

Closing the gap in parent support

How to strengthen psychosocial safety compliance by addressing the critical gap in your wellbeing program.

win win® parenting in partnership with TELUS® Health

Introduction

Working parents are a critical segment of the workforce, yet most organisational wellbeing strategies do not address their specific needs. This oversight not only contributes to elevated rates of stress, burnout, and disengagement—it also puts organisations at risk of breaching psychosocial safety obligations under WHS legislation.

Recent data from Australia and internationally[1,3,4,5] reveals a concerning trend in the psychosocial wellbeing of working parents who experience the:

- **Highest levels of stress**
- **Highest rates of burnout, and**
- **Lowest mental health scores**

All having a negative impact on employee morale, productivity and retention and an organisation's health and safety compliance.

This report outlines five evidence-based strategies to help employers identify and close the critical gap in their wellbeing strategy, improve outcomes for working parents, and demonstrate a proactive approach to psychosocial compliance.

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1 Conduct a Working Parent Risk Assessment

54% of working parents end their workday mentally and/or physically exhausted[2]

37% of working parents find it increasingly difficult to be motivated to do their work[2]

This 2024 Australian data is indicative of the world-wide trends[3,4] highlighting the high rates of parental and employee burnout and its negative impact on morale and productivity for employees with caring responsibilities.

WHS laws require organisations to identify and mitigate psychosocial risks for their employees.

Generic wellbeing assessments often miss the ***unique challenges*** faced by employees with caregiving responsibilities. A targeted risk assessment identifies specific psychosocial hazards such as time pressure, emotional fatigue, and work-life conflict that disproportionately impact working parents.

Assess:

Has your organisation undertaken a thorough risk assessment for working parents?

5 Step Action List

1. **Segment workforce data** to identify working parents across all levels.
2. **Use targeted surveys** and focus groups to uncover stressors unique to parents.
3. **Map hazards** against WHS Code categories— e.g., workload, support, conflict.
4. **Document and prioritise risks** in your organisational risk register.
5. **Evaluate and update existing policies and programs** for relevance and gaps in support.



Recommendation

Partner with a work and family wellbeing specialist to identify the psychosocial risks for working parents and ensure your assessment tools align with WHS obligations and capture real, on-the-ground challenges for employees with caring responsibilities. Use these insights to take a data-driven approach to reviewing and updating workplace policies, programs and support strategies to effectively mitigate identified risks.

2 Embed family-friendly leadership practices

Working parents who did not feel supported by their managers had the lowest mental health scores[6]

People leaders are pivotal to psychosocial safety—but without clear expectations, they may unintentionally overlook or exacerbate risks for working parents. Leaders must be equipped with the knowledge, tools, and authority to support parents in a way that is proactive, not reactive.

Assess:

Does your organisation offer people leaders regular training sessions on the psychosocial risks for working parents and their responsibilities in mitigating risks?

5 Step Action List

1. **Train leaders** in psychosocial risk factors affecting parents.
2. **Create manager guidelines** specifically for supporting employees with families.
3. **Empower managers** to offer flexibility and initiate wellbeing conversations.
4. **Include 'family support' metrics** in leadership KPIs and performance reviews.
5. **Establish escalation pathways** for complex or unresolved parent needs.



Recommendation

Integrate family-friendly leadership modules into existing leadership development programs. This ensures managers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and resources to support working parents to thrive at work and at home.

3 Tailor Wellbeing Programs for Parents

37% of working parents would prefer better support for their wellbeing over a 10% increase in salary[2]

ROI companies whose programs had been in place for three or more years had a higher ROI than short-lived programs[5]

Most wellbeing initiatives are generalised and fail to account for the time, mental load, and variety of challenges faced by working parents. One-off token programs do not achieve the long-term benefits that year-round programs offer. Ongoing, tailored programs deliver relevant, practical strategies that reduce stress, improve confidence, and prevent burnout.

Assess:

Does your organisation provide employees with caring responsibilities with evidence-based tailored programs and on-demand access to practical resources to support working parents to manage the many stressful demands of navigating work and family life successfully, year-round?

5 Step Action List

1. **Audit current wellbeing offerings** for relevance to working parents.
2. **Design inclusive content** for diverse families— single parents, carers, shift workers.
3. **Ensure easy access** through on-demand sessions, recordings, and resources.
4. **Offer parenting programs** during work hours, not at drop-offs or school holidays.
5. **Evaluate participation and outcomes** to measure effectiveness and refine.



Recommendation

Implement ongoing workplace parenting education and family wellbeing programs specifically designed to support employees to navigate the work and family interface. Focus on programs that integrate real-life parenting skills and resources for family wellbeing with strategies to improve performance and reduce stress at work.

4 Build a Supportive Workplace Culture

> “Having my employer provide these programs has shown me the support my employer is committed to giving me as an employee. The webinars have helped my family and me by giving me tools to communicate effectively with two teenage boys. It has provided me with the head space, tools and refresher on things that I can do to be more productive and effective at home, which then makes my work life more manageable and less stressful.”
>
> *(Participant, Win Win Parenting, Work and Family Wellbeing Workplace Program)*

Policies and programs only go so far without a culture that actively supports work- life integration. A supportive culture acknowledges the dual roles working parents hold and actively works to reduce stigma, judgment, and isolation.

Assess:

Do working parents and carers view your organisation as an employer of choice -nurturing a family-friendly workplace culture, providing resources to succeed at home and work as well as attracting and retaining the best and brightest?

5 Step Action List

1. **Communicate commitment** to supporting working parents from the top down.
2. **Recognise parenting challenges** in company-wide messaging and events.
3. **Normalise flexible work** arrangements and discourage ‘presenteeism’.
4. **Establish internal parent networks** or employee resource groups.
5. **Celebrate success** stories of parents thriving at work.



Recommendation

Share employee feedback on your initiatives widely to encourage increased participation and success. Use storytelling and peer visibility to embed parent and family wellbeing support into your cultural DNA as a family-friendly workplace. This creates a safe environment where working parents and carers feel seen and supported without fear of career penalty.

5 Monitor and Report on Impact

$2.30 every dollar spent on effective workplace mental health actions may generate $2.30 in benefits to an organisation. These benefits are derived from a reduction in presenteeism, absenteeism, and compensation claims.[7]

£4.70 ... mental health interventions in the workplace shows employers can generate an average return of £4.70 for every £1 invested in improving workplace mental health[5]

What gets measured, gets managed. Demonstrating the impact of targeted support for working parents builds the business case for continued investment and helps meet compliance obligations under psychosocial safety laws.

Assess:

Does your organisation track the impact and return on investment of initiative tailored to improve the wellbeing, morale, productivity and retention of working parent and carers?

5 Step Action List

1. **Track engagement data** for parenting and wellbeing initiatives.
2. **Measure changes** in absenteeism, retention, and productivity.
3. **Collect feedback** from participants and managers.
4. **Benchmark mental health and burnout levels** pre- and post-intervention.
5. **Report outcomes** in wellbeing, WHS, or ESG performance reports.



Recommendation

Include parenting-related wellbeing data in psychosocial risk reports to WHS Committees, Boards, and ESG stakeholders. This demonstrates leadership in proactive compliance and family-friendly innovation.

Conclusion

Organisations can no longer afford to ignore the wellbeing of working parents. Beyond compliance, supporting this group is essential to boosting retention, reducing psychosocial risk, and maintaining a productive and engaged workforce.

By assessing risk, empowering leaders, tailoring programs with ongoing practical support, embedding inclusive culture, and tracking impact—your organisation can close the critical gap in its wellbeing strategy and lead the way in psychosocial safety and family-friendly practice.

Next Steps

If you'd like to learn more about building a family-friendly workplace culture and taking positive action towards the wellbeing and psychosocial safety of working parents – reach out to the Win Win Parenting team



Sources

1. TELUS Health Research Brief on the Mental Health of Working Parents (2023)
2. TELUS Health Mental Health Index Australia (2024)
3. Maven's State of Women's and Family Health Benefits Report (2025)
4. Gallup State of the Global Workplace: Understanding Employees, Informing Leaders (2025)
5. Deloitte Mental Health and Employers: The Business Case to Support Employees and, in Particular, Working Parents (2024)
6. TELUS Health Mental Health Index New Zealand (2024)
7. Creating A Mentally Healthy Workplace Return on Investment Analysis (PWC)
8. Win Win Parenting Work and Family Education Programs www.WinWinParenting.com

For more information or to book a program
visit go.telushealth.com/en-au/win-win-parenting



Contact the Win Win Parenting team
E: wwp@telushealth.com



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