

5 WAYS TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF AS A NEW MOM AT WORK

Fill out the lines for each tip as they apply to you. Mark down specific policies, people, resources, or concerns that you have and that you want to address.

1. Keep your perspective and be clear on your priorities

- 3 months in your baby's life is much more significant than 3 months at work. Take the leave that you are entitled to, don't apologize, and relish your new role.
- Don't check your email or do other "light" work while you're on leave. It sets a bad precedent and means you're doing everything a little bit worse.

2. Maintain boundaries

- Don't over explain to your supervisor. They don't need to know your child's health status, you don't need sympathy that might turn into resentment. Just deliver the information that needs to be delivered. This is probably the hardest thing for me to do. I want to share my life with the people I spend 8 hours a day with, but that doesn't always serve me and at times I feel it can like the access I grant people with other priorities can backfire.

3. Know your rights / talk to your union / find other moms!

- If you're in a union, **talk to your reps**, find out everything you can about your rights, benefits, and options as a new mom. Is there flexibility with remote work? Do you have paid **and** unpaid leave options? What are the accommodations for illness, breastfeeding, and children in the workplace?
- Whether or not you are in a union, **find other moms** in your industry or business. Ask them all the questions: How have they handled their different roles? What should I do about X,Y, Z? How did you handle _____? Is there a resource for _____? **Gather advice** and think creatively about how you can do your best work while being the mom you want to be.

4. Plan ahead but feign ignorance when met with insane policies.

- Find out early when childcare is closed, plan your vacation days, let your supervisor know early, accept that there will be emergencies, have contingency plans.
- And also... you can't plan everything! Sometimes, you're met with incompetence or roadblocks that you can't anticipate. Try your best to get humane treatment by showing people that you're human. "I don't know what went wrong with the approval but either way I need to pump." You're signaling that they can be on your side or they can choose to hinder a mom who is trying her best.

5. Keep the big picture in mind and strategize

- Keep in mind your trajectory at your job. Do you want to be at this job in 5 or 10 years? What do you want for your future now that you have dependent(s)? Be brave and think about where you want to go and how it would empower your family.
- Be intentional about what you bring home with you - physically and emotionally. I have spent a lot of time dwelling on things beyond my control, or worrying about people who definitely **aren't worrying about me**. You and your family are your priority outside of work hours so try to leave it at the door and pick it up the next day. **Don't give the company your personal time and energy.**

Add any additional notes about your return to work below. What are your hopes/aspirations for the return? Note down some of the parts that will need an adjustment period, including how your children may adjust.

YOU CAN

DO THIS!

(AND YOU DON'T HAVE
TO DO IT ALONE)

