



BARGAINING QUESTIONS ON WORK AND FAMILY

WORKING FAMILIES ARE CHALLENGED with finding a healthy balance between work and family. People are working longer hours, affordable child care is hard to find and the number of working families caring for an elderly relative is on the increase.

Though some unions have bargained family-friendly provisions, many are unaware of members' work and family challenges. Surveys for collective bargaining help identify member needs but they rarely contain work/family questions.

The following are questions that can be included on bargaining surveys and are intended as a first step to understanding the work and family responsibilities of members.

1a) It is difficult to balance my work life with my family life:

Always Sometimes Never

1b) In the last two months I have missed work, arrived late or left early because of family responsibilities:

Never 1-3 times 4-6 times
 7-10 times 11+ times

2) Below is a list of the most common problems workers face in balancing work and family. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = "not a problem" to 5 = "a serious problem"), indicate which problems concern you:

- Long work hours
- Work shift
- Mandatory overtime
- Lack of paid leave for family emergencies
- Lack of flexible work hours in the workplace
- Missing work to care for a sick family member
- Lack of child/elder care services available during work hours
- Cost of child care
- Availability of quality child care
- Cost of elder care
- Availability of quality elder care

Other (please state) _____
 Does not apply

3) Do you have child and/or elder care responsibilities?

Child care Elder care
 Both Neither

If so, what do you find most challenging? On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = "not a challenge" to 5 = "a serious challenge"), please rate in order of importance:

- Cost of quality care
- Availability of care during the hours I need it
- Missing work because of problems with child care or elder care
- Transportation problems
- Other (please state) _____

4) How often have you provided care for an elderly or disabled relative in the last two months? ("Care" includes accompanying the relative to doctor's appointments, supervising his/her financial responsibilities, running errands and grocery shopping, cooking, helping with household chores, helping him/her dress, etc.)

Never 1-5 times 6-10 times
 11+ times Every day

5) What child care issues do you find to be the most challenging? Please rate in order of importance. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = "not an issue" to 5 = "a serious issue"), indicate how important each one is to you:

- Finding affordable, quality child care
- Finding child care close to home
- Finding child care close to work
- Finding care for a mildly sick child
- Getting son/daughter to child care

- Finding extended (before-/after-school, evening or weekend) care
- Finding child care during summer, holidays and school closings.
- Picking up son/daughter after school or child care
- Maintaining backup plans for last-minute emergencies
- Other (please state) _____
- Does not apply

NEXT STEP

The next step is to consider conducting a *Needs Assessment Survey*, which can provide useful information for future bargaining and organizing. Below are examples of questions designed to create a more detailed picture of members' work/family challenges.

1) How many children, within each age group, are you responsible for?

- None
- 6-10 years
- Newborn-5 years
- 11+ years

2) In the last two months, how many times have you taken time off from work to care for a child or elderly relative or because of a family emergency?

- Never
- 1-3 times
- 4-6 times
- 7-10 times
- 11+ times

3) In the last two months, how many times have you arrived late to work or left early because of child or elder care problems?

- Never
- 1-3 times
- 4-6 times
- 7-10 times
- 11+ times

4) In the last two months, how many times have your regular child care plans been changed at the last minute?

- Never
- 1-3 times
- 4-6 times
- 7-10 times
- 11+ times

5) Who provides care for your child(ren) while you are at work? (Check all that apply.)

- Spouse/partner
- Relative
- Friend/neighbor
- Older child
- Licensed center
- Family day care
- Before-/after-school program
- Child home alone
- Other (please state) _____

6) Who provides care for your elderly relative while you are at work? (Check all that apply.)

- Spouse/partner
- Relative
- Friend/neighbor
- Home care worker
- Institution (i.e. nursing home)
- Adult day treatment
- Able to care for themselves
- Other (please state) _____

7) What types of programs would be most helpful to you in balancing your work and family life? On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = "not helpful" to 5 = "very helpful"), please rate the choices listed below:

- More control over work hours
(voluntary overtime, flexible schedules, part-time, job sharing, telecommuting)
- Paid sick leave for family members
- Help with child care
- Help with elder care
- Other (please state) _____

For examples of work and family contract provisions, see *Bargaining Fact Sheets*.