



Small Business Bulletin

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How to Support Employees During Back-to-School Season

For many working parents, the end of summer brings a familiar scramble of new schedules, school supply lists and the emotional adjustment of a fresh academic year. Small businesses that recognize this seasonal strain and respond with genuine support often see the payoff in stronger loyalty, better morale and lower turnover.

Consider the following tips to support employees during the back-to-school season:

- **Offer flexible working arrangements.** Remember that life happens, and unexpected circumstances will arise. Employers can consider providing remote and hybrid work models when possible or as needed. Even when remote and hybrid work are not feasible, organizations can consider flexible scheduling or allow employees to adjust their workday to accommodate school-related responsibilities, such as dropping off or picking up their children.
- **Provide resources for caretakers.** Employers may consider hosting a workshop, distributing a handout or otherwise providing information on caretaking resources. Even if an organization offers no specific caregiving benefits, managers or supervisors could ask working parents how they are doing during the back-to-school season. This kicks off an open dialogue, shows interest in how they're doing as a person, and helps reduce guilt about juggling personal and work responsibilities.
- **Make mental health support visible.** The transition can be stressful for the whole family, particularly households with younger kids or kids who need extra support as they adjust. Point employees toward counseling benefits, mental health days or an employee assistance program.
- **Build in community.** Parenting-focused employee resource groups, even informal ones, give staff a place to trade tips and vent a little. Something as simple as a chat prompt asking how people are handling the new routine can go a long way toward making parents feel less alone.
- **Don't skip recognition.** A short note, a shout-out or a small gift card acknowledging the chaos of surviving the first week back costs little but signals that leadership sees what employees are managing outside of work.

Employer Takeaway

The back-to-school transition is a critical time for employees who have school-age children and associated caretaking responsibilities. As a result, small business leaders can consider how to offer flexible work arrangements, accommodate employees during this transition and provide relevant resources. These efforts can help improve employee morale and wellness and ultimately help organizations attract and retain workers.

Contact us for additional workplace resources.

Budget-friendly Learning and Development Strategies to Grow Your Workforce

For small businesses, a limited training budget can feel like a wall between where your team is and where it needs to be. Larger competitors can afford dedicated learning platforms, outside consultants and full-time trainers, and it's easy to assume that without the same resources, your team's growth will stall. But growing your workforce doesn't always require significant resources.

The following are practical, low-cost ways to build a culture of learning without straining your finances: