



FAMILY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

Interim Recommendations, 24 March 2020¹

The school closures across Viet Nam, as part of efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19, are posing new challenges to working parents. Many are struggling to fulfil both their work and family obligations due to lack of flexible work arrangements, childcare support and paid leave policies that take into consideration their care giving responsibilities.

Without support from parents, children's health, education and emotional well-being is at risk. There are concerns relating to children's protection if they are left alone or with temporary caregivers, who are not trained to take care of children.

By introducing family-friendly workplace policies and practices, your company or organisation will be in a better position to promote children's safety and wellbeing and provide systematic support to your employees. Not only do family-friendly policies pay off in healthier, better-educated children, and greater gender equality, they are linked to better workforce productivity and the ability to attract, motivate and retain employees. In addition, such policies have been found to improve employee learning and innovation due to increased self-determination and fewer work-life conflicts and stress².

Steps your company/organisation can take:

- Update your employee profile to include the number of children by age, gender, current level of school enrolment, disabilities (if any), so you are aware of the number of children benefitting from your policies.
- Carry out a rapid needs-assessment with parent employees and employees with care-giving responsibilities to understand if the current workplace policies and practices are meeting their needs during COVID-19.
- When introducing new policies, make sure all your employees know about them, feel comfortable using them, and that there are no drawbacks if employees implement them.

¹ This document builds on material developed by UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office. It is an interim guidance, developed in a fast-evolving situation. It should not be seen as promoting particular work arrangements, but it provides recommendations to support employers in relation to the social and economic crisis created by COVID-19. As such, information may date quickly, and you are advised to check the online information (via resource links provided on page 2) regularly.

² UNICEF, 2019, Business and Family Friendly Policies: An evidence brief (<https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/UNICEF-Business-Family-Friendly-Policies-2019.pdf>)



Good family friendly policies and practices that your company/organisation can introduce:

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENT	SUPPORT TO PREGNANT AND NURSING MOTHERS	CHILDCARE SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teleworking, flexible working hours and online meetings • Provide flexible time for workers in situation of sickness or sickness in their families. • In case family separation occurs due to hospitalization, ensure flexible time for employees to keep regular contact with their loved ones. • Support employees in situations where he/she needs to spend 14 days in government assigned quarantine areas (e.g. special paid leave). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnant women experience changes to their immune systems and physiology which may make them more susceptible to viral respiratory infections, including COVID-19. Support pregnant employees and ensure they take routine preventative actions to avoid infection. • Nursing mothers should be supported with breastfeeding in the workplace. Adequate facilities for breastfeeding or milk expression should include the necessary items for proper hygiene including disinfecting wipes, trash bin with lid, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, and access to hand washing facilities with soap. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to avail multiple childcare options and diversify measures, such as childcare allowance, community childcare support, providing parenting information, etc. • Provide working parents/ caregivers with opportunities to share their perceptions and voice their needs throughout the child care support programme to ensure relevance, effectiveness and sustainability.

Resource links:

- Eng: <https://www.unicef.org/vietnam/covid-19>
- VN: <https://www.unicef.org/vietnam/vi/covid-19>

Contact us:

Please share with us the family friendly policies and practices your company/organisation has introduced at: vpham@unicef.org (Ms Van Thai Hong Pham)

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