

A GUIDE TO CONDUCTING A CHILDCARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Developed by Seramount,¹⁰ this guide offers practices employers can adopt to collect quantitative and qualitative data from staff to develop an evidence-backed understanding of childcare needs, a first step in implementing some of the strategies in the toolkit. Another sample survey has been developed by Family Forward North Carolina.¹¹

WHERE TO START

Begin with a voluntary and anonymous survey to collect hard data about employee sentiments and needs. If possible, also conduct focus groups or more expansive “Employee Voice Sessions” to dive deeper into attitudes, expectations, and behaviors related to childcare. Anonymized anecdotes elicited there can be a powerful means of communicating childcare challenges and needs with decision makers.

WHO TO SURVEY

- | | |
|--|--|
| Option 1: Survey employees caring for a child | Use Case: Can be used to assess existing needs |
| Option 2: Survey employees caring for a child <u>OR</u> who plan to do so in the near future | Use Case: Can be used to assess both existing needs and near future needs |
| Option 3: Survey employees caring for a child, those who plan to care for a child in the near future, and a random general population set | Use Case: Assesses existing and near-term needs but also provides an idea of how provision of services would affect general perception and behaviors toward the company |

HOW TO INCENTIVIZE PARTICIPATION

- Set an example:** Executive team members should publicly express the need to learn more about childcare needs via this survey and can share a personal story about the importance of childcare, if applicable. Buy-in from the top is essential to motivating employee participation.
- Make surveys anonymous:** If possible, use a third party to host the survey or run an anonymous focus group to create an additional layer of distance between the company and the comments of the employees, which can help garner more honest feedback.
- Leverage employee resource groups (ERGs):** ERG events can be a good forum to in which to collect feedback from caregivers in a setting where they feel comfortable. ERG members can get the word out and enlist coworkers to participate in focus groups or complete the survey.

WHAT TO DO WITH RESULTS

Key findings should be shared with decisionmakers and staff, as relevant, with a corresponding action plan to address opportunities to close gaps revealed by the data. This leads to a sense of transparency with employees and holds the company accountable for progress on solutions.

¹⁰ Seramount, 2021, shared as part of a study conducted for the New York City Economic Development Corporation.

¹¹ Family Forward North Carolina, “Sample Employee Survey”.

A GUIDE TO CONDUCTING A CHILDCARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT



SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. **Do you have, or do you hope to have, children while working here?**
 - a. I currently have children.
 - b. Yes, I hope to have children while working here. *(Skip to Question 8.)*
 - c. No, I do not currently have children, nor do I plan to have any while working here. *(Please only answer question 10.)*
2. **If you answered “yes” to Question 1, what is the age range of your child/ren? (Check all that apply.)**
 - a. 0–2
 - b. 3–4
 - c. 5–12
 - d. 13–15
 - e. 16–18
3. **Are you currently paying for childcare services?**
 - a. Yes, I am currently paying for childcare services.
 - b. No, I am not currently paying for childcare services.
 - c. No, I am not paying for childcare services, but I would want to/plan to in the next year.
 - d. No, I am not paying for childcare services, and I do not want to/plan to in the next year.
4. **Pre-pandemic, did you consider any of the following due to a lack of childcare services benefits offered at your company?**
 - a. Leaving the company
 - b. Cutting back on work hours
 - c. No
5. **Since the onset of the pandemic, have you considered any of the following due to insufficient childcare services benefits offered at your company?**
 - a. Leaving the company
 - b. Cutting back on work hours
 - c. No
6. **Pre-pandemic, did you ever experience reduced productivity at work due to a lack of childcare services benefits offered?**
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Why or why not?
7. **Since the onset of the pandemic, have you experienced reduced productivity at work due to a lack of childcare services benefits offered?**
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Why or why not?
8. **If you are paying or plan to pay for childcare services, is the cost of care so high you may consider leaving the workforce?**
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I am currently not paying nor planning to pay for childcare services
9. **How would you rate the childcare related benefits offered by the company?**
 - a. Inadequate
 - b. Adequate
 - c. More than adequate
10. **Thinking about employees at this company as a whole, to what extent do you believe more company-provided childcare benefits would impact each of the following? (Rank each on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = Very Little Extent and 5 = Very Large Extent.)**
 - a. Quality of work
 - b. Engagement
 - c. Reputation
 - d. Productivity
 - e. Retention
 - f. Other *(Please specify)*
11. **What childcare benefits would most help you? (Select up to five.)**
 - a. Direct stipend to support childcare of my choice
 - b. Employer-subsidized childcare center near my home
 - c. Employer-subsidized childcare center near my work location
 - d. Funding/increased funding for backup (emergency) childcare
 - e. Parental leave/increased parental leave
 - f. Option to gradually phase back into full-time work after parental leave
 - g. After-school care (between the hours of 3 and 6 pm)
 - h. Extended hour care (between the hours of 6 pm and 8 am)
 - i. Weekend care
 - j. Summer care
 - k. Tutoring
 - l. Childcare resource and referral support
 - m. More flexible work schedule
 - n. More flexible work location
 - o. Other