

Corporate
Parenthood
Charter

A commitment by Companies and Public Authorities to give greater consideration to the issue of parenthood with a view to enhancing the balance of the lives of working parents

Under the patronage and with the collaboration of the Ministry of Labour, Social & Family Affairs and Solidarity

A common aim

All working parents have experienced this: having a child when one is an employee still all too often means having to put one's career on hold. And this is of course particularly the case for women, since 14.2% of mothers are non-working, compared to 14.2% of fathers.

To fully take into account the specific constraints involved in reconciling the different key moments in life there must be a commitment in favour of greater professional equality between men and women and also the adoption of a modern family policy, adapted to the way in which people live their lives today.

In this context, signing the Parenthood Charter is therefore much more than a symbolic gesture; it represents a true commitment that could help to remove taboos and to implement means and set up structures to enable everyone to achieve their personal and professional goals.

More and more companies are showing a willingness to play the game and are coming up with imaginative solutions, for example, the setting up in-company childcare centres, actively encouraging staff to benefit from paternity leave, adjusting meeting times to take account of family commitments.

These companies have understood that when the issue of parenthood is taken into account by an employer, the employees are more readily available and will work better.

The Government will of course provide close support to companies that agree to adopt measures aimed at facilitating parenthood.

It is only by working together that we can change the way that people think and to turn great words about professional equality into practical truths!

Xavier Bertrand

Minister of Labour, Social & Family Affairs and Solidarity

Why do **working parents** need support?

The diversification of family models (single-parent and reconstituted families) and the increasing number of ways of becoming parents tend to make it more difficult for employees to organize their life and work.

The care of young children has become more and more problematic, largely because of the increasing number of working women. At the present time, **80%** of parents with at least one child below the age of 3 are both actively employed ⁽¹⁾.

39% of mothers state that their professional activity has changed following the birth of a child. **Although fathers today do play a more assertive role in their children's upbringing than before**, the burden of reconciling work and family life has a major impact on the professional career of working mothers ⁽²⁾.

Stress at work is today considered to be one of the causes of premature births in France. **8%** of babies are born prematurely in France⁽³⁾.

Furthermore, maternity is one of the factors behind **salary discrimination** between men and women in equivalent jobs and working the same hours.

Sources: (1) CAF (family welfare office), (2) INED (National Demographic Studies Institute), (3) SOS Préma

“Our generation must not be afraid to state the belief that strong professional involvement can be achieved with flexible organization. We need to move away from the culture of being available at all times in order to enable parents to lead a balanced life.”

Jérôme, 36, Human Resources Manager in a major company and father of 4 children

The **key corporate stakes** of taking the issue of **parenthood** into consideration

Financial performance

- To attract and retain employees with children within the current context of greater professional mobility
- To strengthen the loyalty and commitment of employees with children

Human resource management

- To reduce the incidence of short-term parental absenteeism
- To improve career management processes and to map out secure career paths

Social responsibility and good citizenship

- To accommodate the aspirations of a new generation of employees: balance and well-being at work
- To bring about change in attitudes to parenthood in society
- To show a commitment to a key public health issue

Respect for the law

- To fight against discrimination towards employees with children
- To prevent the risk of legal action in terms of discrimination

Corporate image

- To enhance the company's name and brand image

"Companies must recognize, endorse and proclaim the importance of well-being at work as one of the key elements of their performance and development."

Leila, Marketing Manager in an international company and mother of two children.

The **commitments** of those signing this Charter

To bring about change in attitudes to parenthood within the company

- By making Human Resource officers and all other managers aware of the importance of taking the issue of parenthood into consideration
- By informing all members of staff of our commitment

To create an environment that is favourable to working parents, especially expectant mothers

- By providing them with the means to balance their professional and personal lives
- By offering flexible working conditions to expectant mothers

To respect a principle of non-discrimination in the professional development of employees with children

- By preventing and eliminating any practices discriminating against employees with children from our Human Resource processes
- By encouraging management practices and behaviour that further the professional development of employees with children

"I had already made up my mind to take paternity leave, but in the end it was my manager who encouraged me to do so! I really made the most of those precious moments with my little girl; I take great pride in telling people that I'm a father, even at work."

Benjamin, 28, technician in an SME and father of one child

Examples of actions already implemented

Awareness tools

- Inclusion in management training sessions of a documentary on parenting stereotypes and attitudes to parenthood in companies
- Management training on dealing with departure and return from maternity, paternity and adoption leave
- Internal distribution of an information leaflet on the importance of gender mixing within the company

Employee services

- An inter-company childcare centre for employees' children
- An intranet site providing legal and practical information for working parents: from childminding facilities to remedial support, and including family holidays and educational activities
- Company-subsidized domestic service vouchers (CESU) for contributing to childminding fees
- Free childcare facilities for employees' children aged 4 to 10 every Wednesday and during school holidays
- Childminding hotline for professional or family emergencies

Organizational arrangements

- Refusal of electronic organizers to schedule meetings outside the 9am to 6pm timeframe
- Opening of transit offices close to people's homes in order to reduce commuting time
- Possibility of modulating one's career to take into account family commitments without any consequences on professional development
- Possibility for staff working on manufacturing sites to opt for part-time work in which the hours worked are calculated on a yearly basis and can be adapted to school times

Public authority measures taken to support corporate parenthood

- 2002: fathers may benefit from social security-funded **paternity leave** of 11 consecutive days
- 2004: **family tax credit programmes** encourage companies to implement actions in favour of employees with children
- 2004: creation of the “**Equality Label**” to show recognition for practices aimed at promoting professional equality in companies
- 2005: the government sponsored Borloo Plan sets up a system of **domestic service vouchers (CESU)** aimed at developing family-help services
- 2006: longer maternity leave and maternity allowance for mothers of **premature babies** requiring extended hospital care
- 2006: **equal pay law** reaffirms the principle of non-discrimination against women returning from maternity leave
- 2007: conditions for **taking maternity leave** are made **more flexible** enabling employees to modulate the time taken for pre- and post-natal leave of absence
- 2006-2010: The **European Commission** road map for equality between men and women recommends that Member States provide for **improvements in the reconciliation of work and personal and family life**

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