

Return to Work Plan



The first year after a baby is born is full of constant adjustments and learning curves for working parents. One of the biggest changes in your employees' lives may be returning to work once parental leave is up. This choice often comes with many anxieties and doubts, and we hope this guide to returning to work can help ease the transition for your team members. The good news is that we know support like paid parental leave and enabling breastfeeding infrastructure makes a tremendous difference in retaining women in the workforce.

As an example, Mutual of Omaha reported spending more than \$2,000 on extra healthcare costs for each woman who failed to enrol in their lactation support program.

Consider the following to help support your employees transition back to work:



Develop phase-in programs

Employers have created options to help phase in moms as part of the return-to-work. This includes flexible work times, peer support and other company-run programs to provide support on their transition, starting out part-time with a pro-rated salary, and offering flexible work arrangements such as work remotely.



Offer additional postpartum clinical support unique to working moms

As moms navigate the transition to work, this often involves adapting their breastfeeding and baby feeding plans which includes breast pumping, introducing a bottle, or transitioning to formula. Expressing breast milk is a physiological need and needs evidence-based expert clinical support to develop feeding plans that work for families while navigating new schedules and environments.

Companies like SimpliFed offer virtual breastfeeding support from health professionals to help parents navigate this transition covered by health plans at no cost to employers or the employees.



Create time and space for lactation needs as required by law

The recently passed PUMP Act expands workplace protections for employees with a need to express breastmilk and requires that employers provide accommodations for salaried employees and other types of workers not covered under existing law. Time spent expressing breastmilk must be considered hours worked if the employee is also working and the bill also extends these accommodations from one to two years.



Provide understanding and support for separation anxiety

Separation anxiety is a very real need for moms and driven by hormone shifts. Providing access to counseling from mental health providers is critical to help parents navigate this transition back to work.

To help your employees work through this transition, you can offer them [this worksheet](#) to help plan for the transition.

Plan for you

What are the policies that your workplace has to support you during parental leave and during the return-to-work?

When do you want to return to work?

How many hours a week do you want to work?

If possible, are there options on where you can work? Either at the office or at home?

Do you have to travel for work? If so, what are you willing to do/not do?

Plan for your family

Where will your child spend the day?

Is your partner able to stay home? If not, how will their routine fit with yours?

How will your feeding routine fit in with your work schedule?

If your child is in day care, what is your drop off and pick up routine? Who is involved, when?

When in your day are you able to carve out family time? For example, if you work late maybe there is time to read a book together in the mornings.

Plan for feeding

How are you planning on feeding your baby with the transition back to work?

Have you picked your breastpump and bottles?

Have you identified a plan to get support which is covered by health plans to help with the transition?

About SimpliFed

SimpliFed provides virtual breastfeeding and baby feeding support fully covered by health plans from pregnancy to weaning at no cost to your organization or your employees. We have national commercial, Medicaid, and TRICARE contracts to allow your employees to get access to support for free and no buy-up is required for your organization.

If you are interested in learning more or getting access to resources to share with your employees, you can email contactus@simplified.us and we will setup a time to chat.

References

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