

Can Having Baby By Your Side Mean Better Productivity or More Distraction?

Have you ever considered what it would be like to have your brand new bundle of joy at the office with you, sleeping peacefully while you type out a memo or work on next year's projected earnings? Millions of women have thought about it and every year more companies in the United States are allowing them to do it. But should they?

The idea of bringing your baby into the workplace is a trend that is slow to start but the founders are hoping it will be the wave of the working future. Parenting in the Workplace Institute (<http://www.parentingatwork.org>) wants the option available for just about every company in the world and they are beginning to make a case for bringing junior to the office. They have developed guidelines that answer just about every question a parent and an employer could ask and even gives guidelines on how to implement it.

It's a trend that leaves many new moms and even dads feeling more secure on the idea of returning to work after the baby arrives. They know that baby will be within their reach at all times and they will be the one to respond to the baby's needs. It's getting companies to back the baby friendly policy that could be a cause for stress. The institute is hoping that citing the benefits will help bring companies around to their way of thinking.

The benefits to be sold on are:

- Parents are back to work sooner
- Increased morale in the workplace
- Lower health care costs
- Increased Teamwork and cooperation
- Higher employee loyalty and retention

The numbers for the companies who are hopping on the baby bandwagon are still low and with possible good reason. The website Digg, a popular website aiming at sharing and discovering new information and content across the Internet has had over 472 Diggings on the topic of bringing your baby to work and over 200 comments on the subject at the time of this publication, most of them negative. For all the warm and fuzzy feelings parentingatwork.org wants you get from bringing your sweet baby into work, those who commented would rather you didn't. They cite it as being distracting to work and having to pick up slack when the mom needs to take time out from work to care for the baby.

One thing those that commented fail to understand is that the program is best for babies eight months and younger, because it is at that stage that most babies begin to become mobile with crawling and thus harder to maintain in an office or cubicle. Still, it's a practice that some declared would cause them to quit their job if their company adopted the program.

With that in mind, bringing your baby to work is better for some employers and not others. For instance, working in food service or law enforcement would make it nearly impossible to do

your job and care for a new baby. Likewise, not all babies are recommended for the program. A baby with colic or a tendency to be loud would probably not be a good fit in the program. Parents who do get their employers to test out the program are under the agreement that if for some reason the employer discovers it doesn't work out, they must find another child care solution.

Do babies really mean that a company will have higher morale and more cooperation amongst coworkers? Possibly, the institute and program suggests that babies bring out maternal and paternal emotions in people and creates an environment where people want to get along and work together. Though it sounds a little farfetched, for those companies who are utilizing the program, things do seem to be working.

One thing to understand, if you think that bringing your baby to work might be an option, it is imperative that guidelines are put into place and practiced. For those who believe that a baby would be distracting, they have the right to take their concerns to management and be heard and the parent has to remove the squawky baby from the area momentarily. Likewise, those people who are doing the distracting, (milling about, playing with the baby instead of working), they too have rules in which to follow in order for the program to work smoothly.

It's also important to discuss that simply because you want to bring your baby to work, doesn't mean it may work out. Sometimes it's a case by case basis in which the baby does fine but mom is too distracted, or the mom can't work because baby won't allow it. Another thing to weigh heavily is whether or not you can give your baby the attention he or she deserves while you are at work with them. You could wind up feeling more stressed than before the baby arrived in the office. A new mom functioning on little sleep and then bringing her little alarm clock to work with her may cause her more problems and frustration than she can handle.

Solely stating that bringing a baby to work is going to solve all the problems and emotions of working and being a parent isn't enough. Parents need to weigh what they know their job demands of them versus what a baby will demand of them and decide if the two worlds are meant to be brought together.