

## EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE SERIES

## WORK-FAMILY INFORMATION ON: TODAY'S DIVERSE FAMILIES

SUPPORTED BY:  
THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATIONCOMPILED BY:  
JUDI CASEY, MSW AND CAITLIN SULLIVANSLOAN WORK AND FAMILY  
RESEARCH NETWORK  
BOSTON COLLEGE

WWW.BC.EDU/WFNETWORK

## WHY ARE TODAY'S DIVERSE FAMILIES AN IMPORTANT WORKPLACE ISSUE?

"SAS has a 30-plus year culture of deliberate inclusion and demonstrated regard for each and every one of our employees and their families. Our programs and policies are grounded in the basic, unassailable contention that by actively anticipating, regarding and responding to the unique needs of employees and their families, we are directly impacting their ability to generate innovative ideas and products. Whether an employee is a single parent of an adopted child, a grandparent raising his grandchild, a domestic partner, or a divorced boomer knee-deep in the sandwich of caring for a teen and a parent, we know they will feel better and do better when we show regard for their whole life, not just the skills they drive in the front gate every morning. It is simply good business." **Jeff Chambers; Vice President, Human Resources; SAS**



## DEFINITION OF FAMILY DIVERSITY

"...[F]amily diversity refers to a broad range of characteristics or dimensions on which families vary, along with a recognition that there are a multitude of different family types that function effectively..." (Eeden-Moorefield & Demo, 2007).

## Want more related DEFINITIONS?

[http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic\\_extended.php?id=15&type=6&area=business](http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=15&type=6&area=business)

## SOME EXAMPLES OF FAMILY DIVERSITY

- Single parents (mothers or fathers)
- Same-sex partnerships or marriages
- Cohabiting couples (with or without children)
- Multicultural households (different religions, races, or cultures within one family)
- Blended families (with stepchildren)
- Non-relative families (unrelated but living together)
- Multigenerational households
- Adoptive families

## STATISTICS ON TODAY'S FAMILIES

- 21.7% of American households consist of married couples with their own children under 18 (US Census: American Community Survey, 2005).
- 5.5 million households contain cohabitating couples (US Census, 2000).
- 11% of unmarried partners are same-sex couples (US Census, 2000).
- 10.4 million households are headed by single mothers, and 2.5 million households are headed by single fathers (US Census: Families and Living Arrangements, 2006).
- 2.1 million children are adopted by and 4.4 million children are stepchildren of the householder (US Census, 2000).
- 2.4 million grandparents have the primary responsibility of caring for a grandchild living in their household (US Census, 2000).

## Want more STATISTICS or the full references for above statistics?

[http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic\\_extended.php?id=15&type=1&area=business](http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=15&type=1&area=business)



## REPORTS WITH MORE INFORMATION

- Luther, S. (2006). *Domestic partner benefits: Employer trends and benefits equivalency for the GLBT family*. Washington, DC: Human Rights Campaign.
- Employment Policy Foundation. (2004, October 28). Shifting household structure at the root of work-life balance issues. *The Balancing Act Newsletter*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Employment Policy Foundation. (2005, January 12). Single parents and the challenge of work and family balance. *The Balancing Act Newsletter*. Washington, DC: Author.

## Want more OVERVIEWS AND BRIEFS or the full references for the above reports?

[http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic\\_extended.php?id=15&type=7&area=business](http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=15&type=7&area=business)



## WORKPLACE SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES

- 95% of employers offer some kind of child care assistance to their employees (Hewitt Associates, 2003).
- 34% of employers report that they offer elder care resource and referral services (Bond, Galinsky, Kim & Brownfield, 2005).
- 10% of employees have access to adoption assistance (National Compensation Survey, 2006).
- More than 50% of Fortune 500 companies offer partner benefits for same-sex couples (Human Rights Campaign: State of the Workplace, 2006-2007).
- 56% of responding organizations offer domestic partner benefits to some or all of their employees (Hewitt Associates, 2005).
- 31% of employers provided more than 12 weeks of job-guaranteed leave for new mothers, and 20% provided more than 12 weeks for new fathers (Bond, Galinsky, Kim & Brownfield, 2005).
- Some Fortune 500 companies offer "extended family benefits" which allow employees to add a partner, roommate or adult child to their health plans (Conlin, 2003).



## SUGGESTED READINGS

- Coleman, J. & Coontz, S. (Eds.). (2007). Unconventional wisdom: New data, trends, and clinical observations about American families. Retrieved May 25, 2007, from [http://www.contemporaryfamilies.org/docs/unconventional\\_wisdom-final.pdf](http://www.contemporaryfamilies.org/docs/unconventional_wisdom-final.pdf)
- Conlin, M. & Hempel, J. (2003). Unmarried America [Electronic Version]. *Business Week*, October 20, 2003. Retrieved July 19, 2007, from [http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/03\\_42/b3854001\\_mz001.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/03_42/b3854001_mz001.htm)
- Muraco, A. (December, 2006). Intentional families: Fictive kin ties between cross-gender, different sexual orientation friends. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68(5), 1313-1325.

## Want more READINGS?

[http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic\\_extended.php?id=15&type=2&linktype=suggested&area=business](http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=15&type=2&linktype=suggested&area=business)

The Effective Workplace Series provides a summary of the Changing Definitions of Families Topic Page.

To visit the Changing Definitions of Families Topic Page, go to <http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic.php?id=15&area=business>