



FAST FACTS

Questions and Answers About Child Psychological Well-Being and Work Demands/Resources

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What is work-family conflict and work-family enrichment?

- **Fact 1:** “Work-family conflict can be defined as a difficulty associated with fulfilling the roles of work and family in light of incompatible demands between the two roles (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985),” (Van den Eynde 2020: pp.124).
- **Fact 2:** “Work-family conflict is based on the scarcity hypothesis that poses limits to individuals’ time and energy expenditure (Goode, 1960) such that competing roles (family, employment) produce inevitable tension, resulting in conflict (Froberg et al., 1986),” (Cooklin 2015: pp.267).
- **Fact 3:** “Work family enrichment stems from the alternative concept that accumulating roles enhances social support, interaction and skill-building, enacting an overall net benefit, despite time constraints (Sieber 1974; Marshall and Barnett 1993).” (Cooklin 2015: pp.267).

How does work-family conflict impact children?

- **Fact 1:** “Work-family conflict is associated with reduced time with children, and poorer child mental health (Allen et al. 2000; Crouter & Bumpus 2001; Grzywacz & Bass 2003; Chandola et al. 2004; Butterworth et al. 2011; Strazdins et al. 2013),” (Cooklin 2015: pp.267).
- **Fact 2:** “Children raised in families struggling to balance work and family obligations may feel spillover effects from elevated stress levels and the limited time and energy that their parents have for demonstrating good and appropriate parenting techniques,” (Van Den Eynde 2020: pp.128).
- **Fact 3:** “Specifically, stressful work conditions, such as feelings of pressure, overload or negative work atmosphere, have been linked to lower parental

involvement and greater parental withdrawal in interactions with children (Repetti & Wood, 1997), harsher parenting styles (Greenberger, O'Neil, & Nagel, 1994), more punishing behavior (Costigan, Cox, & Cauce, 2003), or lower levels of positive interactions and higher levels of negative parenting behaviors with children (Costigan et al., 2003),” (Viera 2016: pp.420).

- **Fact 4:** “ the respondents with more education are employed by demanding jobs that require them to work long hours, taking time away from their personal life and child-rearing responsibilities” (Walkins, 10).

How does schedule flexibility, job autonomy, and work enhancement impact the mental health of children?

- **Fact 1:** “Children in single-mother families whose mothers experienced high levels of inflexibility exhibited the highest levels of externalizing behavior problems compared to all other groups of children (i.e., those in single-mother or partnered families whose mothers experienced low or moderate inflexibility or in partnered families who experienced high inflexibility), and the same was true for children in low-income families whose mothers experienced high levels of inflexibility,” (Pilarz 2021: pp.1279).
- **Fact 2:** “Parents with greater job autonomy and more complex, stimulating, and challenging jobs have been shown to engage in more efficient parenting behaviors and to provide more positive home environments for their children, with more intellectual stimulation, warmth, responsiveness, and less punitive discipline (Greenberger, O=Neil, & Nagel, 1994; Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, & Crouter, 2000), (Viera 2016: pp.420).
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- **Fact 4:** “Work-family enrichment was significantly associated with higher parenting consistency and parenting warmth (but not parenting irritability), in adjusted analyses (Table 2) even when maternal mental health and child temperament variables were included in analyses,” (Cooklin 2015: pp.271).

How do work-related stressors impact the mental health of children?

- **Fact 1:** “The psychologically distressed parent who is lacking the care and resources they need to function as an individual may neglect their child in the endeavor to pursue such resources. Subsequent behavior problems and other

psychological and emotional conditions are sometimes the result of child neglect on the part of the parents (De Bellis & Thomas, 2003; Springer, Sheridan, Kuo, & Cames, 2007)” (Watkins 2013: pp.2).

- **Fact 2:** “Maternal depression leads to outcomes that directly affect the mother, such as emotional disengagement from children and expressing less affection (Bigatti, Cronan, & Anaya, 2001); as well as outcomes that affect the household, such as economic adversity, life stress, and deficient sources of social support (Naerde, Tambs, & Mathiese, 2002; Petterson & Albers, 2001; Reading & Reynolds, 2001),” (Watkins 2013: pp.3).
- **Fact 3:** “A striking finding is that higher work-family conflict was independently associated with less warm, affectionate responding towards the child and more negative irritable interactions even when maternal sociodemographic characteristics, maternal mental health and child temperament were controlled,” (Cooklin 2015: pp.272).

How does father involvement and father’s work demands impact child mental health?

- **Fact 1:** “children’s mental health may benefit when fathers spend more time with them and when the father’s work does not interfere with the interaction between the father and the child. For mothers, we did not find any associations between time with children, interference, and children’s mental health,” (Roeters 2013: pp.241).
- **Fact 2:** “the child’s mental health tended to be higher when fathers reported a higher frequency of father-child activities and when they reported lower amounts of paid-work interference.” (Roeters 2013: pp.239).
- **Fact 3:** “children might be more responsive to the quality of time with their father because fathers’ involvement is generally lower than that of mothers; although fathers spend more time with their children now than a generation ago, paternal engagement with children still lags behind that of mothers (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Cloin, 2013; Kotila et al., 2013),” (Roeters 2013: pp.241).

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