

EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE SERIES

WORK-FAMILY INFORMATION ON: EMPLOYED PARENTS
CARING FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

SUPPORTED BY: THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION COMPILED BY: JUDI CASEY, MSW

SLOAN WORK AND FAMILY
RESEARCH NETWORK
BOSTON COLLEGE

WWW.BC.EDU/WFNETWORK

WHY FOCUS ON EMPLOYED PARENTS CARING FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AT THE WORKPLACE?

“Employers are finding that more of their employees are caring for children with a range of disabilities such as autism and ADHD. By offering case management services at McGraw-Hill, we help our employees who are caring for children with special needs maintain a healthy work/life balance. This is a low-cost, high-impact service that we value greatly, and is an important element of our overall work/life program.”

Sofia Jones, WorkLife Specialist, The McGraw-Hill Companies

 HOW MANY FAMILIES ARE AFFECTED?

- In the U.S., approximately 8.6% of employees will be caring for a child under the age of 18 with special health care needs (Center for Child and Adolescent Health Care Policy, n.d.).
- “Nearly 22% of U.S. households have one or more children ages 0–17 with special health care needs” (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2008).

 DID YOU KNOW?

- “Having a child with an unstable condition increases the odds of a mother cutting her hours of employment by two and a half times” (Leiter et al., 2004).
- Nearly 24% of families with children who have special health care needs choose to cut back or stop working (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2008).
- Nearly 10% of families with children with special health care needs spend 11 or more hours per week providing and/or coordinating their child's health care (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2008).
- More than 18% of families who have children with special health care needs said that their children's health conditions caused financial problems for the family (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2008).

Want more **STATISTICS** or the full references for above statistics?

http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=40&type=1&area=All

 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Brennan, E. M., Rosenzweig, J. M., Ogilvie, A. M., Wuest, L., & Shindo, A. A. (2007). Employed parents of children with mental health disorders: Achieving work-family fit, flexibility, and role quality. *Families in Society*, 88(1), 115–123.
- Murray, S. (2007). Families' care of their children with severe disabilities in Australia: Social policy and support. *Community, Work, and Family*, 10(2), 215–230.
- Olsson, M. B., & Hwang, C. P. (2006). Well-being, involvement in paid work, and division of child-care in parents of children with intellectual disabilities in Sweden. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 50(12), 963–969.
- Rosenzweig, J. L., & Brennan, E. M. (2008). *Work, life, and the mental health system of care: A guide for professionals supporting families of children with emotional or behavioral disorders*. Towson, MD: Brookes Publishing.

Want more **READINGS**?

http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=40&type=2&linktype=suggested&area=All

 HOW DOES RAISING A CHILD WITH DISABILITIES AFFECT EMPLOYMENT?

A survey about the employment experience of parents caring for children with serious emotional and behavioral disorders found:

- Nearly half (48%) reported needing to quit a job at some time to care for their children with mental health disorders.
- 27% were terminated because of work disruptions.
- 17% indicated that they were unemployed.
- 11% could not find employment because of their exceptional caregiving needs (Rosenzweig & Huffstutter, 2004).

 WHAT CAN ORGANIZATIONS DO?

- Identify existing resources that may alleviate strain (e.g., employee support networks, case management services, community-based supports, and inclusive child care).
- Assess how employment practices that encourage recruitment, retention, and productivity can impact parents caring for a child with disabilities.
- Leverage their influence to improve the responsiveness of community-based supports (e.g., schools and health care) to help all working parents.
- Provide responsive resources and interventions (e.g., coordination of backup child care) when securing child care is problematic for employees.

 REPORTS WITH MORE INFORMATION

- Children with Special Needs and the Workplace: What's the Connection? (2004).
- Exploring the Complexities of Exceptional Caregiving Executive Briefing Series (2006).
- Work and Family: Rulings Clarify Rights for Special-Needs Caregivers (2006).
- Work-Family Issues for Employed Parents of Children with Disabilities, Executive Summary and Action Plan, Sloan Work and Family Research Network Panel Meeting at Boston College (2008).

Want more **OVERVIEWS AND BRIEFS** or full references for these reports?

http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=40&type=7&linktype=overview

The Effective Workplace Series provides a summary of the Parents Caring for Children with Disabilities Topic Page.

To visit the Parents Caring for Children with Disabilities Topic Page, go to <http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic.php?id=40>