



Imagine a Day Without Working Parents: What Would Happen if Millions Couldn't Get to Work?

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National Working Parents Day Highlights Why Reliable Care is a Workforce Issue

NEWTON, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Sep. 16, 2026-- On National Working Parents Day, [Bright Horizons](#) (NYSE: BFAM) is calling attention to the critical role working parents play in the workforce and the growing impact child care challenges have on employees, employers, and the broader economy.

According to a 2026 report from [Pew Research Center](#), 45% of working parents say being a parent makes it harder to advance at work, while 52% say their job makes it harder to be a good parent. More than half (54%) say balancing work and family responsibilities is difficult, underscoring the ongoing tension many parents face between meeting the demands of work and caring for their families.

The impact reaches beyond individual families, with a recent study from [ReadyNation](#) estimating that insufficient child care for children under age five costs the U.S. economy \$172 billion annually through lost earnings, productivity, and tax revenue. More than 60% of working parents surveyed said child care challenges caused them to arrive late, leave work early, miss work altogether, or become distracted on the job.

Child Care Challenges Follow Parents to Work

For many families, the challenge isn't just about finding child care, but having care they can count on. When care arrangements fall through, parents are often forced to miss work, adjust schedules, decline opportunities, or manage competing responsibilities at home and at work.

Bright Horizons' 2025 [Modern Family Index](#) found that 94% of working parents say reliable child care is important to their success at work, while 79% report making sacrifices at work or at home to manage caregiving responsibilities.

"Working parents play an essential role in every industry and community, yet too many families continue to face difficult choices when reliable care isn't available," said Stephen Kramer, Chief Executive Officer of Bright Horizons. "National Working Parents Day is a reminder that supporting working families isn't simply a family issue. It's a workforce issue, a productivity issue, and one that affects children, parents, employers, and communities alike."

Working Parents are Looking to Employers for Support

As caregiving challenges persist, many parents feel they are navigating them with fewer sources of support than previous generations. The most recent wave of the Modern Family Index shows [81%](#) of working parents say the "village" of people they can rely on to help support child care during the workday has shrunk compared to prior generations. Additionally, 63% wish they had access to more reliable, formal care during the workday, while 65% wish their employer played a bigger role in providing resources and support to help them care for their children.

These findings align with broader Modern Family Index research, which found that [80%](#) of working parents believe the workforce has not fully adjusted to reflect the care needs of modern families.

Reliable Care Supports Workforce Participation

Reliable care helps employees remain present, productive, and engaged at work. When care becomes unavailable or unreliable, the effects can be felt through absenteeism, reduced productivity, and difficult career decisions.

"No single company can solve the nation's child care challenges alone, but employers can make a meaningful difference in the lives of working families," adds Kramer. "Whether it's helping employees access high-quality child care, providing back-up care when plans fall through, or creating greater flexibility, the organizations that invest in working families are helping employees stay productive, engaged, and connected to the workforce."

National Working Parents Day is observed annually on September 16 and recognizes the millions of parents balancing professional responsibilities with caring for their families. Learn more about how employers are helping working parents succeed through access to child care, back-up care, and family support resources at [BrightHorizons.com](#).

About Bright Horizons Family Solutions Inc.

Bright Horizons® is a leading provider of high-quality early education and child care, back-up care, and workforce education services. For 40 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 approximately 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, go to [www.brighthorizons.com](#).

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