **1-800-514-MOMS (6667)**

General Parenting Resources for all Parents and Caregivers:

BRIGHT BY TEXT

Bright by Text sends free games, tips, and resources right to your cell phone. Messages are targeted to your child's age and include information on child development, language and early literacy, health and safety, behavioral tips, and more! Bright by Text is for anyone who cares for and loves a child between the ages of 0 and 8 - parents, grandparents, babysitters, aunts, uncles, neighbors, friends, teachers, and more. Parents or caregivers can sign-up for the program by texting the keyword SMARTATX to 274448. Then, enter your zip code and date-of-birth of your child. Privacy is guaranteed and the state, as well as our community partners, will not have direct access to that information.

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONE TRACKING

From birth to 5 years, your child should reach milestones in how he plays, learns, speaks, acts and moves. Track your child's development and act early if you have a concern www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/parents/index.html

PBS PARENTS

(KLRU) In Austin, KLRU is the local PBS station which provides family-friendly programming and events. This website includes information for parents and caregivers. <http://www.pbs.org/parents/>

HAPPIYOUNGSTR

As a locally-focused technology-driven resource for parents, HappiYoungstr also works with Austin companies providing child care consultations, nanny placements, child care searches, parenting talks and much more for employees as part their corporate benefits package. HappyYoungstr.com

JUICE BOX HERO

is an online platform that helps parents find infant care, daycare, preschools and after-school programs. JuiceBox Hero is also proud to partner with community organizations and business partners to support their workforce of working parents and their family-friendly brands. www.juiceboxhero.com

Resources and Referrals for Basic Needs and other Resources for Families:

UNITED WAY FOR GREATER AUSTIN 2-1-1 NAVIGATION CENTER

Anyone can contact the Navigation Center by simply calling the free 2-1-1 hotline. Call specialists carefully listen to each individual's situation, then access information about the appropriate services for that individual using the 2-1-1 Texas database. Navigation specialists help directly find the best navigation pathway for basic needs and healthcare support, and coordinated access with several area clinic networks. Specialists can even make appointments for callers for the Medical Access Program (MAP), Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) through our Central Health partnership.

Resources for Accessing High Quality Early Learning Programs:

High Quality Child Care Programs -

The Case for Quality

Scientific evidence demonstrates that the most critical period of brain development occurs before age 5. Therefore, the quality of environment where a child spends his or her days will significantly impact long term developmental outcomes and educational success. Employees' young children need to have confidence that their children's needs are being addressed while they work. For these reasons, it's beneficial to help employees identify and access high quality child care. Most importantly, children who attend high quality programs (indicated by national or state accreditation) are more likely to enter school ready for success.

What to look for:

National Accreditation: National accreditation is available to early learning programs striving to meet the highest quality standards. These standards are based on research on the development and education of young children and include. The two most recognized accreditations include NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and NAC (National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs)

TEXAS RISING STAR

Texas uses the Texas Rising Star (TRS) system for state-level accreditation for quality. Licensed child care centers have the option of being accredited for quality in addition to National Accreditations above. The TRS rating of a center indicates that a center has met specific quality guidelines related to staff qualifications, child-caregiver interactions, curriculum, nutrition and physical environment, and parent engagement programs. Centers meeting the highest standards are 4 Star Centers. Caregivers can be encouraged to "Look for the Stars!"

- Employees may find helpful this checklist helpful in guiding their search for high quality care: <https://texasrisingstar.org/parents-choosing-quality-child-care/>
- The City of Austin and Austin Public Health offer this interactive map showing child care and PreK programs throughout Travis County and which centers have achieved either state or national accreditation.

Publicly Funded Child Care Programs (available to income-eligible families)

CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES (Birth - 12 years)

Eligible families of children under the age of 13 may receive child care financial assistance so that parents can work, attend school, or participate in training. Families may choose from the following providers that meet local and state requirements. Eligible caregivers who chose a TRS accredited center for their child also receive a 15% discount on the parent share of cost. Workforce Solutions Capital Area Child Care Services: **512.597.7191 or wfscapitalarea.com**

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START (Birth to 4 years)

This federally-funded program provides low-income families with comprehensive early childhood education, including mental health services, disabilities services, nutrition services, medical and dental services, social services and parent engagement activities. Families whose income falls at or below the poverty guideline for the preceding 12 months or the previous calendar year are income-eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start Services. Child Inc. provides Austin-area services including home and center-based Early

Head Start services and center-based Head Start. At least 10 percent of Head Start's enrollment is dedicated to children with disabilities or other special needs. Specially trained staff members work closely with community agencies to provide services to disabled children while simultaneously providing them with an integrated, developmentally appropriate early childhood experience within the Head Start classroom.
Child Inc. **512-451-7361** www.childinc.org

PUBLIC SCHOOL PREKINDERGARTEN (3 and 4 Year Olds)

The state of Texas funds prekindergarten programs for eligible three and four year olds (age as of September 1st of the school year). Eligibility is open to children who are: unable to speak and comprehend the English language, income eligible / educationally disadvantaged, homeless, a child of an active duty member of the armed forces, the child of a veteran injured or killed in active duty, is currently or has been in CPS care, or the child of a person eligible for the Start of Texas Award (as a first responder). Registration is completed through each school district.

Below are the phone numbers for each area district:

AUSTIN ISD
512.414.PREK

LEANDER ISD
512.570.0320

BASTROP ISD
512.772.7100

LOCKHART
512.398.0014

DEL VALLE ISD
512.386.3040

MANOR ISD
512.278.4000

ELGIN ISD
512.281.3457

PFLUGERVILLE ISD
512.594.0000

GEORGETOWN ISD
512.943.5080 x 6812

ROUND ROCK ISD
512.464.5000

HAYS CISD
512.268.2141

SAN MARCOS CISD
512.393.6031

HUTTO ISD
512.759.3771

SMITHVILLE ISD
512.237.2487

LAKE TRAVIS ISD
512.533.6023

TAYLOR ISD
512.352.2275

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