

# Working parents: Give us flexibility!

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[Flexible work](#) arrangements are all the rage. In theory, they improve employees' lives while increasing, or at least not decreasing, employee productivity. Such arrangements can help save money on facilities-related costs, and the work-from-anywhere foundation offers social advantages, including reduced commuting time and congestion.

But how to test the theory? How can one quantify the effects on people and workplaces related to workplace flexibility? Consultant FlexJobs has released its third annual study on flexible work arrangements, and may be getting closer to quantifying flexibility's benefits and limitations.

The company got input from 650 working parents, some with flexible schedules. The questions focused on how flexibility effects their work-life balance, their relationships with loved ones, and their health. Among the findings:

Effect on relationships at home:

Workplace flexibility matters more to men than to women, at least in terms of who takes advantage of such benefits.

- 99 percent of working parents think a flexible job would make them a happier person in general;
- 94 percent of working parents think having a job with some type of flexibility would allow them to spend more time with family and friends;
- 93 percent of working parents think having a job with work flexibility would help them be a more involved parent;
- 89 percent think having a job with work flexibility would help them be a more attentive spouse/partner/significant other;
- 52 percent say flexible work options would increase the amount of time they have for date nights;
- 50 percent say flexible work would improve their sex lives in some way;
- 19 percent said flexible work is unrelated to improving romantic relationships;
- 67 percent think having a job with work flexibility would help them be a better

Effect on [work-life balance](#), which 61 percent of working parents say is terrible or needs improvement, and health:

- 90 percent of working parents are absolutely certain or very confident that a job with work flexibility would decrease their levels of stress;
- Almost the same number — 91 percent — report being stressed out by their current work-life balance;

- More than half say their out-of-whack work-life balance negatively affects their health;

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- 93 percent of working parents think having a job with work flexibility would help them take better care of themselves.

Preferred flexibility options included the following:

- Telecommuting all of the time: 77 percent
- Flexible schedule: 53 percent
- Part-time schedule: 37 percent
- Telecommuting sometimes: 34 percent
- [Freelance work](#): 30 percent
- Alternative schedule: 14 percent

And if they could reduce their work week hours to achieve better balance, here are the hours they'd prefer:

- 30-40 hours: 56 percent
- 20-29 hours: 37 percent
- Less than 20 hours: 24 percent

“The overwhelming message from survey respondents is this: Flexible work arrangements can positively affect people’s personal health, as well as improve their romantic relationships,” said Brie Weiler Reynolds, director of online content for FlexJobs. “The survey results clearly show the impact of flexible work.”