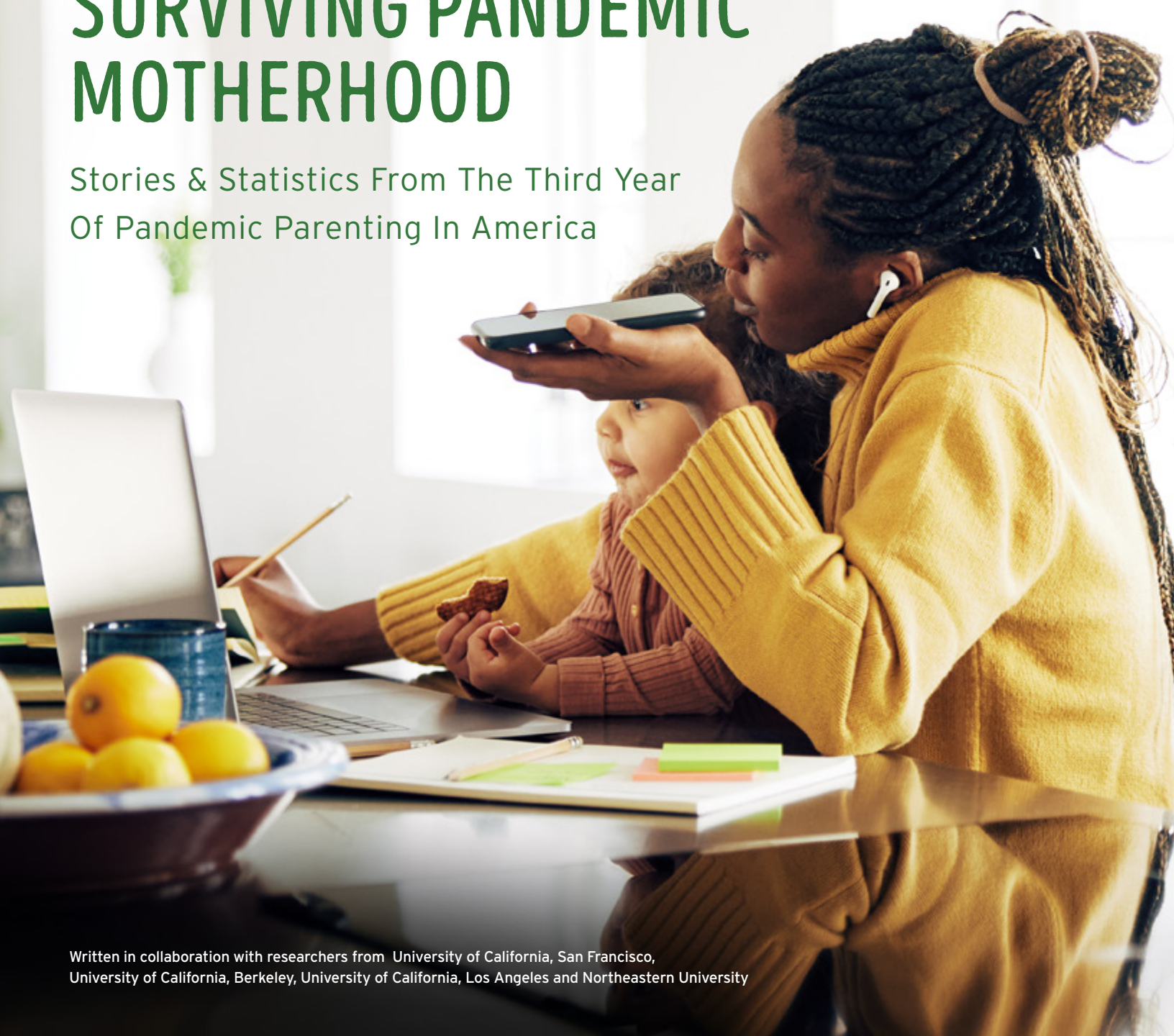
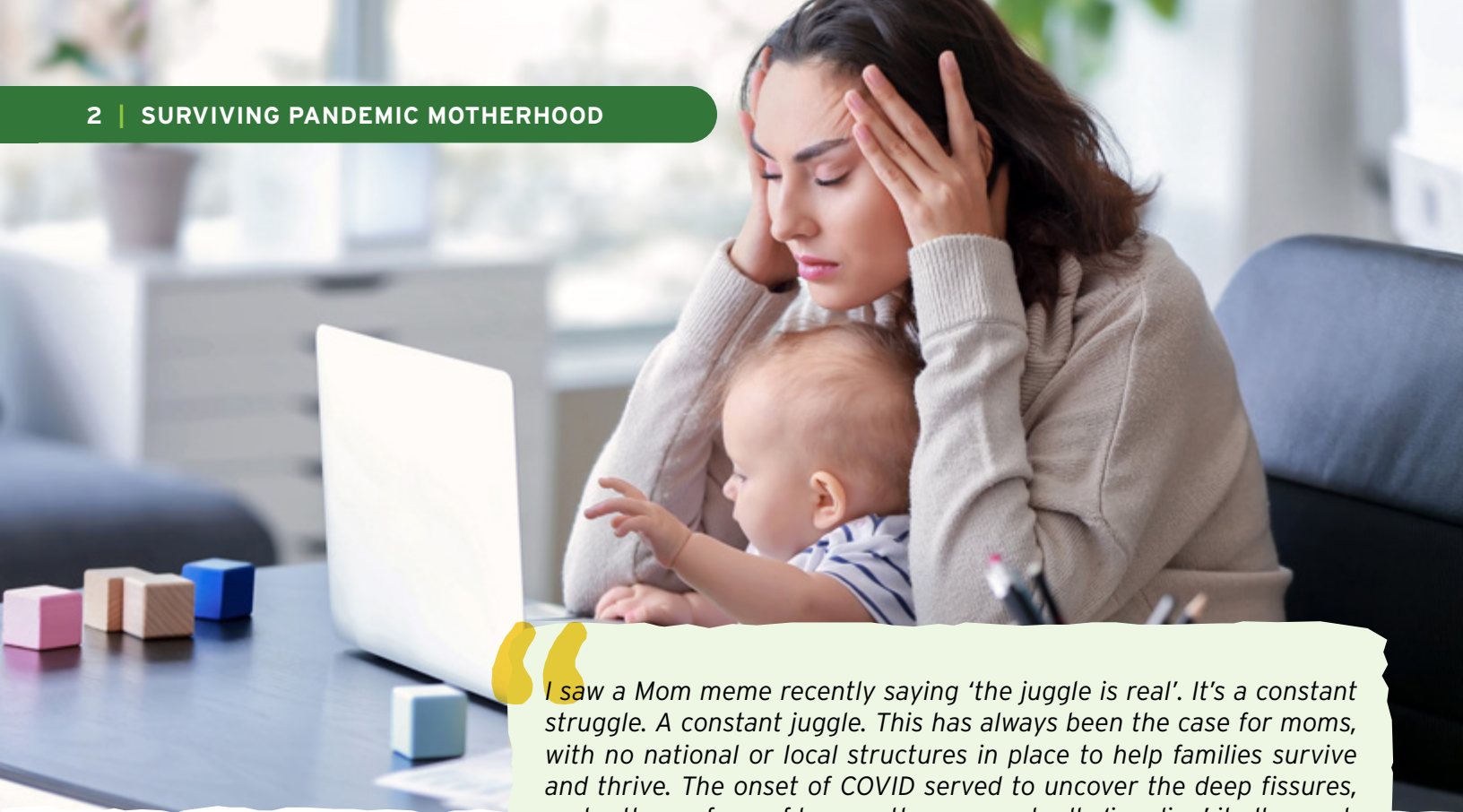


SURVIVING PANDEMIC MOTHERHOOD

Stories & Statistics From The Third Year Of Pandemic Parenting In America



Written in collaboration with researchers from University of California, San Francisco, University of California, Berkeley, University of California, Los Angeles and Northeastern University



I saw a Mom meme recently saying 'the juggle is real'. It's a constant struggle. A constant juggle. This has always been the case for moms, with no national or local structures in place to help families survive and thrive. The onset of COVID served to uncover the deep fissures, under the surface, of how mothers are actually 'juggling' it all; or not. I am one of those Mothers.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact working moms. Stories of moms being pushed out of jobs, leaving the workforce or looking towards entrepreneurship because of the increased demands of juggling work and parenting are increasing. Working moms, particularly young and new mothers, have left the workforce at exceedingly high rates during the pandemic, far more than working fathers ([Heggeness et al. 2021](#); [Cassella 2021](#)). Moms that stayed in the workforce struggled greatly in their jobs ([McKinsey Report, 2020](#); [Modestino, 2021](#)).

In December 2021, mom-led companies Kuli Kuli, Sylvatex, and Uncommon Cacao surveyed over 1,000 working mothers to understand their experiences balancing parenting and work during the pandemic. Additionally, moms had the opportunity to share their pandemic survival stories for the chance to win a SuperMom Award, which included \$10,000 in cash prizes and a year of superfood chocolate.

Working moms are an important segment of the labor force, and their departure from and challenge to stay in the workforce stresses an already impacted labor market. The COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in a labor market shortage that has created challenges for employers to attract and retain talent. According to the [Center for American Progress](#), if moms do not come back into the workforce, it will cost our country \$64.5 billion.

Our study provides a unique opportunity to hear directly from working moms about their experiences of working and parenting during the pandemic. Based on our findings from this study of working moms' experiences during the pandemic, we propose key policies and practices that employers can adopt to attract and retain working moms, increase overall employee satisfaction, and create healthier workplaces that will endure long beyond the pandemic.



UNCOMMON CACAO
TRANSPARENT TRADE

Executive Summary

This report examines the experiences of working moms during the COVID-19 pandemic and explores what business leaders and employers can do to attract and retain working moms in the workforce. Based on survey responses from 1,048 moms and stories submitted by 265 moms, we identified five key findings.

KEY FINDINGS:



THE MOMMY BURDEN.

With loss of childcare and the ongoing prevalence of traditional gender norms, many moms became the “default parent,” shouldering the large majority of childcare and domestic burdens. Of the 265 moms that submitted stories, nearly one-third mentioned their experiences as a default parent. This was particularly visible in the experiences of single mothers and mothers in heterosexual relationships.



THE BREAKING POINT.

As we enter year three of the pandemic, working moms are at breaking point. More than a fifth of working moms (23%) have no time for self-care, including healthy eating, exercise, or connecting with friends. Fifty-three percent of working moms are getting less than 6 hours of sleep per night (7-9 hours is recommended).



WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION.

Many moms experienced increased discrimination in the workplace as they struggled to balance the work and home responsibilities that they disproportionately shouldered.



WORKFORCE EXODUS.

Discrimination, childcare challenges and personal mental health concerns prompted 48% of moms surveyed to leave the workforce or switch to part-time.



FLEXIBILITY KEEPS MOMS WORKING.

Working moms with flexible, remote jobs, and empathetic employers stayed in the workforce, with 79% of moms saying they prefer remote work. Enabling flexible hours and paid time off are the top two things employers can do to keep moms in the workforce. 55 percent of moms said that spending more time with their children was one of the silver linings of the pandemic.

All of these challenges were more acute for moms of color and low-income mothers.

POLICY AND PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Provide increased opportunities for remote work and flexible schedules.

Encourage greater uptake of parental leave resources, including for working fathers. Create a workplace culture that supports all working parents/guardians.

Offer childcare subsidiaries and/or work-based childcare solutions.

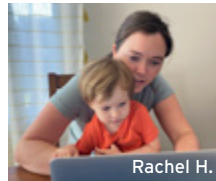
Provide resources and access to services that support mental health.

Ensure equitable opportunities for advancement and combat workforce discrimination against mothers.

Experiences of Managing Work & Parenting During the Pandemic

Our findings examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on working moms. We surveyed over one thousand moms, and collected stories from 265 mothers from all over the country about their experience of parenting and working during the pandemic.

The moms we heard from shouldered an increased level of parenting responsibilities during the pandemic, which resulted in lost work time and increased mental health challenges. Managing competing priorities proved to be unsustainable, and led to adverse effects on their health and job changes. Many moms in the study reported being pushed out of their jobs, leaving their jobs or pursuing entrepreneurship because of the increased demands of juggling work and parenting responsibilities. Additionally, job instability was more pronounced among women of color and low-income moms. Supporting work factors for moms included employers that provided flexible work options with empathetic leadership and colleagues.



Rachel H.



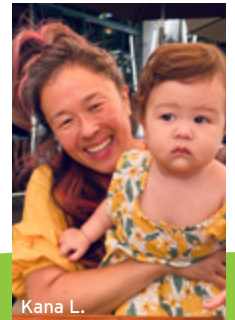
Vy N.



JKarra M.



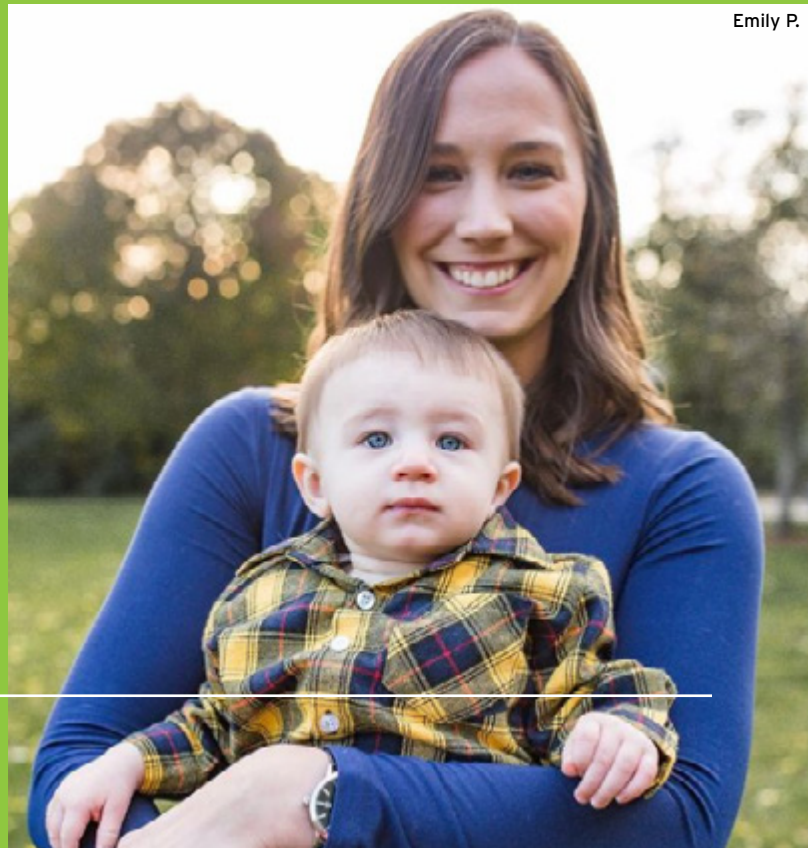
Jordan R.



Kana L.

ABOUT THE MOMS

We heard from moms from all 50 states. Seventy-two percent of the moms surveyed had one or two children. Forty-five percent of the moms we heard from were single parents, the rest were married or in a domestic partnership. The majority of women participating in this study were in heterosexual relationships. There was racial/ethnic and income diversity among the women we heard from. Sixty percent came from low income backgrounds and 22 percent reported incomes below the federal poverty level. The majority of moms surveyed identified as white (61 percent), 18 percent identified as Black, about 10 percent identified as Hispanic or Latina, and 11 percent identified as Asian, Middle Eastern or North African, or multiracial.



Emily P.

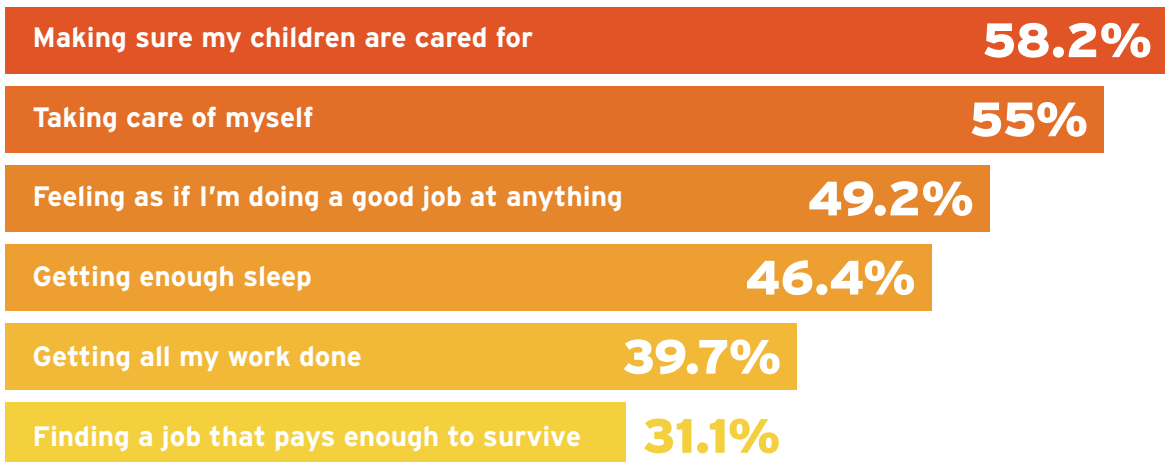
Among Heterosexual Parents, Traditional Gender Roles Loom Large, Placing The Childcare Burden Firmly On Working Moms As “The Default Parent”

Throughout the pandemic, working moms have disproportionately shouldered the burden of parenting. Often, and regardless of relationship status, mothers shouldered this burden single-handedly. Many mothers described this as being the “default parent.” More than half (58%) of the women surveyed said the most challenging aspects of juggling work and childcare was ensuring that their children were cared for. From the stories submitted we learned that for these moms, the biggest challenge was losing childcare when daycares and schools closed at first indefinitely, and more recently, sporadically. Suddenly, working moms had to simultaneously fit in full-time work and full-time childcare, while this typically was not the case for their male partners or the father of their children.



The pandemic turned me into a stay at home mom, house wife, day care provider, home schooler, chef, maid, full time teleworking employee and prayer warrior. And there is not enough time in my day to wear all of those hats. - Kecia M.

What has been the most challenging aspect of juggling work and childcare during the pandemic?





From the stories moms submitted, it was clear that the loss of childcare and school closures challenged working moms' ability to thrive in the workplace as they—all of whom were currently or previously in a heterosexual relationship—took on the gendered burden of being the “default” parent in the home. As Radmilaone R. briefly put it: “Sick pregnant mom is home with two wild toddlers with barely any help. Husband is busy working from the basement to concentrate.” Another mother Celine M., who had the same employer as her husband, explained how childcare responsibilities unquestionably fell on her shoulders:

I'm a helicopter pilot in the Army and my husband is also in the Army, so when our daughter has a runny nose or a restless night, I am usually the parent who has to cancel my flight so I can take care of her...and take care of the shopping, the laundry, and the floor full of pretzel crumbs and dog hair that I swept up 20 minutes ago. Not to mention the trash that gets taken out every 40 minutes, which isn't even an exaggeration. I can't even say I am successfully juggling it all, but I am accepting it now...I'm also accepting that I won't have as many flight hours as the other pilots who do not have children.

The inflexibility of their male partner's job, coupled with the presence of patriarchal social norms (i.e., the cultural belief that women should do the bulk of childcare and domestic labor), was a large factor in mothers shouldering disproportionate new burdens. Jacqueline G. shared that: “Although I'm in a high stress job, the fact that I work for myself and had more flexibility than my husband meant I ended up in the role of lead caretaker during the days, catching up on work at night, weekends, and during naps. Like many other moms, I was beyond exhausted and unable to really care for myself.”

Very few mothers shared that their male partners shouldered equal or more domestic and childcare burdens than they did during the pandemic. These few occurrences show that fathers are capable of taking on an equal share of childcare and domestic burdens, although this remains the exception to the rule. One of the two mothers who reported being in a same-sex

relationship shared equal childcare and domestic burdens with her female partner. While Deb F.'s female partner only worked part-time (thereby technically having the more flexible work position), and she worked full-time, they both shouldered equal shares of caring for their young children: “My wife...would spend the next several months convincing our very active 6-year-old to pay attention to an iPad while our bored toddler also attended kindergarten from the background by default. [My wife] and I flex our work schedules so she can work part-time as a gardener and I can continue my healthcare IT job from home.” As mothers navigated workplace and domestic obligations, the women who participated in our study said it was near-impossible to keep the two spheres of work and home separate, let alone show up for the responsibilities to the extent they desired.



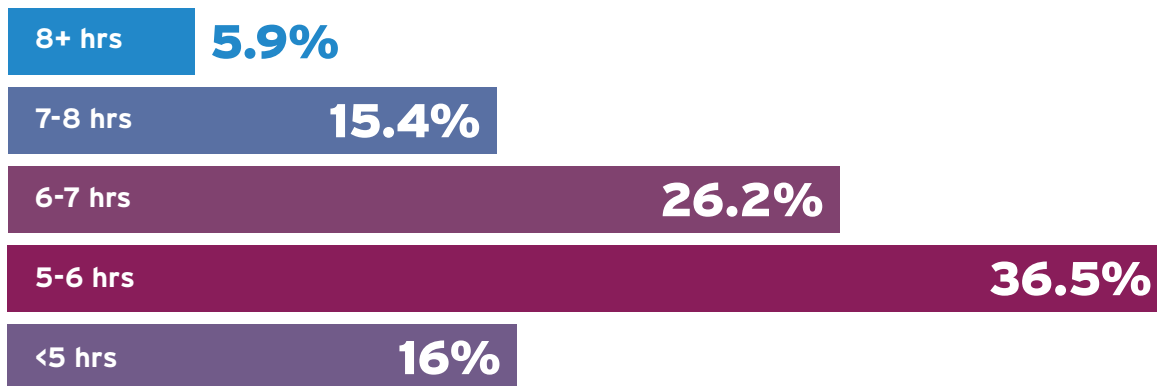
Sleepless, Lacking Self-Care, And Anxious, Moms Are Hitting A Breaking Point

Between working and momming, there was nothing left for ME. I lost myself...

- Ericka R.

Of the 265 moms that submitted stories, over one-third (37%) reported that they experienced a negative impact on their physical and mental health and were less likely to engage in self-care practices. Loss of sleep and perpetual exhaustion were central consequences of working moms managing multiple responsibilities during the pandemic. Similarly, in our survey, 16% of moms reported getting less than five hours of sleep at night. Fifty-three percent of working moms are getting less than 6 hours of sleep per night. Less than 25 percent of moms were getting the recommended 7-9 hours of sleep nightly. Additionally, inequities among mothers who had to adjust their work hours to both rise earlier than their children in order to work. Specifically, mothers of color were more likely than their White mom counterparts to report waking earlier. The lack of sleep has severe consequences for physical and mental wellbeing, and could help explain why many moms have suffered from mental health challenges during the pandemic.

Hours Of Sleep On Average Reported By Moms In The Survey



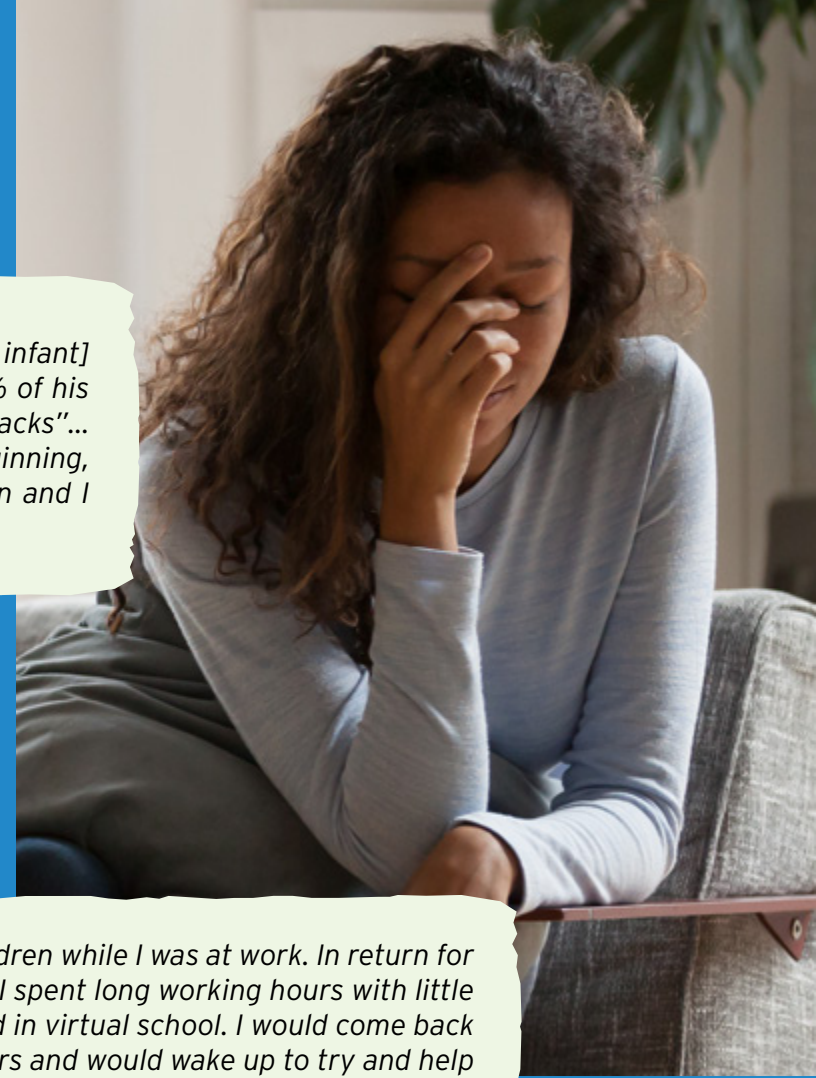
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Melissa V. described the exhausting and single-handed juggle of home and work responsibilities:

We decided out of extreme precaution to keep [our infant] home with us while we both worked from home. 90% of his care fell to me and I was forced to work in the “mom cracks”... during naps, early mornings, and late nights. In the beginning, it felt impossible as he was hitting a sleep regression and I was running on empty.

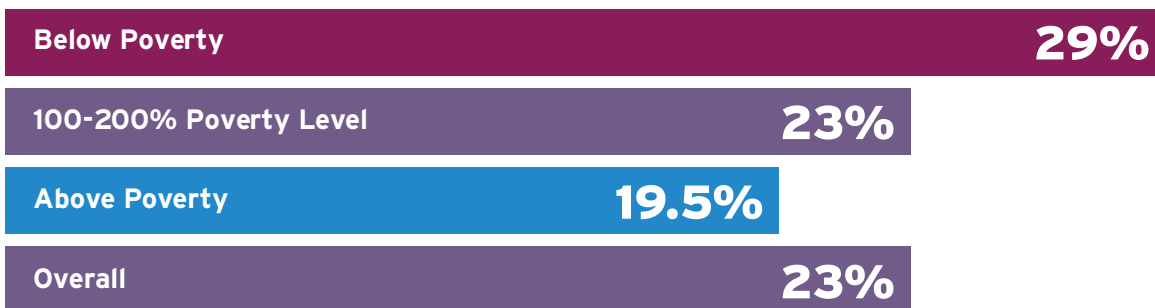
Melissa’s loss of sleep was a direct consequence of her designation as a default parent, as discussed earlier. Even for mothers whose partners shouldered the majority of childcare and domestic responsibilities, sleep was affected through increased work demands due to COVID-19. Daisy R., a healthcare worker, shared:

My husband had to quit his job and take care of the children while I was at work. In return for the loss of income, I had to work long overtime hours...I spent long working hours with little to no rest. My six year old daughter was not doing good in virtual school. I would come back home, at 5 in the morning, would sleep a couple of hours and would wake up to try and help them. I was on the verge of a mental breakdown, but had to keep it together for the children.



Fifty-five percent (55%) of moms reported that taking care of themselves was one of the most challenging aspects of balancing work and parenting. Nearly 1 out of 4 moms were not engaging in common self-care practices such as walking, meditation, maintaining social connections, exercise, or healthy eating. What is yet more concerning is that the moms contending with poverty were more likely than others to report not engaging in basic self-care activities.

Relationship between poverty level and lack of capacity for self-care.





The COVID-19 pandemic ignited mental health challenges across the general population, and moms were not exempt from this. Hundreds of moms shared narratives of feeling deeply overwhelmed, depressed, and anxious because of the conditions they faced during the pandemic. As Alyson S. recounted, “I fell into depression and tried to hide it for months. I felt so overwhelmed and was struggling to do the bare minimum.” Brianna H. recounted how she faced increased anxiety because of her fear of spreading the virus to her children, “I work in healthcare and directly with COVID patients. I was 7 months pregnant when the pandemic hit in 2020. Postpartum depression and anxiety hit hard after I gave birth. Therapy and medication helped. But going back to work and knowing I am putting my family at risk made the anxiety worse.”

For some, their most vulnerable moments were at the beginning of the pandemic, for others, the months of stress continued to accumulate. Erica R. shared of a very recent mental breakdown in response to enduring burnout and loss of self: “Between working and momming, there was nothing left for ME. I lost myself...I couldn’t figure out how to find my way back...I broke down earlier this week. A complete tantrum. A grown up version of a meltdown complete with crying and screaming and hiding under the covers.”

Mental health challenges were further exacerbated by coinciding global, environmental and societal events. The protest movement against anti-Black racism and ongoing natural disasters worsened by climate change made an already stressful situation more worrisome. Elizabeth T. described her experience with the confluence of the pandemic and wildfires:

Within weeks we were in lockdown with my 1 year old and 3 year old in a new city utterly alone. I was juggling night classes and job applications and providing full time childcare. Then the wildfires came. The sun didn't come out for days. I had a full blown panic attack and physically and emotionally collapsed from all the demands, fear and stress. We flew back east to move in with my parents. I became severely depressed and suicidal. It was the darkest time in my life.



“ I [became] the teacher/at home school supervisor for my 5 kids...my boss let me go because according to him, there was no way I could be working and doing all that. - Misty K.

Mothers Get Fired, Or Shifted To The “Mommy Track” As They Struggle To Juggle Work And Parenting

As working moms adapted to pandemic-related circumstances, many moms experienced increased discrimination in the workplace, in some cases being fired, pushed out or their careers stalled. Job instability was most pronounced among single mothers, women living below the poverty level, and women of color. For some moms, the struggle to manage multiple new responsibilities at home led to loss of sleep and perpetual exhaustion, which in turn led to reduced performance at work and/or a perception that they would be unable to fulfill their work obligations.

Did you have to change jobs or downshift hours during the pandemic in order to take better care of your family/children?



Several moms shared stories of being fired because of childcare challenges during the pandemic. In Junia J.'s case, she was fired while trying to work part-time and homeschool her special needs children: "When the pandemic closed everything down we tried online schooling for a hot second and knew it was NOT going to work. So I started legit homeschooling my three special needs kids while working part-time as an essential worker. Then last summer I was fired because of lack of childcare." Another mom recounted an exchange with her boss who didn't believe she could handle multiple responsibilities. Misty K. recollected, "When the pandemic hit, I was working full-time as a business coach in a corporate position and growing my new coaching business on the weekends. When we came back from spring break and found out we weren't going to be going back to school, I also had to become the teacher/at home school supervisor for my 5 kids. We would have 4 people sitting around my work desk on laptops and computers and tablets with my 6 year old in his Pj's rolling around in my office chair. It was a glorious mess! Just a month into making all of that fun work, my boss let me go because according to him, there was no way I could be working and doing all that."

Mothers may have been on a particular career track before the pandemic, but had to shift gears as they were forced to adapt to the pandemic-related childcare limitations. A couple of moms spoke specifically of being in work environments where men were being promoted and favored over moms. For Samantha F., discrimination transpired subtly at first, as she was disinvited from meetings and left out of opportunities for promotion: "I couldn't join all the meetings. I did a lot of evening work. The real struggles came though when I realized I wasn't being given opportunities at work. I was told: 'Don't worry about joining this meeting if you need to feed your son or put him down to bed,' meanwhile my male counterpart received all the projects and was groomed for a promotion I was never told had become available. It was clear in my workforce that you could either rise to the top OR you could have a family, you couldn't do both." Similarly, Kate S. detailed her experience of workforce discrimination that led her to leave her job:

I can't help feeling that my career stalled. There were microaggressions. I reminded my manager about my daughter's doctor appointment. He was fine with it; his wife always did that sort of thing. During a team happy hour, a teammate was talking about forgetting to eat all day, being so entrenched in work. I



joked that they should get themselves a six-year-old—kids remind you about snacks every 30 minutes. My manager said something along the lines of - "I think that's a gender thing." His kids never asked him for snacks, his wife did that. At first, I was relieved—he understood. But I wondered if subconsciously, he prevented me from growing my career. I was left out of meetings; I wasn't listened to when I presented an opportunity for a client only to have my manager bring it up months later as his idea. I've since left that company and job.

Mothers tell of sacrificing themselves for their families and that their work suffered as a result. Alex L. shared, "Instead of the promotion I was positioning myself for, I had to cut my hours, homeschool my kids, and be the emotional sponge for their very real depression and anxiety (Dad the Mailman, meanwhile, was hailed as a hero!)." Another mom, Daniela C., shared:

Fortunately for [my husband], he can go to work and dive right in without a child being on the to-do list for him. I step in. But, what about my job? I'm a marketing director. Since the pandemic, I work remotely. Translation: I do a shitty job because I work when my child and husband's schedule allows me, I am constantly exhausted, and always have to choose between spending time as a family when my husband is around or using that time to get work done. It's unfair. I shouldn't have to choose between spending time as a family, or meeting work deadlines. I am not able to deliver at the fullest potential in my job because I am not given a fair shot at it...it is a constant battle of proving the importance of my time to do my job. I need a fair shot at succeeding, but the circumstances are not in my favor.

The designation as "default parent" led to stalled careers or discrimination in the workplace challenged several of the mom's ability to stay in the workforce.

Nearly Half Of Working Moms Are Forced To Leave Or Downshift Their Careers

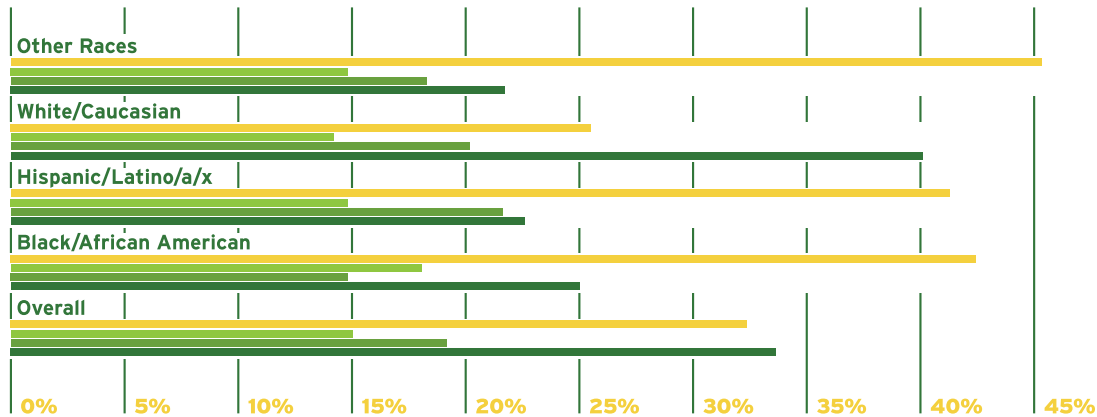


Even though I loved my job, taking care of two young kids while working throughout a pandemic became too much so I left.

- Linzay D.

Nearly half of the women surveyed reported initiating a change to how and if they worked outside the home, reporting they either left their job, or transitioned to part-time or entrepreneurship during the pandemic. Moms reported shifting their jobs or hours at work during various stages of the pandemic in response to additional childcare and parenting demands and mental health challenges presented during the pandemic.

During the pandemic have you had to adjust your work hours so that you can support your child(ren)'s education and/or childcare?



- Yes, I wake up much earlier to get work done before the children start their day
- Yes, I wake up much earlier and stay up much later
- Yes, I stay up much later to get work done after the children go to bed
- No, My hours are the same

Some moms left immediately when they couldn't find safe childcare options, or when they were suddenly charged with overseeing their children's virtual learning, like Lakeisha T., who shared: "During the pandemic I was working in the education field. However, I was forced to leave my full-time job to be home with my school age children." Moms, like Kayla C., shared stories of leaving their jobs because they prioritized protecting their children from the COVID-19 virus: "I had my son August 4th of 2021 and had to end up leaving work to stay home because everyone we had to watch the baby has kids in school and every other week one kid or another was being sent home due to being exposed to someone with COVID, we just couldn't take the chance of our now almost three month old son getting it."

Mental health concerns led some mothers to leave the workforce. "At first I handled things as well as I could," Amanda G. shared. "But things started to disintegrate as the months went on. I was beyond burned out from motherhood and working. I left the workforce in September of 2020 as a result of depression, anxiety and addiction to marijuana." A couple of moms shared how the pandemic exacerbated prior vulnerabilities, like that of postpartum depression and underlying post traumatic stress disorder. Linzay D. realized that she wasn't able to continue caring for her children, her mental health, and her work during the pandemic, so she left work: "After my daughter was born in December 2020, postpartum anxiety and depression hit me head on. With the help of Zoloft and long beach walks I made my way out of the PPA/PPD fog. On the other side of the fog I saw a few things much more clearly. It seems obvious but I had to realize my daughters were my priority—not work. Even though I loved my job, taking care of two young kids while

working throughout a pandemic became too much so I left."

We also heard from moms who left their jobs as the stress of juggling multiple responsibilities wore them down. For Sarah O., the choice to leave the workforce was made in agreement with her husband. Together, they determined that he would continue to work and Sarah would transition out of her job completely: "One year later, we were both stressed from interrupted days of never being able to fully focus on either work or our daughter. We made the decision for me to become a full time stay at home mom." Some moms realized that as long as the pandemic continues to wreak havoc on childcare, they will need to stay home and seek flexible work that they can control from their homes. Linzay's story is particularly illustrative of how she has been forced to stay home and pursue her own business:

*"Throughout this time, it became abundantly clear that I *better* make my business work, because there was no way I could re-enter the traditional workforce. My older daughter's school does weekly COVID testing. If someone in her class is positive, she will have to stay home for 10 days. This could happen anytime and without warning. Without the safety net of at-home care, which is now prohibitively expensive for us, I would never be able to take on a structured professional role, while managing the constant unknowns of this pandemic."*



The Power of Flexible & Remote Workplaces, And Mom Bosses

Workplace flexibility is the most powerful tool keeping mothers in their jobs. Dozens of working mothers applauded their workplaces for providing the flexibility that allowed them to thrive during the pandemic. Thirty-eight percent of surveyed mothers' workplaces switched to remote working during the pandemic and 79 percent of those mothers preferred the switch. Among all the mothers surveyed, 36 percent said their workplace allows them to work flexible hours. For mothers that reported having a flexible employer, 52 percent said that they were much more likely to stay with them for a long time. When asked what employers could do to better support them, 38 percent of moms named having flexible mental/childcare "break" days and 36 percent of moms named flexible hours.

Mothers described how the benefits of a flexible workplace, remote work options, and supportive colleagues significantly relieved some of the pressure points of parenting that were exacerbated by the pandemic. Katie A., expressed gratitude for her company's flexibility to navigate childcare while working full time:

...when my daughter went to bed, I would log back on and work more into the night. It was the most exhausted I have ever been, and I'm grateful I had the flexibility to work when I needed to work.

Supportive workplaces also embraced the inevitable and impromptu presence of children. "Yesterday, my daughter interrupted a meeting to talk about a tiger," Hoa S. shared. "It's always difficult to work when my kids are unable to go to school/daycare, but I also realize how privileged I am to work for a company that realizes my value despite the extra 'accessories' I may have on any given day. In fact, a colleague told my daughter she brightened a stressful meeting." Although no employee would prefer to have a meeting interrupted, accepting the presence of children (and the brief moments of humor they can present) can contribute to reducing stress and tension

in the workplace environment. Stephanie S. emphasized how embracing children in the workplace is an essential component to an improved employee experience:

I am a loyal and dedicated employee, I will work whatever hours are needed to make my meaningful contributions; however, I also know that I will never be criticized for taking time to attend to my child if needed. Not only do they not criticize, but they embrace. We have family outings, chat channels dedicated to talking about our kids and sharing funny moments, daycare reimbursements during COVID, and flexible hours and travel. Going into the office is completely optional. It's a mutual respect for priorities in both our world's that has been missing for so long...I'm so glad to be part of a movement to a more equal future that provides respect and support in the most important work we will ever do, raising the next generation.

Working parents in leadership positions were often identified as creating a work environment that was empathetic and supportive.

Novem A. wrote, "I work for an agency with many working parents in leadership positions who did their best to provide reasonable accommodations and support." Leslie G. shared how important empathy was during a period of perpetual uncertainty and a struggle to stay on top of work: "Just this morning our kids woke up with sore throats. My husband and I tag teamed to email school, schedule their COVID tests, take them to get tested, etc., but in the process I ended up missing a very important work Zoom and falling behind on other work projects. Fortunately the Zoom was with another woman/mom who 100% understood." Flexibility was paramount to mothers who had positive or at least survivable work experiences during the pandemic. Companies that provided benefits such as flexible hours, daycare reimbursements, and space (i.e., Slack channels, family outings) to share about one's family life (instead of hide it) were essential in helping mothers during the pandemic.

Policy and Practice Recommendations: What Employers Can Do to Attract and Retain Working Moms



RECOMMENDATION 1: PROVIDE INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REMOTE WORK AND FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES.

- Flexible employers support working mothers AND fathers. Efforts to cultivate flexibility can include:
- If possible, provide remote options for employees
- Allow for flexible hours/schedules (moving away from the traditional '9 to 5' structure)
- Create additional personal days that parents can allocate specifically for childcare or COVID-related care, which remains important for the foreseeable future. The State of California temporarily [created this](#), though a national and longer-term policy is needed.



RECOMMENDATION 2: ENCOURAGE GREATER UPTAKE OF PARENTAL LEAVE RESOURCES, IN PARTICULAR FOR WORKING FATHERS.

- Recognize all working parents and guardians and support increased access to parental resources. Working moms are supported when their partners are provided more flexibility and support as parents.
- Cultivate a culture of supporting families both interpersonally and institutionally (i.e., explicitly encourage all parents to take advantage of flexible hours, personal days for childcare)



RECOMMENDATION 3: OFFER CHILDCARE SUBSIDIARIES AND/OR WORK-BASED CHILDCARE SOLUTIONS.

- Implement policies and practices that enable working parents to provide quality care for their children.
- Provide childcare subsidiaries and/or work-based childcare solutions
- Offer use of additional PTO (that do not subtract from vacation days) when external childcare is unavailable



RECOMMENDATION 4: PROVIDE RESOURCES AND ACCESS TO SERVICES THAT SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH.

- Outline resources and services that can be used to prevent and address mental health issues among employees.
- Prioritize mental health, including connecting employees to in-network therapists and normalizing mental health days/leaves of absence
- Provide additional PTO days that could be used to support mental health wellness



RECOMMENDATION 5: ENSURE EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT AND COMBAT WORKFORCE DISCRIMINATION.

- Provide transparent communication on requirements and processes related to promotion.
- Provide equal access to mentorship and leadership development opportunities.



Conclusion

Mothers spoke of acute vulnerabilities and difficulties during this ongoing pandemic to navigate parenting and working.

Many of the working moms in our survey expressed awareness about the need for structural changes in the workplace to better support working parents. As one mother put it, "Families drive every good thing in this country, and it's time to show our collective appreciation with paid leave, policies and support." Employers that adopt flexible work practices and provide options for remote working will ultimately make things better for moms as well as gain a competitive advantage in recruiting and retaining talent.

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