



## Questions and Answers about FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES: A Sloan Work and Family Research Network Fact Sheet

### Introduction

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has prepared Fact Sheets that provide statistical answers to some important questions about work–family and work–life issues. This Fact Sheet includes statistics about Flexible Work Schedules. (Last updated: September 2008)



### Are workers satisfied with their work–family balance?

- ✔ **Fact 1** “Since 1975, the dominant household work pattern in the workplace has been the dual–earner, married couple, now totaling 38 percent of all households. Single mothers and fathers with children now constitute another 16 percent. The presumed ubiquitous traditional one–male–earner household with spouse at home, once 68 percent of all households in 1938, is now just 16 percent of all households” (Potter, 2006, p. 74).
- ✔ **Fact 2** “Nearly three–quarters (73%) [of full–time workers] want to spend more time with their families and they are only half as likely as part–time workers to say they are very happy with their work–life balance” (Jones, 2006, p. 5).
- ✔ **Fact 3** “Over two–thirds of respondents (69%) want to spend more time with their families” (Jones, 2006, p. 5).



### How do families deal with the work–family time crunch?

- ✔ **Fact 1** “Our survey found that women were over three and a half times more likely than men to strongly agree that they do most of the household tasks themselves, and over twelve times more likely to strongly agree that they do most of the childcare” (Jones, 2006, p. 7).
- ✔ **Fact 2** “One in ten respondents said that they employed someone to do the housework and nearly one in five (17%) employed someone to look after their children” (Jones, 2006, p. 8).
- ✔ **Fact 3** “Although those in high–level professional work are three times as likely as those in manual work to employ someone to help with housework, there is much less difference when it comes to employing someone to help with childcare. 22% of high–level professional workers in our sample employ someone to help with childcare, compared to 13% of those in manual work” (Jones, 2006, p. 9).



### Do workers have access to flexible work schedules?

- ✔ **Fact 1** Seventy-nine percent of organizations allow some employees to periodically change starting or quitting times. Thirty-seven percent allow all or most employees to do so (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 12).
- ✔ **Fact 2** According to the 2008 National Study of Employers, "there has been an increase in daily flextime: in 1998, 24% of employers allowed at least some employees to change their starting and quitting times on a daily basis within some range of hours; in 2008, 31% did so" (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 12).
- ✔ **Fact 3** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 28.8% of full-time wage and salary workers in 2001 had flexible schedules (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003, p. 15).
- ✔ **Fact 4** The percentage of employees with fixed schedules has decreased from 71% to 67% in the last 10 years indicated that flexibility of work schedules seem to be slowly increasing. (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2005, p. 4)
- ✔ **Fact 5** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2001, 31.2% of employed (full-time) persons aged 65 and over used flexible schedules (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003, p. 15).
- ✔ **Fact 6** "In May 2004, men continued to be somewhat more likely to have flexible schedules than women (28.1 and 26.7 percent, respectively)" (U.S. Department of Labor 2005, p. 2).
- ✔ **Fact 7** "Twice as many (small business) owners as (wage and salaried) employees are able to change their starting and quitting times within some range of hours" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 57).



### Which employees are using flexible schedules?

- ✔ **Fact 1** "Women are somewhat more likely (79%) than men (68%) to use flextime when it is available" (Galinsky, Bond, & Hill, 2004, p. 6).
- ✔ **Fact 2** "...roughly equal proportions of young women and men in this age group (Generation X) work flexible schedules. In addition, 25- to 34-year-old women were more likely than women of other ages to have this kind of flexibility in their jobs" (DiNatale & Boraas, 2002, p. 13).

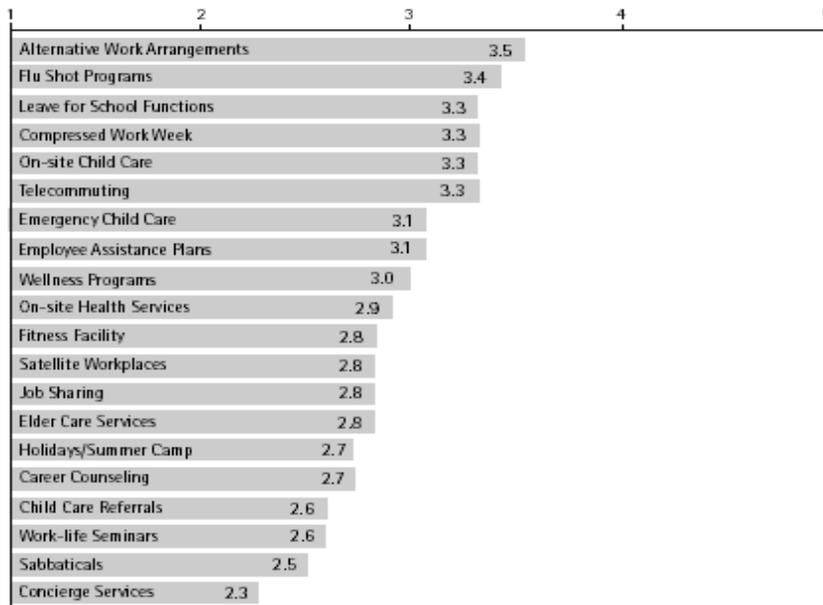


### Are flexible work schedules important to employees?

- ✔ **Fact 1** "Over half of all respondents (54%) disagree that work-life balance should be, primarily, an issue for parents; and the proportion is greater among those under 55. Over a third (37%) of all respondents do, however, take the view that it's just for parents" (Jones, 2006, p. 10).



**Fact 2** Effectiveness of Worklife Programs, 2005 Ratings (CCH Incorporated, 2005)



**How do employees benefit from flexible work schedules?**

- Fact 1** Fifty percent of employees who have high access to flexible work arrangements on the job report high levels of life satisfaction (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 39).
- Fact 2** According to the National Study of the Changing Workforce, "employees who have more access to flexible work arrangements report fewer mental health problems" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 39).
- Fact 3** In 2002, 32% of wage and salaried workers with high availability of flexible work arrangements report no interference of job and family life (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 38).
- Fact 4** In 2002, 34% of wage and salaried employees who have high access to flexible work arrangements report "low levels of negative spillover from job to home" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 39).
- Fact 5** "Over two-fifths (41%) of the full-time workers agree that if they were given more control over their time they would be more productive—compared to one in five part-time workers, who may be working shorter hours but clearly don't feel this necessarily means that they're in control" (Jones, 2006, p. 10).



**How do flexible work schedules affect employees' relationships with their employers?**

- Fact 1** According to the National Study of the Changing Workforce, in 2002, 73% of employees with high availability of flexible work arrangements reported that there was a high likelihood that they would stay with their current employer for the next year (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 34).



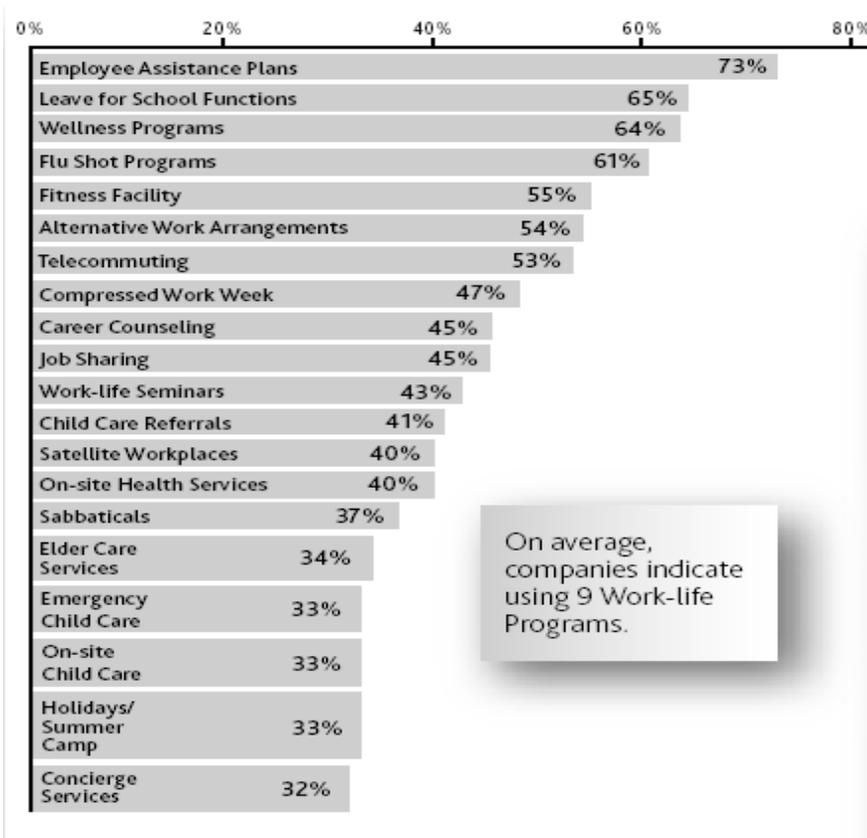
✔ **Fact 2** In 2002, 39% of employees with high availability of flexible work arrangements reported "high levels of loyalty and willingness to work harder than required to help their employers succeed" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 34).

✔ **Fact 3** "Only 9% of company representatives responding to the 2005 NSE survey feel that the use of flexible time and leave policies jeopardizes employees' opportunities for advancement" (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 13).

**? Which employers offer flexible work schedules?**

✔ **Fact 1** Small organizations [50–99 employees] are slightly more likely than large organizations [1000+ employees] to allow all or most employees to periodically change starting or quitting times—40% and 37%, respectively (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 13).

✔ **Fact 2** Percentage of Companies Reporting Use in 2005 (CCH Incorporated, 2005)





### Do employers support flexible work schedules?

- ✔ **Fact 1** Sixty percent (of employers) responded “very true” to the statement “supervisors are encouraged to be supportive of employees with family needs and by finding solutions that work for both employees and the organization” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 26).
- ✔ **Fact 2** Twenty percent (of employers) responded “very true” to the statement “management rewards those within the organization who support effective flexible work arrangements” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 26).
- ✔ **Fact 3** “Those in our sample whose career takes the highest priority in their household are the most likely to agree that reducing their hours would be the kiss of death for their careers (56%), particularly if they work in agriculture, retail and business” (Jones, 2006, p. 10).



### How do employers benefit from flexible work schedules?

- ✔ **Fact 1** “According to one recent survey, alternative work arrangements rank at the top of work–life programs in effectiveness in reducing unplanned absences from work” (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 4)

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has additional resources related to this topic.

1. Visit a topic page on Flexible Work Schedules at: <http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic.php?id=2>  
Topic pages provide resources and information, including statistics, definitions, overviews & briefs, bills & statutes, interviews, teaching resources, audio/video, suggested readings, and links.
2. Visit our database of academic literature with citations and annotations of literature related to the issue of Flexible Work Schedules. You can connect to this database at:  
[http://library.bc.edu/F?func=find-b-0&local\\_base=BCL\\_WF](http://library.bc.edu/F?func=find-b-0&local_base=BCL_WF)



## References

Bond, J., Galinsky, E., Kim, S., & Brownfield, E. (2005). *National Study of Employers. Highlights of findings*. Retrieved from <http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/summary/2005nsesumm.pdf>

This study was designed to build on the 1998 Business Work–Life Study and, therefore, provides data on changes that have occurred over the last 7 years. “The 2005 NSE sample included 1,092 employers with 50 or more employees—66 percent are for–profit companies and 34 percent are nonprofit organizations; 44 percent operate at only one location, while 56 percent have operations at more than one location...(The survey was conducted) using telephone interviews with human resource directors. Harris Interactive staff conducted the interviews from September 23, 2004 to April 5, 2005. Employers were selected from Dun & Bradstreet lists, using a stratified random sampling procedure in which selection was



proportional to the number of people employed by each company to ensure a large enough sample of large organizations. The response rate was 38 percent, based on the percentage of all companies on the call-list that completed interviews" (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 1).

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Bond, J. T., Thompson, C., Galinsky, E., & Prttas, D. (2002). *Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce*. Retrieved from <http://www.familiesandwork.org/summary/nscw2002.pdf>

"The NSCW surveys representative samples of the nation's workforce once every five years (1992, 1997, 2002). Sample sizes average 3,500, including both wage and salaried employees and self-employed workers" (Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce, 2002, p. v). Several of the questions in the National Study of the Changing Workforce were taken from or based upon questions in the Quality of Employment Survey (QES) conducted three times by the Department of Labor from 1969 to 1977. Although the NSCW is more comprehensive than the QES in addressing issues related to both work and personal life and has a stronger business perspective, having comparable data from over a 25-year period has provided a unique opportunity to look at trends over time. The 2002 NSCW uses 25 years of trend data to examine five topics in depth: women in the workforce, dual-earner couples, the role of technology in employees' lives on and off the job, work-life supports on the job, and working for oneself versus someone else (Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce, 2002).

To read the Executive Summary or the press release, and to purchase the full report as a PDF E-product, please visit <http://www.familiesandwork.org/announce/2002NSCW.html>.

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CCH Incorporated (2005). *2005 Unscheduled Absence Survey*. Riverwoods, Illinois: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.cch.com/absenteeism2005/Images/UseEffectWorklife.pdf>

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DiNatale, M., & Boraas, S. (2002). The labor force experience of women from "Generation X". *Monthly Labor Review*, 125(3), 3-15.

"Most of the data in this chapter were derived from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly sample survey of households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For more information regarding the Current Population Survey, see Current Population Survey: Design and Methodology, Bureau of Labor Statistics Technical Paper 63, March 2000" (DiNatale & Boraas, p.15).

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European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. (2005). *Fifteen years of working conditions in the EU: Charting the trends*. Dublin: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2006/85/en/1/ef0685en.pdf>

"The European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) is carried out every five years by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, a tripartite European Agency based in Dublin. The questionnaire is developed by the European Foundation team in close cooperation with an expert questionnaire development group. This group comprises representatives of the European social partners, other EU bodies (EU Commission, Eurostat, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work), international organisations (OECD, ILO), national statistical institutes, as well as leading European experts in the field. The sample of the EWCS is representative of persons in employment (according to the Eurostat definition this comprises both employees and the self-employed) in the countries covered for the respective periods. In each country, the EWCS sample followed a multi-stage, stratified and clustered design with a random walk procedure for the selection of the respondents at the last stage. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in the respondent's own household" (p. 8).

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Galinsky, E., Bond, J. T. & Hill, E. J. (2004). *When work works: A status report on workplace flexibility: Who has it? Who wants it? What difference does it make?* Retrieved from <http://familiesandwork.org/3w/research/downloads/status.pdf>

"The research findings reported here are drawn mainly from Families and Work Institute's National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW). The NSCW is conducted every five years, beginning in 1992 and most recently in 2002. This representative sample of approximately 3,500 workers includes wage and salaried employees, self-employed workers, and business owners, although the data presented here pertain only to wage and salaried employees" (Galinsky, Bond, & Hill, 2004, p. 27).

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Galinsky, E., Bond, J. T., & Sakai, K. (2008). *2008 National Study of Employers*. Retrieved from <http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/2008nse.pdf>

"The 2008 NSE sample includes 1,100 employers with 50 or more employees—77 percent are for profit employers and 23 percent are nonprofit organizations; 40 percent operate at only one location, while 60 percent have operations at more than one location. Interviews were conducted on behalf of Families and Work Institute by Harris Interactive, Inc." (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 3).

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Jones, A. (2006). *About time for change*. The Work Foundation, in association with Employers for Work–Life Balance. Retrieved from [http://www.theworkfoundation.com/assets/docs/publications/177\\_About%20time%20for%20change.pdf](http://www.theworkfoundation.com/assets/docs/publications/177_About%20time%20for%20change.pdf)

"The Work Foundation, in association with Employers for Work–Life Balance, has commissioned some research into whether working people are feeling a 'time squeeze' and how they are managing their work–life balance. The results of the survey (to which 500 people responded) were clear: despite the increased profile of work–life balance, despite the government legislation and despite all the campaigns, people are still feeling a time squeeze" (Jones, 2006, p. 3).

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Potter, E. E. (2003). Telecommuting: The future of work, corporate culture, and American society. *Journal of Labor Research*, 24(1), 73–84.

"The article focuses on the telecommunication boom and its possible impact on corporate culture. Since the 1980s, there has been a rapidly increasing portion of the work force that telecommutes from home or at a location remote from the central workplace at least one day a week" (Potter, 2003).

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U.S. Department of Labor. (2005). *Workers on flexible and shift schedules in 2004*. Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/flex.nr0.htm>

"These findings were obtained from a supplement to the May 2004 Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is the monthly household survey that provides information on national employment and unemployment. In May 2004, the survey also collected information about flexible schedules, shift work, and other related topics. The data presented in this release pertain to wage and salary workers who usually worked full time (35 or more hours per week) on their main job" (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005, p. 1).

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U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States (2003). *No. 579. Persons on flexible schedules: 2001*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/02statab/labor.pdf>

The chief source of these data is the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The sample includes employed full-time wage and salary workers 16 years old and over in the U.S. and excludes the self-employed. Data relate to the primary job. For description of data sources, see <http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/03statab/labor.pdf>.

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