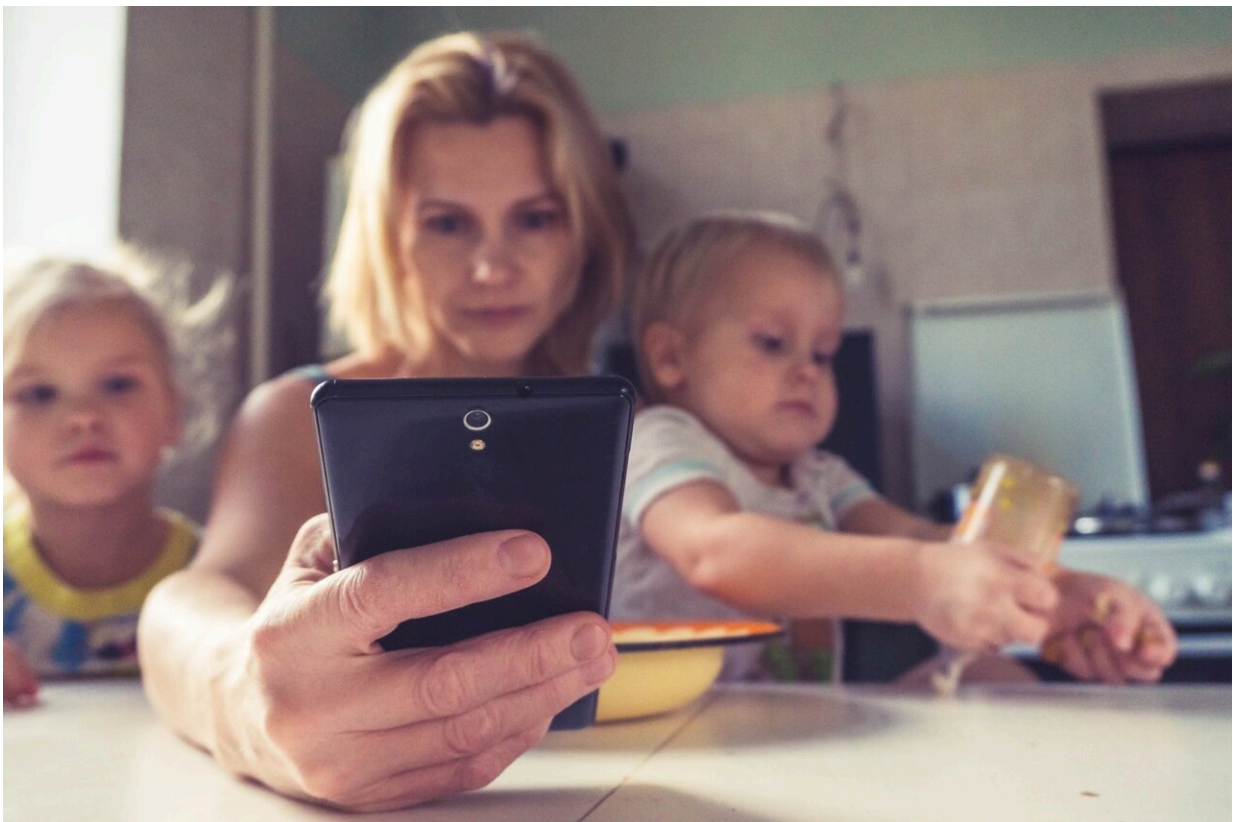


Study illustrates vast influence that children's mental health concerns have on workforce challenges in America

November 3 2022



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

As the American economy has undergone rapid and dramatic change, so too has America's workforce. Trending terms, such as "the great

resignation" and "quiet quitting," have been coined as we seek to better understand workplace challenges across the country.

There have been many contributing factors reported to be driving these issues, but new research shows that the pediatric [mental health](#) crisis is a significant and surprising contributor among working parents in America's workforce.

In a first of its kind national study conducted by On Our Sleeves, the movement for children's mental health, the "Great Collide" found that employees' work performance and productivity were negatively impacted by their children's mental health.

Now, in its second iteration, ["The Ripple Effect" study](#) from On Our Sleeves found that the mental health of their children remains a concern for the large majority of working parents, with almost half of all parents reporting that in the past year their child's mental health has been somewhat or extremely disruptive to their ability to work on most days.

"After discovering the impact that children's mental health was having on the national workforce, it was important for us to dig in deeper and flesh out the scope of the impact and look for ways to provide relief to parents and employers," [Marti Bledsoe Post](#), [executive director](#) of On Our Sleeves, said. "Having these honest conversations can be difficult and new to many parents, but, luckily, this data points to solutions."

In addition to daily work disruptions, many working parents reported long-term disruptions to their careers due to their children's mental health. For working parents who feel as though they've been placed in a position to choose between their child and their work, the choice is clear—with one-third (32%) of working parents reporting that they've changed or quit their job during the past two years because of their child's mental health.

"I left my job to adjust my schedule and workload around my kids. My kids were suffering and I was too exhausted to come home and address things going on. I knew I needed to let the job go because it was affecting my entire household," Demetris, a working mom, said.

Furthermore, among parents who still have some degree of concerns and interruptions regarding their child's mental health, significantly more Black/African-American parents (37%) reported changing their work arrangements because of their [child's mental health](#) than white-only parents (26%).

With so many working parents struggling, On Our Sleeves also asked what would help ease the strain they were feeling and make them more likely to stay with their employer. Many pointed to the need for collaboration with their employers to address the impact of their children's mental health on their work.

Nearly three-quarters of working parents surveyed said jobs that provide their children with mental health benefits and resources are more attractive than jobs that do not offer such benefits.

"We're seeing that caregivers will choose family over work if the mental health needs of their child are involved, and so the U.S. workforce will continue to be affected by pediatric mental health," said [Dr. Ariana Hoet](#), clinical director of On Our Sleeves and pediatric psychologist at Nationwide Children's Hospital. "Our kids are having a hard time and, as a result, their caregivers are too. Equipping caregivers and their employers with resources to address youth mental health is key to our path forward."

On Our Sleeves is pushing for changes across the country. As a national advocate in the youth mental health movement, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy recently traveled to meet with pediatric behavioral

health experts at On Our Sleeves and Nationwide Children's Hospital to discuss the study and actions being taken right now to protect youth mental health.

"We must all work together to address the youth mental health crisis and improve mental health at work. This research reinforces the fact that youth mental health impacts not only children but also parents, caregivers and employers," said U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy. "My Surgeon General's Advisory on Youth Mental Health and Framework on Mental Health and Well-Being in the Workplace both outline steps that employers can take to support the mental health of their employees and their families, recognizing that employers have a role to play as we work to lay the foundation for a healthier nation."

Striving to provide the best possible work environment for its employees, Nationwide Insurance's foundation, the [Nationwide Foundation](#), partnered with On Our Sleeves to help fund this important research. The hope is to raise awareness of the challenges many working [parents](#) face and that more companies nationwide will be able to create a safe space for their employees to thrive.

"As [business leaders](#), it's important for us to understand what an employee needs in order to be successful in the workplace," said Vinita Clements, executive vice president and chief of human resources at Nationwide Insurance whose Foundation funded the study. "By fostering a [work environment](#) where employees feel comfortable opening up, we're able to better provide support."

For more information regarding the findings of this study or to find resources related to pediatric mental health, please visit <https://www.onoursleeves.org/about/research/ripple-effect>.

Provided by Nationwide Children's Hospital

Citation: Study illustrates vast influence that children's mental health concerns have on workforce challenges in America (2022, November 3) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-11-vast-children-mental-health-workforce.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.