

# Supporting working parents

## Practical tips for all colleagues

As colleagues, we all play a part in creating a supportive workplace for working parents.

Balancing family life and work can be overwhelming at times, and small acts of understanding and support can make a real difference. We asked working parents directly about the

support they need and want, and here we share some simple and friendly ways you can help support your colleagues who are parents.

These tips can help make them feel valued, reduce stress, and promote a healthier work-life balance.



## SUPPORTING WORKING PARENTS

# 1 Flexibility and thoughtful scheduling

Helping working parents manage their time effectively can significantly ease their daily stress.

### Flexible hours and remote options

Many parents appreciate having the option to work from home or adjust their start and finish times. This flexibility allows them to manage school drop-offs, childcare, and other family commitments without feeling rushed.

### Avoiding key times

Try not to schedule important meetings during school run hours, early mornings, or other busy times for parents. Being mindful of these moments shows respect for your colleague's time and helps reduce unnecessary pressure.

### Understanding personal commitments

Recognise that parents, like all employees, have other responsibilities outside of work and avoid making assumptions about their schedules. Offering support without comment or judgment goes a long way in making them feel comfortable.





## 2 Effective support from colleagues during family juggling

Sometimes, a little support from a colleague can make all the difference in how a parent handles their work and family duties.

### Listening and empathy

Be a supportive ear when a colleague shares their struggles. Listen without adding more pressure or making them feel guilty. Offering genuine empathy can help them feel understood and less alone.

### Outcome-focused work

Instead of focusing on the strict 9-5 hours, prioritise tasks, outcomes, and results. This approach gives parents the flexibility they need to juggle work with their home life without feeling like they're falling behind.

### Open communication

Regularly check in with colleagues, whether it's a quick message or a phone call, to make sure they feel supported. This kind of communication can help parents feel more connected, especially if they're working remotely.



# 3 Small, impactful gestures

Sometimes, small actions can make a big difference in a parent's day.

## Acknowledgement of parental challenges

Recognise that parents often have hectic mornings, school runs, or children popping in during virtual meetings. Acknowledging these challenges shows you understand and appreciate their situation.

## Avoiding assumptions

Don't assume that a parent can't participate in a task or a meeting due to their family commitments. Understand that parenting today is diverse and that needs vary from family to family.

## Empathy for changing days

Every day can be different for a parent, depending on their child's needs. Being empathetic and flexible when a colleague's day is unpredictable can help ease their stress.





# 4 Creating a parent-friendly culture

Fostering a workplace culture that values and supports working parents is essential for creating a more inclusive environment.

## Inclusive planning

When organising meetings or events, try to accommodate family schedules. This might mean allowing parents to attend remotely or leave early for school events.

## Team flexibility & shared workload

Support a culture of teamwork by offering to take on tasks when necessary. This reduces individual pressure and helps normalise shared workloads within the team.

## Family-centric events

Hosting family-friendly events, or at least acknowledging family life in the workplace, helps create a culture that values working parents and makes them feel included.



## 5 Showing empathy for overwhelmed parents

Sometimes, parents simply need a little extra understanding and reassurance during busy periods.

### Non-judgmental listening and reassurance

Parents may be feeling stressed or overwhelmed. Listening without judgment and offering reassurance that their contributions are valued - regardless of their family commitments - can help ease their worries.

### Open support

Ask your colleagues how you can help, whether it's offering flexibility or taking on a task during a particularly busy or stressful time. Practical support can provide relief when they need it most.

### Proactive check-ins

Check in with colleagues regularly, especially if they're working remotely. This helps prevent feelings of isolation and reminds them they're part of a supportive team.





## 6 Respectful, sincere offers of help

It's important to offer help in a way that feels supportive and not intrusive.

### Mindful check-ins

A simple, “How are you doing today?”, “How can I help?” or “Is there anything I can do to lighten the load?” goes a long way in offering support without assumptions.

### Creating space for conversation

Encourage open and honest conversations where parents feel comfortable speaking up about their challenges. Providing a space for them to express their needs helps them feel heard and supported.

### PACE approach (playful, accepting, curious, empathetic)

Adopting a compassionate approach to interactions can create a positive and stress-free environment. Be playful when appropriate, accepting of diverse situations, curious about how you can help, and empathetic to their challenges.



Supporting working parents doesn't always require big gestures. It's the little things - like offering flexibility, understanding, and empathy - that can truly make a difference.

When we all contribute to creating a supportive environment, parents feel more engaged, productive, and balanced at work and at home.