

Financial, childcare pressures forcing pregnant women to stay at work longer ^[1]

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Read online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

Pregnant women are staying at work until just days before they give birth because of increasing financial pressures and the struggle of getting babies into child care.

According to new data, a growing number of women are still at work less than two weeks before their due date.

The percentage has risen to 27.8 per cent from 22.5 per cent a decade earlier.

The research, contained within the latest Household, Income, and Labour Dynamics in Australia survey also found women were returning to work later after having a baby, often staying on maternity leave until the baby has turned one.

Expectant mum Jane Dionysius is due to have her first baby next week but only finished working on Friday.

The human resources manager said a flexible workplace and love for her job played a part in her decision.

"For us financially, it's not an option for me to go on leave without pay," she said.

"So the longer I can have off with some kind of income, the better. I'm feeling really healthy and fine so I didn't see the need to finish until I had to, either for health reasons or until now," she said.

Nicole Lessio, from lobby group The Parenthood, said parents were now trying to stretch out maternity leave for as long as "humanly possible" to avoid the baby room in childcare centres, where spots were sparse and expensive.

"And it's not just about that, but also about trying to get the maximum money before they go on maternity leave as well," Ms Lessio said.

"Women are telling us ... they are saying they worked right up until their due date and then went on maternity leave because they wanted to avoid any extra costs in having that baby."

Greenslopes Hospital obstetrician Brad Robinson has noticed that his patients are working deeper into their pregnancies.

"For the vast bulk of pregnancies, this is probably entirely acceptable and appropriate but that consideration becomes a concern when they medically should not be working or it's not in their interest to do so and yet they are compelled to do so for financial reasons," he said.

"Pregnancy is an entirely unpredictable event, so striking a balance between that unpredictability and the workplace is not always an easy thing to do."

-reprinted from The Courier Mail

Region: Australia and New Zealand ^[3]

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Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/08/financial-childcare-pressures-forcing-pregnant-women-stay-work>

Links

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