

Research Report

What Working Dads Really Want

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Why Dads Matter So Much

When we started our **Best Companies for Working Dads** initiative in 2018, we were amazed at the interest from corporations and employees. Dads, they told us, were becoming an increasingly vocal group, and younger dads in particular were insisting on more time with their families.

Working Mother Media has been gathering data on working moms for more than 35 years, but we found ourselves making a lot of assumptions about dads that needed to be tested. So we decided to embark on this national research project.

What we found in our survey of 1,964 dads and 1,036 moms is that dads do want the same thing as moms—longer paid parental leave, more flexibility at work, supportive managers and opportunities to advance, but they are more afraid of perceptions and, thus, more nervous about taking time off and using family-friendly benefits.



There are differences for dads based on age, race/ethnicity, job role and sexual orientation. But overall, they say their corporate culture is what really counts. Are there male role models who embrace family responsibilities? Does the company actively support taking all time off? Who gets promoted and who gets overlooked?

This new research includes solutions for employers that are working at many of our Best Companies for Working Dads as well as cutting-edge strategies that have yet to be implemented.

It's clear to us that what helps dads helps moms as well—and also helps their employers have more engaged and productive staff members. As Tom Ragonese of Boston Scientific (father of five, including two sets of twins) tells us: "I am not going to compromise who I am. I am a dad and husband first. If people think ill of me for doing what's best for my family, that's their choice. And it hasn't hurt my career at all."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Subha V. Barry".

Subha V. Barry
President
Working Mother Media



What Working Dads Really Want

For more than 30 years, the Working Mother organization has focused on understanding what working mothers want and need from their employers. Much has changed, including the growing understanding that work/life programs are just as important to dads and that moms benefit when dads are equal partners. To recognize the growing importance of fathers, we began our **Working Mother Best Companies for Dads** list in 2018. We surveyed a national audience of parents to find out specifically what working dads want and need from their employers so we can help companies recruit, retain and engage employees who are parents. Having the benefits moms have long sought isn't always a given for dads, as previous research has shown.

METHODOLOGY

This national sample surveying 1,964 dads and 1,036 moms was fielded in June 2019.

The dads represent a mix of races/ethnicities, sexual orientations, job levels and ages (of both dads and kids). Participants were all professional (salaried) and had at least an associate's degree.

Results for questions using a five-point response scale include the top two responses. For example, the percentage of participants who "agree" equals those who "strongly agree" and "agree" or are "very satisfied" and "satisfied."

Report by Barbara Frankel, Suzanne Richards, Ed.D. and Maria Ferris of Maria S. Ferris Consulting.

Thanks to research advisors Meredith Bodgas of Working Mother, Deborah Munster of Diversity Best Practices, and Ripa Rashid and Laura Sherbin, Ph.D. of Culture@Work.

63%
of men say taking extended parental leave would hurt their careers.

Life Meets Work, 2019

63%
of U.S. fathers say they spend too little time with their kids

although they are spending more time caring for their children than fathers did a half-century ago.

Pew Research study, 2017

73%
of U.S. working dads say there isn't enough support for fathers in the workplace.

Harvard Business Review, 2018

75%
of millennial dads want more time with their children, and most cite a significant work/life conflict.

Boston College study, 2016

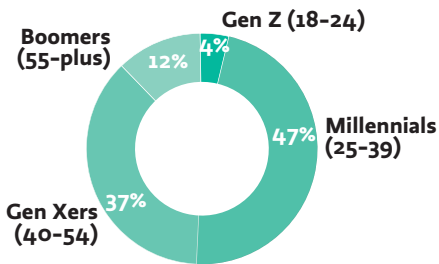
This new research by Working Mother Research Institute shows dads want the same things moms want: **flexibility, more paid time off and no career damage for being a parent.**

While there are differences for dads based on age, race/ethnicity and job roles, many dads said they didn't receive enough time off and fear asking for more could hurt their careers. As part of the solutions section, we explore how corporate cultures can reduce or eliminate perceived "parental penalties" for taking needed time off.

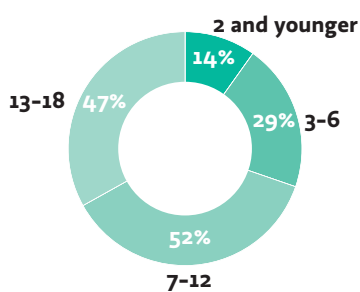


About the Dads

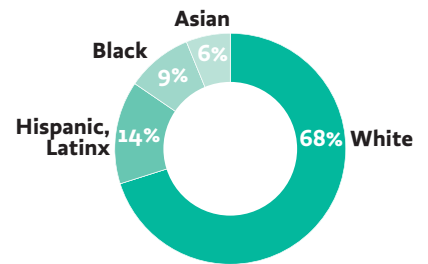
Age of Dads



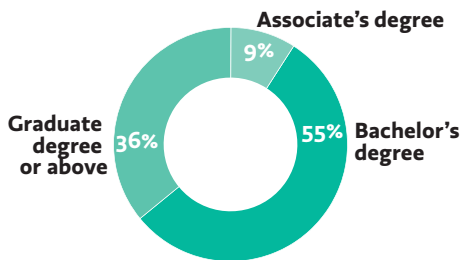
Age of Children*



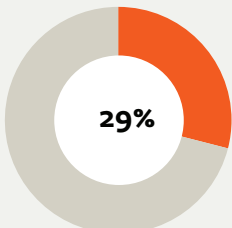
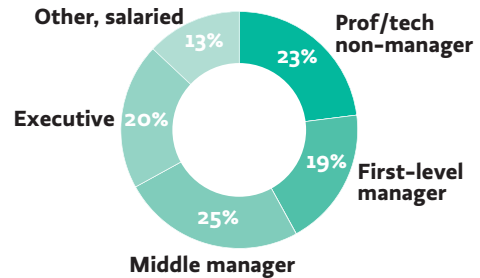
Race/Ethnicity*



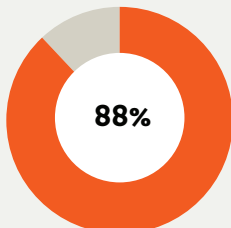
Education (highest level)



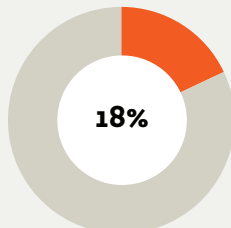
Professions



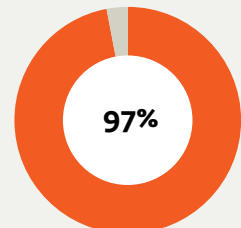
have a child with special needs



were married or had partners



identified as gay, bisexual, transgender or queer

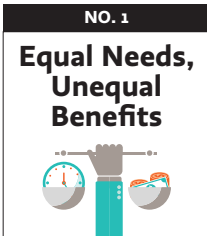


of partners/spouses were employed

*Does not add up to 100%

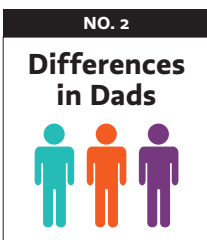
Key Findings: 4 Critical Areas

Our research identified four areas as essential to understanding what will be most beneficial to working dads.



Dads want the same things as moms but don't take as much time off

- 60 percent of dads and moms find it difficult to balance parenting and career.
- Dads and moms both put flexibility, paid time off, sick and backup care at the top of the list of programs that are important in meeting the demands of parenting.
- 63 percent of dads and 65 percent of moms took paid parental leave, but dads averaged 4.8 weeks versus 8.2 weeks for moms.
- 57 percent of dads versus 45 percent of moms work for companies that offer full or partially paid parental leave (beyond disability for the birth mother) following the birth of a child.
- 51 percent of dads versus 42 percent of moms work for companies that offer full or partially paid parental leave following the adoption of a child.



There are significant variations in dads' responses based on age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and job role

- Millennials are the most satisfied with their company's commitment to working parents (72 percent) versus Gen X (62 percent), Gen Z (57 percent) and Boomers (55 percent).
- The largest group of dads who didn't take time off for parental leave were Asian (29 percent), compared to White (27 percent), Black (23 percent) and Hispanic/Latinx (17 percent).
- More executives (66 percent) think their companies focus on working moms over dads than first-level managers (53 percent) and professional/technical non-managers (41 percent).



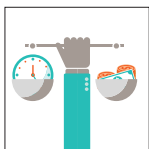
Corporate culture matters – a lot!

- 50 percent of dads have male role models at work who took time off. Those dads were between 20 and 50 percent more likely to take time off themselves.
- Dads who say their company encourages men to take time off took almost two weeks longer leave.
- Yet 50 percent of all dads surveyed believe being a leader in their company is incompatible with family life.



Flexibility is key – dads want and need more

- 84 percent of all dads surveyed listed flexibility when at work as the No. 1 factor important to meeting the demands of parenting.
- When asked what their companies can do to help them be successful, 38 percent cited flexibility when at work, 37 percent cited flexibility where they work, and 29 percent said "encourage a culture that acknowledges family may sometimes come before work."
- 61 percent of dads anticipate needing to take time off from work to care for an adult relative or someone else.



Equal Needs, Unequal Benefits

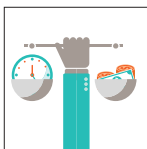
Several state and local governments have passed laws giving parents at least partially paid leaves. In the private sector, there have been increases in fully paid time off, and more policies have become gender-neutral. In the past two decades, some companies offered more leave for primary caregivers and less for secondary caregivers, regardless of gender. But primary and secondary designations appear to be fading in favor of gender-neutral designations. Fifty-seven percent of the Working Mother 100 Best Companies now offer gender-neutral leave compared with 27 percent of employers nationally (Society of Human Resource Management).

Yet the workplace is far from equal in terms of parental benefits for dads. The recent Working Mother 100 Best Companies survey showed these companies offer an average of 11 weeks paid maternity leave compared with four weeks nationally (Society of Human Resource Management). By comparison, those offering gender-neutral leave offer eight weeks paid (no national comparison available). Many of those with gender-neutral leaves also have extra time off for birth mothers to recover physically. And those included in the 100 Best offering just paternity leave have an average of five weeks paid leave for dads (no national comparison available).

There has been recent litigation on behalf of dads. In June, JPMorgan Chase paid \$5 million to settle a class-action lawsuit filed by male employees who said they didn't have access to the same parental leave as new moms. A year earlier, The Estée Lauder Companies paid \$1.1 million in a similar lawsuit. A current lawsuit against law firm Jones Day filed by a married couple who both worked there also alleges discrimination in leave against dads.

RANKING WORK PROGRAMS

	Top 3 programs to meet demands of parenting	How satisfied they are with top 3 programs
DADS		
Flexibility when work gets done	84%	77%
Paid time off following the birth/adoption of a child	81%	70%
Sick child care	80%	64%
MOMS		
Paid time off following birth or adoption	83%	63%
Flexibility when work gets done	82%	67%
Backup child care	81%	67%



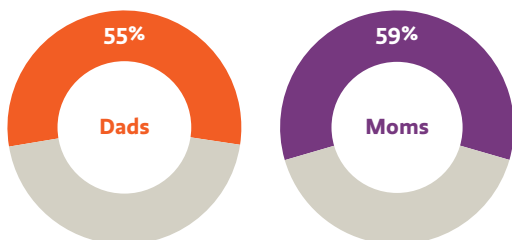
What's the Same: Similar Views on Work/Life and Parenting

Dads' perspectives on parenting are similar to that of moms, with both parents wanting to spend more time with children (both 89 percent) and sharing equally in child care (dads 90 percent; moms 91 percent). Dads' views on challenges are also similar to moms' views (60 percent of dads and 55 percent of moms find it difficult to balance parenting and a career).

% AGREE

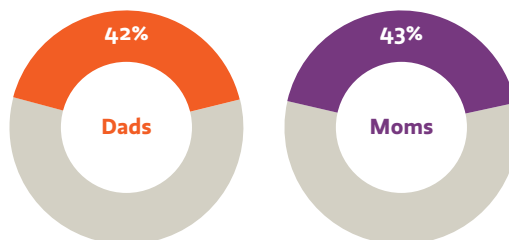
Similar views on difficulty managing work/ personal life and parenting

I find it difficult to manage the demands of being a parent with my work responsibilities

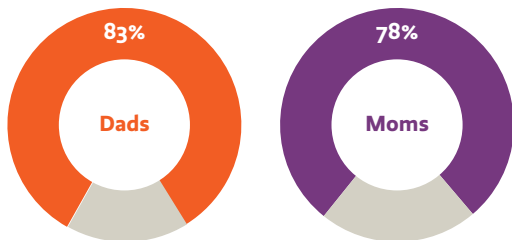


Similar views on impact of parenting and career

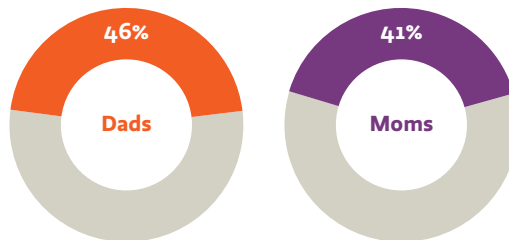
My status as a parent will make it more difficult to advance in my company



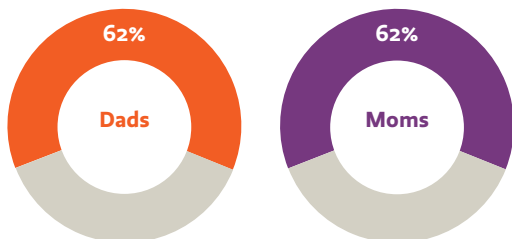
I would like to play a more active role in raising my children



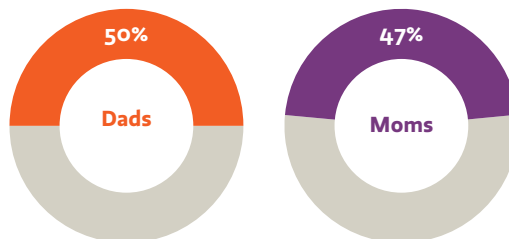
Taking time off for parenting will negatively impact my career

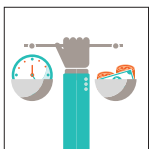


I often miss important moments in my child's/
children's life due to the demands of work



Being a leader in my company is incompatible with having a focus on my family life





What's Unequal: Corporate Benefits and Expectations

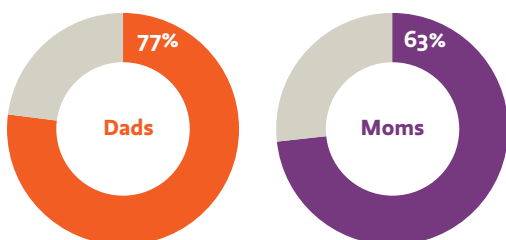
Dads report having more control over their schedule (71 percent are happy with their ability to use flexible work schedules versus 62 percent of moms) and are more satisfied with work and home. For example, 67 percent of dads are happy with the amount of time they have for themselves versus 53 percent of moms. They also take significantly less time off and are far less likely to stay home with a sick child.

Dads are more satisfied with aspects of home and work

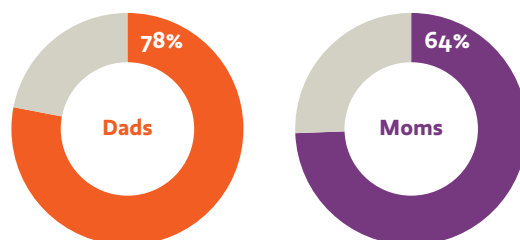
% SATISFIED

Home

The support you get from your spouse/partner in meeting work demands

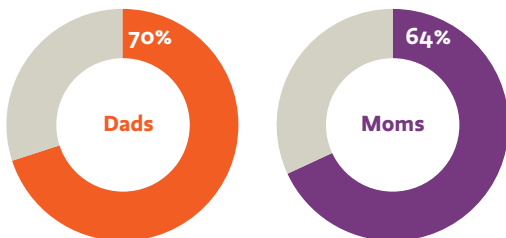


The support you get from your spouse/partner in meeting demands at home

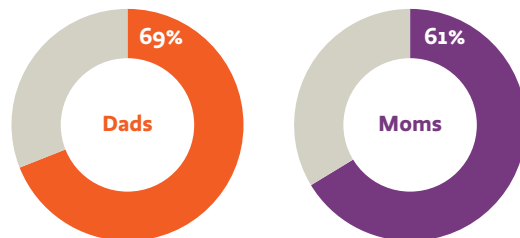


Work

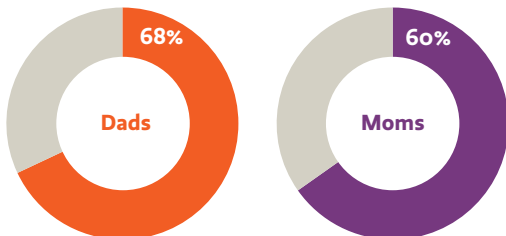
Your career progression to date

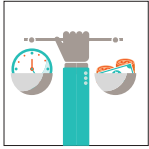


Your career prospects going forward



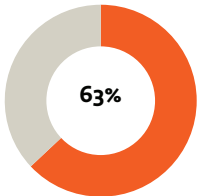
Your ability to advance in the company and feel successful as a parent





Parental Leave After Birth or Adoption

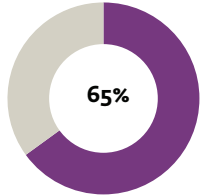
TOOK PAID TIME OFF



63%

DADS

AVERAGE
4.8 WEEKS

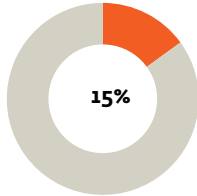


65%

MOMS

AVERAGE
8.2 WEEKS

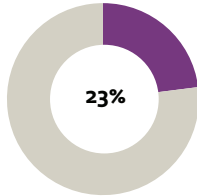
TOOK UNPAID TIME OFF



15%

DADS

AVERAGE
5 WEEKS

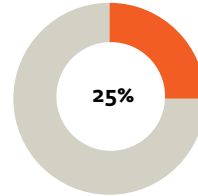


23%

MOMS

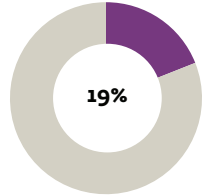
AVERAGE
9.5 WEEKS

TOOK NO TIME OFF



25%

DADS

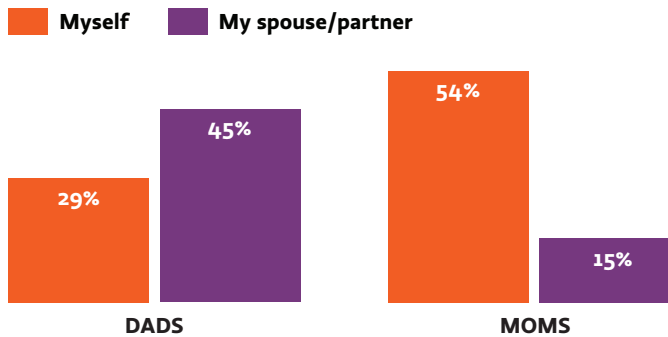


19%

MOMS

Dads are significantly less likely to stay home with a sick child

If your child were ill and not able to go to day care or school, who is most likely to stay at home and care for the child?



Does not add up to 100%

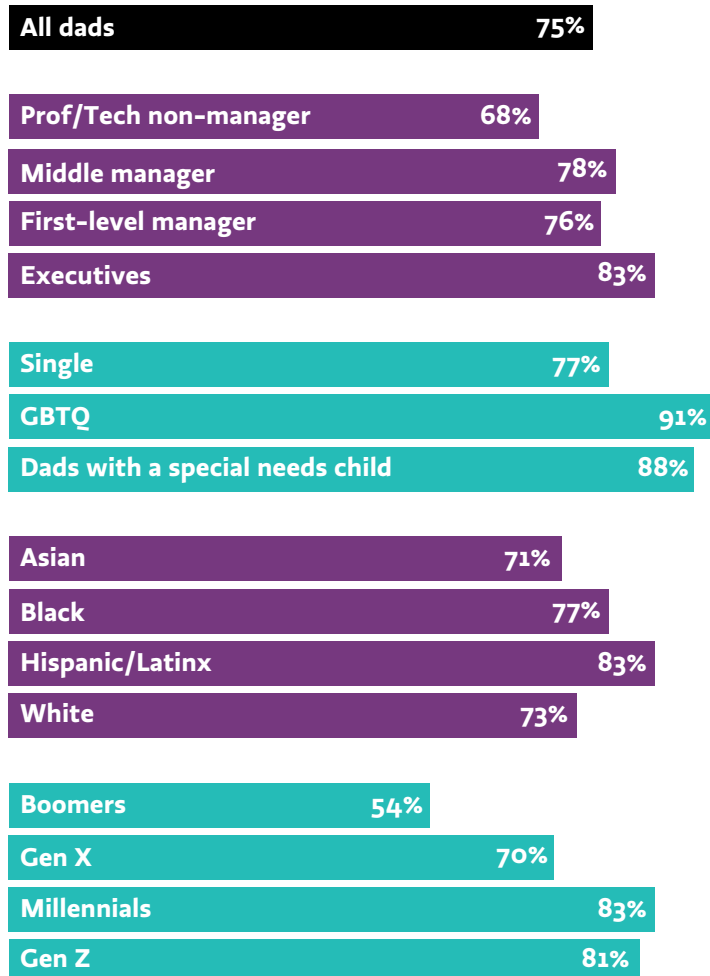


Differences in Dads

Dads' needs vary based on age, job role and, to a lesser degree, race/ethnicity and sexual orientation. Millennials take the most time off and have the greatest concerns about using flexibility at work. In terms of race and ethnicity, Asian dads take the least time off and are the least satisfied with work/life programs. Across the board, the need for more flexibility is their top priority.

% of dads who took time off following birth/adoption

(paid and/or unpaid)





Dads by Generation

Millennials are most concerned with parental issues, which makes sense since they are the prime age for having younger children. For Gen Z (18-23), parental issues are just beginning to surface.

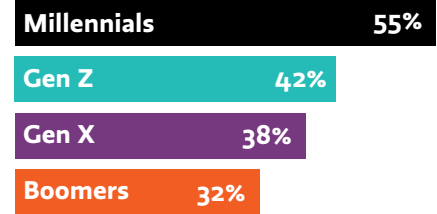
Flexibility

% AGREE

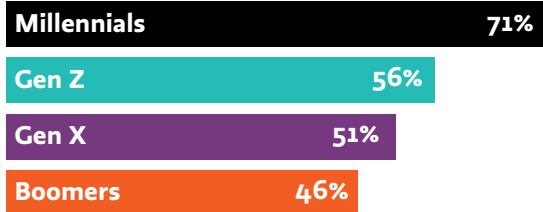
I can use flexibility at work without consequence



Taking time off for parenting will negatively impact my career



I would work part-time if I could have a meaningful career

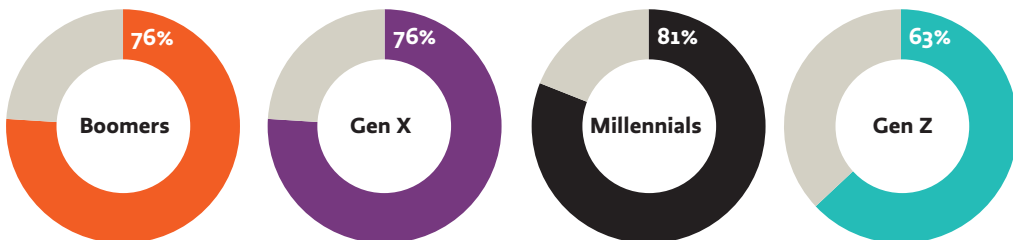


Satisfaction at home

Get support from your spouse/partner in meeting demands at home

% AGREE

The support you get from your spouse/partner in meeting demands at home



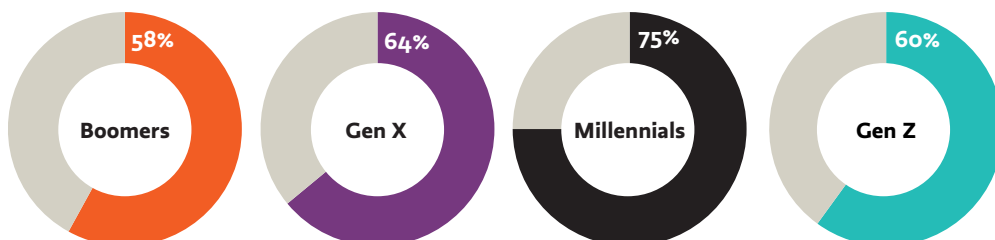


Dads by Generation

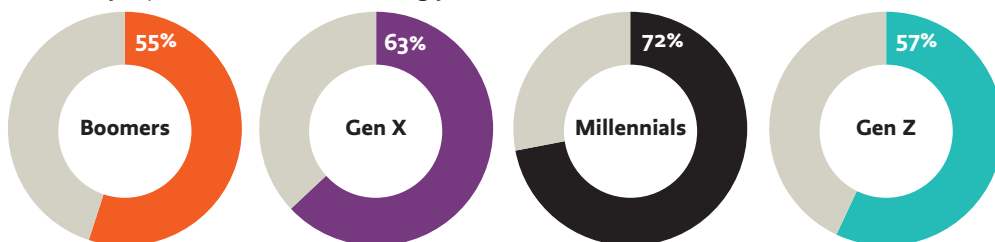
Satisfaction at work

% AGREE

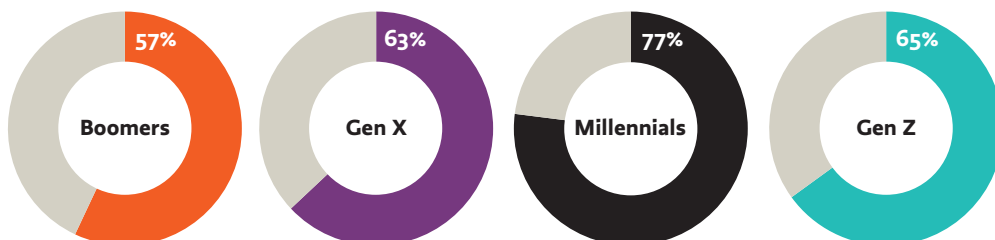
Your ability to advance in the company and feel successful as a parent



Your company's commitment to working parents



Your career prospects going forward



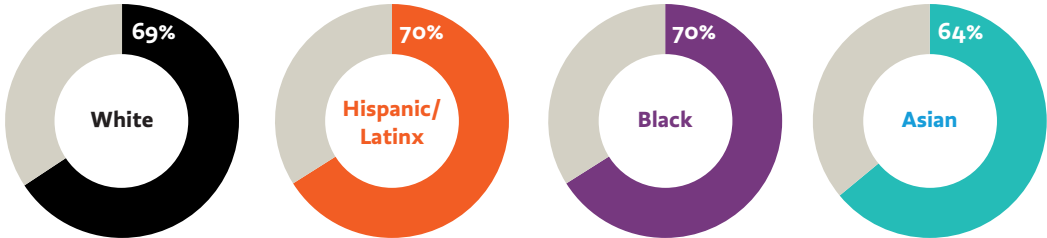


Dads by Race/Ethnicity

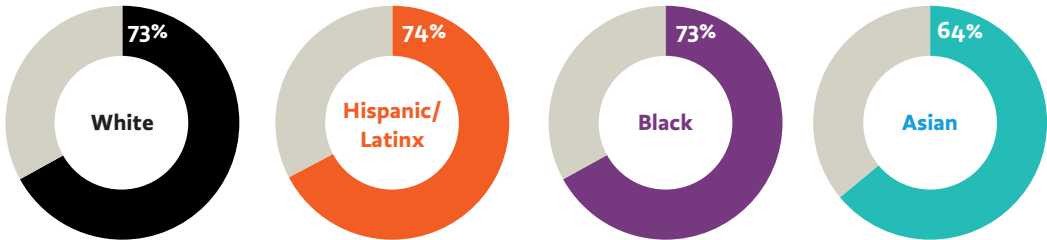
Satisfaction at Home

% SATISFIED

The amount of time you spend with your children



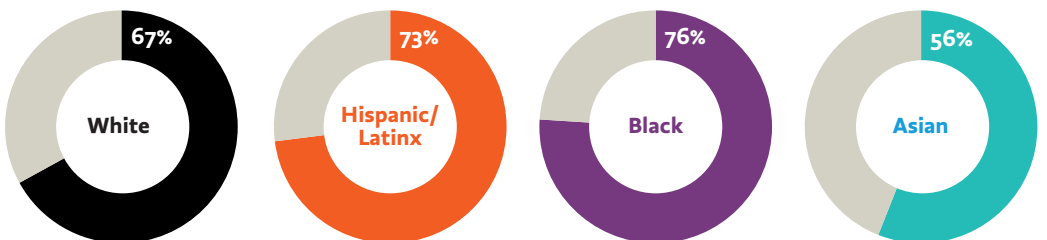
Your children's child care arrangements



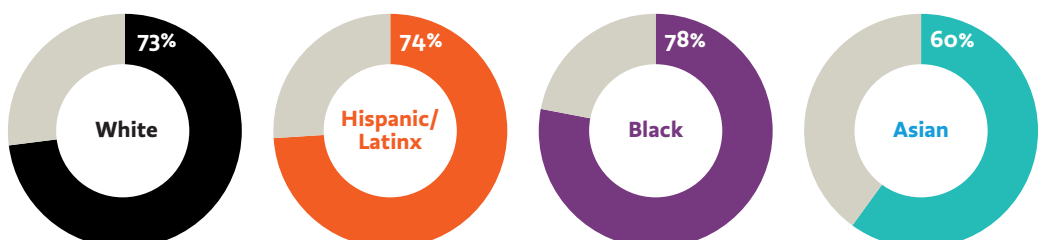
Satisfaction at Work

% SATISFIED

Your career prospects going forward



The support you get from your manager/supervisor in meeting family and home demands

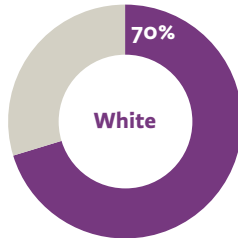
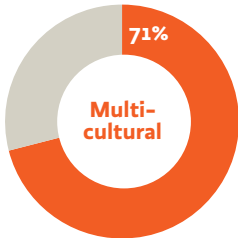




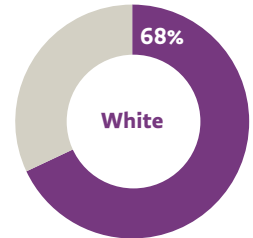
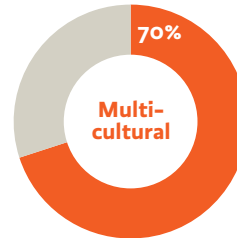
Dads by Race/Ethnicity

% SATISFIED

Your career progress



Your ability to advance in the company and feel successful as a parent



The top obstacles to being the best working parent for dads by race/ethnicity

% AGREE

WHITE

Pressure to meet deadlines 66%

Size of workload 66%

ASIAN

Pressure to meet deadlines 70%

BLACK

Size of workload 67%

Company culture that expects you to be available 24/7 67%

HISPANIC/LATINX

Company culture that expects you to be available 24/7 65%

Culture that expects work to be a priority over family 65%

Pressure to support family 65%



Dads by Race/Ethnicity

Flexibility Differences

My employer allows for flexibility where work is done



I can take off work when necessary



I can use flexibility my company offers without fear of negative consequences





Dads by Job Roles

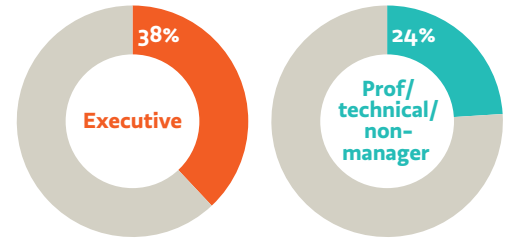
Company Culture – by Job Role

% AGREE

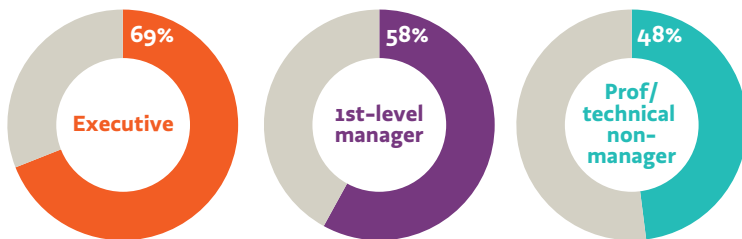
My company is more focused on needs of working moms than dads



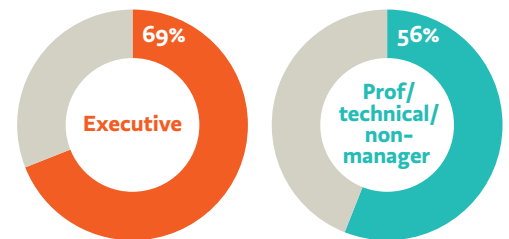
Execs were more likely to have a child with special needs



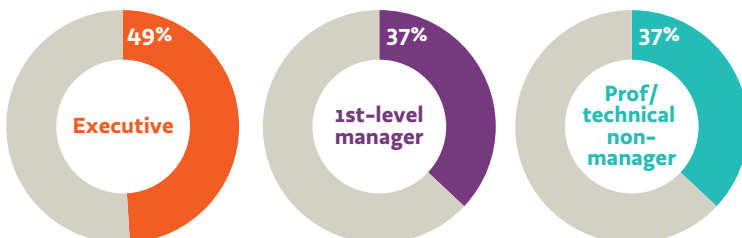
Taking time off after the birth or adoption of a child is encouraged in my company



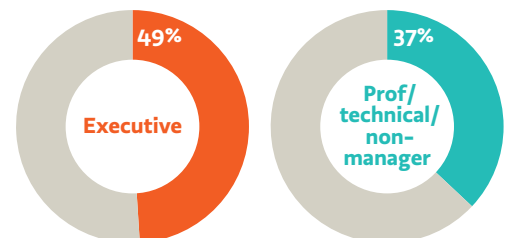
Execs were likely to miss important events in their child's lives



My status as a parent will make it more difficult to advance



Execs were more likely to agree being a parent makes it more difficult to advance





SNAPSHOT

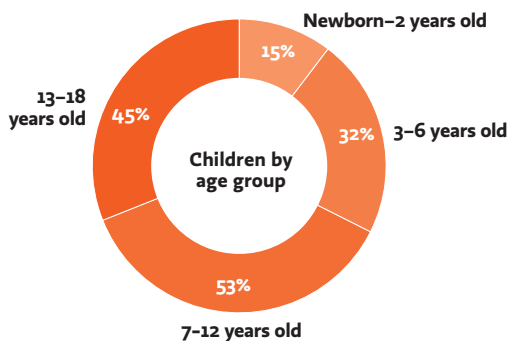
Multicultural Dads

Surveyed: **622**

Average Age: **37.2**

Average number of children: **1.6**

Ages of Children



About These Dads

Have child with special needs

28%

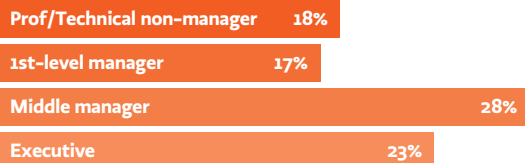
Took time off following birth/adoption of child

78%

Average Weeks of Leave



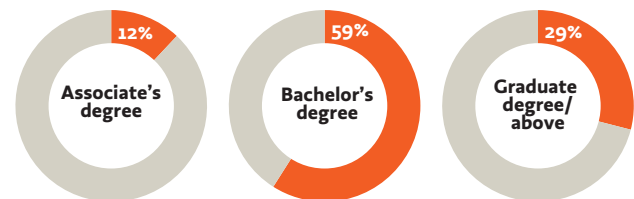
Job Level



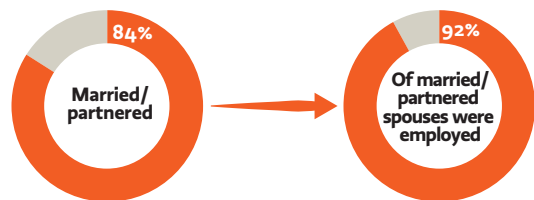
Top 2 Industries



Education Level



Marital Status



Job Demands

Have difficulty managing demands of being a parent and work responsibilities

54%

Would like to spend more time with their children

90%

Agree there are male role models in their company who have taken time off following birth of a child

66%

Agree taking time off for parenting will negatively impact their career

45%

Are satisfied with their job

76%

40% currently have responsibility for caring for an adult



SNAPSHOT

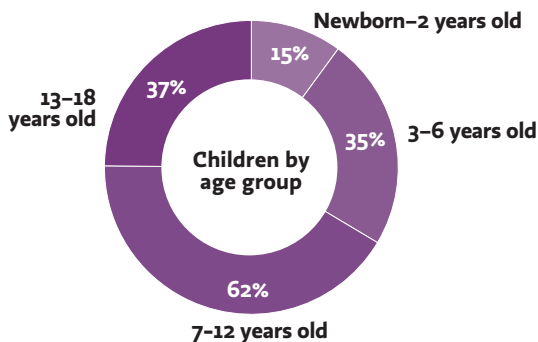
GBTQ Dads

Surveyed: **355**

Average Age: **35.4**

Average number of children: **1.7**

Ages of Children



About These Dads

Have child with special needs

55%

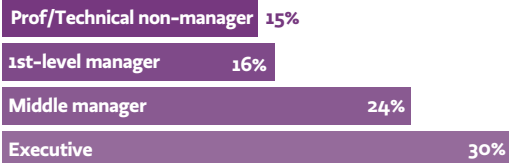
Took time off following birth/adoption of child

91%

Average Leave



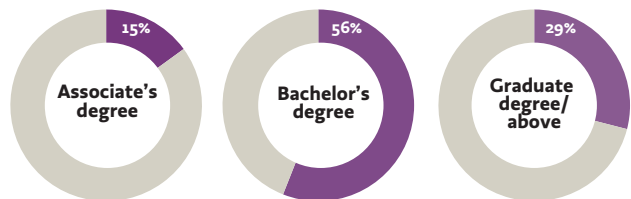
Job Level



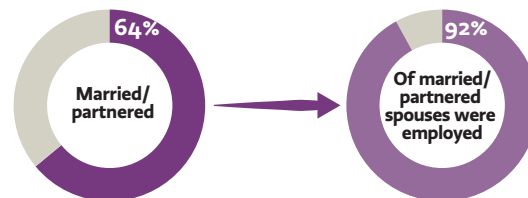
Top 2 Industries



Education Level



Marital Status



Job Demands

Have difficulty managing demands of being a parent and work responsibilities

64%

Would like to spend more time with their children

88%

Agree there are male role models in their company who have taken time off following birth of a child

75%

Agree taking time off for parenting will negatively impact their career

62%

Are satisfied with their job

77%

59% currently have responsibility for caring for an adult



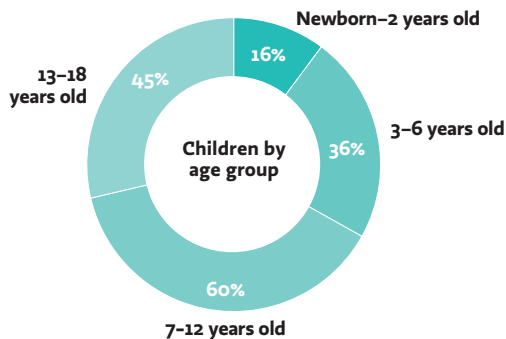
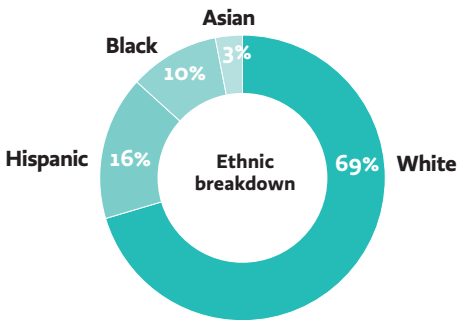
SNAPSHOT

Dads who have a child with special needs

Surveyed: **570**

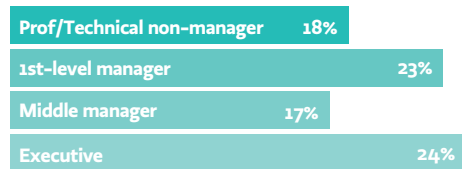
Average Age: **39.2**

Average number of children: **1.7**



57% currently have responsibility for caring for an adult

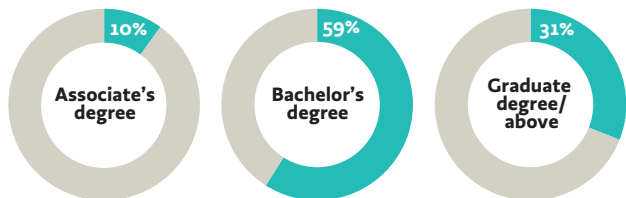
Job Level



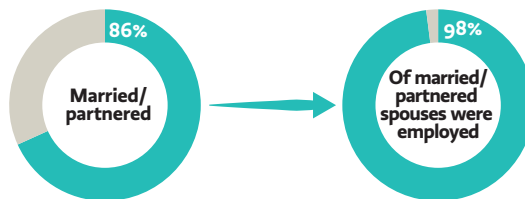
Top 2 Industries



Education Level



Marital Status



Job Demands

Have difficulty managing demands of being a parent and work responsibilities **65%**

Would like to spend more time with their children **92%**

Agree there are male role models in their company who have taken time off following birth of a child **74%**

Agree taking time off for parenting will negatively impact their career **62%**

Are satisfied with their job **79%**

About These Dads

Took time off following birth/adoption of child **88%**

Average Leave



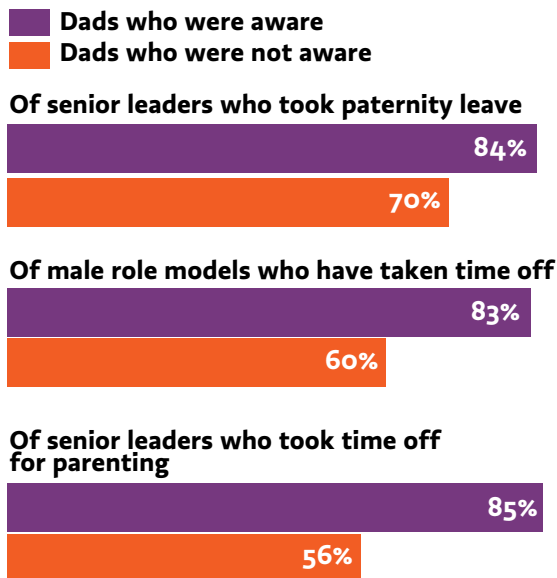


Welcoming Work

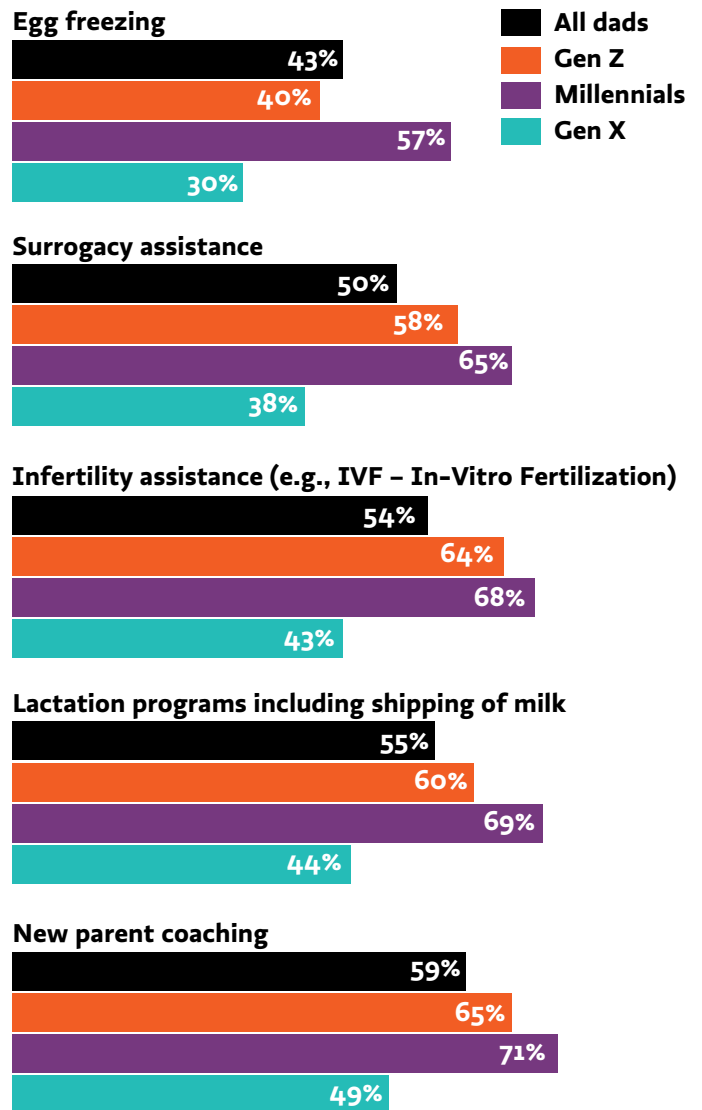
The culture at the top really matters. Fifty-five percent of dads said they find it difficult to combine parental and work responsibilities. Only 30 percent of dads said they were aware of a senior executive taking paternity leave in the past 24 months. Dads with role models who took time off were 20 percent more likely to take time off and took half a week longer.

Setting an example at the top

% of dads who took time off (paid or unpaid)



Importance of programs in meeting the demands of parenting





Welcoming Work

Satisfaction with programs in meeting the demands of parenting – All Dads

Flexibility in where I work

77%

Flexibility in when I work (e.g., ability to adjust hours)

76%

Time off for community or volunteer work

72%

Paid time off following the birth or adoption of a child

70%

Surrogacy assistance

70%

Obstacles to being the best working parent you can be

■ Obstacle ■ Not an obstacle

Not enough paid time off (e.g., vacation, holidays)

58%

42%

Lack of access to resources for working parents

56%

44%

Travel schedule

54%

46%

Lack of support for parents

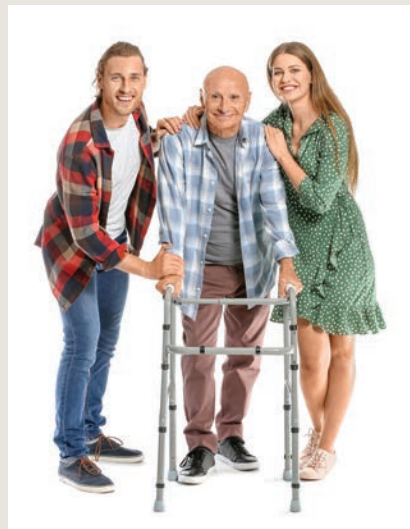
52%

48%

Lack of access to child care

51%

49%



Dad's Next Challenges

4 out of 10 dads and moms have responsibility for an adult – and it's expected to increase.

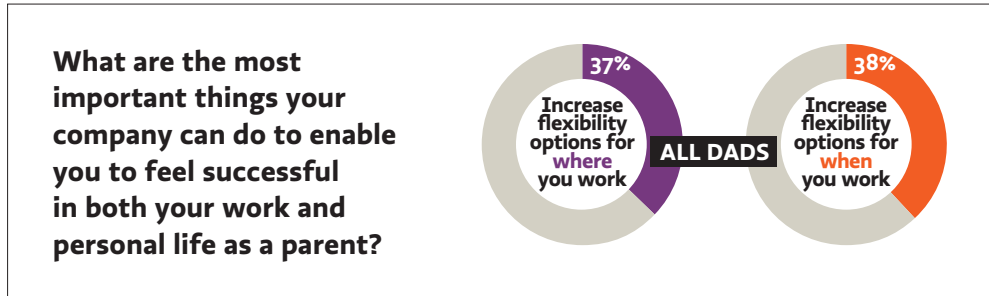
44% of dads and moms both have children over 18 still living at home.

38% of dads and 38% of moms currently have responsibility for an adult (either relative or non-relative)



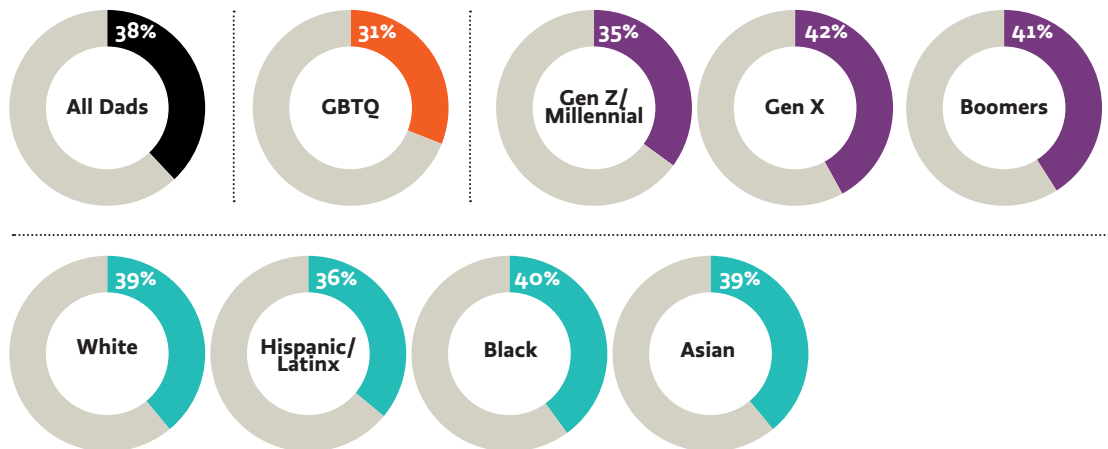
Freedom to Flex

Flexibility about when and where work is done is most important to dads. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, nearly a third of companies (and all Working Mother 100 Best Companies) allow workers some flexibility. But is it enough for working dads? And does flexibility – whether in the form of reduced hours, telecommuting or compressed work weeks – impact their career progression?



Top three things companies can do to enable dads to feel successful in their work and personal life as a parent

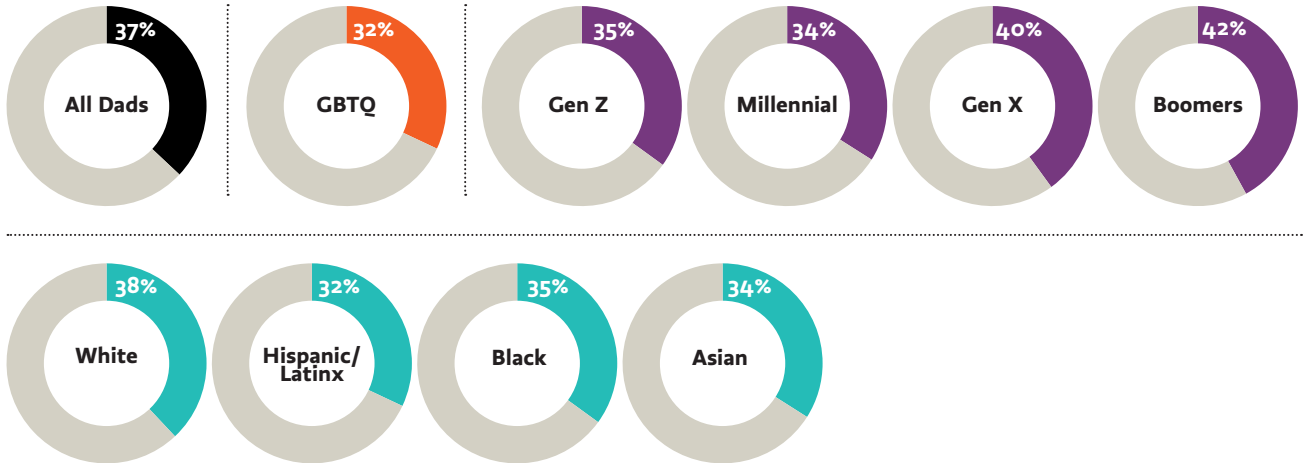
#1 Increase flexibility options for when you work



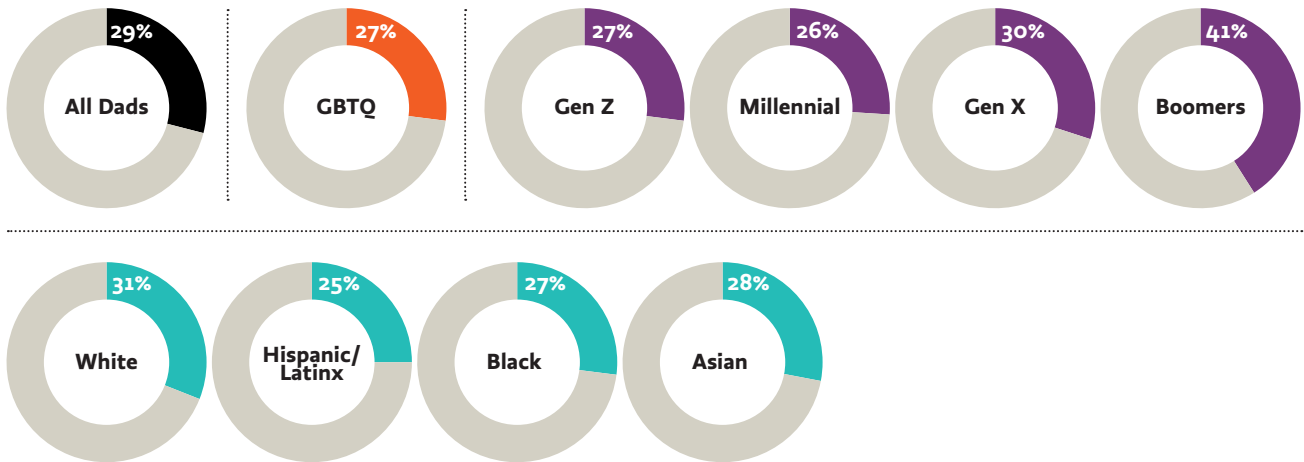


Freedom to Flex

#2 Increase flexibility options for where you work



#3 Encourage a culture that acknowledges family may sometimes come before work



Adult/Elder Care, Burden on Dads

Adult/elder care is a growing concern for dads.

38% have responsibility for an adult
 29% live in their homes
 9% don't reside with them

14% anticipate adding elder-care responsibility in next five years

61% anticipate needing time off work to care for a parent

Solutions

NO. 1

Equal Needs, Unequal Benefits



- **Implement gender-neutral paid parental leave.** Based on 100 Best averages and input from parental leave experts, recommended time is 12 to 24 weeks.
- **Offer gender-neutral paid phase-back time** of 4 to 12 weeks (or more), allowing parents to gradually return to work.
- **Track difference in usage of time off** taken for parental leave (utilization) by gender and race/ethnicity as well as job level.
- **Monitor the career progression** of employee parents who take paid leave to ensure equal access to opportunities.
- **Track usage and access of various flexible work options** by gender and race/ethnicity.

NO. 2

Differences in Dads



- Work with individual **multicultural employee resource groups** to surface and understand issues pertaining to dads and work/life.
- **Take pulse surveys of dads** to understand their utilization of and satisfaction with parental paid leave benefits.
- **Ensure all work/life programs** are viewed through the lens of parents from different generations.

NO. 3

Welcoming Work



- **Engage parents'/caregivers' employee resource groups** to identify and create solutions and options for dads.
- **Use tracked utilization rates to open a dialogue at executive levels** regarding implicit bias against working parents, especially dads.
- **Encourage male senior leaders to provide work/life supportive communications,** be role models themselves and discuss what leadership behaviors should be.
- **Publicize success stories of senior male role models** who are working dads who use flexible schedules and take advantage of the company's fully allotted parental leave.
- **Provide adequate resources and solutions** for departments when parents are out on leave. Use the temporary lack of coverage to create stretch assignments for other employees.
- **Provide transition planning/training for managers and co-workers** before and after a colleague's leave, including:
 - Respect for boundaries while on leave
 - Support for transitioning/returning to work, which includes clear and progressively more challenging goals.

NO. 4

Freedom to Flex



- **Build a communications campaign, highlighting male executive role models,** to encourage dads to be fully involved parents by working flexibly and taking all allotted paid leave.
- **Embed flexibility discussions** in the annual planning and performance management processes.
- **Embed support for flexible work into recruitment/talent acquisition** processes and employment branding campaigns.

Working Dad Profile

Earvin Shade

Senior Manager Advisory Services, Government and Public Sector
Ernst & Young LLP

CHILDREN: Aubrie, 8, Hollis, 4, Ethan, infant

WIFE: Mia

When Earvin Shade's first two children were born, he took two weeks paid leave, and his wife, an HR consultant, took 16 weeks. "After two weeks, I went back to work. I was traveling a lot and didn't think about the importance of time at home with an infant," he recalls.

A graduate of Morehouse, Georgia Tech and Emory (with dual engineering degrees and an MBA), he worked for other firms before joining Ernst & Young LLP (EY) four years ago. When his third child, Ethan, was born, EY's supportive culture and benefits (up to 16 weeks paid gender-neutral leave) gave him a new perspective. His wife took her 16 weeks and then he took his full leave, assuming the daily tasks of caring for an infant as well as two older children.

"I really didn't have an appreciation of what my wife had to deal with for the first two—the feeding schedule, all the changing of diapers, taking older kids to school with an infant, preparing dinner, etc. In the beginning, it was tough. I was changing my lifestyle completely," he says.



From left: Ethan, Earvin, Aubrie, Hollis and Mia Shade

But it was definitely worth it. "After three or four weeks I got into a rhythm with the baby and my other kids. I connected with them and really bonded with my newborn," he says.

The idea of taking four months leave was daunting to him in the beginning. "As a senior manager, I have a lot of responsibility. I was very nervous about transferring that to others and basically going off the grid. I had conversations with leadership. They said they felt it was extremely important to do this and I wouldn't get this time again. They reassured me that everything would be OK when I returned and I could pick right up where I left off."

Before leaving, he worked with the team to transfer his responsibilities to different colleagues. The firm didn't require him to check in while on leave but he did so voluntarily, about every five weeks. When he returned, he hit the ground running. "A few changes had been made in the organization, but I was able to get up to speed quickly," he says.

Now that he's back, he appreciates the benefits EY offers, such as the ability to use the firm's Personal Family Care policy to stay home and care for an ill child or the backup subsidized day care that comes to his house if he has a caregiver gap. He also enjoys flexibility if he needs to leave to pick up a child or attend a child's event. Shade is active in the fathers' network the firm runs to help dads navigate work/life balance and share experiences.

"This makes me more committed to the firm. I thought, 'If the firm would do this for me, why can't I do a little bit more?'" he says.

His best advice to working dads? "If you are happy in your personal life, you'll be happier at work." He sees dads not taking all their leave and he tries to have the same conversations with them that leadership had with him. "Sixteen weeks is not a lot of time over four to five years of your life. The business will go on. You only get that time with your child once," he says.

Working Dad Profile

Scott Joslin

Director of Ocular Materials
Development
Johnson & Johnson (J&J)

CHILDREN

Samantha, 19, Sara, 15



From left: Samantha,
Scott and Sara Joslin

Scott Joslin “wouldn’t have made it” as a sudden single dad without the support of his employer. When his first daughter was born, he took a week off and went right back to work, while his wife, Maria, became a stay-at-home parent. When their second daughter was on the way three years later, he anticipated doing the same. Sadly, because of complications from childbirth, Maria passed away two days after the baby arrived.

“It was a big surprise and shock, but my J&J family was a never-ending source of support. They traveled to South Florida [where his extended family is based] in rented vans to come to the funeral and supplied meals and babysitting while I tried to put my life back on track,” he recalls.

He also stayed home at full pay for seven weeks. At that time, the parental leave offered by the company was only one week. J&J now offers eight weeks paid gender-neutral leave.

“It was a big transitional period, and J&J management and my colleagues provided so much support and gave me flexibility while I wrestled with getting them dressed and fed and off to day care. It took a long time to transition to normalcy,” he says. What’s remarkable, he says, is that he had been at the company less than a year when this happened.

“The management team encouraged me to take all the time I needed and put me in touch with services for nannies, night nurses and preschools. I couldn’t have made it without them,” he says.

He was able to enroll the girls in subsidized day care near his home and eventually sent them to schools nearby. “I never needed to spend significant time telecommuting, but when a child was sick and I couldn’t get a babysitter, I was always able to work at home. J&J is truly phenomenal about making sure family comes first. You can’t replace going to the school play or a child’s first soccer game,” he says.

He took advantage of the company’s work, personal and family time, which gives employees 40 hours a year of paid time for planned and unplanned personal events (in addition to vacation).

The support enabled him to advance on the job despite the challenges of being a single dad. With a doctorate in polymer science engineering, he had a busy career before joining the health care giant as a senior staff engineer, receiving two promotions over the next 11 years. Today, he heads a team of 11 employees (seven are direct reports), accountable for developing new materials for contact and interocular lenses.

What advice does he have for dads in the workplace? “Take the time. You can’t get it back. When you have that baby, your life and your purpose change. J&J recognizes that it’s a really special time and they encourage everyone to use their benefits.”

Working Dad Profile

Joey Famoso

Senior Manager of Compensation and Analytics, Interventional Cardiology Business, Boston Scientific

CHILD: Jackson, 4

HUSBAND: Joe

Joey Famoso's path to fatherhood took an unexpected detour. Famoso and his husband, Joe, have been together for 10 years and married for two. In 2014, they decided they wanted to be parents through adoption. They were matched with a birth mother, who had a baby in October of that year. Unfortunately for them, she changed her mind and decided to keep the baby.

It was "a devastating time" for the couple, but the support of his employer helped him get through it. "Then we decided to get back on the horse," he says.

They had an unusual approach. They created a video called "Dear Future Baby" modeled after singer Meghan Trainor's "Dear Future Husband," in which they sing a love song to their future child. The video "went super viral with more than 500,000 views on YouTube and tweets from celebrities like Ryan Seacrest, Jane Lynch and Meghan Trainor," Famoso says.



From left: Jackson with his dads, Joey and Joe

As a result of all the attention, they were introduced to their son and adopted him in 2015. In addition to receiving adoption assistance, Famoso took six weeks fully paid adoption leave (it went up to eight weeks in 2017) and enrolled the baby in the company's on-campus day care center in Maple Grove, MN. After that, they moved Jackson to a Montessori school and Famoso took advantage of a flexible schedule for pickups, sick days and school events.

About 2½ years ago, the family dynamic changed when his parents, Joe and Deborah, retired and moved from South Florida into Famoso's house. And then six months ago, when his husband, Joe, had a job opportunity in California, all five of them moved there. Given his strong contributions and role within the company, Boston Scientific allowed Famoso to work remotely and continue to lead his team of five reports.

"Boston Scientific was great. They asked me what I needed to do to lead remotely and they helped me in every way," he says, citing the particular support of Isaac Knoot, Vice President, Sales Strategy & Operations, and Camille Chang Gilmore, VP of HR and Global Chief Diversity Officer.

For Famoso, who has a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida and an MBA from Nova Southeastern University, fatherhood has been a boon to his career. "Being a father is very much about loving your child and that makes you more empathetic—you are more cognizant of what people want and need," he says. Since becoming a dad he's been promoted from principal analyst to manager.

"I really have the best of both worlds. The culture at this company is very family-oriented. And my own family is very supportive," he says.

Working Dad Profile

Tom Ragonese

Senior Process Development
Manager
Boston Scientific

CHILDREN: Twins Luke and Sophia, 8, twins Matthew and Vincent, 5, Genevieve, 1

WIFE: Sarah

What do you do if you have a lot of children quickly and no family members nearby to help? You rely on your work family for support.

That's what Tom Ragonese and his wife have done in the past eight years since their family grew rapidly—including two sets of twins. The couple learned early on that their first pregnancy would be double trouble but were very surprised when it happened a second time. And both sets of twins had colic as well as some milk allergies. "The first time, it was tears of joy. The second time, it was tears of misery because we knew what we were getting into," he says.

With their family more than 1,000 miles away from their home in Bloomington, IN, the Ragoneses needed support. Boston Scientific, where he's worked since 2003 as an engineer helping manufacture medical devices, provides that.

"With the twins, I received two weeks paid leave each time but also banked my vacation time so I worked four days a week for about four months after coming back. When Genevieve



From left: Tom, Matthew (5), Luke (8), Vincent (5), Sarah, Genevieve (1), Sophia (8).

was born, the paid leave for dads had increased to four weeks," he says. "The extra time was great. My wife had Cesareans each time and needed to recover. My ability to focus on the family really helped."

His wife, a school psychologist who also has a private practice, took a year off with each pregnancy. The early years with both sets of twins, he says, "honestly were a blur. Thankfully, our fifth baby is an easy one. And just one!"

What's been a big boon has been the company's flexible schedule. "If I have to leave early to pick up kids from school, I just do it and I hop on at night to take care of something I might have missed at work. The company believes that as long as you are getting your job done, family comes first. Managers who don't support that don't last long in our organization." And with that flexibility, "you go the extra mile to make up for the time," he says.

Summer hours, introduced last year allowing employees to work longer days Mondays through Thursdays and take half-days Fridays, also have let

him spend more time with the children, he says.

The company's strong insurance benefits have helped a great deal as well the emotional support from his corporate colleagues and managers. He recalls when his first twins were born, they were on an expensive high-calorie formula that was hard to find. But a co-worker was married to someone who worked at the formula manufacturer and arranged for a couple of cases to be shipped.

"The people at work were always checking in and asking what we needed and what they could do to help. It's a real family atmosphere, and given we don't have family nearby, it makes coming to work every day a joy," he says.

He says working dads should decide what's important to them and stick to it. "I am not going to compromise who I am. I am a dad and a husband first. If people think ill of me for doing what's best for my family, that's their choice. And it hasn't hurt my career at all [he's been promoted twice since becoming a dad]."

Working Dad Profile

Doug Wilson

Talent Acquisition Director
Microsoft

CHILDREN:

Malloy, 2, Harlow, infant

WIFE: Taylor

These days, Doug Wilson talks a lot to his managers and colleagues about children. “Everybody who has kids talks about how to balance everything. My manager is a woman and her boss is a man and they both understand,” he says.

For example, he had a meeting scheduled at 4:30 p.m. and couldn’t make it because he had to pick his children up at day care. His boss’ boss, the general manager of recruiting, told him not to worry about it. “He told me to just say I couldn’t make it and reschedule the meeting. I knew he gets it but it was really nice to hear that,” he says.

Wilson, who grew up in Canada and was recruited to play basketball at the University of New Hampshire (where he earned a bachelor’s degree and an MBA), joined Microsoft six years ago. When son Malloy was born, he took his 12 weeks paid leave but broke it up — a month at the beginning and two months after his wife, a licensing



From left: Taylor, Malloy, Doug and Harlow

specialist at Eddie Bauer, returned from her leave (three months but only partially paid). They did the same thing when daughter Harlow came along.

“It’s cool to go through it together, especially with the first one when neither of you know what you are doing and nobody is getting any sleep. The time we each had alone helped us really bond with each of our kids. I was a little burned out at work so it was also a good way to help me refocus,” he says.

The key to a successful leave, he says, is planning. About a month before going out, he worked with his manager on how to handle his duties. The first time, she took on much of the work herself and disseminated it when needed to other team members. The second time, another manager who was looking to be promoted to a director role took on Wilson’s duties as a stretch assignment and ultimately ended up moving into a new position in another department.

“My manager didn’t email or text me once about business. As I was getting close to coming back, I started to get itchy about what was going on. Things change so rapidly at Microsoft so I wanted to know, but there was no pressure,” he says.

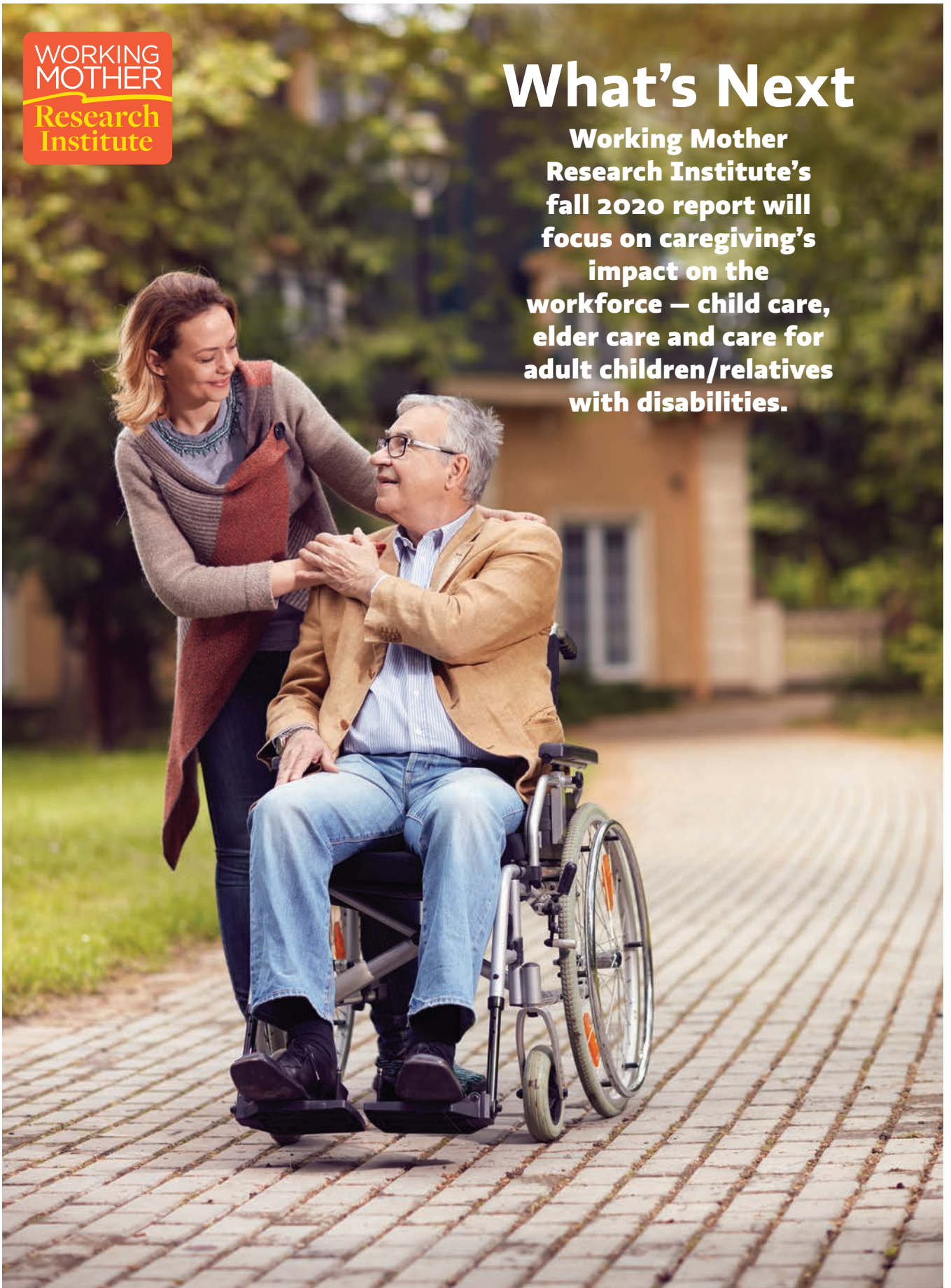
With the second child, he took an extra week’s vacation to help ease her into day care. Now that he’s back, he takes advantage of flexible hours by going in early and leaving early so he can pick up the children (his wife drops them off).

“The culture really promotes family values. If you need to take your child to a doctor’s appointment, it is never a problem,” he says.

His advice for working dads? “Think differently. Work with your spouse or partner and prioritize. Ask questions and talk to your peers. Find people at work who have gone through this. And be good role models for your kids. You can put kids first and still have successful careers.”

What's Next

**Working Mother
Research Institute's
fall 2020 report will
focus on caregiving's
impact on the
workforce – child care,
elder care and care for
adult children/relatives
with disabilities.**



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