The New Dad: A Work (and Life) in Progress

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Boston College Workforce Roundtable
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Outline of Today’s Session

- Quick review of our research
  - The changing role of fathers
  - The at-home dad
- Recommendations
  - For Employers
  - For Fathers
- How can we alter / move forward the conversation in organizations
Men feel more w-f conflict than women

(National Study of the Changing Workforce by Galinsky, Aumann, and Bond, 2008)
Summary of our studies

- 2009: The New Dad
  - Center for Work & Family conducted a qualitative study of 33 fathers
  - First-time fathers, children’s age ~11 months

- 2011: *The New Dad: Caring Committed & Conflicted*
  - 963 fathers from four, Fortune 500 companies with at least one <18 child at home

- 2012: *The New Dad: Right at Home*
  - Looked at experience of at-home fathers

- 2013: *The New Dad: A Work (and Life) in Progress*
Career Aspirations

- I have sought opportunities to gain knowledge of a variety of functional areas.
- I have asked to work on challenging assignments.
- I have participated in networking opportunities within my organization.
- I wish to advance to a position with greater responsibility.
- I would like to be in a position where I can have greater influence on policy.
- I have a strong desire to advance to a position in senior management.
Time off after most recent child

By contrast, most professional mothers take 2-6 months leave
Comparison of Workweeks

- % of Fathers
- % of Spouses/Partners

- Less than 20 hours
- 20-34
- 35-45
- 46-55
- More than 55 hours

Percentage

- 50
- 40
- 30
- 20
- 10
- 0
How fathers see their role

- Earning money to meet my child’s financial needs.
- Mostly earning money to meet my child’s financial needs, but also providing some physical/emotional care for him/her.
- Both caring for my child and earning money to meet his/her financial needs.
- Mostly caring for my child, but also earning some money to meet his/her financial needs.
- Physically/emotionally caring for my child.
What Makes a Good Father?

- Provide love and emotional support: 4.6
- Be involved and present in your child's life: 4.6
- Be a teacher, guide and coach: 4.4
- Provide discipline: 4.2
- Provide financial security: 4.0
- Do your part in the day-to-day childcare tasks: 3.6
How should / is care giving divided?

- Father sole caregiver
- Father provides more care
- Both provide equal amounts
- Spouse provides more care
- Spouse sole caregiver

- Should be
- Is
Becoming a father, a winner at work …

- New fathers receive universally positive workplace feedback regarding their career after becoming a parent (more mature, more credible, etc.)
  - 91% said peers welcomed them back
  - 87% said managers welcomed them back
  - 89% said supervisor supports them when they have a family problem

- Research suggests women receive much more mixed messages (Ladge) and are perceived as committed, less promotable, even less competent when they become mothers (Correll at. al.)
But why wouldn’t it be?

- Organizations are not confronted with real change for their fathers after children
  - 96% of fathers said managers expect the same, 1% lower, 3% higher
  - 99% worked full-time after the birth
  - Only 4% took > two weeks off & only 1% took > four weeks
- And while many used flex, few struck a formal arrangement
Fathers flex, but not formally

- **Flex-time**
  - Not used
  - Used on an informal basis
  - Have a formal arrangement through organization policy

- **Work from home**
  - Not used
  - Used on an informal basis
  - Have a formal arrangement through organization policy

- **Compressed work week**
  - Not used
  - Used on an informal basis
  - Have a formal arrangement through organization policy
Importance of a supportive workplace

Supportive Environment
- Family Supportive Culture
- Manager Supportiveness
- Co-worker Supportiveness

Improved Work to Family Alignment
- Lower Work-to-Family Conflict
- Higher Work-to-Family Enrichment

More Satisfied Employees
- Higher Job Satisfaction
- Higher Career Satisfaction
- Lower Job Withdrawal Intentions
The New Dad: Right at Home (2012)

- Recently, we also explored the small but growing number at at-home fathers.
- The number has doubled in the past decade but is still only 4% of all at-home parents.
- At-home fathers faced many of the same issues as at home mothers (stigma, social isolation, worries about impact on career, etc.) but even more acutely.
- At-home dads may not seem of interest to employers, they often enabled their wives to advance much further in their careers.
- Men found the role extremely rewarding.
Recommendations: Employers & managers

- Fully embrace flexible work arrangements but focus on informal where possible
- Get to know your Dads and their needs
- Recognize father’s care giving role and strongly consider offering paternity leave
- Give Dad’s a place and “permission” to talk
- Ensure not only policies but all work-life initiatives and management decisions do not reflect a gender bias
Recommendations for fathers

- Examine your caregiving goals in light of your career goals: *Myth of having it all?*
- Consider taking more time off after the birth of your children, if not immediately over long term
  - Consider reduced work hours
  - Formal flexible arrangements
- Support your fellow fathers who want to provide shared caregiving
- Help to create workplace cultures support working fathers
Resources for fathers

- A summary report, *The New Dad* outlining recommendations for fathers and organizations
- A new website thenewdad.org dedicated to reviewing research on fathers and work-life. Website will house all of our research studies as well as blogs and reflections on fatherhood.
- Informative videos discussing the research and a “call to action” for fathers and policy makers
- A virtual “Forum for Fathers in the Workplace” bringing together dads to discuss common issues
Resources for fathers

- A series of corporate workshops/webinars at our corporate partner organizations to provide a forum for discussion on fathers’ issues
- Expansion of our The New Dad’s study inviting additional men to participate in the survey
- Promoting a national dialogue on father’s work-life decisions and helping men re-think how to navigate increasingly complex careers of today.
Round Square Table Discussion

- Fathers make up 50% of America’s parents, but also 85% of corporate leaders and 96% of CEO’s.
- How can we engage father more actively in the work-life dialogue in the US?
- What would it take to engage fathers in your organization?
- What barriers prevent fathers in your organization from being involved?
- What specifically can the Center do to support you in efforts aimed at fathers?