

A photograph of a family of three—a Black man, a white woman, and a young child—gathered around a book. The man is pointing at the page, and the woman is holding the book. The child is looking down at the text. The scene is set in a dimly lit room, possibly a bedroom or living area, with a bed visible in the background. The overall mood is warm and focused.

Adecco

Family Matters: Helping Working Parents Thrive

Mining untapped
talent pools for great
permanent hires

We're all about people.
Permanently.

Attracting and retaining talent for long term success

The pandemic has driven massive shifts in working patterns, employee needs and employers' responsibility towards their people. With the Great Resignation / Re-Evaluation, employers now need to approach hiring and retaining key talent for permanent roles in a new way.

Along with a growing talent pool of untapped potential, there is a real opportunity to transform workforces for future success.

At Adecco, we connect thousands of people who are at risk in the labour market with purposeful jobs each year, while providing companies with key talent to take their business forward.

This series of papers highlights the long-term benefits that those who might once have been excluded from work bring to companies.

In this paper, *Family Matters: Helping Working Parents Thrive*, we share our thinking on how organisations can rethink their approach to working parents and address challenges this demographic faces in the working world. We provide guidance on attracting and retaining working parents and highlight how to ensure this valuable talent succeeds long-term.

It is our core mission to make the future work for everyone.

Whatever your permanent recruitment needs, Adecco is here to help. We are, after all, #AllAboutPeople. Permanently.

“ It is our core mission to make the future work for everyone. We believe in talent, not labels, and we know that differences are not deficits ”

Looking for exceptional permanent recruitments whilst also trying to increase your Diversity & Inclusion? Adecco is here to help you uncover and nurture the wealth in hidden talent pools.



Why working parents are key for your workforce

The onset of the pandemic has impacted every employee, across every sector, across the globe. And with parents making up 40% of the workforce, it stands to reason that understanding this demographic's needs is essential in any organisations' success. Moreover, it benefits companies to ensure working parents are taken care of – those that offer paid family leave see increased employee morale and productivity. Yet, when we look at the numbers, it seems something is missing here. 865,000 US women left the workforce in September 2020 alone. That same year, the number of families with at least one parent employed dropped from 91.4 % in the previous year to 88.5%. And 50% of families have reported one or both parents leaving their jobs, reducing hours or taking a break from work.

This valuable talent, which is already such an integral part of the workforce, is being undervalued. Even with the labour shortage and the rising number of working parents leaving the workforce or changing jobs, many employers still aren't recognising that changes need to be made. Yet organisations can turn the tide to attract and retain working parents and thus, transform their permanent workforce.

We're here to show you how.

2.5 million

US women have left the workforce during the pandemic

45%

of working parents have experienced discrimination due to family obligations during the pandemic

68%

of working parents have had to scale back on work responsibilities due to childcare issues

-32%

decrease in likelihood of women with childcare responsibilities to consider changing jobs when able to work remotely

In companies that offer paid family leave:

80%

report an increase in employee morale

70%

report an increase in employee productivity



Working mothers

All working parents have struggled through the pandemic yet working mothers have been especially impacted. Data from the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) revealed that mothers on average spent eight hours a day on childcare-related tasks during the pandemic while for fathers it was five hours. Having to balance family responsibilities with work more than ever before has highlighted the lack of support from many organisations for working mothers, resulting in what US Vice President Kamala Harris has called a “national emergency” – since the onset of the pandemic, 2.5 million US women have left the workforce. Attracting

working mothers back into the workforce will require more than offering improved childcare solutions. A recent [Maven report](#) found that this is due to working mothers experiencing inequity compared to fathers in promotions, recognition, compensation, involvement and favouritism. When employees see others advancing, with no clear, positive future for their own careers, the desire to remain in or return to a job is understandably low. By addressing the broader picture and offering benefits that are inclusive of all caregivers, employers can foster this valuable talent and ensure it thrives well into the future.



Attracting working parents

Building a diverse workforce which is inclusive of working parents starts with tapping into that talent pool. Rethink hiring processes to make sure you're not only finding the best candidates but are also ensuring each candidate feels seen and understood and are therefore driven to join your organisation. Here's how:

Provide family-focused benefits

Offering benefits that help working parents in their roles now and in the future will set you apart from the competition. Find out from existing working parents in your company what works, what they appreciate and what they're missing. A family-friendly culture can include flexible schedules, remote options, paid family leave, emergency caregiving leave or providing mentors who are working parents themselves.

Be clear, transparent, and accessible

You may already have family-friendly policies and benefits, but are they visible to candidates? Ensure every job description states these clearly and they are up to date, as this sends the positive message that your company is inclusive. Moreover, this will make candidates feel more comfortable asking about parental benefits during the interview process. Update your careers page so that all benefits are easy to view and use working parents' stories within the company as real-life examples of what being in your organisation will look like.

Upskill leaders

Provide leaders with up-to-date information, training and workshops so they always know the latest policies and benefits your companies provides for working parents. Because many leaders will be part of the hiring process, it's important that they understand how to deliver an inclusive message – and what should be included in that message – when communicating with candidates.

Offer flexibility

Having a flexible working schedule is no longer a perk, it should be a given. This is especially true for working parents, who have to balance family responsibilities and work obligations daily. When creating job descriptions, put flexibility front and centre. This doesn't just mean offering flexible hours, it can encompass hybrid or fully remote options, job sharing (splitting a full-time role into two part-time roles) and returnships (easing back into the workforce in a short-term role while upskilling for the future).

Reflect your culture with role models

When promoting your inclusive company culture, incorporate working parents' success stories. There will be positive stories to tell from a diverse group of people here, such as different age groups, sexual identity, race and types of roles. You can also involve working

parent role models in the hiring process. They can help with wording on job descriptions and screening applications as well as contribute to interviews. This not only demonstrates how opportunities truly impact people within your company but can reduce bias during the selection process.



Who are working parents?

Many companies focus their resources on new parents, yet the term 'working parents' goes well beyond this stage. Being a working parent spans years and it includes foster, biological, adoptive, single and LGBTQ+ parents, men, women, parents of children with disabilities, all from different backgrounds. And we can broaden the demographic here. For example, those who are caregivers for their spouses or their aging parents also struggle with the challenges of balancing family responsibilities and work obligations. Understanding that 'working parents' encompasses a broad range of situations, family structures and people means a company can foster an inclusive workplace. Encouraging **all** employees to take time off when they need to care for loved ones sends a clear message that everyone matters.



Fostering working parent talent for future success

What does the 'new normal' look like for your organisation? With the Great Resignation under way, it's clear that returning to how things functioned before simply won't work. Employees have proven that remote or hybrid working can be successful and having increased autonomy over schedules has enabled an improved work-life balance. For working parents, it is crucial that positive workplace changes implemented during the pandemic continue, and are adaptable, holistic and supportive. Here's what working parents need from their managers for long term success:

Listen to what parents want

Listen to experiences of working parents. You can gather information using surveys, during performance reviews, or casual conversations. This way, you can get a clear picture of what this talent is missing. Remember, however, that this shouldn't be a one size fits all approach, it's about understanding individual needs and working with those parents to develop the best path forwards.

Adopt tailored schedules

Parents constantly balance their family responsibilities with work, and demands can be wildly different from one parent to the next. For example, an employee with kindergarten-age children is going to have different priorities to one with older children. Let employees set their own schedules. This provides autonomy and empowers them. Moreover, demonstrating your trust means they will be more engaged.

Refocus on outcomes

The pandemic and the resulting increase in remote working has taught us that workers can be trusted to work independently. Gone are the days when the number of hours sat at a desk is what counts. The focus needs to be on the quality of work produced. Tying into flexible work schedules, this allows working parents to adjust their day according to fluctuating responsibilities while remaining productive.

Provide meaningful support

This starts with a flexible schedule, yet additional programs that offer tangible support make the difference between an engaged, productive working parent, and one who is overworked and has checked out. From childcare programs and meal prep assistance to parent counselling, workshops or lactation rooms, offering benefits that go beyond the bare minimum is key to retaining this talent.

Foster a culture of wellbeing

Think of time off as a chance for employees to reset, refresh, and come back to the workplace invigorated. Leaders need to lead by example by taking breaks regularly, adopting a hybrid or remote working model, and using vacation days. Pay attention to employees with a significant number of rollover days and make time to ask why. For working parents, not taking time off can quickly lead to burnout. Making time off an essential part of working is a simple way to ease employee stress, without having to create an entirely new program.

Communicate and collaborate with purpose

Help parents prioritise by making sure communication is clear. Simply putting “for next week” or “urgent” in an email subject line can help. Ask employees when the best time is

for regular meetings, always providing remote capabilities. Consider whether a meeting is really necessary before arranging it. A quick call or message is often a better option, saving everyone valuable time.

Create a supportive community

Create a space on your intranet where parents can share resources. Have someone within the team to help guide and provide advice, keep working parents in the loop on the latest benefits and programs, as well as pass on knowledge on how to balance home and work life. Knowing they are not alone and that their employer understands they need support strengthens workplace relationships and forms a culture of empathy.



Impactful Working Parent Benefits

Which benefits you can provide to working parents depends on the location and size of your company. But thinking beyond flexibility and parental leave can greatly influence whether a candidate joins your company, or an employee remains satisfied. Here are some benefits which make a difference:

Family-focussed discounts

Provide vouchers or discounts for family-friendly entertainment, restaurants or activities to encourage working parents to enjoy their time off. It is relatively low-cost yet makes a positive impact on work-life balance.

Childcare

Offering childcare benefits can take on various forms, from onsite care and contributing financially, to connecting parents with nearby facilities. This enables parents to spend more time with their children, while easing stress and shortening commutes.

Inclusive support for starting a family

Families come in all shapes and sizes. Help employees with the financial burden of surrogacy, adoption or invitro fertilisation to make a meaningful impact. Show all employees you are committed to their all-round happiness, in and out of work.

Wellbeing programs

Make wellbeing part of your culture. This can include mental health support such as counselling or mentoring and discounts for fitness activities for working parents.

Enable smooth return to work

So-called returnships allow employees who have taken parental leave to ease back into the workforce. By starting with a short-term position, they have a chance to re-skill and up-skill so they can then return to a permanent role with confidence.



Key Takeaways

The pandemic shone a stark light on what many working parents have long dealt with in the world of work. The inequity and complex challenges faced by caregivers means those within this demographic are increasingly leaving the workforce. Yet, it has also shown that changes organisations were forced to make during this time have been highly beneficial. With a more flexible schedule and remote working opportunities, parents have been able to balance work and home life more effectively. Those employers who have adapted their recruitment, onboarding and in-house policies - and remained adaptable - have benefitted from higher retention and more satisfied employees.

Going forward, as we continue to adapt to the new normal, a holistic, person-centric approach will be necessary to attract and retain working parents. Employers have the power to empower this invaluable talent with the *right* benefits, flexible schedules, paid family leave, and by fostering a company culture of support for all caregivers. By taking these steps now, employers have an opportunity to make the future work for everyone.





Adecco. We're all about people. Permanently.



We see *The Great Resignation* as an opportunity to revitalise tired, homogeneous workforces with an injection of fresh-thinking talent from the margins.



We develop programmes and pathways to reduce workforce barriers and strengthen employability through training.



We embrace workers across the whole diversity spectrum – and mine untapped talent pools that others ignore.



We reimagine outdated strategies across the entire recruitment process. We reject well-trodden paths.

**People with diverse abilities are ready and able to work.
Let Adecco's permanent recruitment service help you hire them.**

Our parent company, The Adecco Group, is part of [The Valuable 500](#) initiative, alongside companies like Apple, Google, EY, and the BBC. It's a growing global movement dedicated to placing disability on the business leadership agenda.