

Caught in the Middle

Parents' Growing Struggle
to Balance Work and Family
and Why we Should Care

The New America Foundation
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Overview

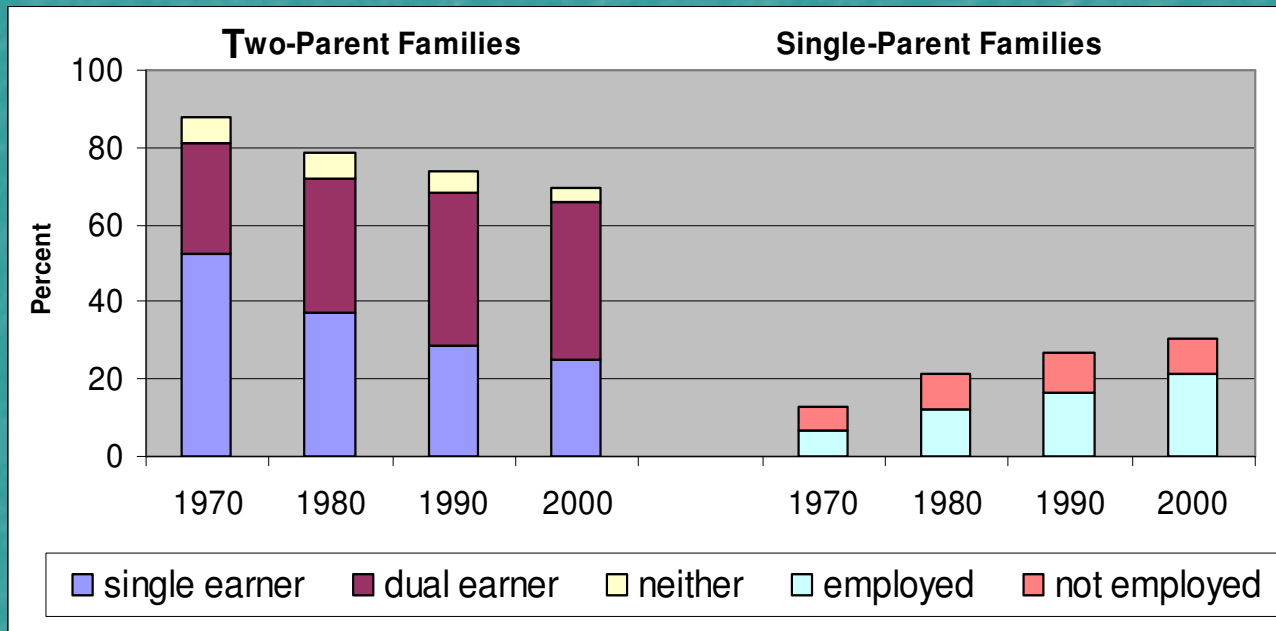
- What is work-family conflict? How extensive is it?
- Has parental time with children decreased or not?
- Why should we care? Everyone is a little stressed. Shouldn't parents learn to manage this themselves?
- Isn't it too hard to tackle? Only 24 hours in a day. And, employers unlikely to embrace new mandates.
- No. Status quo costs employers and workers. Workplace flexibility offers potential for a win-win.

Defining Work-Family Conflict

- “A form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from work and family are mutually incompatible in some way.” *Barling, Kelloway and Frone, 2005*
- The strain that occurs when individuals take on a variety of roles—as family members, as workers and as community members...resulting from the interplay between stresses and supports...and the extent to which community based resources such as child care services effectively meet individual and family needs. *Stone, 1994*

Origins of Work-Family Conflict: “I gave at the office”

- More dual earners and single working parents



Data from Bianchi and Raley, 2005

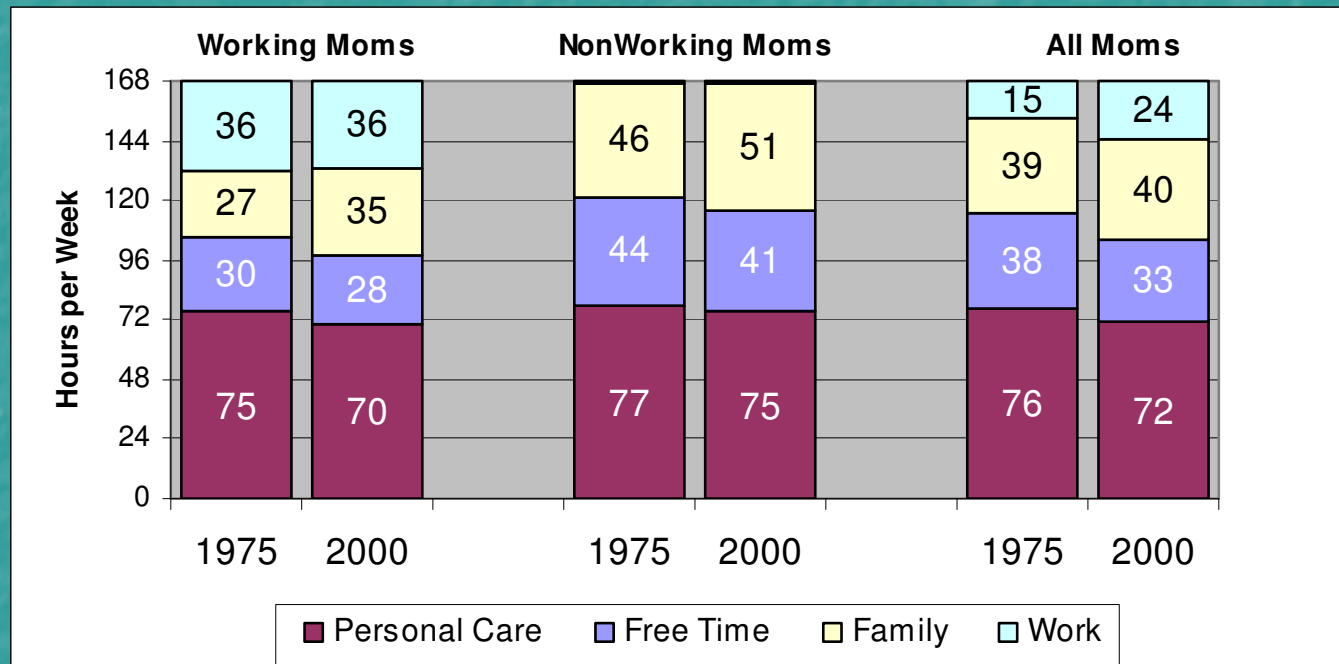
- Plus longer work weeks = significant growth in work hours per family:
 - Hours per single mother has more than doubled, to 23 hours per week
 - Hours per two-parent family has risen about 23%, to 65 hours per week

What's Happening to Time with Kids?

- Lots of studies:
 - Decrease of 22 hrs/wk in parental time available for kids since 1960s.
 - Time spent by parents on child activities fell from in 70s and 80s, but rose in the 90s to a level higher than ever
 - Time each child received during the 1990s remained relatively unchanged.
 - 70% of working parents say they spend insufficient time with their children
- OK, is time between children and parents increasing or decreasing?

Origins of Work-Family Conflict: The 24/7 Parent

- Work, family hours increase while time for sleep and self decline.



Data from Bianchi, 2002

- Through 2002, working moms spend 14 hours/week less on themselves and 8 hours less per week with their spouse than nonworking moms.
- From 1977- 2002, dads spent 4 hours/week more in childcare, 4 hours more on housework, with 4 hours less on self and 4 hours less on sleep.

How Common is Work-Family Conflict?

- MSNBC recently reported that 81% of workers said they were “unhappy with their work/life balance,” (source: Monster.com survey, 2002)
- 63% report that job pressure interferes with family life, (source: Tenth annual Attitudes in the American Workplace Survey, 2004)
- 63% of workers are stressed to the point of “feeling extremely fatigued or out of control” (source: ComPsych Corp. Stress Pulse Survey, 2005)
- 45% report “some” or “a lot” of interference between work and family, a significant increase over the 1977 level of 34 percent, (source: National Survey of the Changing Workforce, 2003)

More than Just a Little Stress

- Those reporting work-family conflict were 2.5 times as likely to suffer from clinically defined anxiety and twice as likely to suffer from substance abuse (CDC comorbidity study).
- Those reporting family-work conflict 30 times as likely to suffer from mood disorder and 10 times as likely to suffer from substance abuse. (same)
- Work-family conflict raises the risk of metabolic syndrome by 1.5 times for men and 2 times for women (London School of Medicine)
- Significant impact on dietary habits and Body Mass Index (BMI) for both adults and children. Sufficient to move child from "normal" to "at risk" category. (USDA)
- Consistent with change in family routines and lifestyle choices
 - Since 1970 share of meals out has more than tripled (USDA)
 - Per capita consumption of fats increased by 38% and sugars by 20% (USDA)
 - Only 42% of adolescents ate meals w/parents 6 to 7 days a week and one third ate with their parents 3 days a week or less (Child Trends, using CDC data)

More than Just a Family Matter

- “Caring for each other is the most basic form of civic participation. We learn to care in families, and we enlarge our communities of concern as we mature. Caring is the essential democratic act, the prerequisite to voting, joining associations, attending meetings, holding office and all the other ways we sustain democracy.”
Stone, 2000

- “Political society is always regarded as a scheme of social cooperation over time indefinitely; the idea of a future time when its affairs are to be concluded and society disbanded is foreign to the conception of political society ... The family must ensure the nurturing and development of such citizens in appropriate numbers to maintain an enduring society”
Rawls, 1997

Workers and employers both struggle, and can both benefit

- Work-family conflict is due more to insufficient control and flexibility than too many work hours.
 - As reported directly by workers in attitudinal polls
 - As estimated in multivariate results
- Significant costs to employers of status quo:
 - Workers comp cases due to stress equal over 81,000 days per year (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
 - Unscheduled absences due to stress doubled from 6% to 12% from 1995-2005. Family issues account for another 24%. Combine for \$284 for every worker (CCH annual manager survey)
- Pilot studies showing bottom line benefits for businesses implementing flexible policies
 - Companies such as Johnson and Johnson, Chubb, Macy's, Gannett, Nextel, PepsiCo, Prudential and Weherhaeuser
 - Lower rates of unscheduled absence, tardiness and overtime

Potential Next Steps

- Promote greater dialogue on work-family conflict
 - More communication around the consequences of work-family conflict (for both workers and employers)
 - Greater understanding of employer concerns
- Learn more about the potential of work-place flexibility
 - More case studies examining implementation of policies
 - Evaluation of worker and employer impacts
- Learn from biggest employer out there
 - Much of federal government ignores mandate for flexible work
 - Need to better document the reasons why
 - Need to study instances where it has been tried—aspects of implementation and outcomes for workers and managers