

Family-Friendly Businesses:

Supporting Your Hampton Roads Employees and Their Families

EVMS
MINUS 9 TO 5

Preparing families from
conception to kindergarten





Childcare challenges threaten many businesses' productivity and strength of the workforce....

And it is only getting more challenging for families of young children.

Hampton Roads is a great place to live, work, play and raise a family! Home to nearly 452,000 families, the region boasts beautiful landscapes, a strong economy, a diverse workforce, good schools, and a strong military presence. But for many of these families, especially those with very young children, finding work-life balance to meet the demands of parenting while working is a growing challenge.

Many businesses today struggle to find talented, diverse, and committed employees. Since the onset of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, many workers, disproportionately women, have been caught between the needs of their families, childcare and virtual schooling, and their careers. Many women have been forced to leave their jobs, resulting in a dearth of talented and skilled females in the workforce, and a significant gap in the job applicant pool.

This toolkit will provide businesses with ideas, knowledge, and resources to advance early childhood outcomes while supporting one of their most valuable assets, their employees. Working families have a lot to juggle, but employers can help make that a little easier by implementing policies and programs that help Hampton Roads' residents balance both family and work.

WHAT HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION DONE TO START EXPLORING FAMILY-FRIENDLY BUSINESS PRACTICES?	YES	NO
Assess employees' needs by survey or discussion		
Offer flexible work arrangements		
Educate employees on tax and subsidy eligibility		
Create a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) for your employees		
Offer the following benefits:		
• Personal leave		
• Paid time off		
• Sick leave		
• Vacation leave		
Offer the following insurances:		
• Health		
• Dental		
• Vision		
• Short-term disability		
Allow donation of leave time		
Contribute to or subsidize childcare		
Provide access to a care marketplace or resource and referral service		
Provide backup care options		
Provide child development, parenting and informational resources		

**According to the US
Bureau of Labor Statistics,
two million women left
the workforce in 2020,
a movement dubbed
the “She-Cession”**



UNDERSTANDING YOUR EMPLOYEE'S NEEDS:

Two-thirds of employees would leave their job for another that offered better work-life benefits. Team members are typically a business's largest investment and by understanding and responding to their needs, companies can retain their employees.

Employers can find out more about the specific needs of their employees in a variety of ways.

- Survey your workforce on their work-family needs annually.
- Host a series of informal meetings or focus groups where working families can share their needs, challenges, and ideas.
- Educate employees on available benefits and establish connection to local resources.
- Include employees in discussions about the benefits offered and how these benefits might better serve them.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY PRACTICES AND POLICIES:

There are a number of practices and policies that employers can consider, depending on the needs of your employees. Research indicates that family-friendly workplaces see benefits of increased productivity, company loyalty, and happier and healthy employees, resulting in employee retention and less employee absenteeism.

By offering benefits that support physical and mental health, businesses can contribute to financial stability and well-being of employees and their families. Benefit offerings could include:

Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance

Even if you already provide these benefits, consider adjustments that allow employees lower premiums, lower co-pays, or smaller deductibles. Employees may put off appointments or necessary care due to cost.

Short Term Disability Insurance

Provides financial help to employees who are temporarily out of work due to illness, injury, or pregnancy and helps to maintain financial stability for the employee and family.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

Provides employees with access to free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, and referral to follow-up services for personal or work-related concerns, including stress, grief, family problems, substance abuse or other challenges.

Sick Leave, Personal Leave, and Paid Time Off

Adjust leave policies to better meet the needs of working parents. Employees who are parents are challenged by caring for sick children, school closures, and other events like parent-teacher conferences, athletic events, or school activities.

Vacation Leave

Vacation time allows employees the time to recharge and rest, spend time with their family, and reduce stress. Employers who provide and encourage use of vacation time report increased productivity and reduction of turnover, and a decrease in workers' compensation claims and health care costs.

**State economies lose up to
\$3.47 billion annually due to
employees' childcare issues¹**

67% of parents in Virginia say lack of access to child care amid the pandemic has negatively impacted someone in their household's job²

Building a culture of flexibility is one strategy that employers find to be effective in employee retention and improving productivity. A variety of time flexible options can be implemented so employees can more easily balance parenting and their work, while benefiting the employer, too.

Flex time

Allowing employee to create their own work schedule can be helpful in allowing them to balance work tasks and family needs.

Telecommuting or remote work location

Allowing employee to work from their home or other remote location instead of the traditional office setting.

Job sharing/part-time work

Dividing job responsibilities into two part-time positions, allowing two employees to work together to fill one position.

Predictable scheduling

Establishing a reliable or set schedule will help employees to find consistent childcare. If a predictable schedule is not feasible, allowing early notification of schedules will allow employees time to accommodate childcare needs.

Parental involvement leave

Providing parental involvement leave can provide parents with an opportunity to attend children's school events like plays, sports, or parent-teacher conferences easily.

Breastfeeding policies and supports

Provide private space and breaks for pumping and storing breast milk.

Understand the federal laws that may be applicable to your business that allows for break time for nursing mothers.

BOOSTING THE BOTTOM LINE FOR FAMILIES:

Salaries are important, but so are other benefits you can offer to your employees to ensure they are keeping the most money in their pockets. There are several ways that you can help employees boost their bottom line. Using tax-advantaged strategies helps employees maximize their dollars.

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)

Creating a Flexible Spending Account option allows parents to use pre-tax dollars to reimburse themselves for certain out-of-pocket childcare with dollars saved before taxes.

Tax and Childcare Subsidy Eligibility

Educate employees about their tax credit and childcare subsidy eligibility, connecting them with resources for maximizing these benefits.

Childcare Subsidy Information - www.doe.virginia.gov/cc/index.html

Contribute to or Subsidize Childcare

Employers can contribute funds toward each employee's childcare needs without the subsidy being added to their taxable income or the employer having to pay payroll taxes because it is not income.

Tax Credits

Consult a tax professional to provide specific guidance on these tax-related strategies and the implications for your organization. Tax credits may be available to you based on the benefits you offer.

1 in 3 mothers is considering leaving the workforce, potentially impacting 27,800+ working mothers in Hampton Roads³

HELP EMPLOYEES ACCESS CHILDCARE:

New parents have a lot of things to think about and many don't realize looking for childcare needs to start very early, often as soon as they find out they are pregnant! The waiting lists for infant and toddler care are very long and it can take months to secure a space. Further, knowing what to look for when visiting childcare centers can be confusing. Helping parents access childcare that meets their needs can make for more productive employees. Provide parents with information on how to secure childcare by sharing the following:

- Childcare Aware of Virginia provides comprehensive, up-to-date information about childcare in Virginia at www.vachildcare.com including:
 - Resource and Referral on options located near you
 - What to look for in childcare
 - Types of childcare
 - Questions to ask when exploring childcare options
 - Financial assistance
 - Family resources
- 1-866- KIDSTLC Ext. 2 provides person-to-person information
- Low-cost or no-cost to family childcare options may be available based on family income and other factors.
 - Local information can be found at www.ReadySetRegisterHR.org
 - o Early Head Start/Head Start (8 weeks to age 5)
 - o Virginia Preschool Initiative (4-year olds)
 - o Hampton Roads Mixed Delivery Collaborative (3 and 4-year olds)

Tomorrow's workforce will be created by the young children your employees are raising today. Ensuring that Hampton Roads' families are equipped and supported to raise children who are healthy, thriving, and enter school ready to learn is the vision of EVMS Minus 9 to 5. It takes a community – all sectors—pulling together to make this happen. Businesses and employers today can make a difference by investing in family-friendly policies and practices that support their employees and their families.



The health and wellbeing of each of our employees is essential to the health of our company. Giving everyone 23 days off a year provides time to utilize health benefits for themselves and their families. Paid time off can look expensive, but with less sick days, higher productivity rates, and greater retention of employees, it is a win-win for both employees and companies.

Tara Ramsey, CEO, Instant Systems

At Chartway, we offer a flexible work model that fuels our team members' energy, physical and mental well-being, and productivity while promoting a collaborative culture. We believe this approach allows our organization and the team members we serve the ability to thrive.

Rebecca Riordan, Chartway Credit Union



¹www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/media-uploads/Employer%20Survey%20Report%20Pt.%201%20FINAL_7.31.20.pdf

²www.vapromisepartnership.com/sites/default/files/2021-06/Virginia%20Promise%20Partnership%20Data%20Profile%20-%20Hampton%20Roads.pdf

³www.vapromisepartnership.com/sites/default/files/2021-06/Virginia%20Promise%20Partnership%20Data%20Profile%20-%20Hampton%20Roads.pdf

⁴www.uschamberfoundation.org/blog/post/new-data-shows-working-parents-look-business-childcare-reform

7 in 10 working parents say providing parents with access to quality and affordable childcare would have a positive effect across economic indicators⁴

PARENTING, CHILD DEVELOPMENT, AND INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES:

Babies and children don't come with an instruction manual! Parenting is tough and can be stressful. Compiling and connecting families with information, resources and other parenting support can help ease parent-related stressors while supporting your employees' needs.

Some reliable resources include:

The American Academy of Pediatrics Parenting - www.healthychildren.org

Parenting Resources in the 757 - www.minus9to5.org/resources/parenting-resources/

Parenting Zero to Three - www.zerotothree.org/parenting

The Basics Hampton Roads - www.minus9to5.org/resources/the-basics-hr/

Employees may experience different needs at different times. Knowing where to help them find assistance can help address needs more quickly. Access to local, specific resources is easy in Hampton Roads. Direct employees to www.Resources757.org, a local directory with a variety of resources, including basic needs like food, housing, and utility assistance. Many other additional resources are listed on the site as well.



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To learn more about EVMS Minus 9 to 5 including
how to get involved, please contact
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partner organizations

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