

Working mothers need better childcare options to improve their career prospects ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Having children gets in the way of a mother's career, according to a new survey by Mumsnet. Specifically, three quarters of British mothers surveyed feel that having children made it more difficult to progress in their career, and nearly two in three said that they felt "less employable" after having children.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg warned women often feel "shoved aside" in the workplace after having children, following the survey that found the majority of mothers struggle to climb the career ladder after returning to work.

He said the problem was "far too common" and was not only unfair but also bad for the economy.

The Liberal Democrat leader said there was a need to dramatically change working practices to adapt to the realities of modern family life.

Mr Clegg's comments came as a survey showed three-quarters of women who returned to work after having a child thought it made it harder to progress in their career.

Of respondents who cited a lack of support in the workplace following the announcement of their pregnancy, a quarter said their job was under threat, and a third said the pregnancy had impeded career progression.

Once they returned to work, a quarter of mothers reported a lack of support from their employer, with nearly half of these women saying they were made to feel guilty for leaving promptly to collect their child from childcare.

Some people would suggest women should be staying at home, anyhow, to raise the children.

But, leaving aside for a moment a woman's personal ambition, being a full-time, stay-at-home mother simply isn't an economic reality for the vast majority of families.

Britain has seen an enormous rise in the number of women who are breadwinners for their families: two million working mothers are the biggest earners in their families, representing an 80 per cent rise over the past 15 years. For nearly a third of couples with children, the mother is a breadwinner - meaning that she earns as much as or more than her partner.

Significantly, "maternal breadwinning" is a trend for everyone: mothers are working more across all family types, all age groups, and all income groups.

Women will only be competitive in the workplace if they have good-quality, reliable childcare in place, and if employers and colleagues recognise the need to set predictable working hours that allow for school runs. The Government's repeated failure to address this issue is dispiriting. Women who can hire nannies to buy themselves the time to be competitive at work. But that is an option that few families can afford.

"Working mother" needs to stop being a dirty term in Britain. Most women I know are leaning in to the point of nearly tipping. Let's help them out.

Workplaces need to have clearer maternity policies, with well-organised return-to-work plans for women.

Socially, we've got to stop criticising each other's hard choices - there's more than one way to raise a child well.

One of the most practical things the Government can do to improve the working mother's lot, and that of society as a whole, is to invest intelligently in early childcare by creating world-class nurseries open to everyone.

-reprinted from the Telegraph

Region: Europe ^[2]

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work/life balance ^[4]

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/13/11/working-mothers-need-better-childcare-options-improve-their-career> [2]

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