

**Business Smart.**  
**Family Friendly.**  
**Future Ready.**



# The Research Basis for Family-Friendly Workplaces

Family Forward NC is an innovative business initiative designed to improve children's health and well-being and ensure our state's business climate is competitive. It is business-led change to increase access to family-forward workplaces partnering with small, medium and large businesses to identify and implement policies that will generate long-term benefits.

83% of millennials would leave their jobs in favor of those with more family-friendly benefits.



## Business Smart.

Family-friendly workplaces provide a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining talent, increasing productivity and employee satisfaction, and reducing absenteeism.

## Family Friendly.

Increasingly, working parents consider family-friendly offerings a priority when it comes to choosing or staying in a job. In fact, 83 percent of millennials would leave their jobs in favor of those with more family-friendly benefits. Workplaces that support parents have a direct impact on their children's health, well-being and future academic and career achievement.

## Future Ready.

North Carolina faces a growing skills gap. By 2020, 67 percent of jobs in the state will require some post-secondary education. Family-friendly business policies help children build a strong foundation for future academic and career success through improved access to high-quality health care, education, and family economic security. These benefits all come back to business by building a strong future workforce.

**Family-friendly workplaces provide an immediate payoff and long-term gains. Promoting family-friendly practices that are within reach of all North Carolina businesses is a win-win.**

This fact sheet lays out the research base for family-forward workplace policies, including leave, flexible work, accommodations, and benefits. Working definitions are provided for each policy, along with research-based outcomes for young children, for parents and families, and for employers. Sources are listed.

*Family Forward NC is an initiative of the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation supported by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina as the founding sponsor.*

# Leave Policies

POLICY/PRACTICE AND DEFINITION	RESULTS FOR EMPLOYERS
<p><b>Maternity/Paternity Leave</b></p> <p>Maternity/Paternity leave is paid leave for the birth, adoption, or acceptance of the foster placement of a child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases or does not decrease productivity</li> <li>• Improves recruitment</li> <li>• New mothers more likely to come back to work (and to same employer) and stay employed</li> <li>• New fathers more likely to stay employed</li> <li>• Reduces turnover costs through increased retention</li> <li>• Improves morale and job satisfaction</li> </ul>
<p><b>Family Medical Leave</b></p> <p>Family Medical Leave is paid leave to take care of a child with a long-term illness or for an employee's own chronic or temporary medical issue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases productivity</li> <li>• Does not lower profits or harm employment</li> <li>• Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</li> <li>• Reduces employee absenteeism</li> <li>• Provides healthier work environment</li> <li>• Reduces health care costs</li> <li>• Workers recover from temporary disability, illness or injury more quickly and are less likely to relapse or be re-injured</li> <li>• Reduces likelihood of dangerous injury or death on the job</li> <li>• Increases loyalty</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parental Leave</b></p> <p>Parental Leave is short-term paid leave that allows a parent to take an afternoon or a day off to pick up a sick child at school or tend to one at home, attend a school performance or athletic event, or otherwise minister to a child's needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves productivity</li> <li>• Increases retention</li> <li>• Reduces complaints of discrimination towards employees with caregiving responsibilities</li> <li>• Improves workplace climate</li> </ul>

## RESULTS FOR CHILDREN/FAMILIES

### Children

- Increases birthweight
- Reduces infant mortality
- Improves health care
- Increases well-baby care
- Increases immunization rates
- Supports child development
- Increases educational attainment
- Increases IQ
- Increases test scores
- Reduces behavioral/mental health problems
- Improves regular school attendance
- Reduces teen pregnancy rates
- Increases wages as adults

### Parents/Family

- Improves family incomes
- Increases initiation and length of breastfeeding
- Decreases maternal depression and stress
- Increases paternal engagement in caregiving
- Increases job satisfaction
- Builds healthier parent-child relationships
- Reduces wage gap between women and men
- Reduces wage gap between mothers and childless women
- Reduces stigma of taking maternity leave
- Increases gender equality and increases women's advancement at work

### Children

- Encourages use of preventative health care

### Parents/Family

- Encourages use of preventative health care
- Workers recover from temporary disability, illness or injury more quickly
- Reduces financial strain from chronic illness or injury.

### Children

- Improves regular school attendance
- Improves grades and test scores
- Reduces behavioral/mental health problems
- Earlier identification of learning problems
- Improves likelihood of high school graduation
- Improves likelihood of attending college

### Parents/Family

- Decreases stress
- Increases engagement in children's education



# Flexible Work

POLICY/PRACTICE AND DEFINITION	RESULTS FOR EMPLOYERS
<p><b>Flexitime</b></p> <p>A flexible work schedule allows employees to choose when they work, as long as they put in their hours every week.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases productivity</li> <li>• Improves the bottom line</li> <li>• Improves recruitment</li> <li>• Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</li> <li>• Reduces employee absenteeism</li> <li>• Improves relationships with co-workers</li> <li>• Increases morale, loyalty, commitment</li> <li>• Increases overall job satisfaction</li> </ul>
<p><b>Working from Home/Telecommuting</b></p> <p>Telecommuting allows employees to work from home or some other remote site some or all of the time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases productivity</li> <li>• Reduces real estate and overhead costs</li> <li>• Increases net worth</li> <li>• Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</li> <li>• Increases employee loyalty</li> <li>• Employees can work more hours before experiencing work/family conflict</li> <li>• Reduces employee absenteeism</li> <li>• Saves money during emergencies and weather-related disruptions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Job Sharing and/or Part Time Work <i>temporary or permanent</i></b></p> <p>In a job share, two or more employees may share a single position, each working a fraction of the necessary time. Job sharing allows employees to hold a position and still have time to spend with children, or take care of other family responsibilities.</p> <p>A full-time employee might be allowed to shift to part-time—either as part of a job share, or simply as a reduction in working hours—and still continue in the same position.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases productivity</li> <li>• Increases net worth</li> <li>• Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</li> <li>• Increases job satisfaction</li> </ul>
<p><b>Predictable Scheduling</b></p> <p>Predictable scheduling involves ensuring that employees have some control over their scheduled working hours, not changing work schedules without employees' consent, and/or giving employees advanced warning about changes to their work schedules.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases productivity</li> <li>• Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</li> <li>• Reduces employee absenteeism</li> <li>• Increases morale, loyalty, commitment</li> </ul>

## RESULTS FOR CHILDREN/FAMILIES

### Children

- Improves physical and social-emotional health, through parental stress reduction
- Reduces obesity
- Improves education, through increased parental engagement

### Parents/Family

- Improves health
- Increases happiness and job satisfaction
- Reduces stress
- Allows employees to care for sick or elderly family members
- Improves family economic security

### Parents/Family

- Saves employees time
- Increases job satisfaction
- Reduces reports of physical and mental fatigue
- Offers large benefits for disabled or temporarily disabled workers

### Parents/Family

- Increases job satisfaction
- Provides more time to meet family needs

### Children

- Reduces stress on children
- Reduces behavior problems
- Impacts cognitive development in language and math

### Parents/Family

- Allows employees to plan for child care, school activities, health care visits, and transportation
- Allows employees to care for sick or elderly family members
- Increases family economic security, due to predictable pay

# Accommodations

POLICY/PRACTICE AND DEFINITION	RESULTS FOR EMPLOYERS
<p><b>Support for Breastfeeding Mothers</b></p> <p>This could include writing corporate policies to support breastfeeding women; teaching employees about breastfeeding; providing designated private space for breastfeeding or pumping; allowing flexible scheduling during work; giving mothers options for returning to work, such as teleworking, part-time work, and extended maternity leave; providing on-site or near-site child care; providing high-quality breast pumps; and offering professional lactation management services and support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</li> <li>• Lowers health care and insurance costs</li> <li>• Reduces employee absenteeism</li> <li>• Allows for a quicker return to work after baby's birth</li> <li>• Improves public relations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Babies at Work</b></p> <p>A Babies at Work program allows parents to bring infants to work with them—generally up to about six months of age or crawling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases productivity</li> <li>• Lowers health care costs from increased breastfeeding rates</li> <li>• Improves recruitment</li> <li>• Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</li> <li>• Allows for a quicker return to work after baby's birth</li> <li>• Increases customer loyalty</li> <li>• Increases positive publicity</li> <li>• Improves morale</li> <li>• Increases teamwork and collaboration</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pregnant Worker Accommodations</b></p> <p>Pregnant worker accommodations are work adjustments that allow pregnant women to do their jobs safely, without jeopardizing their health or the health of their babies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases productivity</li> <li>• Provides benefit to employee at no- or low-cost to employer</li> <li>• Improves recruitment</li> <li>• Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</li> <li>• Reduces employee absenteeism</li> <li>• Reduces health care costs</li> <li>• Reduces litigation costs</li> <li>• Increases diversity</li> <li>• Increases safety</li> <li>• Increases employee commitment and satisfaction</li> </ul>



## RESULTS FOR CHILDREN/FAMILIES

### Children

- Reduces infant mortality
- Breastfeeding lowers child's risk of ear infections, respiratory infections, diarrhea, dermatitis, gastrointestinal disorders, asthma (young children), obesity, types 1 and 2 diabetes
- Increases parent-child bonding
- May increase IQ
- Reduces doctor and hospital visits

### Parents/Family

- Breastfeeding lowers mother's risk of: bleeding, weight gain, maternal postpartum depression, cancers (breast, ovarian, endometrial), type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis
- Improves family economic security

### Children

- Facilitates better socialized babies
- Increases parent-child bonding
- Provides health benefits of breastfeeding

### Parents/Family

- Lowers child care costs
- Improves family economic security
- Creates social network/support for parents
- Reduces stress
- Provides more options for women
- Facilitates easier breastfeeding
- Enables working fathers to be more involved with their babies
- Facilitates happier babies and parents

### Children

- Improves unborn baby's health and safety, including lower risk of preterm birth and low birthweight

### Parents/Family

- Improves mother's health and safety
- Improves family economic security

# Benefits

POLICY/PRACTICE AND DEFINITION	RESULTS FOR EMPLOYERS
<p><b>Health Benefits</b></p> <p>Health benefits can include health and dental insurance, as well as on-site wellness centers, on-site fitness centers, subsidies for joining a gym, and/or health- and fitness-oriented programs for employees' children or spouses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduces payroll taxes and workers' compensation premiums, and employer contributions are tax-deductible</li> <li>• Improves recruitment</li> <li>• Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)</b></p> <p>A Health Flexible Spending Account is a pre-tax benefit account employees put money into that can be used to pay for certain out-of-pocket health care costs, tax-free.</p> <p>A Dependent Care FSA (DCFSA) is a pre-tax benefit account used to pay for eligible dependent care services, such as preschool, summer day camp, before or after school programs, and child care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases productivity</li> <li>• Reduces payroll taxes</li> <li>• Improves recruitment</li> <li>• Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</li> <li>• Eases administration</li> <li>• Improves morale</li> </ul>
<p><b>Backup/Emergency Child Care</b></p> <p>Backup and emergency child care programs are offered either in centers or in-home, and allow employees to continue working despite temporary disruptions in normal caregiving arrangements. Employers can negotiate rates with local child care facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases productivity, including working outside official job responsibilities</li> <li>• Improves recruitment</li> <li>• Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</li> <li>• Reduces employee absenteeism</li> <li>• Reduces "fill-in" costs</li> </ul>

## RESULTS FOR CHILDREN/FAMILIES

### Children

- Improves health, through increased access to health care, including primary care, dental care, needed healthcare services, mental health care, prescriptions, preventive care, treatment for chronic conditions, prenatal care (for mothers)

### Parents/Family

- Improves health, through increased access to health care, including greater access to primary care, preventive screenings, ambulatory care, prescription medications and chronic disease care; greater medication adherence; and higher rates of diagnosis
- Reduces depression
- Improves self-reported health
- Improves family economic security

### Children and Parents/Family

- Health FSAs have similar employee and family outcomes to health insurance (see above)
- Dependent Care FSAs have similar employee and family outcomes to subsidized or reimbursed child care (see below)
- Improves family economic security, through reduced out-of-pocket medical costs from using pre-tax dollars

### Children and Parents/Family

- Reduces stress
- Improves work/life balance

# Benefits *continued*

POLICY/PRACTICE AND DEFINITION	RESULTS FOR EMPLOYERS
<p><b>Child Care Onsite</b></p> <p>Child care onsite takes place in facilities where parents are on the premises, like at their place of employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</li> <li>• Allows tax credit of up to 25% of facility expenditures, plus 10% of any resource and referral expenditures, up to \$150,000 in a calendar year; business expense tax deductions for remaining child care facility expenses</li> <li>• Improves employee performance and reduces absenteeism compared to when using off-site child care</li> <li>• Increases employment of women</li> <li>• Increases employee loyalty</li> </ul>
<p><b>Subsidized or Reimbursed Child Care</b></p> <p>An employer can subsidize employees' child care, paying all or some part of approved arrangements and/or reserving slots at particular facilities for employees' children. Employers can contribute up to \$5,000 to the cost of each employee's child care without the subsidy being added to the employee's taxable income.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</li> <li>• Reduces employee tardiness and absenteeism</li> <li>• Increases employment of women</li> <li>• Increases employee loyalty</li> </ul>

## RESULTS FOR CHILDREN/FAMILIES

### Children

- Improves health
- Improves education

### Parents/Family

- Saves employees time
- Highly ranked as a benefit

### Children

- Improves health
- Improves education

### Parents/Family

- Improves family economic security
- Provides an option for summer care for school-aged children

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