

When you must bring the kids to work

Sometimes it's unavoidable: You've just got to have your child with you in the office to get past a spot where there's no caregiver available.

When it happens, give as much advance notice as possible, and even if that's only 10 minutes, alert everyone about your intention. Make sure the staff knows your child's name and is aware of your plan for making sure this won't be a big distraction. Sending a message like this assures co-workers that you've really taken them into consideration. Don't over-apologize or make it seem hugely inappropriate; this is life!

Whenever possible, address work issues in co-workers' spaces rather than bringing them into your own, where the presence of a tot may create an awkward dynamic.

Finally, even if you don't think you'll ever have a kid in tow at work, pre-plan for the possibility. How will you occupy a child for eight hours? Never assume co-workers will jump at the chance to hang out with a little one, even though they may love kids. Have plenty of quiet activities on call at all times.