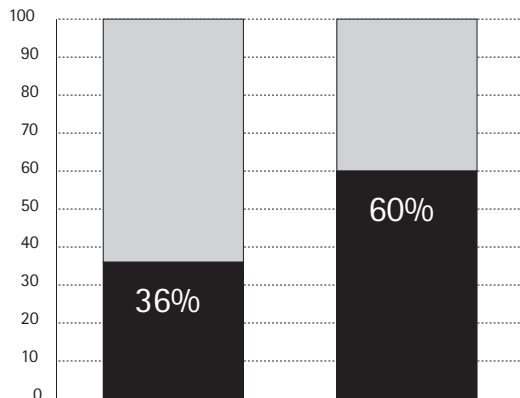


## Meeting the Needs of Today's Families: The Role of Workplace Flexibility

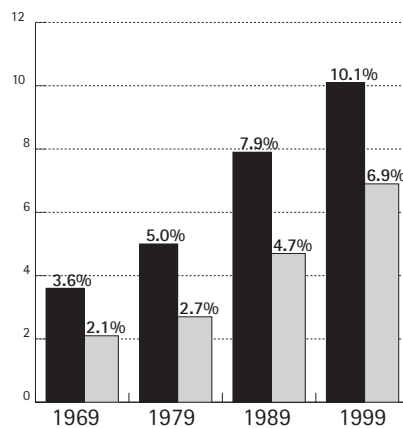
### The Changing Nature of Work and Family

- Most families now have both spouses working.



GROWTH IN DUAL EARNER MARRIED COUPLES 18-64

- In 1970, almost two-thirds of married couples had one spouse at home to handle family life needs; by 2000, 60% of married couples had both spouses in the workforce.<sup>1</sup>



INCREASE IN DUAL EARNER COUPLES WHERE BOTH PARTNERS WORK MORE THAN 40 HOURS PER WEEK

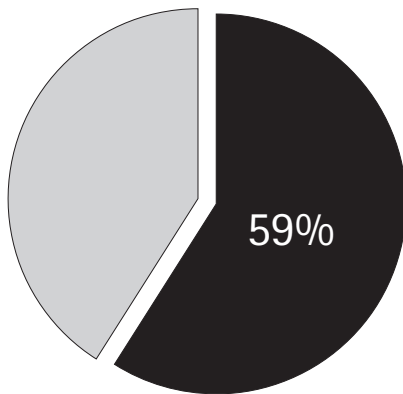
■ All married couples  
 ■ Couples with children under 6

Data are for couples age 25-54.  
 Source: Currently Population Survey

Chart from: U.S. Department of Labor (2000). Futurework: Trends and challenges for work in the 21st Century. Washington, D.C. Bureau of Labor Statistics Retrieved November, 2005, from <http://www.dol.gov/asp/programs/history/herman/reports/futurework/report/chapter3/main2.htm#9b>

- Even among those families with the youngest children, well over half have both parents working; for families with children between the ages of 6-17, two-thirds have two working parents.<sup>2</sup>

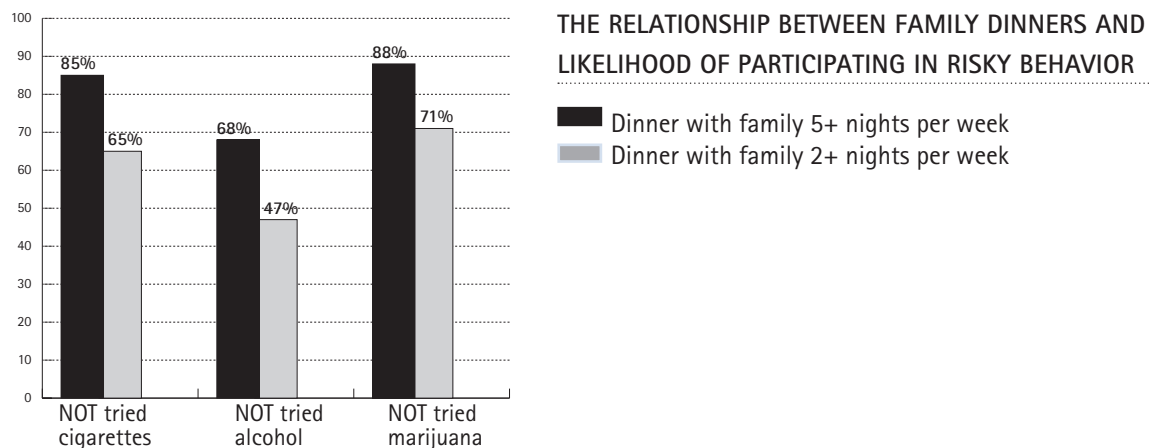
- Couples are working longer hours and, consequently, have less time to spend with their children.
  - In 1970, couples worked a combined average of 52.5 hours per week. Now, couples work a combined average of 63.1 hours per week and almost 70% of them work more than 80 hours per week.<sup>3</sup>
    - Couples with children work on average 91 hours per week.<sup>4</sup>
  - In 2000, the Council of Economic Advisors reported that Americans have 22 fewer hours/week to spend with their children than in 1969.<sup>5</sup>
- Conflicting work schedules further complicate family life.
  - For 28% of dual earner couples, at least one spouse works a shift other than a regular daytime schedule.<sup>6</sup> Parents often work non-standard shifts in order to accommodate child care needs.
- People are increasingly working into older age.
  - By 2008, 1 out of every 6 workers will be over 55; by 2015, they will constitute 20% – or one out of every 5 – of the total workforce.<sup>7</sup>
    - Approximately 65% of America's baby boomers anticipate working at least part-time in retirement.<sup>8</sup>
    - In the Cornell Employment and Family Careers Institute Study, 35% of workers age 54 and older stated that being able to *partially* retire would be ideal compared to only 19% who would prefer to *fully* retire.
- Workers are increasingly likely to be both working and providing care to a friend or family member.
  - Currently, 59% of those caring for a relative or friend work and manage caregiving responsibilities at the same time.<sup>10</sup>
    - Of these working caregivers, 62% said they have had to make some work-related adjustments in order to help the person they care for.<sup>11</sup>



CAREGIVERS WHO ARE ALSO WORKING

## Parental Availability and Involvement is Important to Child Development

- Parental involvement contributes to higher academic achievement for children.
  - The more hours parents are away from home after school in the evening, the more likely their children are to test in the bottom quartile on achievement tests.<sup>12</sup>
  - According to an analysis of the National Education Longitudinal Survey, the more time parents spend discussing school activities and educational programs with their children, the higher the children perform on achievement tests in both reading and mathematics.<sup>13</sup>
    - Another analysis also found that parent-child discussion was positively related to increased achievement in science and reduced truancy for some students.<sup>14</sup>
  - When parents work nonstandard shifts, their children are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to be suspended from school.<sup>15</sup>
- Family rituals, such as sitting down to dinner together and sharing activities on weekends and holidays, positively influence children's health and development.
  - One study reported that children who ate dinner with their family every day consumed nearly a full serving more of fruits and vegetables per day than those who never ate family dinners or only did so occasionally.<sup>16</sup>
    - An increase in the frequency of family dinner was associated with up to a 45% increase in the odds of eating at least 5 daily servings of fruits and vegetables and a reduction of approximately 30% in the odds of eating any fried foods away from home and drinking any soda.<sup>17</sup>
  - The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse found that teens who have dinner with their families five or more times a week are almost twice as likely to receive As in school compared to teens who have dinner with their families two or fewer times a week (20 percent vs. 12 percent).<sup>18</sup>



- The same survey reports that teens who have dinner with their families five or more nights in a typical week are much more likely to have never tried cigarettes, alcohol or marijuana.<sup>19</sup>

- Parental availability and involvement is particularly crucial in adolescent years.
  - Adolescents who spend more than 40% of their time outside of school by themselves are more likely to have lower self-esteem, feel less happy and active, and are less likely to enjoy what they are doing.<sup>20</sup>
  - National FBI data reveals that violent crimes by juveniles peak in the afternoon on school days between 3 and 4 p.m. Also, nearly 1 in 5 juvenile violent crimes and 1 in 7 sexual assaults occur between 3 and 7 p.m.<sup>21</sup>
  - Positive family interaction reduces the chances that children will engage in risky behaviors including fighting or having sex at an early age.<sup>22</sup>

### The Impact of the Time Crunch on Family Unity

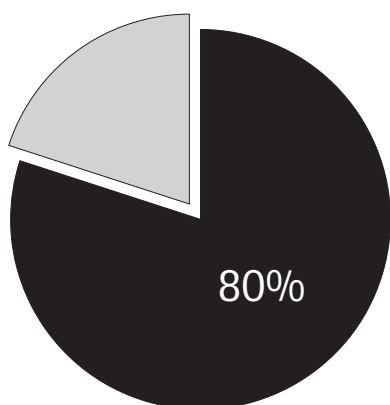
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- Research has shown that scheduling and other conflict between work and family lowers the quality of marriages.<sup>23</sup>
- Shift work creates greater risk for separation or divorce.
  - One nationally representative study found that young fathers working fixed night schedules were 6.5 times more likely to have unstable marriages than those who worked fixed days; mothers working these schedules had a three-fold increase in marital instability.<sup>24</sup>
- Parents' stress related to work-family conflict increases their risk for mental health and substance abuse problems.
  - A national study demonstrated that individuals who faced work-family conflict were 2.5 to 3 times more likely to suffer from a mood or anxiety disorder, respectively, than individuals without work-family conflict.<sup>25</sup>
  - Workers who have difficulties making after school and other child care arrangements experience significantly more stress than other employees;<sup>26</sup> mothers have been shown to face increased depression.<sup>27</sup>
  - Work-family conflict is also associated with heavier alcohol consumption and more frequent intoxication.<sup>28</sup>
    - Estimates from one study suggest workers experiencing work-family conflict are almost 2 times more likely to have a substance dependence disorder than those with no work-family conflict.<sup>29</sup>

## Parents Want More Workplace Flexibility to Care for Family Needs

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- The National Study of the Changing Workforce found that:
  - Nearly 80% of employees said they would like to have more flexible work options and would use them if there were no negative consequences at work.<sup>30</sup>
  - 89% of the wage and salary workforce do not work any of their regularly scheduled hours at home; however, 43% of them would like to be able to do so.<sup>31</sup>



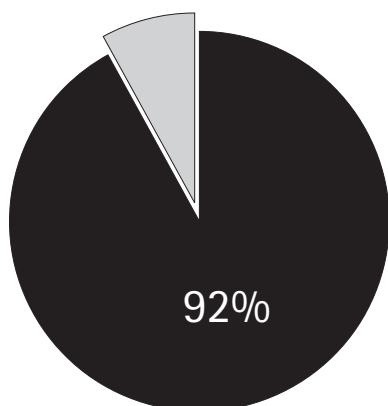
### GROWING DESIRE FOR FLEXIBILITY

- Among full-time employees, nearly 20% would prefer to be working part-time.<sup>32</sup> When asked why they don't work part-time, 70% indicated they couldn't afford to do so, and 44% said they would not be allowed to by their employers.<sup>33</sup>
- According to another nationally representative survey, 60% of fathers and 55% of mothers feel that they spend too little time with their oldest child, and 54% of fathers and 41% of mothers feel that they spend too little time with their youngest child.<sup>34</sup>
- More than 40% of parents report that their working conditions negatively affect their children's health in ways that range from a child missing a needed appointment with a doctor to a child failing to receive adequate early care and causing an illness or condition to worsen.<sup>35</sup>
- Parents of children with special needs face particular challenges.<sup>36</sup>
  - In one study, 48% of parents of children with mental health disorders reported that at some time they had to quit work to care for their children, and 27% indicated that their employment had been terminated because of work interruptions due to care responsibilities.<sup>37</sup>

## Workers Have Limited Access to the Flexibility They Need for Family Life

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- Flexible work schedules are available to less than one-third of workers nationally.
  - 27.4 million, or 27.5%, of all full-time wage and salary workers have access to flexible work schedules according to federal surveys of employers.<sup>38</sup>
  - Despite increasing numbers of women and mothers in the workforce, less than one quarter (22%) report that their work schedule suits their child or elder caring needs.<sup>39</sup>
- Other flexible work arrangements important to families, like job-sharing and telecommuting, are also not widely available.
  - According to the Family and Work Institute's National Study of Employers, 44% of companies allowed *some* employees to share jobs. However, only 13% of companies allowed *all* or *most* employees to share jobs.<sup>40</sup>
  - In the same survey, 31% of organizations allowed some employees to work at home or off-site on a regular basis; only 3% allowed this for *all* or *most* employees.<sup>41</sup>
- According to a nationally representative survey of workers, 92% of American workers feel they do not have enough flexibility in their schedules to take care of family needs such as caring for a sick child or parent or attending school functions.<sup>42</sup>
  - While 51% of all American workers have access to paid short term time off for health reasons,<sup>43</sup> only 30% of all workers are covered by policies that enable them to take such time to care for sick children. This means 86 million workers have no formal policies guaranteeing them short term time off to care for the health of their children.<sup>44</sup>



WORKERS REPORTING THEY DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY FOR FAMILY NEEDS

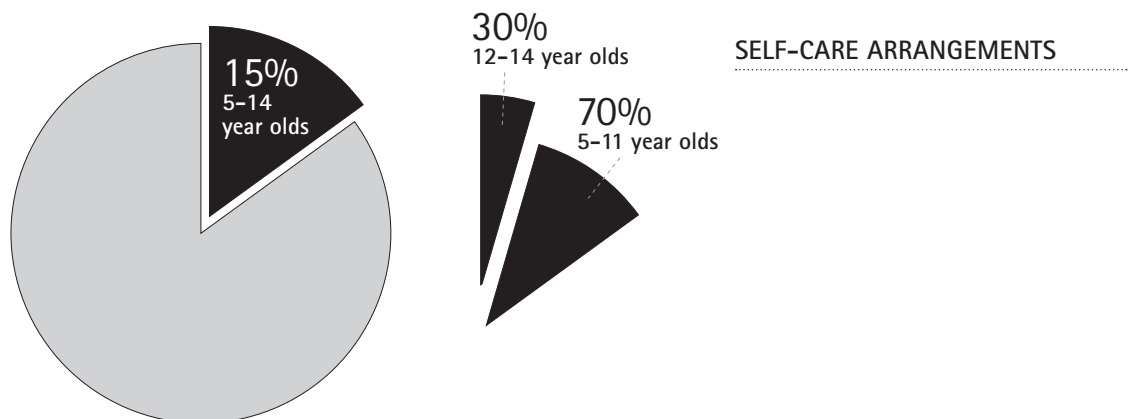
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- Families with the greatest needs sometimes face the most challenging circumstances.
  - In one report, 60% of working parents who had two or more children with a chronic condition at times had no access to either short term time off for health purposes or time off for vacation.<sup>45</sup>
  - Mothers in low-income families are nearly twice as likely (64%) as mothers in higher-income families (37%) to not receive pay when they take short term time off to stay home with a sick child.<sup>46</sup>

## Flexible Work Options Have Been Shown to Benefit Families and Businesses

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- Workers with flexible work arrangements experience less stress than those without such arrangements.
  - In a 2001 study, only 29% of employees with flextime benefits reported work-family conflict vs. 44% of those who did not have such benefits.<sup>47</sup>
  - In a recent assessment of the impact of flexible work arrangements in one organization, 81% of users said the availability of this flexibility made them more effective in managing work/family responsibilities.<sup>48</sup>
  - A recent study indicated that "fit," or the extent to which employees are able to adjust their work schedule to meet their life needs, moderates the effects that long work hours have on burnout.<sup>49</sup>
  - Being involved in the care of sick children has proven to be beneficial for parents by reducing their anxiety and increasing their confidence and competency in dealing with their child's illness.<sup>50</sup>
- Flexible work options would allow caregivers to be more involved in their children's education and care.
  - Parents report facing serious challenges arranging for attendance at school and parent-teacher meetings.<sup>51</sup> In a national study of working parents, nearly 75% could not consistently rely on flexibility at work to take time to meet with teachers and learning specialists.<sup>52</sup>
  - With greater control over work hours and increased flexibility in scheduling work time, fewer children would be in self-care arrangements after school.
    - According to a 2001 nationally representative survey, 15% of children 5–14 years old were in "self-care" at the time of the survey, meaning that they were caring for themselves unsupervised by an adult or family member.<sup>53</sup> Of the children in self-care arrangements, 70% were 5–11 years old and 30% were 12–14 years old.



- Workplace flexibility allows mothers to better care for newborn children.
  - Breastfeeding has been shown to have important health benefits for children. Yet a woman entering employment is more than 3 times as likely to stop breastfeeding as her unemployed counterpart.<sup>54</sup>
  - One study reported that the proportion of mothers who cited return to work as the main reason for breastfeeding discontinuation increased from 14% at 2-3 weeks to 58% at 10-12 weeks postpartum. The major obstacle to continued breast-feeding reported among women who returned to work were restricted schedules and breaks (51%).<sup>55</sup>
  - Studies have also demonstrated the links between breastfeeding, child health, and associated health care costs,<sup>56</sup> including costs to employers.
    - CIGNA's corporate lactation program resulted in a costs savings of \$60,000 in reduced absenteeism among breastfeeding mothers, and an additional \$240,000 in reduced health care expenses for the employees and their children.<sup>57</sup>
- Workplace flexibility enables families to attend to caregiving needs of both dependent elders and children.
  - On average, caregivers provide 21 hours of care per week to individuals over 70 years of age. This figure increases to 46 hours for those who care for individuals with severe dementia.<sup>58</sup>
    - 83% of caregivers are relatives of the person for whom they are providing care.<sup>59</sup>
    - 79% of caregivers provide care to someone age 50 or older.<sup>60</sup>
  - Of working caregivers, 57% report having had to go into work late, leave early, or take time off during the day to provide care.<sup>61</sup>
    - About 1 out of every 3 caregivers reports that they need help balancing work and family responsibilities.<sup>62</sup>
  - Having access to short term time off that is paid is the primary factor in parents' decisions about staying home when their children are sick.<sup>63</sup> Working parents who lack such time off are one-fifth as likely to care for their children at home when they are sick as compared to parents who have such time off.<sup>64</sup>
- Flexible work arrangements have been shown to increase worker productivity and decrease costs to businesses.
  - According to a recent survey of human resources executives, flexible work arrangements rank at the top of work-life programs in effectiveness.<sup>65</sup> In particular, flexible work arrangements and time flexible policies have often been cited as mechanisms that successfully reduce unplanned absences from work. In another study, 63% of workers using flexible work arrangements said they were absent less often as a result of their flexible work schedule.<sup>66</sup>
  - Employees with access to flexible work arrangements tend to be more satisfied with their jobs and also appear more willing to work hard to help their employers succeed.<sup>67</sup>
  - Employers report flexible options are advantageous in recruiting and retaining valuable employees.<sup>68</sup>



- According to one study, the illness of a child causes a parent to miss between six and 29 days of work annually.<sup>69</sup> Another study has found that employee stress due to concerns about their children after school is associated with decreased productivity and increased absenteeism. Estimates indicate this can cost business anywhere from \$496 to \$1,984 per employee per year.<sup>70</sup>
- Reducing unscheduled absences is particularly important to business given the high costs associated with unplanned absence. In 2005, 2.5% of organizations reported that absenteeism was a problem in their organization, costing around \$660/employee. For some large employers, absenteeism resulted in a loss of over \$1 million per year.<sup>71</sup>

## (Endnotes)

- <sup>1</sup> Jacobs J.A., & Gerson, K. (2004). *The time divide: Work, family, and gender inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 43. (Nationally representative of non-institutionalized population 16 and over; based on authors' analysis of CPS data)
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Labor (2005). *Employment characteristics of families summary*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved September 2005, from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/famee.nr0.htm> (Nationally representative of non-institutionalized population 16 and over; data is derived from the CPS)
- <sup>3</sup> Jacobs J.A., & Gerson, K. (2004). p. 44.
- <sup>4</sup> Bond, J.T., Thompson, C., Galinsky, E., & Prottas, D. (2002). *Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW), executive summary*. New York: Families and Work Institute, p. 2. (Nationally representative of the U.S. workforce based on a survey of ~3,500 workers)
- <sup>5</sup> Council of Economic Advisors (1999, May). *Families and the labor market: 1969-1999: Analyzing the "time crunch."* Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, p. i. Retrieved April 2006, from <http://clinton4.nara.gov/WH/EOP/CEA/html/whitepapers.html> (Nationally representative of non-institutionalized population 16 and over; data is derived from the CPS)
- <sup>6</sup> Presser, H. (2003). Embracing complexity: Work schedules and family life in a 24/7 economy. In Bianchi, Casper, and King (Eds.), *Work, family, health and well-being* (pp. 43-66). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, p. 45-46. (Nationally representative of non-institutionalized population 16 and over; data is derived from the CPS)
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2000). *Projections of the total resident population by 5-year age groups and sex with special age categories: Middle series, 2001-2005, 2006-2010, 2016-2020, and 2025-2045. National population projections, Summary Files*. Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved June 2005, from <http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/aboutus/statistics/IMM02yrbk/IMM2002list.htm>
- <sup>8</sup> American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) (2003). *Staying ahead of the curve 2003: The AARP working in retirement study*. Washington, D.C.: Author, p. 5. Retrieved online June 2005, from [http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/econ/multiwork\\_2003.pdf](http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/econ/multiwork_2003.pdf) (Nationally representative of those between the ages of 50 and 70 working full or part-time; based on a survey of 2,001 individuals)
- <sup>9</sup> Moen, P., Erickson, W.A., Agarwal, M., Fields, V., & Todd, L (2000). *The Cornell retirement and well-being study: Final report*. Ithaca, New York: Bronfenbrenner Life Course Center, Cornell University, p. 6. (Cohort study; based on surveys of older workers and retirees ages 50-72 living in upstate New York)
- <sup>10</sup> National Alliance for Caregiving & AARP (2004). *Caregiving in the U.S.* Bethesda, MD: Author, p. 12. Retrieved December 2005, from <http://www.caregiving.org/04finalreport.pdf>. (Based on nationally representative survey which then identified 'caregivers' as those who are: a) 18 years or older, b) living in the U.S., and c) providing one or more Activities of Daily Living (ADL) or Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) for someone 18 years of age or older.)
- <sup>11</sup> National Alliance for Caregiving & AARP (2004). p. 13.
- <sup>12</sup> Global Working Families Project (2004). *Impact of working conditions on children's development and educational outcomes*. Boston, MA: Author, p. 4. Retrieved June 2005, from <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/globalworkingfamilies/images/impact.pdf>. (Nationally representative; this project used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1979). The NLSY is a nationally representative sample of 12,686 young men and women who were 14-22 years old when they were first surveyed in 1979. These individuals were interviewed annually through 1994 and are currently interviewed on a biennial basis. The data for this publication were taken from the surveys conducted between 1990 and 1996.)
- <sup>13</sup> Sui-Chu, Esther Ho, & Willms, J. D. (1996). Effects of parental involvement on eighth-grade achievement. *Sociology of Education* 69(2), p. 136. (Data for this study were taken from the National Education Longitudinal Study, a nationally representative survey which sampled 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in 1988 and followed them throughout high school. The survey was based on a sample of 24,599 eighth-grade students and their parents and teachers drawn from a national probability sample of 1,052 public and private schools in the United States.)
- <sup>14</sup> McNeal Jr., R. (1999). Parental involvement as social capital: Differential effectiveness on science achievement, truancy, and dropping out. *Social Forces* 78(1), p. 129. Specifically, McNeal found that discussion was significantly related to increased achievement for whites and blacks but there was no significant relationships between discussion and achievement for Hispanics or Asians (see p. 131).
- <sup>15</sup> Heymann, J. (2000). *The widening gap: Why America's working families are in jeopardy and what can be done about it*. New York, New York: Basic Books, p. 55. (Nationally representative; based on author's analysis of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth)
- <sup>16</sup> Gillman, M.W., Rifas-Shiman, S.L., Frazier, A.L., Rockett, H.R., Camargo, C.A., Field, A.E., Berkey, C.S., & Colditz, G.A. (2000, March). Family dinner and diet quality among older children and adolescents. *Archives of Family Medicine* 9, p. 237. (Cohort study; the sample for this survey was a national

- convenience sample of 16,202 children between 9 and 14 years of age. The children in the sample were children of nurses who were participating in a national cohort study of registered nurses in 1996.)
- 17 Gillman, M.W., Rifas, Shiman, S.L., Frazier, A.L., Rockett, H.R., Camargo, C.A., Field, A.E., Berkey, C.S., & Colditz, G.A. (2000, March). p. 238.
  - 18 The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (2003). *The importance of family dinners*. New York: Author, p. 6. (Nationally representative based on a survey of 1,987 teenagers and 504 parents of teenagers interviewed between April 30, 2003 and July 14, 2003. Data were weighted to be representative of the U.S. population according to the 2003 Current Population Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau.)
  - 19 The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (2003). p. 7.
  - 20 Schneider, B., & Waite, L. (2005). Timely and timeless: working parents and their children. In Bianchi, Casper, and King (Eds.), *Work, family, health and well-being* (pp. 67–79). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, p. 75. (National study based on study of 500 families)
  - 21 Snyder, H.N. & Sickmund, M. (1999). *Juvenile offenders and victims: 1999 national report*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, p. 65. (Nationally representative; data derived from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention)
  - 22 See for example, Eisenberg, M.A., Olson, R.E., Neumark-Sztainer, D., Story, M. & Bearinger, L.H. (2004). Correlations between family meals and psychosocial well-being among adolescents. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* 158, 792–796; The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (2003, September). *The importance of family dinners*. New York, New York: The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. Retrieved May 2005, from [http://www.casacolumbia.org/Absolutenm/articlefiles/Family\\_Dinners\\_9\\_03\\_03.pdf](http://www.casacolumbia.org/Absolutenm/articlefiles/Family_Dinners_9_03_03.pdf); and Council of Economic Advisors (2000, May). *Teens and their parents in the 21st century: An examination of trends in teen behavior and the role of parental involvement*. Washington, D.C.: Author, p. 13–18. Retrieved June 2005, from <http://clinton4.nara.gov/media/pdf/CEAreport.pdf>.
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  - 26 Barnett, R., and Gareis, K. (2004). *Parental after-school stress project*. Community, Families & Work Program, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts. Retrieved on March 17, 2006, from <http://www.nsba.org/site/docs/37600/37588.pdf> (Based on a survey of 243 parents recruited through an employer-sponsored parenting group at JPMorgan Chase. The sample consisted of 243 employed parents (84.3% mothers; 15.7% fathers) who have at least one school-age (K–12) child. Parents work in six different states (Arizona, Delaware, Florida, New Jersey, New York, Texas) and at a wide range of jobs at all occupational levels from administrative assistants and clerks to systems analysts.)
  - 27 Ross, C.E., & Mirowsky, J. (1998). Child care and emotional adjustment to wives' employment. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 29, 127–138.
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  - 30 Galinsky, E., Bond, J.T., & Hill, E.J. (2004). *Workplace flexibility: What is it? Who has it? Who wants it? Does it make a difference?* New York: Families and Work Institute, p. 21. (Nationally representative of workers; based on the National Study of the Changing Workforce survey of 2,810 wage and salaried employees)
  - 31 Galinsky, E., Bond, J.T., & Hill, E.J. (2004). p. 10.
  - 32 Galinsky, E., Bond, J.T., & Hill, E.J. (2004). p. 12.
  - 33 Galinsky, E., Bond, J.T., & Hill, E.J. (2004). p. 12.
  - 34 Bianchi, S.M., & Raley, S. (2003). Time allocation in families. In Bianchi, Casper, and King (Eds.), *Work, family, health and well-being* (pp. 21–42). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence

- Erlbaum Associates, p. 36. (Nationally representative based on author's calculations of the 2000, National Survey of Parents)
- <sup>35</sup> Heymann, J. (2000). *The widening gap: Why America's working families are in jeopardy and what can be done about it*. p. 62, p. 224. (Based on author's Urban Working Families study which included over 200 in depth interviews with a representative sample of working families, child care providers, and employers.)
- <sup>36</sup> Center for Work and Family. (2006). *Exploring the Complexities of Exceptional Caregiving*. Boston: Boston College, p. 5.
- <sup>37</sup> Rosenzweig, J., & Huffstutter, K. (2004). On the job strategies for taking care of business... and family. *Focal Point* 18(1), p. 5. Retrieved April 2006, from <http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgPubsScript.php>. (The data for this study was derived from a survey posted on Portland State University's Research and Training Center's website. The survey sample included responses from 349 parents.)
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- <sup>40</sup> Bond, J.T., Galinsky, E., Kim, S., & Brownfield, E. (2005). *National study of employers*. New York: Families and Work Institute, p. 6. (Nationally representative of U.S. employers with 50 or more employees; based on survey of 1,092 companies)
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