



Research Reveals Stress Peaks for Working Parents During the Holiday Season

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Employer Support and Reliable Child Care are Key to Easing Parents' Mounting Seasonal Pressures

NEWTON, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Dec. 9, 2025-- The pressure of balancing work and family reaches an all-time high during the holiday season, according to [Bright Horizons](#) (NYSE:BFAM), the leading global provider of early education and child care. This time of year brings mounting pressures from family, friends, work, and society to create picture-perfect celebrations.

A new survey of 500 employed U.S. parents of young children, commissioned by [Bright Horizons](#) and conducted by Opinium, found that 68% report juggling work and child care as a top source of holiday stress. Nearly half (47%) say they need more child care support to complete everything on their holiday to-do lists, and 34% need extra child care options such as back up care or holiday camps during school breaks. More than half (51%) admit feeling increased guilt when balancing family time with work and additional seasonal responsibilities.

These findings align with broader research on holiday stress. A [Modern Health survey](#) reports that 57% of employees consider the holidays the most mentally draining time of year, with financial stress and family obligations topping the list. Among parents, 66% expect family conflict to harm their mental health, and many feel pressure to overspend and maintain work performance during this period. A [C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll](#) found that 18% of parents rate their holiday stress as high, with mothers reporting nearly twice the stress of fathers. Together, these insights underscore the unique challenges parents face as they juggle professional responsibilities and family obligations during the festive season.

Beyond seasonal stress, long-term trends show working parents face systemic challenges. Earlier this fall, the latest [Modern Family Index](#) commissioned by Bright Horizons revealed that 79% of working parents feel forced to choose between sacrifices at home or at work, and 80% say the workforce hasn't evolved to meet modern caregiving needs. According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), both parents are employed in 67% of married households with children under 18, leaving many to face a difficult dilemma: balancing career ambitions with family responsibilities. The research reveals a looming challenge for U.S. businesses, as 58% of working parents have considered leaving the workforce altogether.

As working parents face mounting pressures during the holiday season, access to reliable child care and employer support is more critical than ever. Bright Horizons offers solutions that help families find balance and peace of mind—For more information on Bright Horizons services and tips for reducing holiday stress, [click here](#).

About Bright Horizons Family Solutions Inc.

Bright Horizons® is a leading global provider of high-quality early education and child care, back-up care, and workforce education services. For more than 35 years, we have partnered with employers to support workforces by providing services that help working families and employees thrive personally and professionally. Bright Horizons operates more than 1,000 early education and child care centers in the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, and India, and serves more than 1,450 of the world's leading employers. Bright Horizons' early education and child care centers, back-up child and elder care, and workforce education programs help employees succeed at each life and career stage. For more information, please visit to www.brighthouse.com.

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