



FFL's FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE EVALUATION

POLICIES and the LAW

Please indicate which items you Have, Need, or Want

Good practice starts with sound policies. Workplaces should have policies that support pregnant women and parents and other caregivers, and comply with federal, state, and local laws.

Do the workplace policies state their opposition to pregnancy discrimination?

Do those responsible for hiring understand that pregnancy discrimination is illegal, and that asking questions during the interview about plans to have a family is against the law?

Do employees receive and sign for a copy of personnel policies when they are hired?

Do the policies recognize the rights of birthparents and adoptive parents?

Are your workplace policies regularly reviewed by counsel to ensure they comply with current federal, state, or district laws?*

Are there stated policies about how to pursue grievances?

Has the employer—including managers and supervisors—created a climate that is welcoming to suggestions and practical solutions by employees?

Comments: _____

COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY

Are workplace policies, practices, or benefits regarding pregnancy and parenting communicated through
a website,
signage,
personnel manual,
orientation,
ads/signage,
workshops or seminars, etc?

As benefits change, are communication vehicles updated?

Comments: _____

A FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE MEETS EVERYONE'S NEEDS

Does the company have flexible scheduling?

Can workers set their schedules so they avoid coming and going during rush hour?

Are policies about leave and flex-time in writing?

Are there part-time opportunities?

Does your workplace offer job sharing?
a compressed work week?
comp-time?

If there are job sharing opportunities, is there clarity in who is responsible for what, and are there clear paths of communication and reporting?

Is telecommuting available?

If you have telecommuting opportunities, do you have a written policy and agreement that both employer and employee sign?

*Check state and federal laws for requirements mandated in the workplace.

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Are flexibility options available to all employees regardless of gender, geography, pay grade, or seniority?

Is the hourly rate of part-time employees or those with flexible working schedules comparable to that of full-time staff?

Are there advancement opportunities for flex-time or part-time workers?

Comments: _____

HEALTHCARE and WELLNESS

Does the workplace offer employer-sponsored health coverage?

Does it include medical, prescription drug, vision, and dental plans?

Is prenatal/maternity coverage included in all employee health plans?

Is dependent care coverage available in all employee health plans?

If employer-sponsored coverage is available only to the employee, are additional insurance riders available to cover children of employees?

Are health plans available to part-time as well as full-time employees as part of their compensation package?

Are there eligible employees who do not use employer-sponsored coverage due to cost or inaccessibility?

Does the workplace accommodate parents taking prenatal classes?

Does the workplace offer or connect pregnant women and parents to wellness programs proven to cut down on leave for parents and dependents, such as smoking cessation, exercise, breastfeeding, or well baby programs?

Does the workplace provide a room (other than a bathroom) that is free from intrusion (e.g., locked or with signage for privacy) for women who are nursing or pumping breast milk?

Is there also an electrical outlet?

Is refrigeration available for storing breast milk?

Is there a comfortable chair?

Is there adequate time for lunch and a couple of breaks?

Are pregnant and nursing women allowed to have lidded water and snacks at their workstations?

Are healthy foods and snacks available in a workplace cafeteria, in breakroom vending machines, or at work-sponsored events?

Comments: _____

SAFETY on the JOB

Do the employee workstations include ergonomic foot rests or chairs with better back support to prevent unnecessary physical strain?

Does your workplace meet OSHA standards regarding the amount of time employees spend doing repetitive movements, heavy lifting, stair-climbing, or long periods of standing?*

Does your workplace meet OSHA standards for exposure to toxins or other reproductive hazards?*

Is the workplace smoke free?

Is there proper ventilation?

Comments: _____



Please indicate which items you Have, Need, or Want

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THE CRUCIAL CHALLENGE OF CHILDCARE

Does your workplace offer on-site or near-site childcare?

If your workplace offers childcare, does the center offer care for infants, children with special needs, sick children, and school-age children?

What is the weekly cost? Are there eligible employees who do not use workplace childcare due to cost or inaccessibility?

Are there subsidies for or has the employer/owner negotiated discounts at off-site childcare? Does the employer offer resources and referrals for off-site childcare?

Are there pre-tax spending accounts made available for dependent care?

Does your workplace list or connect parents to volunteer or paid babysitters? Do parents trade for babysitting services?

Comments: _____

PARENT-ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACE

Are there diaper-changing stations available in public restrooms (women's and men's)?

Is there designated nearby parking on-site for pregnant women or parents with infants?

Are family calls permitted during work hours?

If there is on-site childcare, are parents allowed time to visit during the day?

Can parents intermittently check in online via "nanny cam" at their daycare centers?

Comments: _____

FAMILY LEAVE

Does your workplace offer parental leave for both mothers and fathers—paid or unpaid?

What about leave for birthparents and adoptive families? If so, for how many weeks?

Does your workplace offer paid or unpaid leave for the care of a sick child?

If grandparents, other relatives, or foster parents are primary caretakers, can they also take leave for their dependents?

Is the employer willing to offer "flex-leave" after the birth or adoption, allowing part-time or compressed work hours to help ease new parents back into the workplace? (For example, if the policy is twelve weeks of leave for full-timers, can an employee return after six weeks and work half time for twelve weeks?)

Is an employee's job guaranteed while away on leave?

Are employee benefits continued while away on leave?

If the employer is a university or college, will tenure timeline requirements be extended for those taking parental or medical leave?

If your company has 50 or more staff members, are employees generally aware of their rights under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)?*

Do employees, including management, support other caregivers in the workplace when they need help?

Comments: _____

*Check state and federal laws for requirements mandated in the workplace.

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CONCLUSION

Every workplace has its own unique challenges. Employers should consider different solutions that meet the needs of the pregnant women and caretakers who make their workplace productive.

Every generation should strive to do better for the next. Inviting employees into the workplace evaluation process and remaining open to their suggestions lead to creative and even cost-effective solutions.

Editor's note: Check out *Working Mother's* "Best 100 Companies Report" at www.workingmother.com if you are seeking a family-friendly employer. You can also look for companies at which women fill half or more of the top executive positions. According to a 1988 Families and Work Institute study, such companies are far more likely to provide flex-time and on-site or nearby daycare than those with no women in top management. And if the company has employed a large percentage of women, they are much more likely to offer family-friendly benefits.

Developing a Task Force for Workplace Improvement

Consider distributing this evaluation among a small, representative group of employees. Ask all of your participants to take the evaluation individually and answer each question "have it," "need it," or "want it."

Designate a moderator or facilitator from outside your group. Establish a sense of camaraderie so that everyone can be heard within reasonable time constraints. Give each participant time to report evaluation answers and comments, and welcome written comments as well. Have a flip chart, chalk, or white board available for a group note taker.

Begin by listing the items in the "have it section." If you have available resources, but employees marked them as "want it" or "need it," your solution may be as simple as developing cost-effective communication strategies.

Rank the "need it" items in priority order 1, 2, or 3. What do employees need the most?

Take those marked "1"—the highest priority—and focus your energy there, or on any area where the law requires employers provide certain resources and support. Establish timelines, responsibility, communication tools, next meeting date, and any budgetary requirements. Thank your participants!



Let FFL know if you have creative workplace solutions that you'd like to share—especially if they are cost-effective! Contact info@feministsforlife.org.

Know it. Share it. Give it.



Did early American feminists like Susan B. Anthony really oppose abortion, or are their quotes simply taken out of context? Can their opposition to abortion be chalked up to Victorian attitudes about sex? Were they really concerned for the unborn as well as for women? Feminists for Life's *Herstory* articles are based on *original research into primary documents* by authors including Mary Krane Derr, Suzanne Schnittman, Lisa Belecci-st.romain, and Cat Clark. They bring the truth about pro-life feminist history to light.

"March Forth!" is a substantial 40-page issue including articles about Anna Julia Cooper, the daughter of a slave and slave owner turned educator, civil rights activist, suffragist, and adoptive mother and foster parent; Benazir Bhutto, a political prisoner who became the prime minister of Pakistan; and Pearl S. Buck, popular novelist and humanitarian activist. "March Forth!" is a "must have" for your library—and available in packs of 5 and 25 so you can share with friends and family.

Enclosed in each "March Forth!" magazine is a copy of FFL's "Voices of Our Feminist Foremothers" brochure, containing powerful pro-life quotes from many different suffragists. (This brochure is also available in packets of 50.)

Visit feministsforlife.org to order your Covetable Stuff™ now!