

NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION

WORK & FAMILY PROGRAM

THE WAY WOMEN WORK

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Women are the primary caregivers in a family . . .

70 percent of women in dual-earner couples report taking greater responsibility for routine child care than their male partners in 2002. 70 percent of women also report responsibility for taking time off work because of children's needs, in comparison with 30 percent of men (Families and Work Institute).

More than 20 percent of households are responsible for some or all of the care of elderly relatives (US Department of Labor). According to a 1997 survey, 72 percent of family members providing elder care are women (National Caregiving Alliance).

Although they constitute approximately half of the workforce, women often lack the flexibility to accommodate their family responsibilities . . .

39 percent of all wage and salary workers report "very little" or "no control" over the scheduling of their work hours (Families and Work Institute).

53 percent of working women caregivers report they are unable to take days off to care for children. 49 percent say they lack the flexibility to change starting and quitting times at work (Jody Heymann, *The Widening Gap*).

Formal workplace flexibility arrangements are unevenly distributed – even women in full-time jobs are less likely than men to have flexibility (Lonnie Golden 2000).

40 percent of private sector employees at companies with more than 100 workers report that using flexible schedules and taking time off for family reasons – when these options are available – "somewhat" or "strongly" hinders job advancement (Families and Work Institute).

As a result of the Family and Medical Leave Act, full-time employees can take up to 12 weeks of family and medical leave, but this leave is unpaid and applies only to workers at firms with 50 or more employees.

Women are more likely to be employed in part-time and nonstandard jobs . . .

25 percent of employed women work part-time compared with 11 percent of employed men (Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Women are more likely than men to work part-time for reasons related to child care problems, personal or family obligations, and school. For men, only 12 percent work part-time for reasons related to work-life balance, compared to 45 percent for women (The Employment Policy Foundation).

31 percent of employed women work in a nonstandard arrangement, compared to only 22 percent of men (Economic Policy Institute).

These work patterns put women at economic risk . . .

In earnings: Researchers have identified a well-established parent penalty. The gap between men's and women's wages is 10 to 15 percent larger for women with children than for women without children (Jane Waldfogel 1998). Regular part-time workers earn \$3.97 less per hour than regular full-time workers (Economic Policy Institute).

In health insurance: While 69 percent of regular full-time workers have health insurance coverage provided through their employers, only 14 percent of nonstandard workers receive employer-provided health insurance benefits (Economic Policy Institute). Women are about 15 percent less likely than men to be offered health insurance directly through their employer (Commonwealth Fund).

In pensions: 16 percent of nonstandard workers receive pension benefits through their employer, in comparison with 66 percent of regular full-time workers (Economic Policy Institute). The average income from pensions in 1996 for women was \$3,679, while the average pension income for men was \$6,442 (Urban Institute).