

Glossary of Family Friendly Practices

Family friendly provisions support people in practical ways to balance work and family responsibilities. As a result, people are happier at home and are also able to be more productive and committed workers.

Here is a list of possible family friendly provisions. Only some of them are legally protected rights (see the 'Your rights, responsibilities and entitlements' section of ways2work for more information). Of the rest, some might work for you and if your workplace doesn't currently offer them, you might be able to suggest their implementation.

The ways2work website's 'What I Want' checklist will help you think through which options might suit you and the impact they might have on your home life, career and workplace.

Leave Options

Adoption leave

Provisions for adoption leave are the same as parental leave but the age of the child being adopted may affect the length of time the parent can be on leave.

Annual leave in single days

The provision of annual leave in single days enables workers to take annual leave one day at a time rather than in blocks of a week or longer.

Antenatal (before birth) leave

Enables pregnant women and, in many cases, their partners to attend routine medical appointments associated with pregnancy. This leave is separate from, and in addition to, parental and personal leave.

Banking rostered days

Enables employees, by agreement, to accumulate their rostered days off to use at some time in the future. Often there is a limit to how many rostered days can be banked.

Bereavement leave

See Compassionate leave.

Career break

A negotiated leave without pay arrangement that gives employees a break from work to pursue personal development or carry out family commitments. Employees know they can return to their job once their career break is over.

Carer's leave

Granted to an employee to care for an ill or injured family member, or to supervise a carer.

Ceremonial leave

Often interchangeable with cultural leave. Most commonly used to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to meet their cultural obligations by participating in ceremonial activities.

Compassionate or bereavement leave

Paid leave from work after the death or serious or sudden incapacity of a family member.

Cultural leave

Either paid or unpaid leave to enable an employee who needs to be absent from work to be involved in their community's cultural or religious activities, such as Yom Kippur, Greek Easter or the last day of Ramadan.

Exceptional circumstances leave (miscellaneous or extraordinary leave)

This leave, usually unpaid, may be granted to employees to assist them cope with an extraordinary circumstance or event in their family life. This leave covers circumstances not covered in other types of leave. Exceptional circumstances leave is often used to extend bereavement leave or carer's leave. It is also used to cover one-off significant events, such as a fire in the home.

Family leave

See Carer's leave.

Foster parent leave

Assists foster parents in the process of settling a child into their home. The length of leave may vary depending on the age of the child.

In Vitro Fertilisation leave (IVF leave)

Paid leave enabling employees to attend routine medical appointments associated with IVF treatment.

Leave without pay

By mutual agreement, an employee takes leave for an agreed and nominated time without pay.

Long service leave

Paid leave awarded to employees in recognition of a period of service to an employer. Length of service varies between awards and workplaces. Length of leave can be extended by mutual agreement to part-pay.

Parental leave

Parental leave is a collective term that can be used to describe maternity, paternity (partner) and adoption leave. It can also include foster care, child rearing and permanent care order leave. Parents are legally entitled to a combined total of 52 weeks unpaid leave where they have at least 12 months continuous service or 12 months regular and systematic employment as a casual employee at that workplace.

Part day absences

Employees can take a few hours leave, by agreement, to assist in balancing work and family responsibilities. The employee may take this as paid leave, for example carer's leave or sick leave, or they may make up time to replace the hours lost.

Paternity (partner) leave

Leave taken by the partner of the mother of the child or primary carer when their child is newborn or, in the case of adoption, when the child begins to live with the adoptive parents.

Personal leave

Combines sick leave, carer's leave and bereavement leave into one entitlement.

Pre-natal leave

See Antenatal leave.

Purchased leave

Enables an employee to purchase an additional period of leave during the course of a year. For example, if working a 48/52 purchased leave arrangement, the employee will receive an additional four weeks leave per year while their salary for 48 weeks is spread over the course of the entire year. Other variations of this leave include 46/52 or 50/52.

Sick leave

Paid, authorised absence from work granted to employees when they are ill.

Time off in lieu (TIL or TOIL)

An employee can choose not to be paid overtime but take an equivalent amount of time off instead by agreement with their employer.

Flexible work options

Early closing

As agreed, generally prior to significant community or cultural events, such as Christmas or at the end of the week, staff members are able to leave work early in order to be with family or manage other commitments, such as shopping or cooking.

Employee choice rostering or self-rostering

A system in which employees take responsibility for arranging their shifts, in consultation with management and within set guidelines.

Flexi-time

Flexible working hours allow employees to start and finish work earlier or later between an agreed range as long as they work a set number of hours each day or week. For example, employees required to work an eight hour day with a half-hour lunch break, may be able to start work at any time after 7.00 am and finish any time between 3.30 pm and 6.00 pm.

Home based work

See telecommuting.

Job share

Job share is a form of permanent part-time work in which two, or possibly more, people share the responsibilities, hours, salary and benefits of one full-time job. The performance of job share partners is evaluated separately even though they share the duties of the one job.

Make-up time

An employee, with the consent of the employer, works a reduced number of hours and then makes up those hours at a later date during an agreed spread of hours without penalty rates being applied.

Part-time work

Part-time workers are permanent employees who have a set number of weekly working hours. Part-time workers receive the same entitlements as full-time workers but on a proportional (often called 'pro rata') basis.

Request-driven rostering

The roster takes into account the needs of individual employees. Employees inform their employer about when they want to work and when it would be difficult for them to work and the employer will make genuine efforts to accommodate the individual needs of employees.

Telecommuting/home based work

Telecommuting, also known as home-based work, is a formal, regular and ongoing arrangement by which employees perform their usual work duties away from the regular workplace. An employee can telecommute for a few hours a week or several days a week.

Family friendly services and facilities

Advice and referral service

Some workplaces provide free referral and advice to staff on common family care issues, such as how to place an elderly relative in a nursing home, contact numbers for child care places or advice on managing challenging behaviours at home.

After hours dependent care

When an employer requires an employee to attend work, training or a meeting outside the employee's normal hours of work, the employer covers the cost of additional expenses incurred by the employee for the care of a dependent.

Carer's room, also known as a family room

A room or work area set aside in the workplace where employees can continue to work while also caring for a family member. Usually it is used when normal care arrangements break down, or when children are unable to attend child care or school due to a minor illness.

Employer sponsored child care

Refers to a broad range of child care options including the organisation owning and administering a child care facility for the children of employees or subsidising the care of employees' children by external agencies.

Family room

See carer's room.

Keep in touch program

Keep in touch programs provide a systematic way of keeping in contact with employees who are on extended leave such as parental leave or extended sick leave. Employees remain connected to their workplace and reintegrate more easily into the workplace when they return from extended leave.

Lactation breaks

An entitlement that allows nursing mothers to have regular breaks during working hours to either breastfeed a baby if the child is nearby or to express breast milk to be stored for later. Arrangements for time, place, and whether the breaks are paid or unpaid are negotiated in the workplace.