

Half of working dads want more childcare support ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Stuart Greaves is one of a growing number of fathers who have cut their working days to look after their children because of the high costs of childcare.

A stock manager at a fashion retailer, Mr Greaves and his wife, Alice, both work four-day weeks so they can share equally the care of their daughter Emily, aged two. He values the extra time he gets with Emily, but doesn't believe the Government is doing enough to support working parents, and wants to see more free nursery places.

Almost half (44 per cent) of British fathers are dissatisfied with the Government's childcare policies, according to a study to be published this week. Furthermore, a fifth of men surveyed for the Annual Childcare Report from Findababysitter.com say they are unable to work because of the cost of childcare.

The figures are higher for women, with a quarter of unemployed mums saying they would like to work, but high childcare costs prevent them.

"Life as a dad is incomparable when I consider how happy it makes me, but that happiness comes with a huge price tag," says Mr Greaves.

Nurseries near his home in Wallington, Surrey are either too expensive or too inflexible to fit in with the family's schedule, so they have chosen to send Emily to a childminder for the days when both parents work.

Businesses also need to do more to support working dads, says Ben Black, director of My Family Care, which provides childcare support to employees at major companies. He runs a programme at Deloitte, P&G and IBM called Being A Dad, which offers information sheets and webinars (web-based seminars) to new dads.

"There is this perception that if you are a man you are on the career ladder and you have to be the alpha male," Mr Black says.

With the Being A Dad programme "we went out there and said you need to recognise you are dads", he says, adding: "You will never break the glass ceiling for women unless you get the men holding up their hands as dads in the workplace as well."

Last month, Labour's spokesperson for families, Alison McGovern, said fathers are just as concerned as mothers about childcare.

Region: United States ^[3]

Tags: fathers ^[4]

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