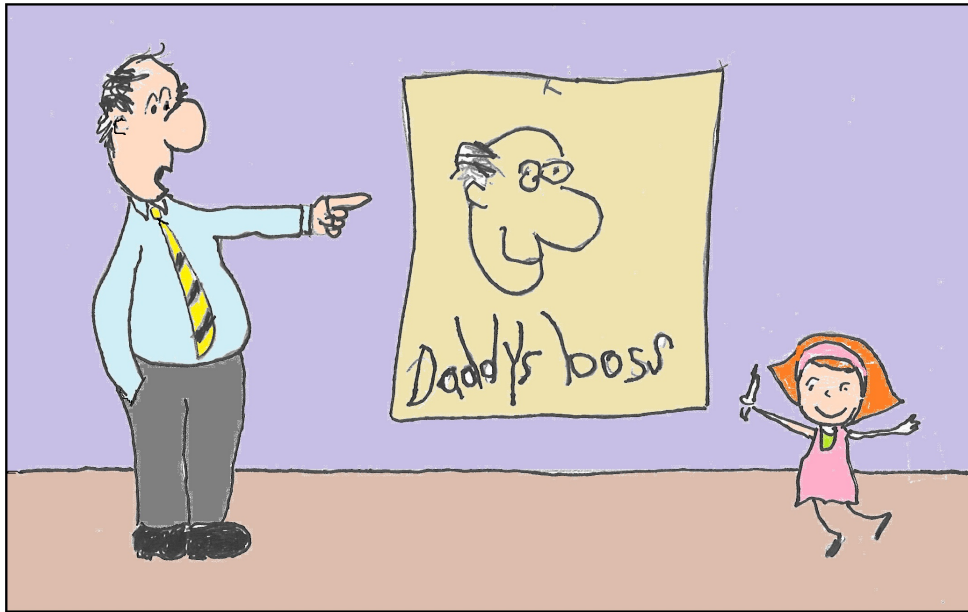


It's playtime! What's your policy on bringing kids to work?



"Hey, can you add a little more hair to it?"

Does your company allow its employees to bring their kids to work? We're not talking about the "Bring Your Son or Daughter to Work Day" in which parents can show their malleable offspring what Mom and Dad do to provide life's essentials—like unlimited text, talk and data with 10GB for tethering, HD streaming, and ad-free Spotify. We're talking about those little tykes; you know, the 2-year-old whose daycare shut down for an electrical outage, leaving your employee with no choice but to bring the tot to work.

Don't worry though, Mom brought the crayons and the "Frozen" coloring book, so Olivia can occupy herself for about 35 minutes of the 7.5-hour workday.

Most companies face this scenario and few have written policies to deal with it. It especially gets a little touchy if (a) you've let it happen once—which means if one worker did it or is allowed to do it, that means everyone can bring their kid in under similar circumstances, or (b) you've been in the habit of telling job candidates that "we're like a happy, tight-knit family here." Such a syrupy statement can certainly open up a can of Play-Doh, and have your staff wondering what kind of "family" turns away children.

There are only three options for this issue:

1. **Ban it completely.** Which also means getting rid of the "We are family" spiel from handbooks, mission statements and the mouths of hiring managers. An all-out, no-exceptions ban is a punch to the gut to the hardworking parent who sees the new rule as callous and mean-spirited; a rug-yanking move that will have them updating their résumés and maybe taking a shot at you on Glassdoor. It's the risk an

organization faces when it puts an end to a perk.

2. **Welcome it unconditionally.** No kindergarten today? No problem. The twins are cordially invited to the workplace today. No need to ask or apologize. Management thoroughly understands the dire situation the parents are in. Besides, co-workers are thrilled to see the world through a child's eyes, even if it's the drab, mundane environment of the tired-looking workplace. Who knows? Maybe little Josh will draw a crayon picture for you to hang up in your cube. The kids wander around and it's all good. Cute.
3. **Allowable with restrictions.** Here we take the middle road, but there are guidelines. For example, a child may need to be beyond the diaper-changing and chronic-crying stage; or the child must be occupied only in the parent's work area with non-distracting toys and games. Also a company could establish a limit as to how many times you can bring the kid in. This could be your best option if you think the rules-free route will lead to a productivity zapper.

If you were never a parent, you certainly were once a little kid. So it may not be too hard to choose a plan.