OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

SURVEY OBJECTIVES

Demonstrate Moms First as a leading resource for moms advocating on their behalf in the workplace, in culture and in the government.

Drive the conversation around the challenges moms experience at work - once they become pregnant, when they return to work after welcoming a child and how they manage work with young children under the age of 5.

Go deeper on insights uncovered in recent focus groups within the Moms First community on the pain points of returning to work and interviewing for a job as a new mom.

Inform a unique point of view for advice or a toolkit to help new Moms navigate the return back to work, while uncovering learnings relevant for employers on ways to change their workplace culture and to hire

AUDIENCE

1,000 Moms in the U.S.
1,000 general population
480 with children 0 to 5

FIELD DATES

The survey was fielded between June 26 – July 10, 2023
KEY FINDINGS

Experience Expecting and on Parental Leave
Worries about juggling parenting and work starts early when moms learn they are expecting a child.
A majority of moms were dissatisfied or had concerns about their parental leave, and more than half dreaded returning to work after leave.
Roughly a third considered quitting their job.

Experience at Work
Moms who are dissatisfied with their work are struggling to keep up – citing the struggle to balance work and parenting, burn out and a lack of back-up childcare.
3 in 4 moms say their company could be doing more to support for working parents of young children.
While moms report getting support from their managers and co-workers, leadership is not setting the example.
Moms report feeling sidelined or excluded at work as a parent of young children and are struggling to balance parenting and their careers.

Exploring New Job Opportunities
Of the moms thinking about quitting or changing their jobs (4 in 10), roughly half cited burnout and the desire to spend more time with their kids as the reason.
Among moms who have recently applied for a new job, more than half report encountering challenges during the process, such as a lack of job options with benefits for parents or discomfort with negotiating flexible work arrangements.

Desired Solutions
In the workplace, the most helpful ways employers can support parents of young children is through:
- Tangible benefits (e.g., onsite childcare)
- A part-time transition period after parental leave
- A manager who is supportive of parents' needs

Outside the workplace, Moms are craving advice, guidance and talking points to:
- Advocate for public policy changes to support working parents
- Raise opportunities for their employees to better support parents of young children
- Start the job search after a caregiving gap
Worries about juggling parenting and work starts early when moms learn they are expecting a child.

42% of moms considered leaving their job once they welcomed their child.

On the positive side, more than half of all moms felt their employer would be supportive of them.
Q8. How well do the following describe your experience at work when you found out you were pregnant or expecting a child (e.g., through adoption, surrogacy)?

58% 59%
50% 51%
42% 46%
36% 41%
34% 35%
33% 39%
26% 29%
21% 23%

All moms  Children under 5

I felt that my employer would be supportive of me
I felt confident that my manager would help me navigate working during my pregnancy and/or being a working parent
I considered leaving my job once I welcomed my child
I worried if I would be able to keep up with the physical nature of my job
I wanted to wait as long as possible to tell my employer to avoid being passed over for opportunities
I worried about falling behind on my career plan / trajectory
I worried my coworkers would think I was less dedicated to my job
I experienced inappropriate questions and comments from my co-workers

**Data shown is the NET of “Describes very well” and “Describes extremely well”

Significant testing between ALL shown audiences
Q10. Which of the below best reflects your view on your parental leave?

60% of moms expressed some level of concern or dissatisfaction around their parental leave.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>All moms</th>
<th>Children under 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I had more parental need than I needed</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a sufficient amount of parental leave</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had no parental leave</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I had more parental leave</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was concerned taking all the parental leave offered by my employer would hurt my career or cause me to lose my job</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt guilty about taking all the parental leave offered by my employer</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to take more unpaid / partially unpaid parental leave</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey by APCO worldwide
At the end of their leave, less than a third of moms (28%) said they felt eager and ready to go back to work. And more than half dreaded going back.

- **64%** dreaded going back to work but had to return for financial reasons
- **41%** didn’t feel ready to go back to work and considered or decided to shift to part-time work
- **36%** dreaded going back to work and considered or decided to quit their job

Survey by APCO worldwide®
Q12. How well do the following describe how you felt as the end of your parental leave approached, but before you returned to work?

- I had mixed emotions about returning to work
- I dreaded going back to work but had to return for financial reasons
- I felt ready to go back to work, but anxious about being away from my child
- I felt nervous about my ability to do my job while juggling my responsibilities of a new parent.
- I didn’t feel ready to go back to work and considered or decided to shift to part-time work
- I dreaded going back to work and considered or decided to quit my job
- I felt ready and eager to go back to work

**Data shown is the NET of “Describes very well” and “Describes extremely well”**

Survey by APCO worldwide®

Significant testing between ALL shown audiences
THE EMOTIONAL JOURNEY OF MOMS RETURNING TO WORK IS COMPLEX AND MULTIFACETED

When asked in an open-ended question to describe their emotions about returning to work after parental leave, Moms’ responses show a complex and diverse journey, encompassing a wide range of feelings. Many moms feel anxious, stressed, and exhausted as they navigate the challenges of balancing work and family responsibilities. They may also experience sadness and guilt about leaving their children or not being fully present at home. On the other hand, some moms, in many cases the same moms, feel excited and ready to rejoin the workforce, finding fulfillment and purpose in their careers.

Mixed feelings are common, as moms grapple with conflicting emotions and uncertainties. Unfortunately, some moms may also feel unsupported, struggling to find the necessary resources and understanding from their workplace or support systems.

Overall, the return-to-work journey for moms is a unique and personal experience, shaped by a combination of emotions that evolve over time.

Sad to leave him, happy to be back to work

I felt very emotional and physically drained. I wasn’t ready at all, but my family needed me to return in order to pay our bills

Anxious and behind the career curve
Q11. How did you feel right before going back to work after welcoming your child? Please describe your emotions using one or two words.
EXPERIENCE AT WORK

Moms who are dissatisfied with their work are struggling to keep up

30% of moms are (or were) dissatisfied with their work situation while raising children under 5 years old

Top 3 reasons why they are (or were) dissatisfied:

- 76% are struggling to balance the demands of work and caring for their children (this jumps to 90% among self-employed moms)
- 75% are burnt out
- 70% don’t have back-up childcare options

KEY

Moms
Stay-at-Home Moms (Not Seeking Employment)
And moms earning less than $50,000 per year were more likely to cite the lack of support from their employer, manager and spouse.
Moms with more paid parental leave report higher levels of satisfaction with their current employment.

Q6. Thinking about your employment situation as a parent of children under the age of 5, how satisfied are/were you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of Paid Leave</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All moms</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 weeks or less</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 12 months</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than a year</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey by APCO worldwide®
Moms are looking for their employers to provide more support for parents of young children.

76% say their company could be doing more to support parents.

**Q17.** How would you assess the level of support your company currently provides to parents of young children? Please select one option that best reflects your opinion:

- Could be doing a lot more to support parents
- Could be doing somewhat more to support parents
- Is currently providing sufficient support to parents

Survey by APCO worldwide®

Significant testing between ALL shown audiences
EXPERIENCE AT WORK

While moms report they’re getting support from their direct managers and co-workers, support from leadership to set the example and drive a parent-friendly work culture is lacking.

**THE GOOD NEWS:**

- **63%** said their co-workers were understanding of last-minute changes to my schedule due to childcare responsibilities.
- **59%** had a manager/direct supervisor who was supportive and empathetic of parents’ needs.

**THE BAD NEWS:**

- **36%** said their company leadership team served as role models.
- **Only 34%** said their workplace culture encouraged calls/meetings not to be scheduled at times inconvenient to parents of young children.

*Survey by APCO worldwide*
EXPERIENCE AT WORK

And **moms who permanently left the workforce to be stay-at-home parents** were less likely to report experiencing support as a parent at their last job overall.

**THE GOOD NEWS:**
- **↓ 43%** said their co-workers were understanding of last-minute changes to my schedule due to childcare responsibilities
- **↓ 42%** had a manager / direct supervisor who was supportive and empathetic of parents’ needs

**THE BAD NEWS:**
- **↓ 16%** said their company leadership team served as role models
- **↓ 18%** said their workplace culture encouraged calls/meetings not to be scheduled at times inconvenient to parents of young children

Survey by APCO Worldwide®
EXPERIENCE AT WORK

Moms report feeling sidelined or excluded at work as a parent of young children...

Have received negative comments from co-workers on my ability to complete my work because of my childcare responsibilities

24% 29%

Had less opportunities for career growth (e.g., not offered trainings, mentorship opportunities, networking events)

35% 47%

Said their achievements or contributions are not adequately recognized or celebrated possibly due to their reduced visibility during parental leave

32% 44%

Survey by Moms

Stay-at-Home Moms (Not Seeking Employment)
More than half of the moms surveyed relay feeling stressed out, exhausted and experiencing feelings of guilt about juggling work and parenting.

Survey by **Data shown is the NET of “Describes very well” and “Describes extremely well”**

**Significant testing between ALL shown audiences**

- **Felt exhausted and burnt out**
  - All moms: 67%
  - Stay-at-Home Moms: 83%

- **Felt stressed when work obligations kept them from spending time with their child**
  - All moms: 65%
  - Stay-at-Home Moms: 78%

- **Felt guilty when they couldn’t meet work obligations (due to a sick child, etc.)**
  - All moms: 54%
  - Stay-at-Home Moms: 70%

- **Worried they were doing their best work**
  - All moms: 46%
  - Stay-at-Home Moms: 60%
EXPERIENCE AT WORK

When it comes to juggling work with their responsibilities as a parent, their top concerns largely center on home life...

- 69% I will miss out on time with my child(ren) due to work
- 43% I will not have enough time for myself
- 40% I will fall behind on household tasks
EXPLORING NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Of the moms thinking about quitting or changing their jobs, roughly half cited burnout and the desire to spend more time with their kids as the reason.

41% are thinking about quitting their job to...

15% take on full-time childcare responsibilities

17% apply for a similar job with a different workplace culture

9% start freelancing

Because they...

56% want to be more actively involved in their children’s lives

54% want more quality time with their children

49% are burnt out

47% are struggling to balance the demands of work and caring for children

Survey by APCO Worldwide®
EXPLORING NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Among moms who have recently applied for a new job, more than half report encountering challenges during the process.

Top 4 challenges going through the job search process:

- **75%** wish they could find more job options with flexibility and benefits for parents.
- **56%** wish the interviewers shared more about the workplace culture.
- **51%** felt uncomfortable asking about and negotiating flexible work options.
- **50%** encountered job descriptions that made me feel I shouldn't apply as a parent of young children.

41% have applied and/or interviewed for a new job.

Survey by APCO worldwide®
DESIRED SOLUTIONS

The top 3 most helpful ways employers can support a working parent of young children:

- **47%** Access to tangible benefits to support parents, such as onsite childcare
- **47%** Employer that offered a part-time transition period post-parental leave (e.g., 2-3 months) before returning to full-time work
- **47%** Manager / direct supervisor who is supportive and empathetic of parents’ needs
Q24. Please rank how helpful you think each of the following would be to a working parent of young children.

**Data shown is items that were ranked 1, 2 or 3**

Survey by APCO worldwide®

**Significant testing between ALL shown audiences**
Top 3 most helpful ways to support a working parent of young children outside the workplace:

- **67%** Provide quick and simple ways to advocate for policy changes to support working parents.
- **64%** Give advice and talking points on how to raise opportunities for your employer to better support parents with young children.
- **59%** Give advice and talking points for starting the job search after a caregiving gap.
Q25. How would you rate the helpfulness of the following potential areas of support outside of the workplace to help parents manage working while raising a young child/children?

- Provided quick and simple ways to advocate for policy changes to support working parents
- Given advice and talking points on how to raise opportunities for your employer to better support parents with young children
- Given advice and talking points for starting the job search after a caregiving gap
- Finding and fostering a peer group of fellow working moms
- Being matched with a mentor to support and coach you on managing work and raising children
- Other

Survey by APCO worldwide®

**Data shown is the NET of “Very helpful” and “Extremely helpful”**

Significant testing between ALL shown audiences
When it comes to advice, moms rate “Be kind to yourself” as the most helpful while “Don’t let imposter syndrome get you” to be the least helpful.

Survey by APCO worldwide

**Data shown is the NET of “Very helpful” and “Extremely helpful”**

Significant testing between ALL shown audiences
When reflecting on their experience juggling work with their responsibilities as a parent, a majority say it is getting easier.
Appendix: Q8. How well do the following describe your experience at work when you found out you were pregnant or expecting a child (e.g., through adoption, surrogacy)?

**Data shown is the NET of “Describes very well” and “Describes extremely well”**

**Significant testing between all moms HHI $150,000 or more**

Survey by APCO worldwide®
Appendix: Q16. Please rank the top 3 concerns you have when it comes to juggling work with your responsibilities as a parent.

Top 3

- I’ll miss time with my child due to work
- I’ll not have enough time for myself
- I’ll fall behind on household tasks

Survey by APCO worldwide

**Data shown is items that were ranked 1, 2 or 3**
Appendix: Q19. Which of the following describes why you’re thinking about quitting your job?

- Want to have more quality time with my child: 54%
- Want to be actively involved in my child’s life during their formative years: 50%
- Struggling to balance the demands of work and caring for my child: 44%
- Compensation not enough to compensate for childcare costs: 43%
- Burnt out: 47%
- Work schedule not flexible: 41%
- Can’t work remotely as much as I would like to: 42%
- Need a part-time schedule to handle my childcare responsibilities: 32%
- Workplace culture is not the right fit: 32%
- Don’t see opportunities for advancement: 29%
- Company doesn’t offer flexible career paths: 29%
- Don’t have a supportive manager: 27%
- Need a part-time schedule to handle my childcare responsibilities: 25%
- Don’t have sufficient childcare: 24%
- Don’t have a supportive manager: 24%
- Company doesn’t offer flexible career paths: 24%
- Don’t have sufficient childcare: 14%
- Don’t have sufficient childcare: 12%

Significant testing between all moms HHI $150,000 or more
Appendix: Q24. Please rank how helpful you think each of the following would be to a working parent of young children. Assign a rank from 1-9.

**Data shown is items that were ranked 1, 2 or 3

**Significant testing between all moms HHI $150,000 or more

Access to tangible benefits to support parents, such as onsite childcare: 51% (All moms), 47% (Moms MMI $150,000 or more)

Manager / direct supervisor who was supportive and empathetic of parents’ needs: 47% (All moms), 42% (Moms MMI $150,000 or more)

Employer that offered a part-time transition period post-parental leave (e.g., 2-3 months) before returning to full-time work: 39% (All moms), 39% (Moms MMI $150,000 or more)

A company leadership team that sets the tone for other workers (setting meeting times within business hours, prioritizing family, etc.): 30% (All moms), 34% (Moms MMI $150,000 or more)

Manager / direct supervisor who outlines a transition plan to ease you back into a full workload: 30% (All moms), 28% (Moms MMI $150,000 or more)

A workplace culture that ensures calls/meetings aren’t scheduled at times inconvenient to parents of young children (e.g., not early in the morning or late in the day): 29% (All moms), 26% (Moms MMI $150,000 or more)

Support group of co-workers who are also parents of young children: 22% (All moms), 22% (Moms MMI $150,000 or more)

Co-workers who were understanding of last-minute changes to my schedule due to childcare responsibilities: 18% (All moms), 19% (Moms MMI $150,000 or more)

Mentor who coaches you through the transition: 19% (All moms), 18% (Moms MMI $150,000 or more)

Survey by APCO worldwide®
Appendix: Q25. How would you rate the helpfulness of the following potential areas of support outside of the workplace to help parents manage working while raising a young child/children?

![Bar chart showing ratings](image)

- Provided quick and simple ways to advocate for policy changes to support working parents: 67%
- Given advice and talking points on how to raise opportunities for your employer to better support parents with young children: 65%
- Given advice and talking points for starting the job search after a caregiving gap: 64%
- Finding and fostering a peer group of fellow working moms: 60%
- Being matched with a mentor to support and coach you on managing work and raising children: 59%

Survey by APCO worldwide®

**Data shown is the NET of “Very helpful” and “Extremely helpful”**

Significant testing between all moms HHI $150,000 or more