

D O W N T O W N S A N T A B A R B A R A
EMPLOYER  CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP

Be a Part of Santa Barbara's October Work and Family Month

A Family-Friendly business culture is made up of both the big policy decisions and the everyday small things that let employees know that they are respected, and that they are supported in balancing their work and family responsibilities.

By creating activities to recognize Work and Family Month, you reaffirm the culture you are striving to create for your employees. The following is a list of sample activities to celebrate National Work and Family Month.

Activities to Promote Work-Life Balance:

- Distribute information about work-life balance and your support of National Work and Family Month to your employees.
- Plan an event to proclaim October as Work and Family month. Have a celebration that highlights what work-family programs your organization offers to employees.
- Post quotes about the importance of family on the company intranet and staff bulletin boards – post a new one each week for the month of October.
- Solicit testimonials from employees on how they successfully manage work-life challenges. Use these quotes to create an internal article and in press release. Share quotes with Downtown Employer Child Care Partnership for special recognition.
- Advertise your celebration by posting the National Work & Family Month poster throughout your organization and in front window.
- Hold an art contest for the children of employees to participate in depicting work and family together. Display the art on meeting room walls and the top three winners (or their parents) can be presented with a prize.
- Solicit photos of employees' families for internal posting, showing names, ages and some interesting achievements (e.g., scholastic, sports, etc.) that the employer helped support, either directly or indirectly.
- Solicit family facts about employees and run a trivia quiz. (e.g., "Which employee has 10 children and 22 grandchildren?")

Toot Your Horn!

Let other businesses and the community know about your good work! **Take the work-life self audit** and promote the findings internally and to the public. Your employees will be proud to work for you, potential employees will see you as an employer of choice, and your business will stand out from the others. Distribute a press release, send a letter to the editor highlighting your businesses' efforts and the positive effects you see, or add an article in your internal newsletter about Work and Family Month. For more information about Work Life balance and successful strategies to promote work and family programs go to www.awlp.org.



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Work and Family Success Stories

For over twenty years Working Mother Magazine has been recognizing companies who offer top of the line work-family programs and policies. Each year, Working Mother Magazine produces a list of the top 100 best companies for working mothers based on compensation, child care, flexibility, time off and leaves, family-friendly programs, as well as overall company culture. Companies are recognized for their progressive ideas, family-friendly policies and investment in women and families, which pays for generations to come. Companies have come to realize that promoting work-life balance makes business sense.

PATAGONIA'S family friendly environment is top notch. New mothers and fathers get two months of paid child-care leave, and an on-site child-care program lets employees slip in to see their children during the day. Child-care subsidies are provided, company buses transport children from local elementary schools to the company's Ventura offices, and a school support program allows employees five days off to participate in their children's classroom activities. Parent education seminars are often given during lunch.

According to Terri Wolfe, director of human resources, "taking care of children is a welcomed part of the corporate culture." Family-friendly policies have benefited Patagonia, reducing absenteeism and helping the company keep workers, especially women. A cost-benefit analysis found it was more expensive to recruit new employees than to pay for the on-site child-care center — a significant factor in retaining women in the workplace.

"The children are a visual, verbal, and vocal reminder to balance our lives," Wolfe observes. Says Setnicka, "Basically, our mission is to make the best-quality product with the least amount of harm. It's very hard to produce a high-quality product without high-quality employees."*

COTTAGE HEALTH SYSTEMS has a long history of providing quality child development services to the children of employees. The original Children's Center opened in 1981, and the Infant/Toddler Center was added in 1992. "With the Orfaleas, Cottage shares a passion for high quality care, not only for our patients but for our employees as well," said Ron Werft, president and chief executive officer of Cottage Health System. "Ideally, working parents need to know that their children are nearby in a secure and stimulating environment. Thanks to the generosity of The Orfalea Fund, we have been able to expand our services to more children in a new, child-friendly setting with both programs housed together for the first time."

Through The Orfalea Fund, Paul and Natalie Orfalea have pursued a long-standing interest in high quality early childhood care and education for working families. "We are pleased to partner with Cottage to help ensure that its co-workers can give 100 percent on the job knowing that their young children are receiving excellent care nearby," said Mrs. Orfalea. Added Mr. Orfalea, "A nurturing setting like this new center with its excellent team of teachers and staff will support families and children in our community for many years."***

ALLSTATE INSURANCE offers an on-site child-care center and at five near-site centers enjoy a wide range of activities, from music classes and cool science projects to field trips. A



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sliding fee scale at all six centers helps keep parents' costs down. Backup care is available at the on-site facility, and company-sponsored community-based facilities and in-home child care give moms and dads plenty of options.

"My husband and I both work at Allstate, and the on-site day-care center has made the biggest difference in balancing our home life with our careers. We take turns dropping off and picking up our daughter, Megan. When I first came back from maternity leave, she was twelve weeks old and still nursing. Rather than pump, I'd drop by the center every day and nurse her. Now the day-care center staff sends me daily emails with photos of the children playing, blowing bubbles, and painting. Those emails help me stay connected to Megan during my workday."***

NORTHERN TRUST offers an on-site child development center at the company's main office which enables employees to be near their kids. Workers earning less than \$45,000 get up to a 60% discount. In addition, birth moms receive 19 weeks of maternity leave, with eight days at full pay and 27 days at partial pay. New dads and adoptive parents get 13 weeks off, with one week paid. All employees can opt to take up to six months of personal unpaid leave with continued benefits and training.


"Over holiday breaks, Northern Trust sponsors a kids' camp that my eight-year-old son, Drew, attends. He gets to see friends from his day-care center, and it gives my husband and me more vacation flexibility. My son and I have a tradition: We ride the train from the suburbs into Chicago, walk to my office and have breakfast before camp begins. Often, I'll pick him up from camp so that we can have lunch together, too. It's really nice to have so much connection with him during that time of year."***

MERCK & CO. supports across-the-board child-care options for employees: All locations offer daily on-site care, as well as backup care and summer programs. New moms may take 12 weeks off beyond the time provided by FMLA and are fully paid for six weeks of their leave. If they want more time to bond with their baby, they can take up to six months of unpaid job-guaranteed time off.

"If I could pick one program that has made the biggest impact on me and my entire family, it would be the on-site child-care center. Being able to see the building from my office was an emotional comfort because I could focus on my job and not have to worry about what was going on with my children. My kids loved going there, and they learned so much, which is probably a parent's biggest relief. One afternoon when my husband and I were at the center, the staff told us, 'Your daughter wants to show you something.' Then she walked across the entire room, fifteen or twenty steps! We were so excited—and a little bummed out that we had missed this first milestone, but it also felt like the center staff was part of the family."***

GENENTECH offers an on-site center that serves 254 employee children, and company-purchased spots at a local facility run by the YMCA to help ensure daily care. A sliding fee scale at the on-site centers and tuition aid at the YMCA are instrumental in helping parents keep costs under control. New moms can take 24 weeks of job-guaranteed time off, with six weeks at full pay and six at partial pay. Six weeks of paid adoption leave is available for primary caregivers.



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An added perk: Every six years, any employee can take a six-week paid sabbatical.

"My three-year-old and five-year-old sons have been attending the corporate child-care center since they were each six months old. I feel really comfortable in the course of my day because I know they're nearby and they're being well cared for. The teachers have been wonderful partners to me as a parent, and I've frequently asked for their advice on how to cope with a particular behavior. The choices I need to make to be there for my kids have never limited my performance at Genentech. I received two key promotions—each while I was on maternity leave!"***

For more information on companies that successfully offer work-life programs and policies got www.WorkingMother.com or www.AWLP.org.

*By Lisa Gardiner Retrieved from: <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/ie/v8n1/synchilla.html>

** Retrieved from: <http://www.sbch.org/aboutus/news/orfaleachildcenter.htm>

*** Retrieved from <http://www.workingmother.com>



1 East Anapamu Street Suite 200, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 Tel: (805) 884.8085 Fax: (805) 564-8586
218 Carmen Lane, Suite 111 Santa Maria, CA 93458 Tel: (805) 739-8470 Fax: (805) 739-8747