

Any guidelines for 'Take your child to work day'?

Question: "This year, we had a number of employees bring their children to the office for "Take your child to work day." The employees expected our admin assistant to "baby sit" their children, which interfered with her daily tasks.

I work for a small family-owned firm and don't want any animosity with our employees, but having a bunch of kids (none of them belonging to the owners) running around the place is very disruptive. Years ago I worked for a large firm that had restrictions on the age of the children who were allowed to participate, as well as a limit to what hours they were allowed at the workplace. I want to approach the owners of the company to set guidelines for next year and would like some "workable sample guidelines" to present." — *Monica Kulawiak*

Mrs. R. June 6, 2009 at 3:32 pm

Ugh, that day. I was working at a firm where we participated and my exec's kid came. His school gave him an assignment whereby he had to ask a series of employees, including me, 'what do you do, how long have you done it," and here's the real pip, "what is your salary." When the boss told me that there would probably be a 1 hour gap between the time he left for his off site meeting and the time the wife could come pick him up for the office, "so, would you mind watching Billy for a little while?" I had a flat out perfect answer. "I made a doctor appointment I can't change." "Oh, are you sick?" "Yes, I am."

Companies now have a lot of programs for this and I do think guidelines are a must. I'm in biotech now and we limit it to 12 and up, with scientist tours, and a small, safe experiment in a lab, to introduce them to science. That's what it should be all about!

Virginia May 11, 2009 at 10:26 am

Our company has a 3 year limit. Age limits is 9 – 16. We have structured programs for each year level and each department has a certain year. I have 3rd year kids. We have half hour programs with breaks in between to be spend with sponsors. I work in Finance and I make a book for them called Finance is fun. It has stuff about money facts, credit card information, budgets, and then games and puzzles at the end.

Admin May 6, 2009 at 1:29 pm

Since this is a small firm speak to the owner or Manager and suggest some ground rules for the up and coming day but before you do have some ideals ready. I do think it is important you explain what "take your child to work day" is all about. Otherwise you will run into problems. Maybe a 1/2 day or afternoon would be better than a whole day. You also really need to know who wants to bring their children and the ages.

Anon1 May 5, 2009 at 4:02 pm

I've read all these replies and don't feel many of the answers are relevant to Monica's question. She states that she works for a small firm and they probably don't have the resources to offer free child care for the day. I have the same dilemma and was hoping to get some insight for our company also. I think ANON and Deanna had the best suggestions as to explain what the day is really meant for and to limit it to the older age groups. It's great that large companies can devote personnel and money to this day. I however, do not think doing crafts, playing Wii games or watching movies show a child what work is about. Kids would be better off in school that day.

Shannon Adlong May 4, 2009 at 11:39 am

We have an activities committee that hosts Bring Your Child to Work Day every year and is looked forward to by the employee's children. They start off by having breakfast as a group with the parents and then having their photo taken with their parent. The parent then leaves while the child is hosted by the committee. Each year there is a theme (e.g., safety, product information, what we do, how we make it, office techniques, etc.). Then the parents come have lunch as a group on the grounds with some games or they can take them to lunch. Then the parents have them for the rest of the day. Most of the time they leave for the day but some keep them in their office so they get hands on experience of what they do each day. It's one of the biggest events beside the company picnic.

Ruth Moore May 4, 2009 at 10:57 am

Plan for this event. Send out an invitation securing the number of children that will attend. Yes, you should specify the appropriate age (usually middle school 6, 7 and 8 grade). Have them meet in an area that is not disruptive to the rest of the employees or in one location in the general office if you do not have room anywhere else. Your day should include some crafts, scheduled meetings with key personnel in your office, a luncheon with one or two chaperones (depending on the number of children) possibly off site if you do not have a cafeteria. Games can be played like corn hole, Wii games and then in the afternoon, they can watch a movie and prepare thank you letters to the president of your company and whoever plans this event.

Susan May 1, 2009 at 5:20 pm

I participated in this twice when my kids were younger and they had a wonderful time. I worked at the Dept. of Natural Resources and each section did something special with the kids all day. Some activities were gold panning (for real specs of gold), seeing a helicopter used for fire fighting in the wilderness, meeting rangers, etc. Everything was hands on and they learned so much. The best part was that they were kept so busy; I hardly saw them the entire day. They did come to my desk for a short while but then they were off to the next activity. I was able to do my job without interruptions. It was a well planned event and extremely successful.

celt365 May 1, 2009 at 4:21 pm

BRAVO TO THE ADMIN!!

I'm sure sure of you job role in relation to the Admin but simply saying to the owners something like "I'm glad we allow "bring your child to work Day" however, I found it a bit disruptive this year. Perhaps in the next staff

meeting we would agree on ground rules for those who choose to participate next year.

If you happen to be the manager/supervisor of the Admin, you might send out an e-mail politely saying that the admin is not there to babysit the kids. That defeats the purpose of Take your child to Work day. You might include a brief description from an outside source on what the Day really means.

Deanna May 1, 2009 at 4:16 pm

We have about 200 employees and last year we didn't have any guidelines. We had 51 children from the ages of 6 to 17 show up! Needless to say we were overwhelmed! We had activities planned but not all were appropriate for such a wide range of ages.

This year we explained that the purpose of Take your child to work day was to introduce the young adult to the workplace and show them what it means to be an employee! We restricted it to high school age children only. We had 4 people this year but each one was able to spend time with an executive, attend training, and assist their parent on the job. It was very meaningful.

Anon May 1, 2009 at 3:59 pm

We too participated in "bring your child to work day" and knew we needed to set parameters, or it would get out of hand. The age limit was 12 and up. Bring your child to work day is for the child to get an idea of their parents job—not to have a free day from paying a babysitter and/or for the Administrative staff to be used as babysitters.

Jeruda April 18, 2018 at 11:43 am

What an jerk thing to say. The age ranges will tell you that the kids are not being excused from daycare, but school – and usually public school – which is FREE. So, your view and your "anonymous" credential behind it just tells me your an over anxious jerk.

Pat May 1, 2009 at 3:50 pm

I work for a hospital. In the past, we have had programs for Take your kids to work day, where the children are gathered together in one place and our Human Resources department has planned activities for them, such as tours, speakers, etc. They go to lunch with their parents. Some of the older children are able to shadow employees (not necessarily their own parent) in departments that might be of interest to them as a career possibility. The program was a success. However, it takes a lot of work in planning and a lot of volunteers to make it work. In the past couple of years, it just hasn't happened. Now, the children do not come, and a system-wide e-mail goes out a week or so before the day to remind everyone not to bring their children to work, because there is no supervision. I guess it would depend on your company and how much effort you want to put into planning for it. The purpose of the day should definitely not be just for babysitting.

