

Survey reveals higher parenting stress for dads working from home during pandemic

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A survey from Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago found that 40% of parents who worked remotely during the pandemic

reported higher parenting stress compared with only 27% of parents who worked onsite.

Results revealed a gender difference—fathers who worked from home were twice as likely to report that parenting was stressful all or most of the time compared to fathers who worked onsite. Parenting [stress](#) for mothers who worked at home was slightly higher, but it did not reach [statistical significance](#).

The [survey](#) included 1,060 parents from all 77 neighborhoods in Chicago. The study, published in *JAMA Network Open*, found no differences in mental or [general health](#) between parents who worked remotely or onsite.

"Our survey results show that teleworking during the pandemic was associated with more parenting stress, especially for fathers," said lead author John James Parker, MD, a pediatrician at Lurie Children's, an internist at Northwestern Medicine and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

"This might be a reflection of societal expectations that men should prioritize work obligations over family needs, which creates additional stress for fathers working from home. We recommend that parents reflect on their family and work situation and try to find an arrangement that limits stress and promotes well-being. This can be as simple as putting a noise cancelling machine in the workspace, rearranging schedules to limit distractions and planning time for parents to step away from work to be fully engaged with their children."

"Employers could provide support to [fathers](#) by offering more flexibility and recognizing that both parents need more work/life balance. Employers also could encourage parents who work from home, especially men, to take advantage of employee assistance programs if

they are experiencing high levels of stress," added Dr. Parker. "This is important, since [parents](#)' stress is linked to negative parental health and child developmental outcomes."

More information: Teleworking, Parenting Stress, and the Health of Mothers and Fathers, *JAMA Network Open* (2023).

Provided by Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

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