



Negotiating and Planning for Parental Leave

There are a number of important issues for you to consider when you're planning and negotiating a parental leave. It's important that you have an action plan in mind before you discuss your leave with your supervisor. Effective negotiating strategies are also important to you at this time. The more desirable you can make your plan, from the company's perspective, the more likely it is that your plan will be accepted.

Research your company's administrative policies regarding flexible work options before you make a proposal. Once you've come up with a plan, be prepared to sell its benefits to your supervisor. Remember, you don't have to discuss everything you want; just propose a strategy. Choose a time for the discussion when your supervisor is most likely to be responsive to your suggestions.

Be prepared to discuss:

- ✓ the starting date and length of your leave.
- ✓ whether you want to use personal or vacation time to extend your leave.
- ✓ the possibility of working a flexible work schedule or using alternative work options when you return to the job.
- ✓ whether you want to restrict your travel when you return to work.



Create a strong bargaining position by highlighting your strengths and reassuring your supervisor of your commitment to the company. Identify the issues where you're prepared to compromise, and approach the discussion with a give-and-take attitude.

If your company's policy doesn't provide benefits you feel are necessary, don't feel helpless. Your best bet is to create a strong argument for benefits and, at the same time, meet your employer's needs.

If the first meeting doesn't produce a satisfactory result, let

***These tips can
help you
prepare to meet
with your
supervisor to
propose a
family leave.***

your supervisor know you need a few days to think things over. Make careful note of your supervisor's reactions to your proposal and come back with alternative suggestions.

If your supervisor is skeptical about part-time or flexible hours, suggest a trial period. Tell your boss you will use this trial period to demonstrate how problems will be resolved. Remind your supervisor that the advantages of keeping an experienced staff member usually outweigh the inconveniences created by a new schedule.

Once you and your supervisor agree on what's acceptable for you and your company, present your proposal in writing for your supervisor to consider. Make sure your plan stresses advantages to the company and clearly describes the responsibilities, schedule and flexible work arrangements you have agreed upon. Make an appointment to discuss or negotiate your proposal after your supervisor has reviewed it.