



# ture This

Programs and Policies  
Affecting Today's Families



**"In this new economy, we have to think of family friendly policies in a new way. Not as perks. But for what they really are-good ideas that are good for workers and good for business. Make no mistake, companies succeed in the global marketplace when workers succeed around the kitchen table."**- US Department of Labor Secretary Alexis Herman May 1997- January 2001

Family friendly work environments and benefits are supported by many employers; however, some are still being introduced to the concepts. Today more employers are implementing new policies to improve their employee's experiences and create family friendly work environments and benefits. Mothers increasingly work outside the home. In 1990 nearly 60% of mothers of children younger than 6 worked, up from 30% in 1970. (US Census) Mothers of children with special needs are also at work, though they may cut back hours or stop working for a time, especially if their children have serious conditions. It's hard to balance work and raise children, especially children with special needs. Many organizations, public and private, are exploring initiatives to help with the challenges of the competing life roles employees who are parents play.

➤ In addition to the value of comprehensive health benefits, families may benefit from:

1. Flexible work schedules
  - Work arrangements that allow employees to work hours other than just 9-5.
2. Part-time work arrangements
  - Options to work less than a full week.
3. Job-sharing arrangements
  - Two people share the responsibilities, hours and benefits of one full time position.
4. Working from home or telecommuting
  - Employees carry out job responsibilities from home or another site, rather than going into the office.

### 5. Leaves of Absence

• Paid and unpaid leave, when an employee stops work for an extended period of time and their position is held until they can return to work.

### 6. Time-off policies

- Offering a "free day" to attend a school meeting.
- Scheduling holidays to coincide with school holidays.

### 7. Family friendly policies at work

- Allowing employees to make and receive calls from children and family members.
- Tracking down employees during family emergencies.

➤ Along with special work arrangements some employers offer programs to help parents work productively while caring for their families. Some examples:

### 1. Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

• Provide various services, resources and information for employees and their families to address personal needs or problems.

### 2. Child Care Centers

• Some employers provide subsidized child care on site or nearby - and may also include sick child care.

### 3. Breast Feeding Support

• Employers may offer mothers who are breast feeding a private, comfortable space to pump milk and a refrigerator to store it.

(Employers who make it easier for women to breastfeed have lower absenteeism and fewer infant illnesses. Business, Babies, the Bottom Line, Washington Business Group on Health, 1996.)

Family Voices is a national grassroots network of families and friends speaking on behalf of children with special health needs. Our children are also part of the wider world of children. With a Partners in Information and Communication (PIC) Cooperative Agreement from the MCH Bureau - DHHS, Family Voices is working to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health.

*PICture This* is a digest of articles and news clips to share with families, family organizations, and our professional partners to offer a flavor of activities going on in the maternal and child health community. We hope to encourage flourishing partnerships!

## Partners...



### The National Association for Home Care (NAHC)

concentrates on representing and supporting home care and hospice providers improve the services patients receive. This organization fully supports the idea that when possible, patients should receive care in the comfort of their own homes. The members of NAHC act as advocates, influence policy and promote the highest quality of care possible.

*Peds@Home* is NAHC's electronic newsletter about pediatric hospice and home care. The newsletter provides information, links, highlights pediatric programs and contact information on various programs. Go to: [www.nahc.org/nahc/peds/peds.html](http://www.nahc.org/nahc/peds/peds.html) to access Peds@Home. Or view The NAHC web site at:

[www.nahc.org](http://www.nahc.org) Contact information: 228 7th Street, SE Washington, DC 20003 **Phone:** 202/547-7424  
**Fax:** 202/547-3540.



## Family Resource Corner

\* **PICTure This Archived Issues-** Go to [www.familyvoices.org](http://www.familyvoices.org) to access the current and past issues of PICTure This.

\* **Winter Safety Tips from KidSource online-** You can easily access tips and information about how to be safe during the winter season. There's information about driving safely, surviving a winter storm, keeping your house warm and many other common issues we face during the winter months. Go to: [www.kidsource.com](http://www.kidsource.com) to find out more!

\* **Información en español-** The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality provides several articles of information pertaining health care and quality en español.

Go to: [www.ahrq.gov/consumer/espanoix.htm](http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/espanoix.htm)

\* **National Express Lane Eligibility (ELE)-** The Children's Partnership has launched a web site to increase the numbers of eligible children who have health insurance and benefit from subsidized health insurance programs. Connecting Medicaid, State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and other programs should increase the overall enrollment numbers. This site will provide information, resources and tools to help identify and enroll low income children in health insurance programs. Go to: [www.expresslane.info](http://www.expresslane.info) for more information.

## What do you think?



Family Voices is looking for parents' comments and suggestions concerning employee benefits. Family Voices is working on a project with MassGeneral Hospital for Children; New England SERVE; and the Health and Disability Working Group at Boston University. We plan to use the information you provide us to help inform families and encourage employers to create family friendly work places. What benefits are most helpful to those of you juggling work and family lives. Please help us out by completing the attached questionnaire and returning it once it is finished. Thank you!

## Tidbits for the Month



*We wish you a safe, fun, peaceful and family-filled holiday season!!*



Resources for Children's Good Health

## Bright Futures for FAMILIES

\* We are pleased to announce our newly designed web site - check it out!

[www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org](http://www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org)

\* **Transition!** We are in the process of transitioning PICTure This into Bright Futures: Family Matters! Keep an eye out!!



Highlights for the next PICTure This...  
**Health Differences among Cultures**

## Share your news with others!

We're always looking for news and activities about family organization and programs to post. Share exciting events and activities about your organization that will be interesting to others. Email Lindsey Pope at [lpope@fcsn.org](mailto:lpope@fcsn.org) or fax at (617) 572-2094 with your tidbits. To subscribe to the newsletter, email or call Lindsey at (617) 236-7210 ?

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