

The Modern Families Index 2017 ^[1]

Author: Working Families & Bright Horizons

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AVAILABILITY

Full report PDF ^[2]

About the Modern Families Index

The Modern Families Index is a snapshot of how working families in the UK manage the balance between family life and work. The Index asks them what their family and work balance is like, whether or not the balance they have matches their aspirations, and what the effects of being a working parent and an employee are on family life. How much time do families spend together, and what is the quality of that time? Are parents able to leave work at work, or do they bring it home with them? In couple families, how do parents share working and caring and is this changing between the generations? And do parents feel that their employer and government are doing enough to help them combine work and family? The Index is not a study of a particular group of parents, but seeks to capture the experiences of 'everyday' families, however configured. It describes the pressure points where family and work meet today, and how these vary by demographic and other circumstances. Learning from what parents who have completed the Index say, based on the reality of their experience, shows us what is working for working families, and what needs to change – to inform the policy landscape, configuration of the labour market and employment practice in the UK.

Key Findings

- Only one in five families said they have got the right balance between time (to spend with family) and money (earning or having enough income) to see their family thrive. More than a third say they haven't got enough time or money.
- In couple families, many parents both work full time. 48 per cent of couple families in the survey said they both worked full time. 57 per cent of single parents worked full time.
- Just under half of parents (47 per cent) think that over the last two years it has become financially more difficult to raise a family.
- Family life is under pressure from work. The majority of parents (72 per cent) catch up on work at home in the evenings and at weekends, with 41 per cent saying this is often or all the time.
- Only a third of parents manage to leave work on time every day. For many, staying later at work is a regular occurrence. One in five parents working full time is putting in five extra weeks a year – the equivalent of their annual holiday allowance – in unpaid work, just to keep up with the demands of the job. A third of working parents regularly feel burnt out.
- Almost half (48 per cent) said working hours regularly got in the way of spending time with their children. A third said that work pressure negatively affected their relationship with their partner and a quarter said it led to rows with their children.
- Parents are keen to mitigate the effects of work on family life. They identified flexible working as a key way of getting a better balance, but many felt that they could not make use of it because of their job, manager's attitude or workplace culture.
- Parents are worried about discussing family and work related issues with their employers. 41 per cent said they had lied or bent the truth to their employer about family life conflicting with work, and almost half said they were not comfortable talking about work boundaries with their employer.
- Fathers increasingly see themselves as actively involved in childcare, and will make career sacrifices accordingly: 69 per cent of fathers said they would consider their childcare arrangements before they took a new job or promotion. Fathers are the more likely (47 per cent) to want to downshift into a less stressful job and 38 per cent would be willing to take a pay cut to achieve a better work-life balance, reflecting the difficulty they face in reconciling work and home life.
- Parents said they would leave employers who do not offer good work-life balance opportunities. Improved opportunities for better work-life balance and a better work-life balance culture were priorities. In contrast, parents said that employers who afforded them a good work-life balance would get more motivated, loyal and productive employees.

Region: Europe ^[3]

Tags: fathers ^[4]

work/family balance ^[5]

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/17/01/modern-families-index-2017> [2] http://www.wearethecity.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Modern-Families-Index_Full-Report.pdf [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/europe> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/fathers> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/workfamily-balance>