

# A generational wipeout of mothers' careers?

*The path forward post-Covid*

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REAL-LIFE  
SOLUTIONS



PRACTICAL  
ADVICE



SOCIAL  
SCIENCE

## Triple punch

1. The first wave of closures: restaurant and retail  
(372,000 service jobs lost)
2. The second wave: state and local gov.  
(62,500 education jobs lost)
3. Remote schooling and closures of commercial  
childcare and grandma care

*Women generally fare well in recessions...  
not this one*

Cohen, P. (2020, November 18). *Recessions Toll on Women Points to Lasting Setback*. The New York Times.;  
Coyle, D. (2021, January 14). *Working Women of Color Were Making Progress. Then the Coronavirus Hit*. The  
New York Times.



## Equality...for a millisecond

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- “Stalled gender revolution”...but in early 2020, ♀’s LFP rose to over 50%
- By April 2020, nearly half of moms of school-aged kids not working
- As of Jan 2021, ♀’s LFP fell to levels **last seen three decades ago—in 1988**

Coyle, D., (2021, January 14) ; Heggenes, M., Fields, J., Garcia Trejo, Y. & Schulzetenberg, A. (2021, March 3). *Tracking Job Losses for Mothers of School-Age Children During a Health Crisis*. United States Census Bureau.; Ewing-Nelson, C. (2021, February 5). *Another 275,000 Women Left the Labor Force in January: February 2021 Fact Sheet*. National Women’s Law Center.

## Equality? Nope.

*“The perception that we’re in the middle of a 'she-cession' has not been borne out...[By] late fall, enough mothers had returned to paid work that the decline among mothers and fathers was about equal...” (NYT 3/4/21)*

- **Study cited: “active work”**
  - Excludes mothers of infants and toddlers
  - Excludes moms on leave
  - Excludes NILF
  - Includes PT work, gig work

### **The real story?**

As of January, **10.1 million** moms of school-age children were on leave, unemployed or NILF vs. **3.8 million** dads

Cain Miller, C. (2021, March 4). *Mothers Are Regaining Jobs, Even While Shouldering Pandemic Burdens At Home*. New York Times.; Heggeness et. al, (2021, March 3); Heggeness, M., & Fields, J.M. (2020, August 18). *Working Moms Bear the Brunt of Home Schooling While Working During Covid-19*. United States Census Bureau

## Equality? Nope.

- Mothers' reductions in work hours were 4-5x greater than fathers
- Gap between # hours worked by ♂ and ♀ > doubled



Kashen, J., Glynn, S.J. & Novello, A. (2020, October 30). *How Covid-19 Sent Women's Workforce Progress Backward*. Center for American Progress.; Collins, C. , Landivar, L. C., Ruppner, L., Scarborough, W. (2020, July 2). *COVID-19 and the gender gap in work hours*, *Gender, Work, and Organization*.

## Equality? Nope.

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- Some economists predict pandemic will increase gender wage gap by 5 percentage points
- Motherhood penalty highest for low-earners
- Gone for high-income 🧑 but fatherhood premium has *doubled...so 🧑 are still behind*

Alon, T., Doepke, M., Olmstead-Rumsey, J., Tertilt, M. (2020 August). *This Time It's Different: The Role of Women's Employment in a Pandemic Recession*. National Bureau of Economic Research. Working Paper 27660; Aspan, M. & Hinchcliffe, E. (2021, January 29). *The Pandemic Has Derailed Women's Careers and Livelihoods. Is America Giving Up on Them?* Fortune Magazine.; Glauber, R. Trends in the Motherhood Wage Penalty and Fatherhood Wage Premium for Low, Middle, and High Earners. *Demography*. 2018 Oct;55(5):1663-1680. doi: 10.1007/s13524-018-0712-5. PMID: 30255427.

## Impact of school closures

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- 80% of those who exited workforce in Sept. (when school resumed) were ♀
- In early closure states
  - Women 20% > likely take leave and 30% > likely leave jobs
  - Men's hours? unaffected
- Majority of schools offer daily, in-person instruction now, but summer is around the corner...

## Impact of childcare closures

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- Women ages 25-44 3x more likely than men to say they're NILF due to lack of childcare
- Childcare deserts existed before the pandemic
- Estimated 4.5 million childcare slots permanently lost

Heggened, M. & Fields, J. *Working Moms Bear Brunt of Home Schooling While Working During COVID-19*. US Census Bureau; Gards, J. (2020, August 21). *Women three times more likely than men to not work during pandemic due to lack of childcare*. Marketplace.; Malik, R., Ham, K., Schochet, L., Novoa, C., Workman, S. & Jessen-Howard, S. (2018, December 6). *America's Child Care Deserts in 2018*. Center for American Progress. Jessen-Howard, S. & Workman, S. (2020, April, 24). *Coronavirus Pandemic Could Lead to Permanent Loss of Nearly 4.5 Million Child Care Slots*;

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## Racial hierarchy reinforced

- After 6 months, White ♀ recovered 61% jobs lost; Black ♀ 34%
- UE single moms (Jan. 2021)
  - Asian 9.5%
  - Black 9.3%
  - Latinas 8.8%
  - White 5.0%

## Class hierarchy reinforced

“The most educated women saw the least impact – and the least educated saw the most impact”

- Changes in employment:
  - 20% → 13% <HS
  - 21% → 9% HS
  - 15% → 8% Some college/associate's
  - 7% → 1% BA+
- After 6 months, 55% of jobs lost by college grads recovered; < 40% of HS grads'

## Short path to poverty

- ¼ families experienced food insecurity in 2020
- 29%- 43% renter households faced eviction
- Pre-COVID
  - US mothers' income shrinks by ~40% after giving birth; impacts last 5 years or more
  - Single mothers 2x as likely as single fathers to be in poverty



*Credit: Mario Tama/Getty Images*

## Long-term impacts

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- Employment for women predicted not to recover until 2024 – **2 years after recovery for men**
- A 26-year-old woman earning median wage takes 5 years off, reduces lifetime earnings **19%**
- After a career break, typically earn less; and **women 5x more likely to take career break**
- Also affects retirement income

Ellingrud, K. & Hilton Segel, L. (2021, February 13).; Madowitz, M., Rowell, A., Hamm, K. (2016, June 21). *Calculating the Hidden Cost of Interrupting a Career for Childcare*. Center for American Progress.; PayScale (2020) *The State of the Gender Pay Gap in 2020*.; Wagmiller, R. L. & Adelman, R. M. *Childhood and Intergenerational Poverty: The Long-Term Consequences of Growing Up Poor*. National Center for Children in Poverty.

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## Long-term impacts

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- [Calculator](#)
  - A 35 year old woman who makes \$100,000 annually and takes a 2 year break from the workforce loses **\$446,291** in salary, wage growth and retirement asset benefits
  - Extend to 5 years? **\$1,020,936.**

Ellingrud, K. & Hilton Segel, L. (2021, February 13).; Clifford, Lee (2021, January 4) *This Calculator Shows the 'Grim Math' of How Much Leaving the Workforce During COVID Will Cost You.* Fortune; The Center for American Progress. *The Hidden Cost of a Failing Child Care System.*

[https://interactives.americanprogress.org/childcarecosts/?\\_ga=2.243372866.615112731.1620846112-1878294382.1614632646](https://interactives.americanprogress.org/childcarecosts/?_ga=2.243372866.615112731.1620846112-1878294382.1614632646)

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# Public policy

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## Having a child in Sweden

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- Mother takes off six months at 80% of her salary (cap, \$37k)
  - Father must take at least 90 “daddy days”
    - Total of 480 days; must be taken before child is 12
  - One parent can work part time until the youngest child is 8
  - Subsidized, neighborhood-based, high-quality childcare—  
and elder care
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## Women respond to inflexible workplaces by...

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- In America, ♀ found their own companies
  - But companies typically small and not focused on growth
- In countries with more generous leave and work-family reconciliation policies, ♀- owned businesses typically larger, more high-impact, scalable businesses
  - e.g. Denmark, where rush hour is between 3 – 4:30 as parents head home.



# Popular culture

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## Changing popular culture

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- “Magic Disappearing Children” in *the Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*
- “The Prodigal Dad” in *Bosch*
- “Mom Doesn’t Mind” in *Black-ish*



Image sources: Amazon Studios , Image of Midge Maisel in a row boat, accessed 26 January 2021 <https://student.unsw.edu.au/citing-images-and-tables-found-online>

# The fairness gap

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# Polling

1. Childcare
  2. Housework
  3. Remote schooling
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## The ideal worker

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Ideal workers are expected “to demonstrate commitment by making work the central focus of their lives...”

“unencumbered by family responsibilities”

“People who take leave or flex “are challenging a key part of ... traditional culture. They become ‘**time deviants**’ who are flouting the **time norms** of professional life.”

## The fairness gap

*“He’s pretty strict with keeping his office time pristine.”*

Among partnered parents:

- ~ 80% of mothers: chiefly responsible for the housework
- 66% of mothers: chiefly responsible for the childcare
- 75% of moms v. 33% dads spending more time on homeschooling
- When moms are the only parent working remote, do > childcare. When dads are the only parent working remote, they don’t.
- **“Mothers as the backup plan”** – harshest consequences for single moms

## A career break?

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- “It wasn’t working for anyone.”
  - Don’t count childcare as a cost of *you* working
  - Will it be easier for you to go back to work once everyone is used to having you home?
  - Think long-term!
    - Remember the calculator
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# Ideal worker, good mom, good dad

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## The good mother?

- Traditional view: “willing to always be there and do anything for the children”
- Competing devotions

## The good father?

- Package deal: marriage, children, steady job, own a home
- “Everybody has a purpose in life....**Your purpose is to provide for your family.** Obviously, when you have children, you have more of an incentive for that, to get up and go to work.”

## Neotraditional family

- Father entitled (and compelled) to be an ideal worker
- Mother has a job but also picks up the pieces



## Maternal wall bias

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### **Experiment 1:** negative competence/commitment assumed

- 79% less likely to be hired
- Half as likely to be promoted
- Offered an average of \$11,000 less
- Held to higher performance & punctuality standards

### **Experiment 2:** indisputably competent mothers

- Less likable than successful fathers
- Held to higher performance standards
- Penalized on hiring, promotion and salary

## On the ground

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*“I found it really hard to get work after I returned from maternity leave. As a result, I didn’t make my numbers at the end of the year.”*

*“I knew it wasn’t a good time for you.”*

*“My wife could never do that—leave the kids.”*

## **Tug of war among women**

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*“I worked long hours and my kids are fine.”*

***Childfree:*** “They are just reinforcing stereotypes.”

***Childless:*** “I had to make hard choices.”

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## Frigid climate for fathers

- **One experiment: man requested flex work to care for child**
  - Seen as too feminine and less competitive
  - Less career commitment, leadership potential
- **Men took family leave to care for child or ill parent**
  - Seen as poor workers because perceived as too feminine
  - Flexibility stigma is a femininity stigma
- **Survey: men who disclosed caregiving responsibilities**
  - Highest levels of “not man enough” harassment and of general mistreatment

## Tug of war among men



- Sports radio host Mike Francesca, criticized NY Mets player Daniel Murphy for taking his union-negotiated 3-day paternity leave

*"You're a major league baseball player. You can hire a nurse. What are you gonna do, sit there and look at your wife in the hospital bed for two days?"*

- But, changing tides? Younger men—such as MSNBC host Chris Hayes—defended Daniel Murphy

*"Take some time with the partner in your life who brought the kid into the world... **that actually is part of being a man.**"*

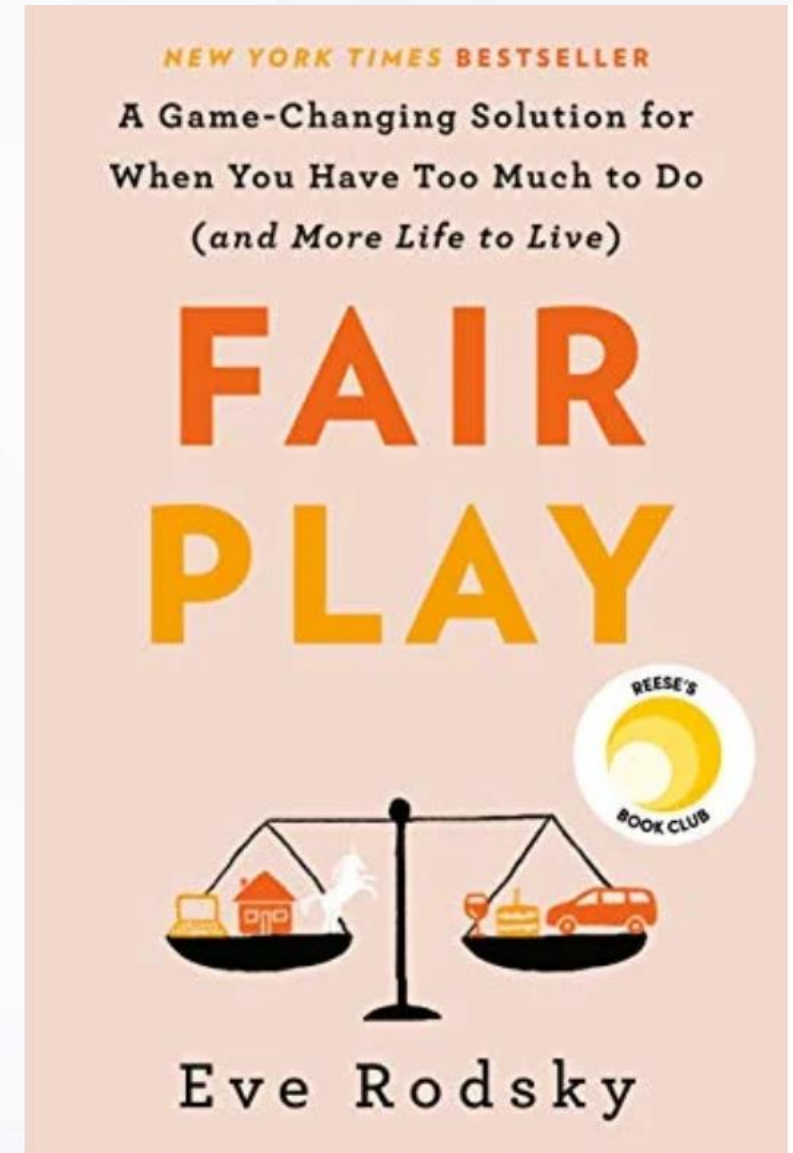
## On the ground

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*“When I inquired about parental leave, people were surprised. ‘We expect your wife will do it,’ a colleague told me.”*

- No wonder employers are confused!
    - What men say...
    - What women say...
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- Remember, your time is as valuable as his time
- Remember to include your children
- What you need is not a conversation, but a system
- List every household task; choose cards!
- Remembering to do something is a separate task



# It's better for everyone

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Why it's better for the children

Why it's better for him

Why it's better for you

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# Effective management of remote work

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*The ideal worker norm was why  
remote work was unthinkable  
before COVID*

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## Redefining the ideal worker

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- I guess remote work wasn't impossible!
- 83% of American companies are happy with remote work
- > 80% of American companies embracing hybrid model (3 days/wk in office)
- Democratization of remote work

## Productivity improves

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- RCT:
  - Remote work enhanced performance by 11%
  - Improved to 22% when the company opened up remote work to all employees and allowed people choose remote or on-site work

## Innovation

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- Innovation is enhanced by chance encounters
- But then you need long periods of concentrated work
- How to optimize for both?

## **You need structure**

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- Here are some tools
  - Core hours or days (Marriott)
  - Check-in meetings to ensure team cohesion
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## Not everyone has kids – but everyone has a life

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- **Fundamental principle** for successful leave and flexibility policies: employees have a variety of family structures and accompanying obligations.
- **Non-parents have their own family obligations** including to spouses/partners, elderly relatives, or other family members, as well as friends, de facto family, and other VIPs.
- **“Furry children.”**

## Elements of a remote work proposal

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- Number of days remote: considerations
  - Schedule: fixed, core hours, ROWE; limits
  - Communication: during working hours, after working hours
  - Periodic check in/duration
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## Elements of a part-time proposal

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- Principle of proportionality
  - What kinds of assignments?
  - Schedule: considerations
  - Communication
  - Periodic check ins; duration
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# Template telecommuting proposal

Available at:  
<https://studylib.net/doc/15942460/sample-telecommute-proposal>



## Sample Telecommute Proposal

To: Supervisor's name

From: Your name

Re: Proposal for Flexible Work Arrangement

Date: Date

As a staff member of (name of division or department) for (X) years, I propose adjusting my work plan to incorporate (X option) into my work assignment. I hope you will consider my request based on my past performance and my contributions to the department. I have considered the needs of our department/office/unit/etc. and the expectations of my position and have identified several potential benefits to this arrangement: (outline below).

I would like to meet with you in the next couple of weeks to discuss this proposal and share how a telework arrangement would be mutually beneficial.

You may have concerns regarding my accessibility to you, customers and co-workers, and by ability to work independently while at home. My proposal addresses these potential concerns.

### Communication

I will be available and accountable during our regular office hours. I will keep in contact with you, customers and my co-workers via my home phone, cell phone and/or e-mail. My work voicemail will automatically be forwarded to my cell phone during normal business hours.

### Information sharing – inform others of where critical information is kept

Items to consider:

1. Filing system
2. Computer access
3. Keys to files, desks and office
4. Addresses and contact information/rolodex
5. Calendar
6. Shared department drive
7. Use of Qtrix

### Job tasks and reporting

The elements of my job responsibilities that I consider appropriate for remote work include research, writing, and project planning. Each week I will create a status report outlining what I expect to complete on my telework days and how much time I anticipate spending on each task. At the end of my telework days, I will report what I have completed to you as part of the weekly status report created. I will also save the tasks that are best done without interruption for my telework days.

### Meetings

1. On days when I am working remotely I will be available to come in for meetings in person when necessary
2. If there is an ad-hoc meeting, I would be available to call-in and participate in the meeting via phone

# Template telecommuting proposal

Available at:  
<https://studylib.net/doc/15942460/sample-telecommute-proposal>



## Sample Telecommute Proposal

### Schedule

For the 90-day trial period, I propose working from home on Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week. I have reviewed my meeting schedule and workload over the past several weeks and conclude that these are the most appropriate days and it would have the least impact on coverage and attendance at scheduled meetings.

### Equipment

In my home I have an area dedicated as a home office. I will use my personal computer, phone, and internet to perform my job functions and keep in contact with you, customers and co-workers. I would be open to an office inspection by you or someone from Gonzaga if that would help you feel comfortable about my working environment and to confirm that it meets ergonomic guidelines. I would also be open to using a laptop provided by the department if you would prefer that I not use my personal computer.

I propose that we begin by trying telecommuting two days a week for 90 days starting on 1/6/03, then evaluating my quality of work and productivity. At that point, we can determine whether I might be able to continue with that schedule.

I understand that you are responsible for the success of this department and must determine whether or not this plan fits appropriately within the goals for the office. I also understand that approval of this proposal means that we will pilot the arrangement, and that we may need to make adjustments to this plan or I may need to return to my original work schedule/arrangement if the needs of the department change or if this arrangement is not going well.

## [ **BIAS INTERRUPTERS** ] *small steps big change*

### **BIAS INTERRUPTERS FOR MANAGERS & ORGANIZATIONS**

#### *Tools for Workplace Flexibility*

#### **THE CHALLENGE**

Surveys show time and time again that employees want more flexibility at work, with one finding that 96% of white-collar professionals say they need flexibility.<sup>1</sup> Workers value workplaces that value them. In one study, attrition was cut in half when workers went remote, and telecommuting employees took fewer sick days and less time off.<sup>2</sup>

When workplaces rely on an outdated model of a breadwinner who is always available for work, not only do they exclude most people working today, they also hurt the company's bottom line. According to Cisco, their mobile or remote employees have a voluntary attrition rate a third the size of their office-based employees.<sup>3</sup> Cisco credits this lower attrition rate with \$75 million in annual savings for recruiting, hiring, and training replacements. Other studies have found sharp gains in productivity when workplaces move to telework or build-your-own schedules.<sup>4</sup>

Building a flexible workplace enables employers to promote people based on their talent instead of their schedule.

#### **THE SOLUTION**

Recognize the difference between crisis work and full-time/part-time telework. Working remotely in the midst of a crisis, like the COVID-19 pandemic, is not the same as telework during normal times. The first steps to successful telework are childcare and a place to work. Organizations designing a permanent telework scheme typically will balance the productivity gains of telework with the innovation gains of in-office work. For tips on creating a telework policy that works for your organization visit:

<https://trello.com/remote-work-guide>.<sup>5</sup>

# Thank you



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