

EMBARGOED until 9.00am - July 15th, 2020

Leading Agencies Unite to Release New Recommendations for Workplaces to Support the Wellbeing of Families

Australia’s leading agencies dedicated to supporting families have joined forces to highlight the important need for the business community to understand and respond to the real challenges facing working families through the COVID 19 crisis and beyond – to help them ‘bounce back’ to build a stronger, more sustainable way of working and caring for family.

The new collaboration between Parents At Work, PANDA – Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia, Karitane and UNICEF Australia brings together front-line mental health services, experts in parenting support, children’s rights and wellbeing, and groups that specialise in assisting businesses to support working parents.

A key focus of the new partnership will be on building effective responses to the findings in the [National Working Family Survey](#), which found the competing pressures of working and caring were impacting the wellbeing of Australian families, even before the additional pressures of coronavirus occurred. The Group has published a new set of nine family-friendly workplace recommendations designed to provide employers with a guide on how best to support their employees at this time that it hopes the business community will embrace.

“Working parents and their families are facing unique challenges under COVID-19 restrictions,” said Emma Walsh, CEO of Parents at Work. “It’s more important than ever right now for businesses to invest in policies and practices that support working families to help ensure those businesses are resistant to shock and able to ‘build back better’ once our economy gets back on track.”

“This partnership aims to advocate for better outcomes for working parents and the businesses they work for right now, but also after the coronavirus crisis eases. This is all about embracing the future of work, recognising that the health and wellbeing of families is critical to business recovery and success. Bridging the work and family divide post COVID-19 involves employers,

Bridging the work and family divide beyond COVID-19
9 KEY GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS

<p>1 Normalise Flexible Work</p>	<p>2 Strengthen Health, Safety & Wellbeing</p>	<p>3 Provide New Parent Support</p>
<p>4 Address Family & Domestic Violence</p>	<p>5 Provide Financial Wellbeing Services to Families</p>	<p>6 Review Family Leave Policies</p>
<p>7 Support Child Care</p>	<p>8 Educate Leaders</p>	<p>9 Promote Gender Equality</p>

www.aplen.com.au/familyfriendlyworkplaces

government, community services and families working together to build a pathway for recovery – the health and wellbeing of individuals, their families and our economy depends on it.”

Nicole Breeze, Director of Australian Programs at UNICEF Australia says supporting employees with families is critical for children too.

“The first years of a child’s life have a profound effect on their future – on their brain development, their ability to learn in school, on their health and wellbeing and even on their lifetime earnings. Being a parent or caregiver is one of the most important jobs in the world. UNICEF works with Governments and businesses around the world to help develop policies that give parents the time and support that they need to raise happy and healthy children. The evidence shows that as well as leading to healthier, better educated children, family friendly workplace policies can also drive gender equality and economic growth. The business benefits are also well documented including better workforce productivity and the ability to attract, motivate and retain employees.”

Karitane CEO Grainne O’Loughlin said it was critical to support parents and families at this difficult time for so many.

“What we were seeing through our parenting services, even before coronavirus, was an increase in stressed and anxious working parents needing support. The struggle of the juggle is very real!”

“The first 2,000 days shapes a child’s future and in this time children develop many of the skills and abilities that help them grow into productive adults. Bonded attachment is critical for a child’s brain development, their ability to form relationships and is proven to have improved education outcomes as well as reducing the risk of mental illness.”

Julie Borninkhof, CEO of PANDA – Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia welcomed the shared commitment of the four agencies to supporting working parents.

“As partners, we are committed to ensuring that people are supported to navigate their roles as parents and as workers in a supported and inclusive manner by their workplaces,” she said.

“That means ensuring workplaces provide staff, both those who are employed and those who volunteer, with access to tools and resources to ensure that they are equipped to do the best work they can at this time.”

The partnership is encouraging businesses to support their staff by getting on board and downloading the Family Friendly Workplace recommendations and implementing them within their workplace.

To read the recommendations visit www.aplen.com.au/familyfriendlyworkplaces

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ABOUT PARENTS AT WORK

Parents At Work is a membership-based organisation providing work + family education and policy advisory services to workplaces and their people. Our mission is to create family friendly workplaces so that people and businesses can thrive. Since 2007, we have provided over 100,000 families globally with vital family, career and wellbeing services. We collaborate with employers, policy makers and industry professionals to advocate for improved wellbeing and gender equality outcomes at work and at home.

ABOUT PANDA

PANDA – Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia is the national perinatal mental health lead organisation, supporting and representing expecting and new parents to understand and recover from perinatal mental illness, including anxiety and depression, psychosis and suicidal ideation. PANDA operates Australia's only National Helpline that supports expecting and new parents affected by perinatal mental illness in communities right across the country.

ABOUT KARITANE

Karitane is a not-for-profit organisation that supports families, builds parenting capacity, and enhances parent-child relationships through evidence based services and programs. Karitane are leaders in parenting services with a multidisciplinary team of health professionals supporting parents particularly in the first 2,000 days with sleep and settling, feeding and nutrition, establishing routines, toddler behaviour, conduct disorders and emotional dysregulation and pre and post-natal anxiety and depression.

ABOUT UNICEF AUSTRALIA

Children's charity, UNICEF Australia, has been a champion of children since 1966. We fund life-changing programs for children and work with governments and civil society partners to protect and provide a fair chance for children. UNICEF Australia works for every child – in Australia, the Asia Pacific region, and around the world.

MEDIA CONTACT

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