

Children in the Workplace: An Exploration in Library Policy Making

Sharolyn Swenson, Marissa Bischoff, and Ryan Lee

Abstract

Children in the workplace are becoming a more common discussion in various work environments, including libraries. Since the university has no policy addressing this issue, a task force was charged to draft a recommended policy for the university library regarding bringing children to the workplace. The task force reviewed existing policies and conducted a survey and interviews with library employees. The resulting policy provided guidelines for employees and their supervisors without being overly prescriptive. This article provides a case study of how the task force used assessment methods and tools to create an appropriate and inclusive policy. While the specific policy and results are unique to this institution, the framework used to create a policy can be more broadly applied to all types of libraries.

Introduction

The library administration had noticed that employees were bringing children into the library workplace during regular work hours, but there was no policy to direct this. The administration created a task force to draft a policy regarding employees bringing children into the workplace. The task force was to gather input from stakeholders, consider best practices, determine impact, and understand the variables so that the policy would align with other library and university policies. The draft policy was to be submitted for review within two months. This paper examines the methods used to create this library policy and the effectiveness of those methods. The assessment tools and process utilized by this task force could be used as a case study to create future policies within libraries.

Literature Review

The parameters of the policy needed to be well defined before the task force began drafting a policy. The task force began its work by reviewing articles related to policy

development within libraries. A library policy should include a statement of purpose and be directly linked to the library's goals.¹ In addition, other steps to consider implementing in the drafting process are determining stakeholders, providing background information, becoming comfortable with ambiguity, and being open to all possibilities.² Purpose, mandate, objectives, scope, challenges, principles, and roles and responsibilities should also be considered.³ Once these parameters have been defined, the next step in creating a policy is developing a list of questions that will be presented to stakeholders and that will allow for a wide range of opinions.⁴

Performing background research resulted in examining studies about family-responsive policies in the workplace. There were not any studies on creating a policy related to children in the workplace, but there were studies on the importance of a family-friendly environment at work. The findings in these studies included factors that affected parental well-being. For example, schedule flexibility, informal social support between the coworker and supervisor, and family-supportive policies led to parental well-being.⁵ Additionally, work-to-family conflict could be decreased, and parental well-being boosted when the employee had a perception of a supportive workplace.⁶ As Matias explained, "Support from the workplace plays a fundamental role in enhancing the balancing of multiple roles and consequently reducing work-family conflict and its negative consequences."⁷ "Access to workplace flexibility enables workers of all ages and life circumstances to meet the often-competing demands of work and personal life. Flexibility has been shown to: improve health and wellness for workers; increase parental involvement in children's lives; support gender equity by allowing men and women to participate in caregiving; and increase the ability of older workers to remain engaged in the workplace."⁸ "A nationally representative U.S. sample, provide(s) some credible evidence supporting the link between workplace flexibility and work and nonwork well-being."⁹

Because there was a lack of scholarly articles on children in the workplace, the committee looked at non-academic articles that discussed children in the workplace. After a famous baseball player quit over complaints about bringing his son to work, Wilkie wrote an article addressing whether there should be limits to when and how often a child is brought to work.¹⁰ The article addressed concerns about what children do at work, the safety of the workplace, the effect children have on professional interactions, and coworkers' feelings about children in the workplace. Many workplaces have begun allowing children to address gaps in childcare during snow days and summer holidays and to allow employees to be close to their young children.¹¹ To address these needs, the Utah State Legislature set up an Infant at Work Pilot Program for employees at the Department of Health. Dr. Marc Babitz, deputy director of the Utah Department of Health, advocated for the bill and the need for parental bonding: "We're

pretty excited about it. It's a win-win for the baby, the mom, and the employer.”¹² Fisher Phillips developed a child-in-the-workplace policy and agreement to address a temporary need wrought by school closures and COVID-19.¹³

Institutional Background

Brigham Young University is primarily an undergraduate institution with just under 35,000 students. The university does not have an on-campus daycare facility. The only university policy that governs children on campus is the Minor Protection Policy, but it does not address employee's children in the workplace. A recently published university Remote Work Policy laid out remote work options for employees and stated that “remote work arrangements are not a permanent substitute for childcare or eldercare arrangements.”¹⁴ The Brigham Young University library employs about 155 staff and faculty. Approximately 40% of these employees have children under the age of 18. Library administration noticed a need for a childcare policy because employees were bringing children into the library.

Methodology

Library administration appointed four members to a Children at Work Task Force who were representative of the university library employees and had children: three were female employees and one was a male employee, two were faculty and two were staff, and three had children in the home and one did not. The library administration gave the task force a charge to draft a recommended library policy regarding bringing children to work. The charge included considerations such as other university policies to consult, as well as a list of responsibilities, such as gathering input from stakeholders, looking at best practices, and considering variables and their impact on library functions. To fulfill this charge, the task force gathered input in a variety of ways, including examining similar policies and best practices at other universities and academic libraries across the country as well as administering a survey and conducting voluntary interviews with library employees. In the policies examined, the task force identified several common themes that they felt should shape the university library policy. Themes included circumstances when children should and should not be permitted in the workplace as well as guidelines that both employees with children and their direct supervisors should follow when considering the possibility of bringing children to work.

Policy Review

The task force searched the university's policy website for existing policies that included keywords such as "child," "children," "dependents," and "minors." One relevant policy was found, the Minor Protection Policy, which addressed minors on campus.¹⁵ While this policy discussed the responsibilities of parents or guardians for their children visiting the campus, it did not discuss whether children were permitted to accompany their parents or guardians to work. The task force contacted the university's Integrity and Compliance Office and confirmed that there was no university policy regarding children in the workplace. The Department of Risk Management and Safety referred the task force to the Minor Protection Policy, of which they were already aware.

The task force also searched the websites of other academic libraries and universities for policies concerning children in the workplace, beginning with institutions in the state. None were found. The search was extended to other libraries and universities within the United States. Four libraries and universities had relevant policies, which the task force reviewed. The policies that the task force reviewed covered the university as a whole and did not apply solely to the library. We were unable to locate any policies that only applied to an academic library. The policy being developed by the task force differed because it would only be applicable to the library and not to the university as a whole.

The policy for the University of Kansas outlined its purpose. The policy made clear that it was providing "guidance for creating a supportive working climate for employees to meet family obligations and to outline when children can appropriately be at the workplace." While the University of Kansas allowed children in the workplace, its policy made clear that it was not a substitute for daycare and should only be used on an infrequent basis.¹⁶ New York University limited children in the workplace by hours and did not allow for consecutive days. Supervisory approval was needed, and the supervisor could deny the request.¹⁷ The University of Colorado Boulder's policy regarding when a child could come to the workplace was extensive and clearly outlined. Restrictions focused on safety, disruption, supervision, and any damage done by the child.¹⁸ The University of Wisconsin System provided a template for each of its universities. This policy template included elements such as definitions, exclusions, a policy statement that included the responsibilities of the employee and management, the right of denial, and the consequences of violations.¹⁹

The task force also located relevant policies—in particular, about young babies in the workplace—from associations and articles. These policies suggested topics that should be

addressed in the university library's policy, including safety issues, productivity, office etiquette, laws, and insurance concerns.²⁰ One policy made a differentiation between mobile and non-mobile babies. The articles helped to show current thoughts and trends regarding children in the workplace.²¹ A sample policy for older children specified that the visits to the workplace should be "infrequent, brief and planned in a fashion that limits disruption to the workplace."²² Another article spoke about a pilot project that was approved by the Utah State Legislature, allowing employees at the Department of Health to bring babies under 6 months to work.²³

The task force located relevant policies for organizations that also proved helpful. The Center for Drug Evaluation and Research allowed children in the workplace for authorized events. If a child needed to come into the workplace for a rare circumstance, then the employee needed to obtain supervisory approval.²⁴ Fisher Phillips created a temporary policy related to the COVID-19 outbreak. This policy made clear that employees were responsible for their children in the workplace and included statements about disruptive behavior, social distancing, and hygiene.²⁵

After gathering background information, a task force member drafted a document outline so the task force could examine common themes across policies. Themes included references to the age of the child, restrictions on materials children could be around, times children would be allowed in the workplace, and supervisory approval.

Survey Creation

After surveying the literature and policies, the task force needed to become familiar with the thoughts and feelings of library employees. Because every library employee would be affected by the policy, the task force sent a survey to all employees. The task force did not collect data from library patrons because of the short timeline, but they considered the needs of patrons throughout the process. Additionally, due to the brief timeline and because the employee survey was intended for internal use, the task force did not receive IRB approval for the survey. However, IRB approval was sought afterward and granted for this study.

As the task force researched the policies of other institutions, they identified the most important issues related to children in the workplace, which informed the survey design. The task force identified the information they wanted to collect and brainstormed potential survey questions that would provide that information. They decided to examine both what was currently happening in the university library (e.g., how often children were brought to work) and the perceived disruption when a child was brought to work so that the task force could understand to what extent children in the library had affected work or might be perceived to affect work. The

task force also included additional questions to gauge what was acceptable to the library employees: At what age should children be allowed to come to work with parents? How appropriate is it for children to come to work with parents for a given amount of time? Where should children who come to work with parents be allowed to stay?

The task force used questions with multiple-choice answers for each question where specific answers were needed so there could be quantitative data to aggregate. The task force worked with the assessment librarian to ensure the questions were as unbiased and clearly written as possible. They developed multiple-choice options to ensure consistent and concise answer choices from question to question. For example, the range of times was the same for Questions 3, 4, and 8. Another question employed a matrix (Question 8) so participants could rate the range of opinions about acceptable time frames for children to be at work (see Appendix A for the full survey). The survey contained one open-ended question (“What else would you want to tell us that would help us draft a policy about children in the workplace?”) at the end to seek any additional information not specifically addressed in the preceding questions. This question was critical because the participants could elaborate on previous responses or discuss other issues that the task force had not considered.

Results

Quantitative Data Analysis

All roughly 155 non-student library employees were emailed the survey and given two weeks to respond. A total of 138 responded to the survey, an approximately 90% response rate. Appendix B includes graphs showing all responses to Questions 3 to 9.

Following data collection, the task force analyzed questions with similar themes together. For example, Questions 3 and 4 were grouped because they addressed how often library employees have brought their children to work in the past. Similarly, Questions 5 and 6 were analyzed together because they dealt with understanding how disruptive children are in the workplace. In each set of questions, one question was from the perspective of the employee bringing in their children, and the other was from the perspective of other employees. The task force did not perform statistical analyses, but they did examine trends and patterns in the data. The data revealed that most employees (87%) did not bring in their children more than 2 days a year. For employees who brought their children to work, most (62%) did not feel that their children were disruptive, and most employees (86%) did not feel that their coworkers' children were disruptive.

The task force analyzed the more complex questions (7, 8, and 9) separately because they focused on separate themes related to children in the workplace. These questions allowed for multiple responses. The task force focused on descriptive analysis to show trends and patterns in the responses. This analysis helped to identify how employees felt about certain aspects of children in the workplace, including appropriate ages, frequency of bringing children to work, and acceptable locations within the library. Most employees felt more comfortable with pre-mobile infants (61%) and children 10 years and older (57%–60%). A majority (63%–87%) were more comfortable having children in the workplace on occasion (fewer than 3 days a month) than regularly (more than 1 day a week).

The question related to work location was not worded well, and participants were somewhat confused about which areas of the library were accessible to the public and which were restricted. However, this hiccup in the survey was ameliorated by the free-response question, which allowed participants to clarify their choice for the question about work location.

Based on the data, the task force decided to form a more flexible policy framework because of the many situational variables. They eventually linked the data directly to the final report so the data could be used to create guiding principles for both the employee and their supervisor in any given situation.

Qualitative Survey Results

The survey was sent to all non-student employees in the library, including administration and the task force. Of the 138 survey participants, 90 (70%) responded to the open-ended question at the end of the survey. Two task force members were assigned to analyze the open-ended question. After reviewing the responses to the question, the two task force members met and jointly determined six recurring themes in the responses: (1) flexibility, (2) distractions, (3) age appropriateness, (4) family friendly/women in the workplace, (5) safety/facility concerns, and (6) work from home/core work hours. The two task force members independently coded each open-ended response to the most appropriate category. Then, the two task force members met and reached a consensus on any conflicting coding.

Twenty-eight participants (20%) commented on flexibility. The comments indicated that individual circumstances should be considered when creating a policy. One respondent pointed out, “The more specific a policy gets, the less effective and less trusting it becomes. It should provide good principles to live by and not a lot of specific rules.” Comments coded to this theme also included concerns about the temperament of the child, the duration of the stay, and the

number of times the child was brought to work. Additionally, five participants wanted to make sure that children were still able to come to work on specially designated days, such as the Halloween trick or treat and Bring-Your-Child-to-Work Day; three wanted those days to be the only days when children are allowed at work. Five participants felt that because of individual circumstances, supervisors would be in the best position to navigate what works best for the employees in their area. Others urged for limited flexibility.

Twenty-seven participants (20%) commented on distractions in the workplace. The comments were split on whether children in the workplace were considered distracting. Participants expressed concern about the number of distractions children posed to their parent and coworkers. The amount of time children spent in the workplace also made a difference in how distracting they were. Some felt that the degree of distractions depended on the temperament of the child and the parent. One commenter pointed out that:

not everyone can handle the distractions caused by children in the workplace. Also, parenting style makes a big difference in the amount of distraction that can be caused by children in an office area. While the options should be made available, there should also be conditions based on how the individual child's behavior affects other office mates, and destructive or disruptive behavior on the part of the child should take away the privilege. This means that any policy has to mention up front that this is a privilege that can be revoked due to complaints or overuse and that it isn't necessarily going to be an option for all circumstances.

Respondents urged that any workplace policy be flexible and cognizant of how the child is affecting the work of the parent and coworkers.

Fourteen respondents (10%) commented on age appropriateness. They expressed concerns about whether children could entertain and direct themselves, which was dependent on their age. One respondent pointed out, "I feel torn between the flexibility that parents need and the responsibility that we have to give attention to our work." The most common answer was that non-mobile babies and older children seem most likely to allow the parent to both work and not disturb others in the workplace. The individual temperament of the child appeared to be more important than the specific age of the child.

Nine respondents (7%) made comments about the policy being family-friendly and/or about women in the workplace. One respondent indicated, "There are times when being able to bring a child to work for a short amount of time makes the difference between a mother quitting

or continuing to be in the workforce.” Others pointed out that occasionally bringing a child to work is often a matter of necessity. They hoped that our policy would reflect the university as a family-friendly institution. One employee stated,

I think if a child can come to work without interfering with the job, it's completely appropriate for the institution to become more family friendly. Ultimately this is a pro-female/pro-family type policy, which we need to move toward as much as we appropriately can.

It was also pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic required flexibility to accommodate schedule variations. Additionally, one employee felt that they had made sacrifices so their spouse could stay at home and did not promote bringing children to the workplace regularly.

Six respondents (4%) commented on safety concerns and lack of facilities. Many commented that the issue of children at work would be best satisfied by having a daycare center located at the university and wanted to know if any steps had been taken at the university level to implement one. One respondent pointed out that:

the mere presence of children at work is not the sole issue; there are concomitant issues such as changing facilities, meal preparation facilities, rockers/beds for children's naps, quiet or noisy toys/tablets, and widely-understood policies about diaper disposal, heating meals in offices, breast-feeding (it's not always convenient to get to the mothers' room), not expecting co-workers to watch children during commitments to meetings, instruction, or other out-of-office/workspace responsibilities, etc.

Workplace safety was also a concern with one respondent, who commented that “security and safety are considerations that could cause more, less, or no flexibility in being able to bring a child to work.”

Nine respondents (7%) commented on work-from-home/core work hours. Core hours for the university library are defined as between the hours of 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The commentators felt the issue of having children in the workplace has become more prevalent since the library has begun emphasizing that employees of the library need to be present during core work hours. These respondents felt that a flexible remote work policy could ease pressure on needing to bring children to work. They pointed out that when childcare occasionally falls through or when a child is sick, they could work from home if the core hours were more flexible, allowing them to work when the child did not need their attention. More flexible hours allow for

employees to navigate shared childcare responsibilities with their spouses.

Being able to examine the thoughts of library employees on the topic proved valuable in creating a policy. These comments helped the task force more fully understand the concerns and benefits related to bringing children to work.

Interviews

The task force also allowed survey respondents the opportunity to offer further feedback in the form of an interview, as interviews can better capture subtle or complex feedback on nuanced issues.²⁶ Interested individuals self-selected and reached out to members of the task force to provide additional comments. Members of the task force interviewed these voluntary participants in an unrecorded, informal setting. The interviewees talked about situations related to children in the workplace and offered elucidating opinions related to the topic. The task force did not develop formal interview questions but rather listened intently while the interviewee spoke candidly on the issue. Only clarifying questions were asked by the task force members during the interview.

Thirteen library employees were interested in an interview. The individuals who volunteered to interview were generally those who had stronger opinions or a more personal stake in the matter, such as employees who had brought children to work, their immediate coworkers, and others who were especially concerned about the disruption of children in the workplace. The task force gained a pulse for the whole library through the survey and then received additional feedback from the interviewees that helped them more fully understand the range of employee opinions. The topic was a potentially polarizing one, and the interviews helped task force members see the extent to which it was. The interviews also gave the task force specific examples of children in the workplace and the variables and result according to interview participants. An employee who had brought her infant to work said, "Returning from maternity leave initially is very hard. I felt more capable of working with this gradual time to be with my baby and work." This interview and others gave the task force positive examples of allowing children in the workplace. Some interview respondents expressed opposing viewpoints. One interviewee said,

Children at work are disruptive. No matter how well behaved, their presence negatively changes the way co-workers interact with each other. I understand and appreciate the need for parents to work, but childcare should occur outside the workplace, for the benefit of the child, the parent, and the parent's work associates.

This perspective was important for the task force to see and consider as they formed the policy. The interviews helped the task force immensely with deciding on the direction of the policy. For example, an interviewee commented,

As I was taking the survey, it struck me that there are so many variables, age, temperament of the child, type of work the employee is doing, the location, any special needs unique to the child, etc., that making a policy with too many specifications could be a real problem.

While the task force noted this finding from the survey data, the interview comments provided deeper insights. Another interviewee also commented on the variety of variables:

The policy should be as close to “work with your manager” for each situation as possible. The manager should be open to working with the parent employee and figuring out accommodations with schedule, remote work, etc. We should assume that our managers can manage. It is not a black-and-white situation.

Comments like these were influential in the task force opting for a more flexible policy. The comments were in accordance with the work of Alita that acclimating to ambiguity is important in policymaking.²⁷

Writing the Policy

After background research, literature review, data collection and analysis, the task force began drafting a policy for library administration to consider. The policy followed a similar outline to other children-in-the-workplace policies that were reviewed in the initial stages of research. Enders noted that a policy should correlate with the library’s goals, so the policy began with a preamble that discussed the values and priorities of the university library and how the policy fits within those parameters.²⁸ It also included overarching principles and broad guidelines for how supervisors and employees could implement or follow the policy and addressed which children this policy applied to. The core of the policy’s guiding principles was for both employees who bring children to work and for their supervisors. Many of these recommendations were modified from the other policies that were reviewed at the beginning of this effort, but they were reworked to fit the university’s circumstances and to create an open and flexible policy. The policy put the onus on the employee and their respective supervisor to evaluate the risks and ramifications of

bringing children to work while allowing supervisors the flexibility to make decisions on a case-by-case basis. The policy pointed to the campus's Minor Protection Policy,²⁹ which was the main relevant university policy that needed to be considered in this policy-creation process. In an academic library setting, it is imperative to follow the overarching university policies and to ensure the library policy fits firmly within the parameters set within the university policy. The link to this university policy directly in the document ensured that those using the library policy in the future would also follow the university policy. The Children in the Workplace Policy also included principles found in other university policies, which were not as directly related as the Minor Protection Policy, but important to consider, including the recently developed institutional remote work policy and other human resources guidelines. Policies are not made in a vacuum and often depend on or link to related institutional policies. The policy also included the Children in the Workplace Task Force report that the task force presented to library administration, which included survey and interview data about appropriate ages, locations, and frequency of visits that could help guide a supervisor in making the best decision.

After the policy draft was written, it and the accompanying report were presented to the library administration. The overall reception to the policy was positive. Administrators suggested that all library employees might want to weigh in on the proposed policy draft, so it was subsequently sent out to all library employees. The task force then led a discussion of the policy at the library's monthly "town hall" meeting, where all nonstudent employees had a chance to ask questions and discuss any issues regarding the draft. This presentation was successful and provided additional feedback to help ensure that the policy was something that all library employees could accept and feel comfortable following. One comment from the meeting was that a line of the draft policy contradicted a part of the campus remote policy, which was very helpful feedback. After this meeting, the task force edited the policy draft to account for the feedback received from the meeting and administration, and it was adopted by the library administration for use (see Appendix C for the final policy).

Discussion

Implementing each step of creating this policy had its challenges. The first challenge was the short, two-month timeline. Because of this timeline, the task force decided to modify or not use some steps. For instance, the task force did some initial background research, but ideally, they should have taken more time to fully examine what literature was available about both policy creation and children in the workplace. A lengthier literature review would have

helped provide important parameters for the task force to consider before beginning the analysis of the survey and interview data and creating the policy. A more in-depth review would have also revealed what the predominant issues were regarding allowing children in the workplace. Task force members were disappointed that no policies were found at other state libraries and universities. In hindsight, the task force should have contacted librarians at these institutions and asked them whether they had a policy on the issue.

When preparing the questions, the task force relied on each other and the assessment librarian for clarity. The survey could have been piloted by a few library employees to help improve its validity and clarity. After all participants completed the survey, the task force learned that the terms “public-accessible” and “public-restricted” from Question 9 were interpreted differently among participants and that definitions or examples should have been added. Other than that minor issue, the survey questions were intentional and gave indispensable feedback for the entire process. It is important to ensure that all questions are directly influential to a potential policy, so that the survey is a manageable size and pertinent. A final catch-all qualitative question such as “What else would you like to tell us?” is highly recommended because it helps account for any issues in the survey design and allows participants to give parting comments that did not fit elsewhere.

Having multiple venues for employees to provide feedback (i.e., via survey and interview) helped to create a policy that was positively received by the employees and the administration. Some employees preferred to express themselves by answering the questions in the survey and others felt they had more to contribute through an interview. The Town Hall listening session before policy approval allowed for transparency and final review by all stakeholders. The feedback received at each step in the creation process helped the task force understand the overarching concerns and needs that should be addressed in a policy concerning children in the workplace.

The framework that was set at this institution could be implemented in other libraries, both academic and public. The first recommendation is to find out what policies already exist. Creating a policy that does not run counter to policies beyond the library’s control is key. In this case, the university had few policies regarding minors and these policies mainly addressed the responsibility of parents or guardians for their children while visiting campus. The second recommendation is to do research. It is important to find out what policies other libraries and institutions have implemented. These policies will not necessarily fit all the needs of your library and may in some cases run counter to existing policies at your institution, but they will help policymakers become aware of possible wording and limitations that need to be considered.

The third recommendation is to ask for feedback. This feedback highlights the specific concerns of your library employees that the policymakers may not have considered. Taking these three recommendations into consideration will help make an appropriate and inclusive policy tailored to your library.

Conclusion

The task force members were initially wary of drafting a policy on children in the workplace. It had the potential to be a highly charged policy topic with a gamut of viewpoints and experiences informing it. The task force was able to work through these challenges by systematically reviewing policies already made and gleaning important points and language from them. The survey and interviews with stakeholders were important to understand where library employees generally stood on the issue as well as the range of opinions of the employees. These two assessment measures justified the flexible design of the policy, and the final review gave the policy more legitimacy in the organization. The policy refers to the research data to assist supervisors as they make the best decisions for their areas.

The Children in the Workplace Policy is transferable to other institutions and may be used as a template for other organizations. Other institutions may have additional considerations or, conversely, things that do not apply, but the policy could still be used as a starting point or framework. The policy-creation process is also transferable and similar steps can be taken at any institution for any topic. When beginning to draft a new policy, it is important to look at what has already been done on the issue at your institution, in your industry, and in other environments to consider what could work best. Conducting assessments to understand the issue within the context of your institution and environment is critical to framing the policy and ensuring that all viewpoints are considered. Policies affect stakeholders' work and, consequently, their lives. Therefore, because of the potentially high effect that policies have on individuals, policymakers must exercise due diligence. A thoughtful approach can make all the difference.

Appendix A: Employee Survey

2021 Children in the Workplace

Q1 The following survey is from the Children at Work Task Force. It refers to employees with children under 18 years old, but we ask all employees to respond to the survey. The survey is anonymous unless you choose to identify yourself at the end of the survey. Responses from those who do identify themselves will be kept confidential, and only task force members will see them. Would you like to participate in this survey?

- No
- Yes

Q2 Do you have children under the age of 18?

- No
- Yes

Q3 How often have you brought your children to work at the library while you were working during regular business hours?

- 4–5 days per week
- 2–3 days per week
- 1 day a week
- 1–4 days a month
- 1 day every few months
- 1–2 days a year
- 1–7 hours a year
- Never

Q4 How often have you noticed coworkers bringing their children to work in your work area while they were working during regular business hours?

- 4–5 days per week
- 2–3 days per week
- 1 day a week
- 1–4 days a month
- 1 day every few months
- 1–2 days a year
- 1–7 hours a year
- Never

Q5 How much was your work disrupted when you brought your child to work?

- A great deal

- Somewhat
- Not at all
- I have not brought my child to work.

Q6 How much was your work disrupted when your coworker brought their child to work?

- A great deal
- Somewhat
- Not at all
- None of my coworkers has brought a child to work.

Q7 At what age should children be allowed to come to work with parents during business hours on a regular basis? (Check all that apply.)

1. Never
2. 0–6 months or before mobile
3. 7–12 months or when mobile
4. 1–3 years
5. 4–6 years
6. 7–9 years
7. 10–12 years
8. 13–17 years

Q8 How appropriate do you feel it is for children to come to work with parents for the following amounts of time?

	Very appropriate	Appropriate	Neither appropriate nor inappropriate	Inappropriate	Very inappropriate
4–5 days per week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2–3 days per week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1 day a week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1–3 days a month	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1 day every few months	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1–2 days a year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1–7 hours a year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9 If children were allowed to come to work with their parents, where should they be allowed to come? (Select all that apply.)

1. Public-accessible areas
2. Public-restricted area
3. Offices

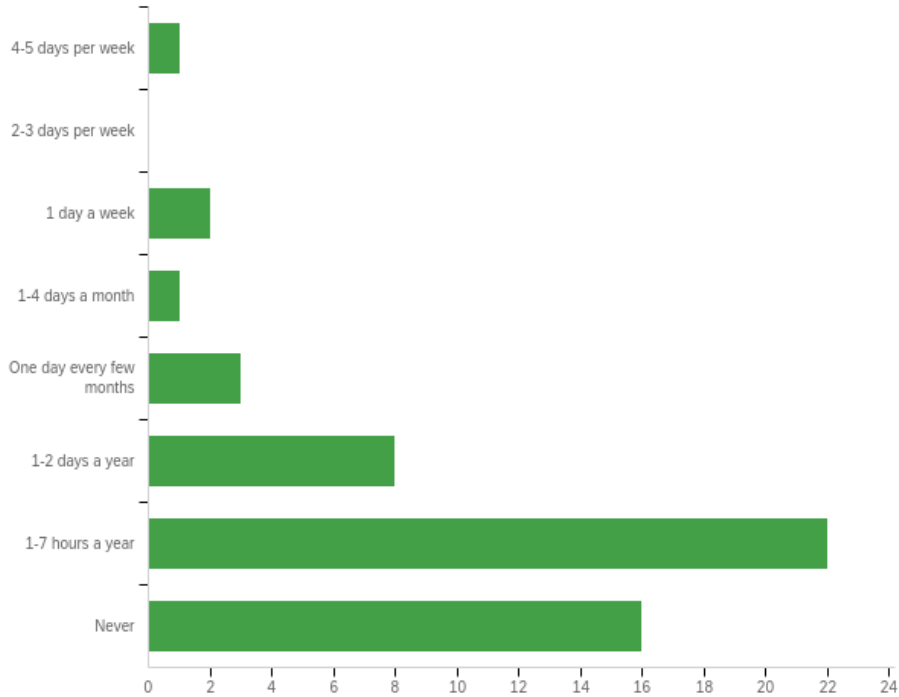
4. Cubicles in shared workspaces
5. No areas are acceptable.
6. Other (please specify) _____

Q10 What else would you want to tell us that would help us draft a policy about children in the workplace?

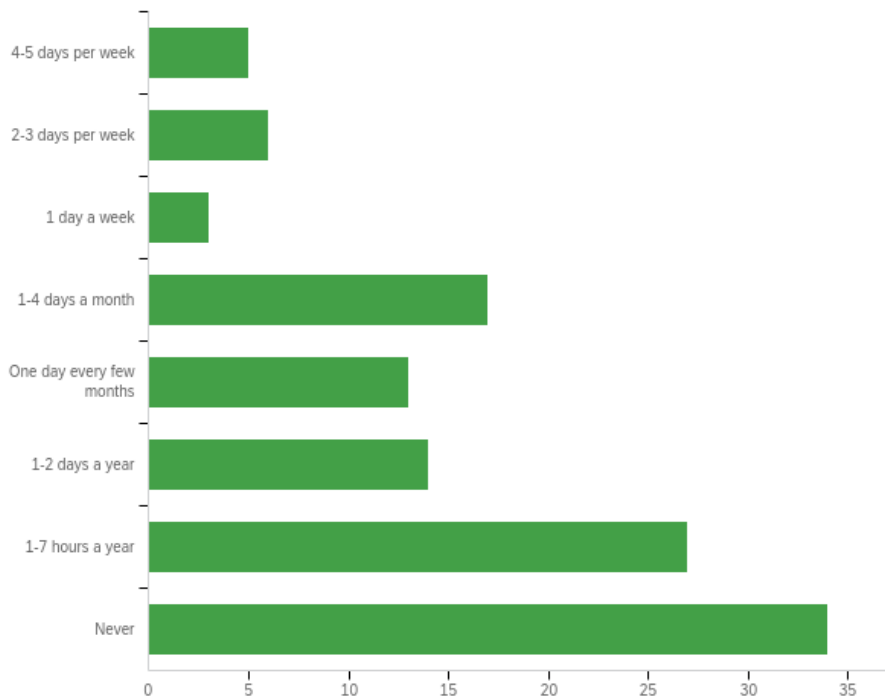
If there is something we have not asked about this issue that you would like to talk with us about, please send your comments to one of [the task force members] or contact us for an interview. All comments and information you provide will be kept confidential.

Appendix B: Graphs of Responses to Questions 3–9

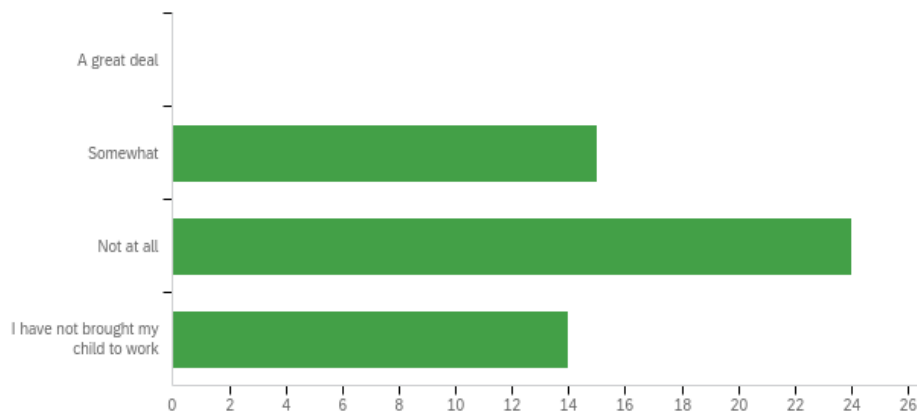
Question 3: How often have you brought your child to work at the library while you were working?



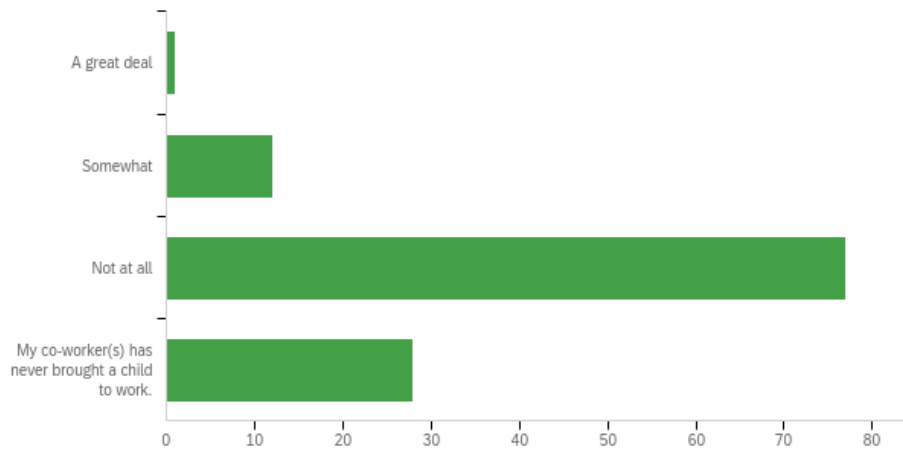
Question 4: How often have you noticed coworkers bringing their children to work in your work area while they were working?



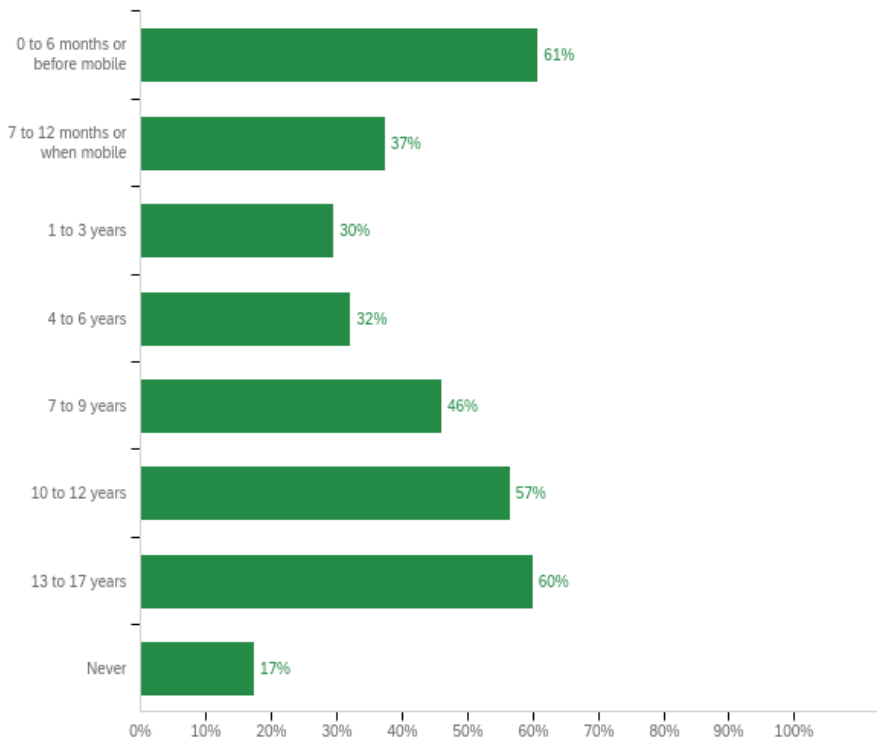
Question 5: How much was your work disrupted when you brought your child to work?



Question 6: How much was your work disrupted when your coworker brought their child to work?

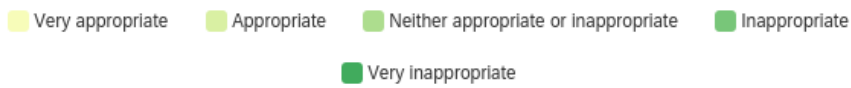
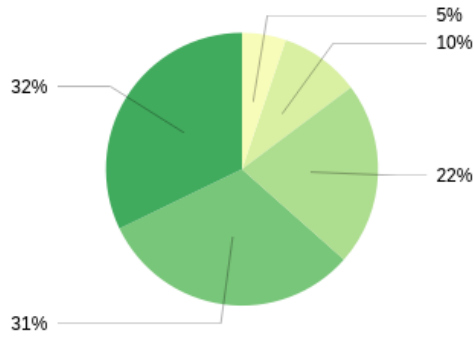


Question 7: At what age should children be allowed to come to work with parents during business hours on a regular basis? (Check all that apply.)

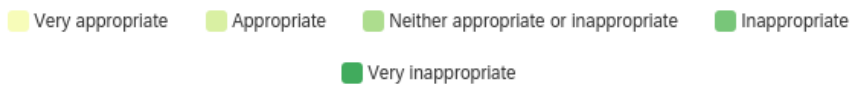
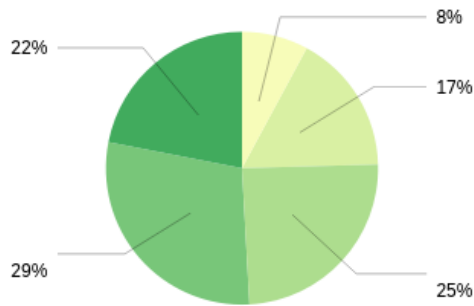


Question 8: How appropriate do you feel it is for children to come to work with parents for the following amounts of time?

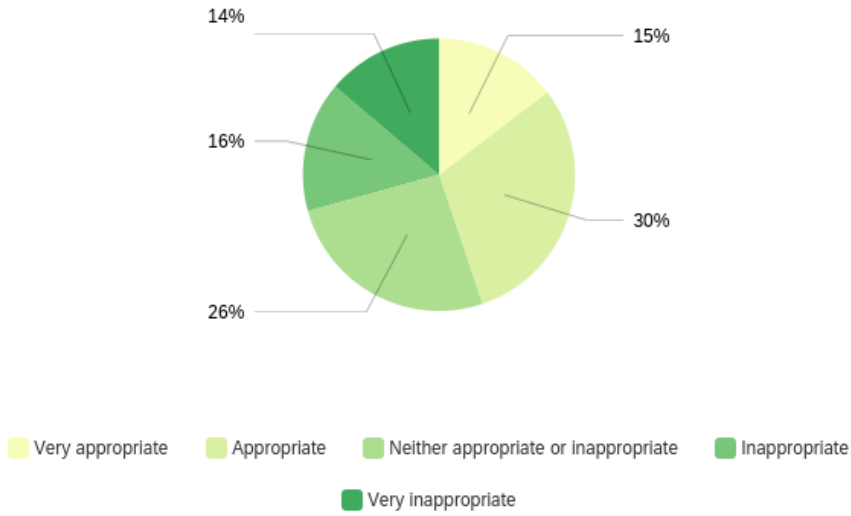
Q8_1 - 4-5 days per week



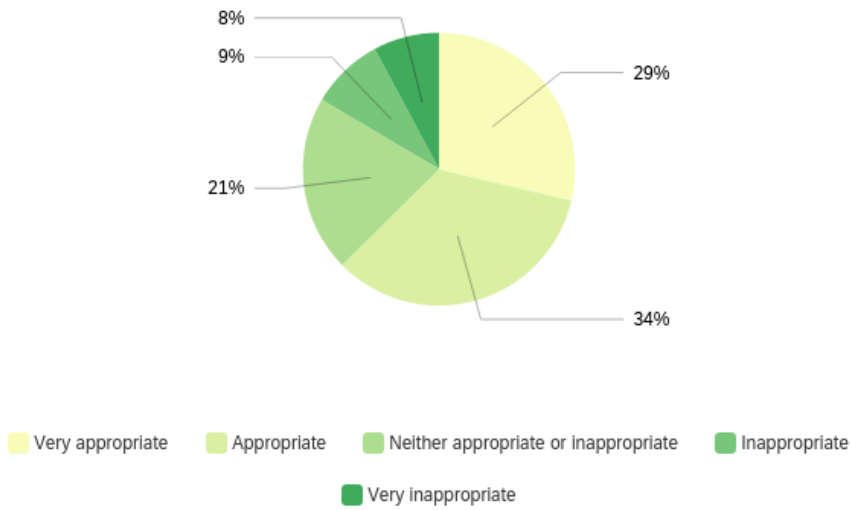
Q8_2 - 2-3 days per week



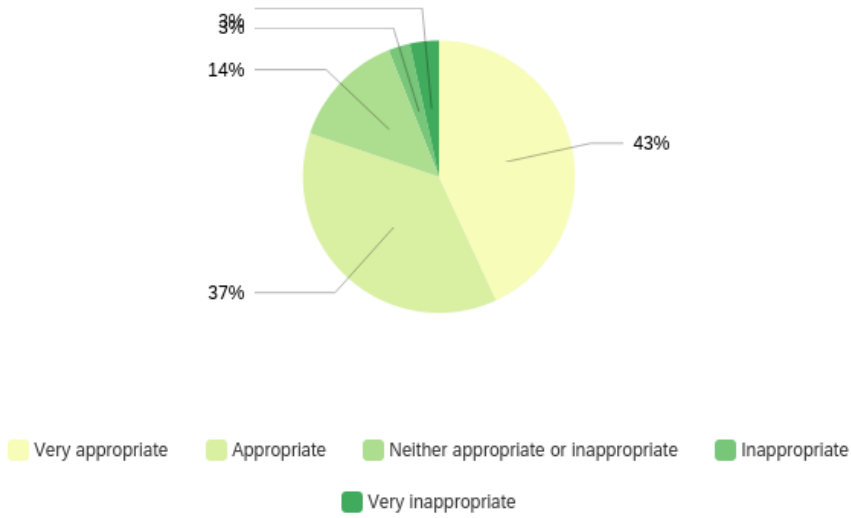
Q8_3 - 1 day a week



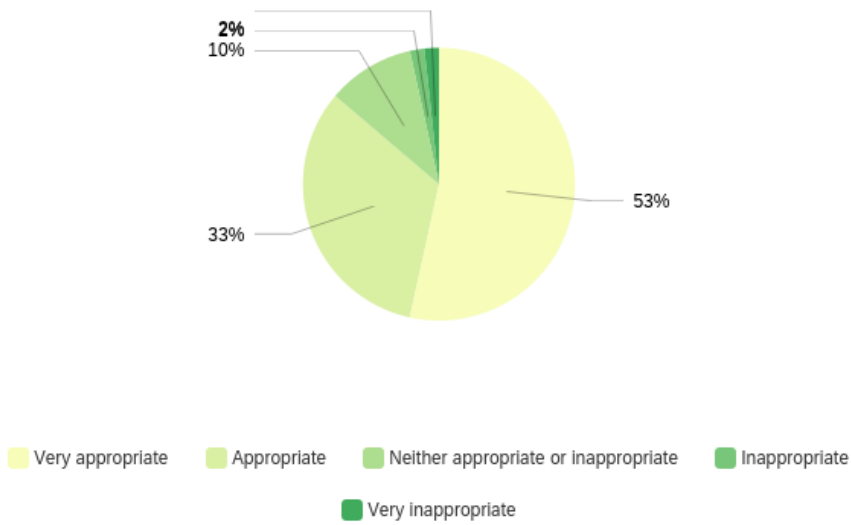
Q8_4 - 1-3 days a month



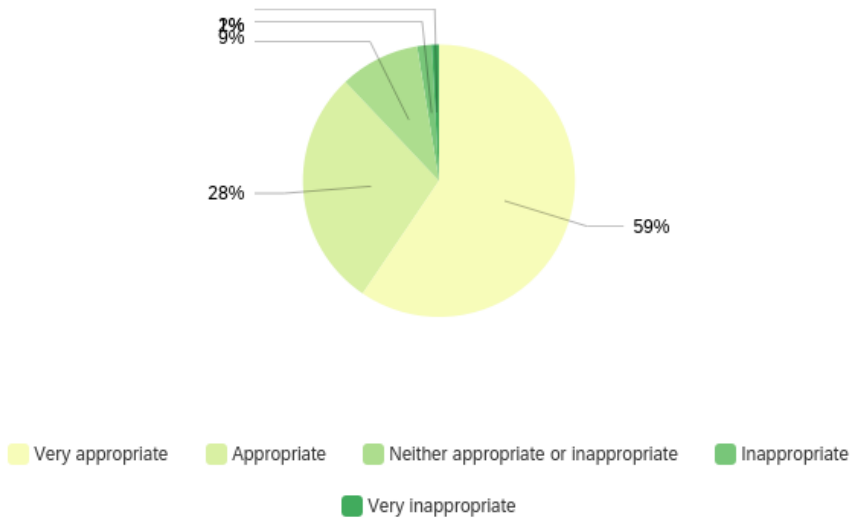
Q8_5 - 1 day every few months



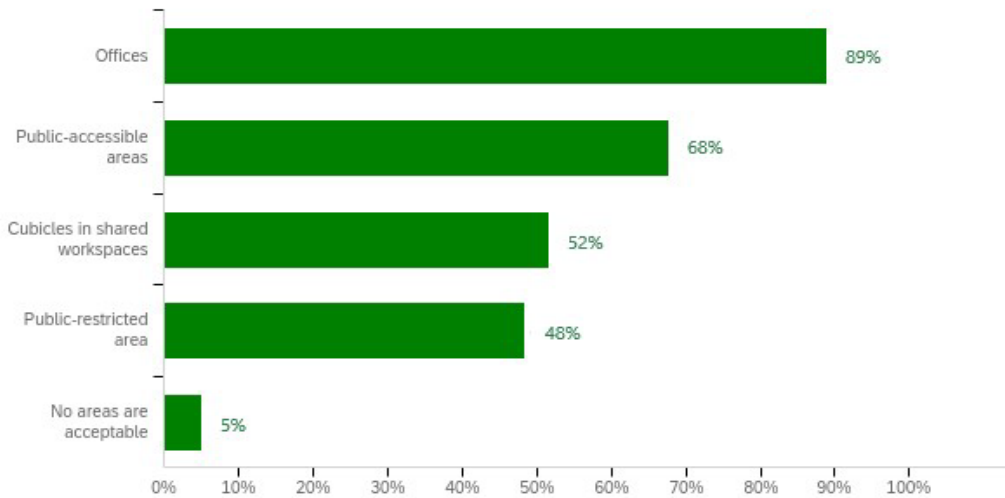
Q8_6 - 1-2 days a year



Q8_7 - 1-7 hours a year



Question 9: If children were allowed to come to work with their parents, where should they be allowed to come? (Select all that apply.)



Appendix C: Children in the Workplace Policy

The university library values families and seeks to foster a work environment that balances workplace needs and family responsibilities. Supervisors are encouraged to work with employees who need some flexibility because of family obligations. Some tools that can assist include sick and vacation time, breaks, and lunch hours. Other possible options, dependent on the situation and job responsibilities, could include early or late work hours or occasional remote work.

This policy addresses minor children under the age of 18 brought to work by a library employee. It does not include children of student employees or university students.

When an employee brings a child to work, they must gain approval from their supervisor. Bringing children to work is not an ongoing alternative to childcare. Generally, it should be a brief visit and occur infrequently or be for an authorized event or emergency.

Here are guiding principles for employees who bring children to work:

- Always supervise and take responsibility for the safety and actions of your children.
- Be sensitive to and respectful of the needs of other employees and patrons by ensuring that the presence of your child is not disruptive.
- Abide by the campus [Minor Protection Policy](#).
- Guest policies for restricted areas should be considered.
- Children should not handle rare or high-priced items.
- Children should not be allowed in potentially hazardous areas.
- Employees should not bring sick children to work.

Here are guiding principles for supervisors to consider in this matter:

- Be generous and flexible in granting time off or scheduling employees with childcare needs.
- Address potential issues of possible disruption to coworkers.
- Consider the extent to which the child's presence is appropriate to the work being accomplished.
- Consider materials and potential hazards in the area and guest restrictions.
- See the [Children at Work Report](#) for helpful data about most appropriate ages, areas, and frequency.¹

If an employee wishes for a short-term, regular arrangement to bring a child to work, then they should get approval through the supervisory line up to the AUL. The supervisor(s) would need to work with the employee to develop a plan to follow.

¹ The Children at Work Report was made for internal use in the university library and is not authorized to be published here.

Any permission given can be revoked at any time if the supervisor deems the presence of the child as disruptive or a risk.

Sharolyn Swenson (sharolyn_swenson@byu.edu) is Continuing Resources Cataloging Librarian at Brigham Young University. **Marissa Bischoff** (marissa_bischoff@byu.edu) is Digital Imaging Workflow Supervisor at Brigham Young University. **Ryan Lee** (ryan_lee@byu.edu) is Manuscripts Collections Coordinator at Brigham Young University.

Published: January 2024

Notes

¹ Naulayne Enders and Heidi Wineland, "Writing a Social Media Policy for Your Library," *Kentucky Libraries* 76, no. 1 (2012): 16–19.

² John Alita, "Creating an Internet Policy by Civic Engagement," *American Libraries* 32, no.11 (December 2001): 48.

³ Emily Rafferty and Becca Pad, "Better Together a Holistic Approach to Creating a Digital Preservation Policy in an Art Museum," *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 36, no. 1 (2017): 149–62, <https://doi.org/10.1086/691378>.

⁴ Enders and Winelane, "Writing a Social Media Policy for Your Library," 16–19.

⁵ Sarah Beth Estes, "Family-Responsive Workplace Policies, Parenting, and Children's Well-being: A Study Relating Employment Conditions to Family Functioning," Order No. 9985558, The University of Iowa, 2000.

⁶ Marisa Matias, Tiago Ferreira, Joana Vieira, Joana Cadima, Teresa Leal, and Paula Mena Matos, "Workplace Family Support, Parental Satisfaction and Work-Family Conflict: Individual and Crossover Effects among Dual-Earner Couples," *Applied Psychology* 66, no. 4 (2017): 628–52, <https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12103>.

⁷ Matias et al., "Workplace Family Support," 629.

⁸ Kathleen Christensen, "Launching the Workplace Flexibility Movement: Work Family Research and a Program of Social Change," *Community, Work & Family* 16, no. 3 (2013): 261–84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2013.820092>.

⁹ Jaeseung Kim, Julia R. Henly, Lonnie M. Golden, Susan J. Lambert, "Workplace Flexibility and Worker Well-being by Gender," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82, no.3 (2020): 892–910, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12633>.

-
- ¹⁰ Dana Wilkie, “Kids at Work: How Much Is Too Much?” SHRM: Better Workplaces, Better World, April 7, 2016, <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/kids-at-work.aspx>.
- ¹¹ Wilkie, “Kids at Work.”
- ¹² Marina McNairy, “Legislature Approves Pilot Program to Allow Infants at Work,” *The Daily Universe*, March 16, 2020, <https://universe.byu.edu/2020/03/16/infant-at-work-pilot-program-passed-by-utah-house-and-senate/>.
- ¹³ “Children in the Workplace Policy and Agreement,” Fisher Phillips, March 19, 2020, <https://www.fisherphillips.com/assets/html/documents/CHILDREN%20IN%20THE%20WORKPLACE%20POLICY%20AND%20AGREEMENT%20.pdf>.
- ¹⁴ “Remote Work Policy,” University Policies, Brigham Young University, June 28, 2021, <https://policy.byu.edu/view/remote-work-policy>.
- ¹⁵ “Minor Protection Policy,” The University Office of Risk Management and Safety, May 17, 2021.
- ¹⁶ “Children in the Workplace,” University of Kansas Human Resource Management, October 16, 2006, <https://policy.ku.edu/human-resources/children-in-workplace>.
- ¹⁷ “Children in the Workplace Policy—New York, District of Columbia and California,” New York University, August 13, 2019, <https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/children-in-the-workplace-policy---new-york--district-of-columbi.html>.
- ¹⁸ “Guidelines for Children in the Workplace &/or Classroom,” Campus Policies, University of Colorado-Boulder, August 5, 2019, <https://www.colorado.edu/policies/guidelines-children-workplace-or-classroom>.
- ¹⁹ “Sample Policy on Children in the Workplace,” UWSYS Children in the Workplace Policy, University of Wisconsin General Counsel, May 5, 2014, https://www.wisconsin.edu/general-counsel/download/child_safety/Sample-Policy-on-Children-in-the-Workplace.pdf.
- ²⁰ Chron Contributor, “Rules about Bringing Small Children to Work,” *Chron*, September 14, 2020, <https://work.chron.com/rules-bringing-small-children-work-15648.html>.
- ²¹ Jennifer Church, Tammy Chapman, and Josie Emunah, “Babies in the Workplace Policy Brief: A Team Project of the Emerging Leaders in Maternal and Child Health Nutrition Institute Association of State Public Health Nutritionists,” June 14, 2013, <https://asphn.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/2013-Babies-in-the-Workplace.pdf>.
- ²² “Children in the Workplace Policy,” SHRM: Better Workplaces Better World, April 26, 2022, <https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/tools-and-samples/policies/Pages/default.aspx>.

²³ McNairy, “Legislature Approves Pilot Program to Allow Infants at Work.”

²⁴ Policy and Procedures: Children in the Workplace,” Manual of Policies and Procedures, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, January 25, 2021, <https://www.fda.gov/media/72607/download>.

²⁵ “Children in the Workplace Policy and Agreement.”

²⁶ Dan Broadbent, “Not Another Survey! Use Interviews Instead to Understand Needs in Your Library,” *Library Leadership & Management* 35, no. 1 (2020): 10, <https://doi.org/10.5860/llm.v35i1.7447>.

²⁷ Alita, “Creating an Internet Policy by Civic Engagement.”

²⁸ Enders, “Writing a Social Media Policy for Your Library.”

²⁹ “Minor Protection Policy.”