

6 Ways Live-in Childcare Improves Work Life Balance

Written by Susan Robinson
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Survey results for October 2012 National Work and Family Month

CAMBRIDGE, MA, October 19, 2012 -- As working families across the country are struggling with the dual demands of work and family, many seek ways of finding work life balance. [National Work and Family Month](#) was designated in 2003 by the U.S. Senate to highlight and communicate work-life initiatives that create healthier and more flexible work environments. A recent study has found that parents' choice of child care can have an effect on the work life balance equation.

In a closer look at how child care can impact work life balance, [Cultural Care Au Pair](#) conducted a study of 2500 working parents who had used more than one form of child care. The survey asked parents about their previous form of child care and how their current child care choice of a live-in [au pair or nanny](#) had affected their work life balance.

1. More quality time

Most working parents agree that work life balance has a lot to do with time. More than two thirds of the au pair host families surveyed found that having live-in child care allowed for more quality time with their children and more time with their spouse. Sixty two percent also found they had more time for themselves to do things like exercise and volunteer.

2. Greater flexibility

Flexibility is very important to working families and live-in child care provides parents with more options for scheduling and last-minute coverage. In the Cultural Care survey, 84 percent of respondents reported having more flexibility in their schedule in general. Seventy-eight percent

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of parents who had previously had their children in [daycare centers](#) stated that the more flexible schedule that the au pair program provides allows them to be more flexible with their work hours.

3. Higher productivity

That increased flexibility can translate into productivity. More than two thirds of parents indicated that their child care choice allowed them to be more focused and productive at work and 77 percent said they were less stressed about work as a result of switching to live-in child care.

4. A stress-free morning routine

Do smoother departures affect the feeling of work life balance? Absolutely. Ninety percent of parents with au pairs who had previously had their children in daycare centers reported that the morning routine was easier. Families with [live-in child care](#) find that children can take the morning at their own pace rather than be rushed out the door to meet a parent's work schedule, providing everyone in the family with a more relaxed start to their day.

5. Easier after-school and evening transitions

Working parents report that transportation to after-school activities, homework help and meal preparation were all part of their au pair's responsibilities and made for more balanced evenings. 74% of parents surveyed agreed that the coming home/dinner time routine is easier with the help of an au pair.

6. Less time off for sick days

What about when the unexpected happens and a child gets sick? According to a Georgetown University study, [Meeting the Needs of Today's Families](#), the illness of a child causes a parent

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to miss between six and 29 days of work annually. But not for parents with live-in child care. 75 percent of all respondents, and 81 percent of those who had previously had their children at daycare centers, said that they had taken less time off for children's sick days since switching to au pair child care.

The [Alliance for Work Life Progress](#) suggests that companies can recognize National Work and Family Month by conducting a work-life needs assessment. Parents can do the same by taking a look at how various aspects of work and home life affect their stress levels, work performance and general happiness. Overall, 90% of the respondents to the Cultural Care Au Pair survey felt that they have better work life balance because they have an au pair, indicating that child care choice, and choosing a flexible, live-in option, may be a factor predictive of work life balance.

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About Cultural Care Au Pair

Cultural Care Au Pair is the leading provider of intercultural, live-in childcare in the United States. Since 1989, Cultural Care Au Pair has placed more than 85,000 au pairs in welcoming American homes. A U.S. Department of State regulated program, Cultural Care Au Pair is headquartered in Cambridge, MA, with their own extensive network of recruitment, screening and orientation offices worldwide and more than 600 local coordinators across the U.S. For more information about hosting an au pair, visit www.culturalcare.com or call [800-333-6056](tel:800-333-6056).