



***Work-Family Policies and Possible Future Options for
Newfoundland and Labrador on behalf of the
Department of Advanced Education, Skills, and Labour***

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this research was to explore the concept of work-family balance and identify different work-family policies that have been put in place by governments or businesses. The specific objectives of this research were:

- Discuss the concept of work-family balance and its emerging importance;
- Explore industry work-family policies across Canada and internationally;
- Summarize the current state of work-family balance and its related policies in the province and Canada; and,
- Identify the challenges in attaining work-family balance and provide recommendations.

These research objectives were explored through secondary research, a general population survey, and key informant interviews. Using this data, a current state analysis and gap analysis was conducted. The secondary research indicates that work-family balance today is difficult to achieve. In Canada, difficulty achieving work-family balance is attributed to three key factors: accessibility of technology, high rates of eldercare, and increasing female labour force participation.

The general population survey of Newfoundland and Labrador residents indicates that in general, participants are largely satisfied with their work-family balance. However, many participants expressed that would like to spend more time with their family, and have more flexibility in their jobs. Many participants with children in childcare felt that it was not affordable, and that daycares in their region did not accommodate non-traditional working hours. Similarly, key informant interviews suggest that work-family balance is a concern for many workers, particularly for working mothers. Most interviewees agree that attaining work-family balance is more challenging for working mothers as opposed to fathers, due to childcare responsibilities. Some interviewees believed that the government could do more to foster a culture that accepts work-family balance.

Overall, research suggests that while there are a number of federal and provincial family initiatives in place, there is still a long way to go in supporting workers with families. Additionally, this research suggests that Canadian businesses must change their culture into one that rewards employees based on quality of work and job performance, as opposed to how long the individual works (e.g., how much overtime they put in), which often puts working mothers at a disadvantage.

This report includes the following sections: **Introduction, Work-Family Challenges by Industry, Best Practice Research, Current State Analysis, Summary of Challenges, Gap Analysis and Recommendations.**

Introduction

What is “Work-Family Balance”?

Work-family balance (also known as *work-family conflict*, *work-life balance*, or *work-life quality*) refers to the degree to which an individual prioritizes their personal obligations in relation to their work obligations, as well as the degree to which one’s work life extends into one’s personal life. While work-family balance primarily brings to mind family responsibilities, this concept includes *all* aspects of one’s personal life, including hobbies, community activities, and overall health and well-being. In this report, both *work-life balance* and *work-family balance* will be used interchangeably; however, the focus of this report will centre on family-related issues.

Work-family balance does not mean dividing up one’s work and personal time equally; rather, it is a general term that is based on the notion that all working individuals should dedicate an adequate amount of time to their personal lives while maintaining productivity at work, based on their unique circumstances. The “balance” can look different across individuals, depending on their circumstances. The term “work-life balance” is also commonly used today as a broader definition, implying balance in terms of family, hobbies, community participation, availability of benefits/policies, organizational culture and employer support, and other relevant programs (e.g., eldercare initiatives)¹.

Research has consistently shown that a lack of work-family balance can result in negative outcomes relating to physical and mental health, and overall quality of life. Early psychological research on work-life balance found that a lack of balance in one’s work and personal life had four primary (negative) consequences on an individual:

- Increased stress (and stress-related illnesses);
- Lower life satisfaction;
- Increased rates of family issues (e.g., divorce); and
- Increased alcohol and/or drug abuse².

One empirical model of work-life balance, known as *The Two Legs of the Work-Life Strategy*, posits that work-life balance has two dimensions or “legs”: the *organizational dimension* (what organizations can do for individuals) and the *individual dimension* (what individuals can do for themselves)³. In order for work-life balance to be achieved, the organization must be supportive of their employees in providing them with family-friendly policies, and employees must allow themselves to find a balance by utilizing these policies as it fits their individual needs.

¹ Tariq, Aslam, Siddique, & Tanveer (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net>

² Hobson, Delunas, & Kesic (2001). Retrieved from <http://www.wallnetwork.ca/inequity/9hobson.pdf>

³ Tariq et al. (2014).

With regards to workplace outcomes related to lack of work-life balance, research has found that the primary consequences are *lower job satisfaction, higher work stress, higher turnover and absenteeism, and lower employee morale*⁴.

Another model of work-family balance posits that conflict consists of three primary aspects:

- The degree to which *family interferes with work*: this is when family responsibilities negatively affect job performance (e.g., taking time off work if one's child is ill);
- The degree to which *work interferes with family*: this is when job responsibilities hinder family responsibilities (e.g., being unable to spend time with family due to long working hours); and
- The degree of *caregiver strain*: the physical, emotional and financial pressures associated with caretaking (e.g., paying for childcare or eldercare)

Emerging Importance of Work-Family Balance

Accessibility of Mobile Technologies

Increased availability and use of mobile technologies including Wi-Fi, cloud-based services and smartphones has blurred the separation between work and personal life. As a result, people are increasingly more available for work-related responsibilities and vice versa⁵. Because people are accessible outside of their work hours (e.g., being able to check one's work email on their personal smartphone), expectations for job productivity have increased.

The discussion surrounding the accessibility of mobile technologies and its impact on work-life balance is an interesting one, as the advantages can also turn into disadvantages. For example, some advantages for technology include the ability to easily accommodate work responsibilities (e.g., if there is a snowstorm, an individual can still work from home without having to take a personal day), and ease of communication with coworkers, which is particularly important for businesses with multiple locations. However, this enhanced connectivity has disadvantages for work-life balance, as work-related responsibilities risk encroaching into one's personal life. Additionally, the increasing availability of employees outside of official working hours can result in higher expectations of work from employers, longer working days, and the perception that an employee must always be available to work⁶.

Statistics Canada data shows that the percentage of working Canadians who were satisfied with their work-life balance decreased from 78% in 2008 to 68% in 2016. While this percentage is still relatively

⁴ Spinks (2004). Retrieved from http://www.web.uwa.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1858314/Work_Life_Balance-Achievable_Goal_or_Pipe_Dream.pdf

⁵ <https://www.hrzone.com/hr-glossary/what-is-work-life-balance>

⁶ The Impact of Technology on Work-Life balance. Retrieved from <https://www.firstpsychology.co.uk/files/Research-report-FULL-technology.pdf>

high, researchers fear that this rate will continue to decrease in the coming years. Carleton University researcher Linda Duxbury points out that technology for work is a double-edged sword – that while it connects employees to their workplace and their coworkers, it also invades one’s personal life to the extent that employees can suffer from burnout⁷. Due to the increased availability of technology resulting in decreased separation between work life and personal life, researchers and policy-makers alike have placed a focus on exploring the complex relationship between technology and work-life balance.

Canada’s Aging Population

Canada’s demographics – specifically, the aging “baby boomer” population – is an additional factor in the discussion of work-family balance. It is not uncommon for today’s working parents to be simultaneously caring for their children and their aging parents, some of whom may be ill and require special care. According to *Statistics Canada’s General Social Survey (2012)*, parents who were “sandwiched” between caring for their children and sick family members reported being *less* satisfied with their work-life balance compared to parents who were only caring for their children. In a 2012 national study of over 25,000 working Canadians, 31% reported having to care for **3 or more** elderly relatives⁸.

Although eldercare is not the focus of this particular research, it is important to recognize how Canada’s rapidly aging population has shaped the conversation about work-life balance and work-life policies. The aging population in Canada has directly contributed to increased family responsibilities, thus creating a “sandwich generation”, where working adults are responsible for caring for their children *and* their elderly relatives. Due to this, modern conceptions of work-family policies include discussions of how employees can accommodate their eldercare responsibilities, in addition to childcare responsibilities.

Higher Rates of Female Workforce Participation

A third major contributing factor to discussions on work-life balance, and on work-family balance specifically, is the increase in the number of women who have entered the workforce compared to previous generations. In Canada, the number of families with two working parents has increased from 36% in 1976 to 69% in 2014⁹. According to the 2012 national study of 25,000 working Canadians¹⁰, 75% of participants stated that they come from dual-income households. From the participants that were parents, just over one-quarter (27%) shared childcare responsibilities. Despite this, researchers point out that women still bear the majority of childcare responsibilities, a factor that has had a direct impact on the work-family balance of working women.

⁷ CBC News: Work-Life Balance and Technology. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/statscan-work-life-balance-technology-1.4401290>

⁸ 2012 National Study on Balancing Work and Caregiving in Canada. Retrieved from <https://newsroom.carleton.ca/wp-content/files/2012-National-Work-Long-Summary.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2016003-eng.htm>

¹⁰ 2012 National Study on Balancing Work and Caregiving in Canada.

Approximately 9.8 million women in Canada are mothers. Research from the Vanier Institute of the Family states that the proportion of women in the workforce aged 25 to 54 years has risen from 35% in 1964 to 82% in 2016¹¹. Moreover, 70% of women with children under the age of 5 are employed in Canada as of 2016, compared with only 32% in 1976. While these statistics represented a step forward in labour force equality, women in Canada are struggling with their work and family responsibilities. From this research, there are two key findings directly related to policy:

- *The “mommy tax”*: on average in Canada, women without children earn 12% more than women with children, informally known as the “mommy tax” wage gap.
- *Employment Insurance (EI) eligibility*: in 2013, 36% of new mothers in Canada (excluding Quebec), did not receive EI maternity and/or parental leave benefits, possibly a result of differential eligibility requirements between provinces.

While labour force participation among women has increased dramatically over the years, caretaking responsibilities are still predominantly placed on women. According to one work-family balance researcher that was spoken to as part of this research, Canadian society still functions in a largely patriarchal fashion, where rigid gender roles are still adhered to – while men typically work a single shift (i.e., their job) while women work two shifts (i.e., work and caretaking). Therefore, sociocultural norms for gender roles have not progressed at the same pace as women’s increasing participation in the labour force.

Summary

Since the conception of the term in the 1970s, work-life balance has become a focal issue among researchers and policymakers alike, particularly as it relates to family responsibilities. However, the definition of what work-life/work-family balance is, and how it can be achieved, has evolved. In particular, factors such as increasing accessibility and use of technology, an aging population in Canada, and increasing participation of women in the workforce continue to shape our understanding of work-life balance. Additionally, national-level research has brought issues relating to work and family to the forefront, providing policymakers and employers with empirical evidence that highlights the psychological, mental, and physical benefits of work-life balance.

¹¹ The Vanier Institute of the Family: A Snapshot of Women, Work and Family in Canada. Retrieved from <http://vanierinstitute.ca/snapshot-women-work-family-canada/>

Work-Family Challenges by Industry

Empirical research on work-family balance that is specific to the six key industries (agriculture, mining, oil and gas, cultural industries, and aquaculture) is scarce. Although research studies aim to use diverse participants representing different occupations, they do not stratify the sample and provide industry-specific results. This section summarizes the current state and challenges of work-family balance in each of the key industries.

Research provides evidence that work-life policies ought to reflect specific occupations/industries. For example, while someone who works in a traditional office-setting may benefit from teleworking a few days a week, a factory worker or a classroom teacher would not be able to make use of this practice. In industries such as aquaculture, mining, oil and gas, etc., it is often the case that high-level, administrative or corporate employees benefit from flexible family policies, but the front-line workers are not given the same options. This was also reflected in the two interviews conducted with union representatives.

Agriculture, Aquaculture & Fisheries

Literature on work-family balance that is specific to the agriculture (including aquaculture) and the fisheries industry is limited.

According to research provided by the Australian Wool Innovation and Meat & Livestock Australia (AWIML)¹², farming families experience unique challenges to attaining work-family balance. Family-owned and operated businesses are unable to separate work from family responsibilities, and work hours often stretch long past a traditional 8-hour workday. As a result, it is critical for farming families to minimize conflict between work and family responsibilities. Farming families should take advantage of the fact that “they are their own boss” – and use that to design a healthy balance between work and family life.

In 1993, the then-Minister of Supply and Services (now the Minister of Public Services and Procurement) published research on the role of women in the fisheries industry in Newfoundland and Labrador¹³. The researchers describe a precarious juggling act on the part of women to balance work and family demands. For example, in situations where both parents were employed at a fish processing plant, women were more likely to work night shifts in order to be at home during the day with their children. The report also demonstrates that the irregularity of work hours (particularly for seasonal workers in in-shore plants) further complicates the issue of childcare, as parents have to find childcare depending on their shift hours, which may not necessarily be between 9am and 5pm.

¹² Capable and Confident Producers. Retrieved from http://www.makingmorefromsheep.com/capable-confident-producers/procedure_4.5.htm

¹³ Cahill & Martland (1993). Retrieved from <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/166380.pdf>

Mining

For on-site workers in the mining industry, the combination of travel (working away from home/family), long hours, and shift work all contribute to high levels of work-family conflict¹⁴. Work-family balance in mining has been of particular focus in Australia due to their large mining industry. Research conducted by researchers at Griffith University in Australia¹⁵ found evidence of extremely long working hours in the Australian mining industry. This is a result of 24/7 operations, the implementation of 12-hour long shifts, and a lack of input in shift/roster design from the front-line workers. Their research suggests that in the mining industry, career advancement is often based on working long hours over and above regular working hours. The research produced by Griffith University reported a strong level of support for a cap on the number of hours than employees can work in a typical week.

Oil and Gas

In general, for corporate positions in the oil and gas industry, incentives such as “flex days” or getting every other Friday off are common practices, although policies differ between corporations. For on-site and front-line jobs, practices include rotational shift work or on-site recreational facilities¹⁶. A recent qualitative study in the US found that a significant gender divide in perceptions of work-family balance existed among those occupied in the oil and gas industry¹⁷. Specifically, mothers reported having more work-family conflict compared to fathers, who were generally satisfied with their work-family balance. When asked why they felt satisfied with their current balance, the men reported that their levels of satisfaction were heavily dependent on traditional gender roles in their family (i.e., the woman takes on the primary share of childcare responsibilities).

Cultural Industries

In cultural industries such as tourism and hospitality, work-family balance can be challenging. The customer-service focus of these occupations creates an assumption that the employee must always be available to cater to customers. As a result, high turnover, burnout and exhaustion are common in tourism and hospitality resulting in the formation of a “turnover culture” in the tourism industry¹⁸. High turnover results in excess pressure placed on remaining employees to work longer hours, eventually leading to increased burnout and work-family conflict.

¹⁴ Australian Work and Life Index report (2012). Retrieved from <https://www.australianmining.com.au/news/mining-jobs-blamed-for-poor-work-life-balance/>

¹⁵ Peetz & Murray (2011). Retrieved from https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/bitstream/handle/10072/40174/71488_1.pdf

¹⁶ Careers in Oil and Gas: Work Culture. Retrieved from <http://www.careersinoilandgas.com/workculture>

¹⁷ Williams (2017). Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2329496517748334>

¹⁸ Deery & Jago (2009). Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1057/thr.2009.4>

Best Practices in Work-Family Policy

This section outlines three specific examples of best practices to achieving different aspects of work-family balance: childcare subsidies, employee support and workplace cultures that are conducive to work-family balance. Each example includes a discussion of the policy, or a set of policies, that significantly contributes to the work-family balance of employees.

1. Childcare Subsidies in Quebec

In Canada, childcare policies including subsidies vary from province to province. Quebec's work-family policies, particularly related to childcare, are uniquely geared to work-family balance. According to a 2014 report by Statistics Canada, the median cost of childcare for children aged 4 and younger was \$152/month per child – the lowest in Canada. Quebec was followed by the Atlantic region (calculated across all four Maritime provinces), whose median cost per child was \$541/month¹⁹. The comparatively low cost of childcare in Quebec compared to other provinces is a result of government subsidizing.

The concept of adopting universal childcare, such as in Quebec, is also popular among European nations. Universal childcare significantly reduces the financial burden on parents, who otherwise would have to spend a significant portion of their income on childcare. This is particularly relevant to the discussion of work-family balance in Newfoundland and Labrador, given that the cost of childcare in St. John's alone averages between \$700 to \$900/month per child, according to 2015 city rankings by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives²⁰.

One work-family researcher that was spoken to as part of this research summarized the impact of universal childcare in Quebec:

Quebec made affordable daycare in 1990s, and as a result, labour force participation of Quebec mothers substantially increased, resulting in the family poverty rate in Quebec falling by half.

2. Extensive Employee Support in Denmark

According to the OECD Better Life Index²¹, Denmark has a better work-family balance than any other surveyed OECD nation. In Denmark, only 2.2% of employees work extremely long hours compared to the OECD average of 13%²². According to the OECD Better Life report, there are two main policies implemented in Denmark that has resulted in healthy work-family balance for their citizens²³:

1. **Flexible jobs:** known as **Flexjob schemes**, flexible job agreements are set between employers and workers to accommodate the needs of the worker. For example, an older worker can request lighter tasks, or design their own hours. Lower-income workers can receive additional

¹⁹ Statistics Canada: Childcare in Canada. Retrieved from <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2014005-eng.htm#a5>

²⁰ Macdonald & Klinger (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/they-go-so-fast>

²¹ Organization for Economic Development and Co-operation. For a list of all member countries, visit <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/canada/>

²² Extremely long hours defined as 50 hours or more in a single work week.

²³ OECD Better Life Index (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/denmark/>

subsidies on top of their wages. Flexjob arrangements between employers and workers are set for five years, and can be renewed after this period has ended. If eligible, workers can receive a permanent job through this scheme.

2. *Extensive support for families with children:* in Denmark, just over 4% of Denmark's GDP is spent on family benefits compared with the OECD average of 2.6%. Of the total amount, 60% is allocated directly for family programs and services, like childcare. Families receive 18 weeks of paid maternity leave, 2 weeks of paid paternity leave, followed by 32 weeks of paid parental leave. Heavy subsidies for childcare and out-of-school care are provided to families, with 67% participation in childcare (for children under 3 years), and almost 90% participation in out-of-school programs (for children between 6-8 years) – the highest rates of childcare participation among OECD countries.

Denmark's work-family policies have been big contributors to gender equality in the country, particularly in labour force participation. Denmark has a gender inequality rating of 1.1 out of 10, indicating that males and females, on average, experience equal treatment regardless of gender. Compared to Denmark, whose average work-life balance rating is 9 (on a 10-point scale, with 10 indicating the highest work-life balance satisfaction), Canada has an average ranking of 6.9.

3. Organizational Culture at Raytheon

Raytheon is one of the largest engineering corporations in the United States, and has over 63,000 employees around the world. The company specializes in defense technology and cybersecurity. According to a study conducted by Indeed based on over 10 million company reviews²⁴, Raytheon was identified as one of the top North American companies for work-life balance.

At Raytheon in the United States, employees are given the choice of four types of work arrangements:

- *The "9/80" schedule:* employees work 80 hours for nine days, and get every other Friday off.
- *Every Friday afternoon off:* employees can work 9 hours/day from Monday-Thursday, and then four hours on Friday morning.
- *Standard work week:* employees work 8 hours/day from Monday-Friday.
- *Modified work week:* an employee can work more or less than 8 hours/day during a two-week pay period, as long as 80 hours in total have been worked during this period.

All employees start accumulating paid time off (PTO) from their first day of work at Raytheon. The number of days of PTO depends on how many years the employee has been working at the company. An employee who has worked less than a year can receive 10 days of PTO per year, while someone who has been working at the company for 15 years or more can receive 25 days of PTO a year. In addition to PTO, all employees receive 12 additional paid holidays a year. Raytheon also permits job sharing and teleworking.

²⁴ CNBC: The 20 best companies for work-life balance (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/05/03/the-20-best-companies-for-work-life-balance.html>

With regards to family benefits, Raytheon offers up to 3 weeks of paid parental leave. Raytheon also has a 24-hour support program known as LifeSources, which provides employees with family-related assistance, including childcare and pre-natal care, parenting, eldercare, and adoption support (employees can receive up to \$6,000 in adoption assistance benefits).

Raytheon also offers a Transportation Benefit to cover work-related transportation costs, such as transit and parking.

Current State Analysis

The goal of the current state analysis is to examine the present situation of work-life and work-family policy in Canada. This analysis consists of three sources of information: Canadian and provincial family policies, perceptions of work-family balance from NL residents, and key informant interviews. These three key sources of information will help to summarize the current state of work-family policy and work-family balance among Canadian workers.

Environmental Scan

A discussion paper on flexible work arrangements by Employment and Social Development Canada (2016) asserts that 58% of Canadians²⁵ report “overload” in their lives from pressures and obligations of work and their family and personal lives. This section provides an overview of work-family policies in Canada, and then explores current perceptions of residents in NL regarding their work-family balance.

Current Federal Family Policies in Canada

Currently, the Government of Canada offers the following federal family benefits²⁶. The six benefits listed below are the federal policies that most directly relate to maintaining work-family balance, although there are a number of other family-related benefits offered (e.g., victim supports, support for parents with missing and murdered children).

- *Employment Insurance (EI) maternity and parental benefits:*
 - *Maternity benefits:* 15 weeks of benefits available at 55% of applicant’s weekly insurable earnings
 - *Parental benefits:* 35 weeks of benefits available at 55% of applicant’s weekly insurable earnings
 - *Extended parental benefits:* 61 weeks of benefits available at 33% of applicant’s weekly insurable earnings;
- *Family caregiver benefits for adults:* up to 15 weeks of benefits to provide care for an adult in need of critical care;
- *Family caregiver benefits for children:* up to 35 weeks of benefits to provide care for a child in need of critical care;
- *Canada Child Benefit:* up to \$6,400/year for each child under 6 years, and up to \$5,400/year for each child aged 6-17;
- *EI compassionate care benefits:* up to 26 weeks of compassionate care benefits available for a family member who is critically ill or close to death; and

²⁵ According to the Canadian Mental Health Association

²⁶ Government of Canada: Family Benefits. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/family.html>

- *Working Income Tax Benefits (WITB)*: up to \$1,894 for a family (this benefit differs slightly in Quebec, Alberta, Nunavut, and British Columbia)²⁷.

Current Family Policies in Newfoundland and Labrador

In the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, residents can receive a variety of Income Support Benefits through the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour²⁸. Approximately 6.3% of the province makes use of the provincial income supports.

- *Newfoundland and Labrador Child Benefit (NLCB)*: families may receive a tax credit between \$386 and \$1,708 a year, depending on how many children are in the family;
- *Mother Baby Nutrition Supplement*: helps with the cost of food for low-income mothers with children under the age of 1; and
- *Student Aid*: benefits for adults who are full-time students.

While there are basic monthly rates for income support benefits, rates are dependent on a number of factors such as family income, number of dependents, living arrangements, etc.

Although there are federal policies in place, provincial policies may differ from one province to the next. With regards to leave from work the *Newfoundland and Labrador Employment Standards Act* requires employers to grant a certain amount of leave according to specific situations. However, leave is typically unpaid, and employees must meet all specified eligibility criteria. Listed below are the common types of leave taken from work²⁹:

- *Pregnancy leave*: up to 17 weeks of unpaid leave;
- *Parental leave*: up to 35 weeks of unpaid leave;
- *Adoption leave*: up to 17 weeks of unpaid leave;
- *Bereavement leave*: 1 day paid leave; 2 days unpaid leave;
- *Sick/Family responsibility leave*: 7 days unpaid leave; and
- *Compassionate care leave*: up to 8 weeks of unpaid leave within a specified 26-week period.

Current Perceptions of Work-Family Balance among NL Residents

As part of this research, a telephone survey was conducted with a random sample of Newfoundland and Labrador residents. This section contains the survey results found to date, with a sample of 48 residents (27 female, 21 male) across a range of industries, including education, retail, and transportation. Due to

²⁷ <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/working-income-tax-benefit-witb/refundable-tax-credit-working-income-tax-benefit-calculation.html#q3>

²⁸ Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labor: Income Supports. Retrieved from <http://www.aesl.gov.nl.ca/income-support/index.html>

²⁹ Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Retrieved from <https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/en/tools-resources/providing-paid-and-unpaid-leave-work-newfoundland-and-labrador>

this, the results are reported for the whole sample instead of by industry. The survey is provided in Appendix A, and the breakdown of participants by occupation can be found in Appendix B.

Demographic Highlights

Dependents: Out of the total sample, 41 participants (85%) had children as their sole dependents; two participants reported having elderly family members as dependents, and five participants reported supporting both children and elderly family members.

Employment: The majority of survey participants (n=45; 94%) did not have more than one paying job. The reported amount of hours worked per week was varied, with slightly more than half of participants (n=28; 58%) working between 31 and 40 hours/week or more and a third (n=16; 33%) who reported working 41 hours/week or more.

Marital status: Most participants are married (n=34; 71%). The majority of survey participants (83%) reported being a primary caregiver in their household³⁰, and 36 total participants (75%) are from dual-income households. Among those from single-income households, 11 participants reported being the primary caregiver.

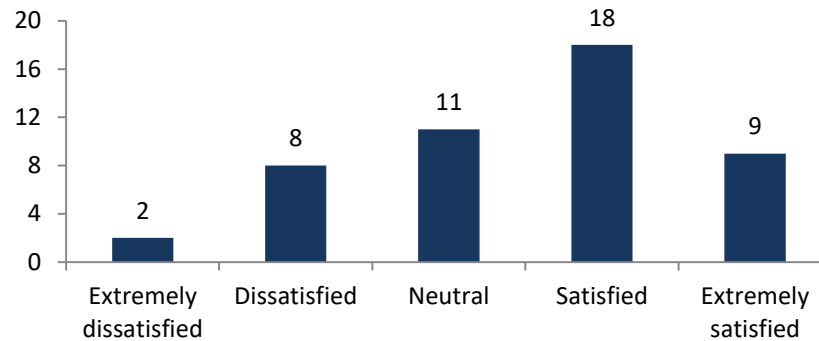
Family size: Less than half (n=21; 44%) of those surveyed reported having one child; slightly fewer (n=20; 42%) reported having two children, five participants (10%) reported having 3 to 5 children, while two participants (4%) reported having no children. Of those with children, eight participants reported caring for children aged six or younger (1 child aged six or under = 7; 2 children aged six or under = 1).

General Perceptions of Work-Family Balance

Nineteen out of the 48 surveyed residents (40%) agree that work-family balance is a problem for them. As shown in Figure 1, over half of those surveyed are either *satisfied* or *extremely satisfied* (n=27; 56%) with their current work-family balance. Only 10 participants (21%) reported being *dissatisfied* or *extremely dissatisfied* with their work-family balance.

³⁰ Note: this does not imply that they are the sole caregiver in their household.

Figure 1
Satisfaction with current work-family balance
(n=48)



Below are three verbatim responses from participants who were *dissatisfied* or *extremely dissatisfied* with their current work-family balance:

"I have to work to pay for childcare and then I feel guilty that my children are in childcare. I have to drive an hour to and from work every day, so I spend less time with my children as a result."

"There is always more work at the end of the day and the work is taken home to complete."

"I'd like to spend more time at home."

Examples of participants who were *satisfied* or *extremely satisfied* with their work-family balance provided the following verbatim responses:

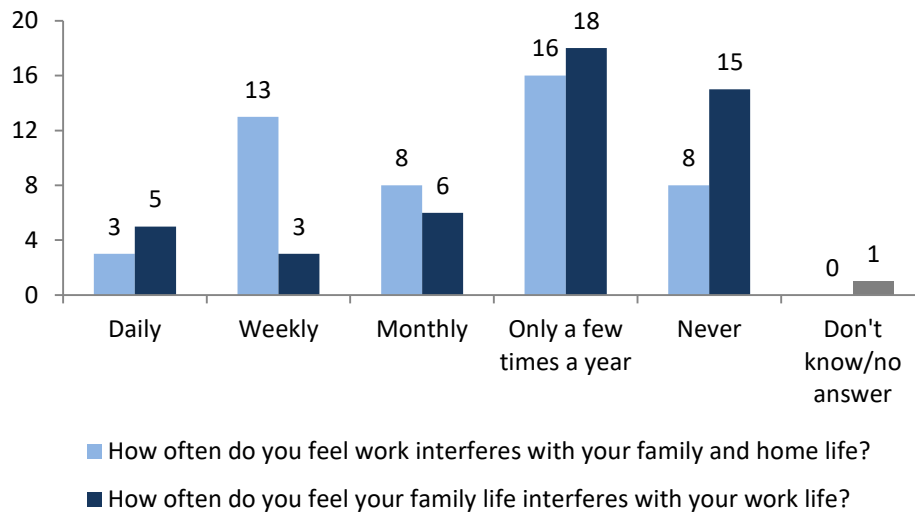
"My hours are flexible and I am usually at home when my daughter is."

"I have the flexibility to sometimes arrange my work hours or need to travel for work around family responsibilities."

"...The only impact on me is the hours for school, but we have flexible hours...My company has a program they offer once a month called an EDO, an earned day off, and typically it's the third Friday of the month. So that's the day you can go get your banking done, etc."

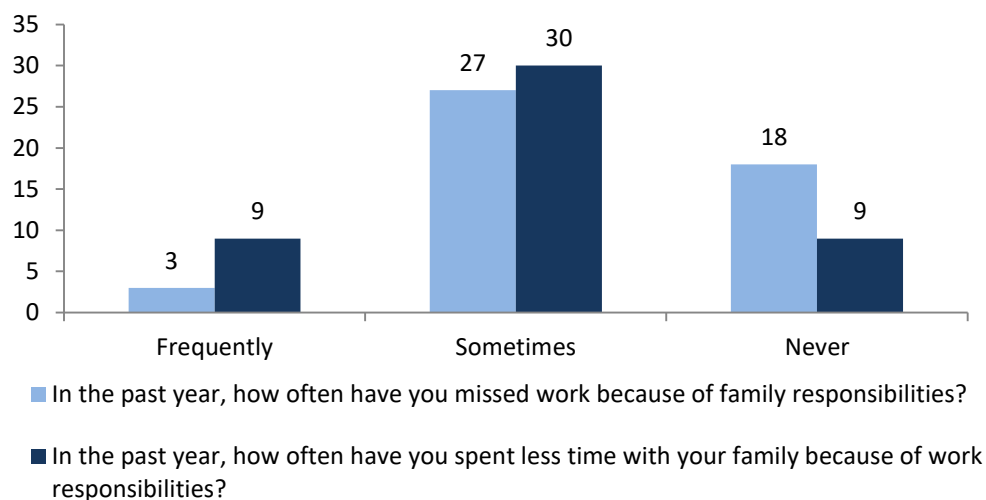
With regards to work-family interference, Figure 2 shows that interference of work into family life, and vice-versa, occurs on a daily bases for a very small proportion of the sample. However, among those who indicated *weekly* interference, significantly more participants indicated that work was more likely to interfere with family life (n=13) compared to the other way around (n=3). Overall, participants are more likely to cite interference of work into family life (n=40; *Daily – Only a few times a year*) as opposed to family interference into work (n=32).

Figure 2
Work-Family Interference (n=48)



With regards to work-family conflict in the past year, participants were marginally more likely to state that work responsibilities have either *frequently* or *sometimes* caused them to spend less time with their family (Figure 3). Interestingly, participants were twice as likely to state that they have *never* missed work due to family responsibilities (n=18). This is consistent with results from Figure 2, suggesting that work is more likely to interfere into family life, as opposed to family responsibilities interfering into work life.

Figure 3
Work-Family Conflict in the Past Year (n=48)



Participants were asked to provide verbatim responses to *what a good work-family balance looked like for them*. Responses to this question were interesting, as it was apparent that all participants did not visualize work-family balance in the same way. While a number of participants suggested a flexible work schedule, others mentioned wanting a 9-5 job that would allow them to be free on evenings and weekends. Some individuals mentioned limiting the workday – not being made to work overtime or at nights/weekends, limiting the workday to 30 hours a week, or only working overtime occasionally.

The variety in responses for this question suggests that there is no one standard prescription for what a “good” work-family (or work-life) balance is. For some, it may be primarily related to family, while for others it might include other aspects of their personal lives. Additionally, the type of job a person works influences their conception of a good work-life balance (i.e., shift work versus set office hours). Below are some examples of verbatim responses.

“That means you work your set number of hours and only occasionally work overtime but don't let it interfere with your family life. When you are home you spend quality time with your family.”

“To work 30 hours a week with weekends off.”

“Flexibility if you need to be home with your children if needed.”

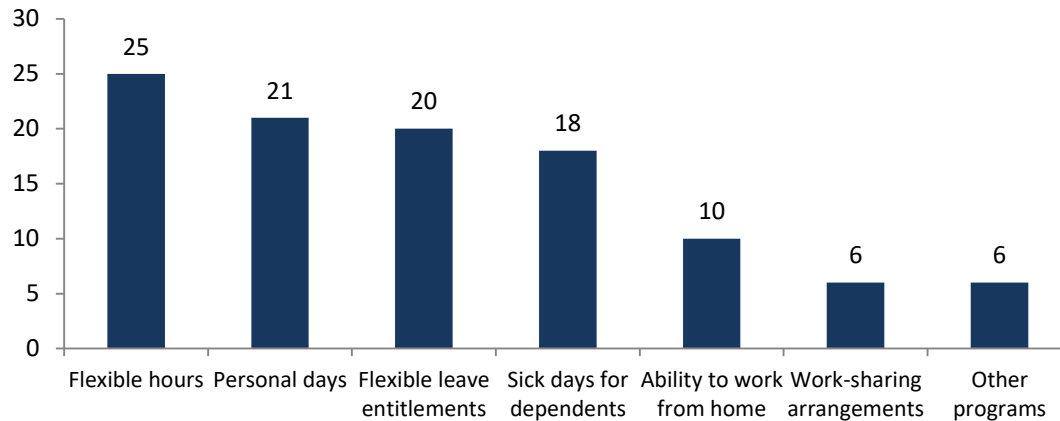
“Being able to want to go to work and not dread it, to come home at the end of the day and know work was done and the rest of the evening is mine, to feel like I've done a good job, to come home with a clear conscience.”

Work-Family Policies and Practices

When asked to cite what policies or programs they accessed through their workplace to accommodate family responsibilities, participants most frequently mentioned *flexible hours*, cited by just over half of the sample (n=25; 52%). This was followed by *personal days* (n=21; 44%) and *flexible leave entitlements* (n=20; 42%) (Figure 4).

Among those who mentioned at least one program/policy (n=43), *flexible hours* were cited as most effective in supporting work family balance. When asked if the programs/policies they cited had allowing them to remain working in their industry, 30 out of the 43 participants (70%) said yes. When asked to specify which ones, flexible hours was once again the top response (n=16), followed by flexible leave entitlements and personal days.

Figure 4
Use of Policies and Programs (n=48)
Those who said "Yes"



Among the six residents who cited *other programs*, three examples were provided:

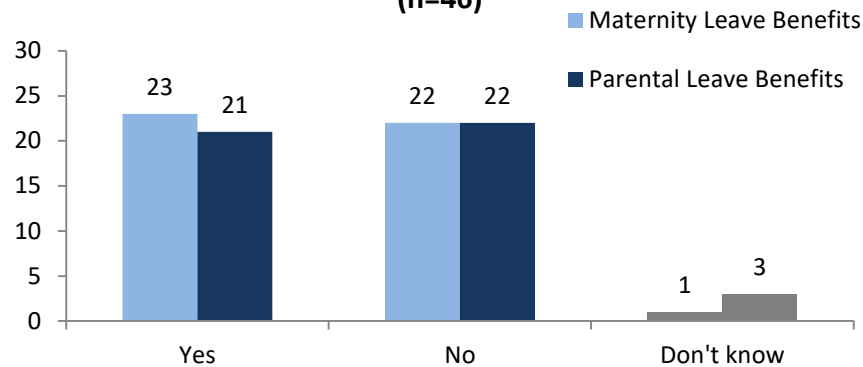
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP; n=3)
- Three family days per year (n=2)
- Vacation time (n=1)

Work-Family Balance and Gender

Participants with children (n=46) were asked about their views on federal maternity and parental leave benefits. They were provided definitions of maternity leave and parental leave benefits, and we asked them to state, based on these definitions and their own experiences, if these benefits were sufficient in achieving work-family balance.

Interestingly, opinions on this were evenly divided. As shown in Figure 5 below, almost an equal number of participants believed that these benefits were sufficient or insufficient.

Figure 5
Sufficiency of Maternity & Parental Leave Benefits
(n=46)



Affordability and Accessibility of Childcare

The majority of participants with children (n=46) do not access any childcare program (n=36; 78%) during working hours. Among those who do access childcare (n=10), the following results were found:

- Four participants access a childcare centre, one accesses a school-sponsored pre-kindergarten program, and six participants access other programs, such as:
 - After school childcare program (n=3)
 - Home-based/private home daycare (n=2)
 - Drop off at someone's house (n=1)
- Participants are split on whether they believe their childcare is affordable, with five stating *yes* and the other five stating *no*, while eight out of the ten participants stated agreed that childcare was easily accessible to them. Those who stated that childcare was accessible, the majority of responses had to do with **being able to afford childcare**, and **having multiple childcare options in their community**. Among the two participants who elaborated on why they said *no*, one resident provided the following response:

"It's because of the cost. It's not subsidized in any way because I earn too much to be able to qualify for any kind of subsidy even as a single parent."

- Only three participants stated that their child was in an early learning program as part of their childcare, while four out of ten agreed that early learning programs were accessible to them. One resident who believed early learning programs were accessible provided this cost-related caveat:

"We can afford it, so it's there for us. But the cost is too high compared to other provinces."

Participants were asked to list the benefits of childcare and early learning programs. Table 1 on the following page shows all responses that were provided for this question. As is apparent from the responses, the two primary benefits of childcare and early learning programs are that they provide **an opportunity for parents (particularly mothers) to work**, and they allow for **learning opportunities and socialization for the child**.

Table 1	
Benefits of Childcare	Benefits of Early Learning Programs
<i>"Childcare keeps people in the workforce and maintain hours at work."</i>	<i>"They support overall development of my child when she's not in school and fosters further learning."</i>
<i>"I don't have to leave work to pick up the kids. I can work."</i>	<i>"They do better at school. They function better."</i>
<i>"It allows both parents to be able to work outside the home and contribute to the economy. It allows the child to socialize."</i>	<i>"They allow me to be at work on time."</i>
<i>"It allows both parents to continue to work. The child can learn more with interaction."</i>	<i>"School preparation and socialization for the child."</i>
<i>"Lets me go to work and provides socialization opportunities for my kids."</i>	<i>"It also gives children a better understanding of what school will be like, helps them develop social skills. And it's more structured, more like kindergarten."</i>
<i>"Socialization for the child. Early education. It gets them ready for school. The mom can go to work if she chooses to, which is important for a mother to have that choice."</i>	<i>"Preparing kids for kindergarten."</i>
<i>"The ability to have two parents working, so one does not have to put their career on hold. It also gives children a better understanding of what school will be like. Daycare gives them more social skills."</i>	<i>"You are getting the benefits of knowing what your children will be learning prior to going to school."</i>
<i>"The social aspect for kids; it prepares them for kindergarten. It also enables a dual income for families."</i>	
<i>"We need them to look after them when they are not in school. Mostly, they are in school. Between the time when school is out and they get home, we need someone there. It's variety for the children."</i>	
<i>"You are able to go to work."</i>	

Table 2 shows all participants' responses in challenges they have faced in accessing childcare and early learning programs. Clearly, the **cost of these programs** is the biggest challenge for participants in accessing childcare and early learning programs.

Table 2	
Challenges to Accessing Childcare	Challenges to Accessing Early Learning Programs
<p><i>"Availability of childcare providers."</i></p> <p><i>"It's expensive. It's also in demand, so you have to be very proactive, planning far ahead to cover off the times that you need. We have two kids, so we want them in the same place. You have to check out where they are going, and know it's appropriate."</i></p> <p><i>"The cost is much higher than what I can actually claim, so I pay out of pocket for my childcare; I'm at risk of losing my space when there are too many children enrolled because my child would be bumped in favour of someone who was there on government funding. Being unhappy with the level of care and qualifications of staff, not knowing if my children are being taken care of well enough when I'm at work."</i></p> <p><i>"The cost is the only thing."</i></p> <p><i>"The cost of it."</i></p> <p><i>"The cost, without a doubt."</i></p> <p><i>"The lack of early morning care."</i></p>	<p><i>"My location is isolated, I live on an island."</i></p> <p><i>"Lack of availability and high cost; the fact that there's no learning happening."</i></p> <p><i>"Just the cost."</i></p> <p><i>"The cost of it."</i></p> <p><i>"The cost. When my daughter was in early child care it was really expensive I found."</i></p>

Labour Market Development

An encouraging result found in this survey is that the majority of residents (n=42; 88%) **did not** feel that work-family conflict prevented them from fulfilling their job obligations. Among the six residents who did feel work-family conflict affected their job, almost all response had to do with **caring for their children**.

“Deadlines. If your child is sick or has a PD [Professional Development] day from school, having to take time off interferes with meeting deadlines at work.”

The two final questions of this survey asked participants to state what (a) **the provincial government** (Table 3), and (b) **employers** (Table 4) could do, in terms of policies and programs, to help people in the labour force achieve better work-family balance. Due to the large number of responses provided for these questions, responses were coded into broad themes. Verbatim responses are provided for each theme as examples. Note that participants were permitted to provide more than one answer to these questions.

With regards to what the provincial government can do, the top suggestion was to encourage the government to promote work flexibility, in terms of *flexible hours and more civic holidays* (n=10). A second issue was regarding childcare – residents would like to see more *affordable childcare*, but also more *flexible childcare services* to accommodate all hours of the day (e.g., to accommodate those who work evenings). Once again, this goes back to the importance of understanding that work-family needs are not the same for all individuals.

Other responses include *lowering taxes and providing more tax benefits*, and *improving maternal/parental leave benefits*.

Theme	Frequency	Example Verbatim Response
Work flexibility (e.g., flexible hours, job sharing) and holidays	10	<i>“Mandate employers to offer flexible hours.”</i> <i>“Provide additional family days that are statutory holidays.”</i>
More flexible childcare services (early mornings, evenings)	8	<i>“To have a program for people working evenings where you can take your children.”</i>
More affordable childcare	6	<i>“To provide cheaper childcare to low-income families.”</i>
Lower taxes/more tax benefits	4	<i>“Giving families child tax benefits for the early years of their lives.”</i>
Improved maternal/parental leave benefits	3	<i>“Make parental leave better and more financially feasible.”</i>
Other	4	<i>“Advocate for better work-life balance.”</i>

In providing suggestions for employers, *flexible work hours* was the top response (n=17). Participants would also like their employers to *allow for more time off*, to accommodate their family responsibilities. The third most frequent response indicates that participants would like *employers to be more understanding* of their family/personal responsibilities. Individuals also suggested that employers offer *daycare subsidies* or *daycare centres at the workplace*.

Table 4 Suggestions for Employers		
Theme	Frequency	Example Verbatim Response
Flexible hours (e.g., work from home, job sharing)	17	<i>"Flexibility, allowing people to take care of family responsibilities without added pressure and stress, its pressure you don't need when you have an issue with your child."</i>
Allow for more time off (e.g., more family days, sick days)	10	<i>"Allow people to take more time off by providing more vacation days, family leave, or more family days."</i>
Being understanding and respectful of employees' needs	7	<i>"Try to be open minded and work with their employees. I have had really good employers willing to work with me and others but we know that doesn't happen everywhere."</i>
Offer daycare/childcare subsidies; have childcare centres in the workplace	6	<i>"Offer daycare at work sites."</i>
Other	3	<i>"Offer childcare; extent benefits to my dependent (my elderly mother)."</i>

Key Informant Interviews

Nine key informant interviews were conducted. Of those, three researchers, three union representatives, two Newfoundland and Labrador government employees and one HR specialist were interviewed. The interview guide is provided in Appendix C.

In general, the interviews corroborated the findings from the secondary research on work-family balance. Specifically, key informants reported that employees face a number of challenges that impede the attainment of a reasonable work-family (or a general work-life) balance. Below are the highlights and key considerations from the interviews.

General Insights on Work-Family/Work-Life Balance

- Work-family research in North America to date has primarily focused on White, urban, and hetero-normative populations – this is now slowly changing to include low-income families, minority populations, and same-sex couples.
- Mothers are disproportionately affected by work-family imbalance, as they are usually the ones who take time off work to attend to family responsibilities.

- There is a fundamental inequality in achieving work-family balance between men and women, which needs to be addressed at both a societal and a legislative level.
- One's work-life balance is dependent on many factors, including the type of job and their workload.
- Workplaces often have unwritten policies, which are informal agreements set within departments.
- Job flexibility leads to higher productivity and better morale in workers.

Challenges in Attaining Work-Family Balance

- Work-family support is often limited in rural communities, where support networks may not be as vast as in urban areas. Rural communities have the challenge of de-population, where young adults may leave for a bigger town or city for better opportunities. Work-family policy (for example, easy access to affordable childcare) is strongly related to the issue of rural sustainability, and working to retain young adults in rural communities.
- Employers are close-minded about leave – they see employees taking leave and it is immediately perceived in a negative way.
- There is a lack of care and a lack of understanding by both businesses and the provincial government with regards to work-family balance - a \$100 tax break is just not good enough.
- Employers and the government should be cognizant of the fact that workers have different personal circumstances that need to be addressed.
- Many employees do not have family days. Often, family leave comes out of the employee's own sick leave.
- Current Employment Insurance (EI) maternity/parental leave benefits are not enough to sustain a family through that time.
- Cost is a perceived barrier by those in power – but in fact, it is a cost to the Canadian economy when women are prevented from working full-time due to being unable to juggle work with family responsibilities.
- Based on the way the EI system is designed now, it makes more sense for families to keep the higher-earning parent working full-time (who is typically the male), and have the lower-earning parent take leave (because women earn typically less than men). This creates a cycle where

women are forced to take long leaves, posing challenges for returning to work. Often times, women will leave their job or switch to part-time work due to lack of childcare support.

Suggestions for Policies and Practices

- Employee wellness must be a top priority for all organizations. Government must stress the relationship between happy/healthy workers and job productivity (and job satisfaction).
- Part of the focus in improving work-family balance should be on organizational culture, instead of just the policies. If the culture is not supportive of work-family balance, the policies are not serving their purpose.
- From an HR perspective, minimal vacation offerings are a “thing of the past” – employees need to be given more paid time off.
- Policy suggestions include:
 - Introducing **flexible work arrangements** - workers must have job flexibility if they are expected to be on call outside of set work hours;
 - Monthly quotas for **family days** in the province;
 - Greater **childcare subsidies**;
 - Implementation of **universal childcare** in Canada;
 - Rather than longer parental leave (which is generally taken by women), the government should have **concrete incentives for men** to take leave;
 - Mandate **gender neutral policies** across workplaces;
 - Guaranteed **pay equity for men and women** to reduce stress for working mothers; and
 - Creating a **collaborative work environment** so that job flexibility is possible.
- The labour union (collective bargaining unit) is currently pushing for financial top-ups on maternity/parental leave benefits. They are also pushing for legislative changes regarding childcare.

Summary

It is clear that work-family balance is a multifaceted, complex issue that cannot be addressed with one standard formula for all working Canadians.

In examining current family policies in Canada and Newfoundland Labrador, there are a number of financial benefit programs available to eligible Canadians. If one is looking solely at the number of family benefit policies, there is a relatively large variety. However, based on the information gleaned from the general population survey and the key informant interviews, these benefits often do not provide enough support for families, and as a result, workers may not make full use of these benefits.

From the key informant interviews, it is clear that women are indeed disproportionately affected by work and family responsibilities. A larger burden is placed on working mothers for childcare, thus making it difficult for many women to sustain full-time work.

Additionally, lack of support from employers makes it challenging for employees to avail of government benefits, out of concern that it may have negative repercussions for their career. Moreover, employers must provide a support system within the organization that allows them to access government benefits, as well as organizational ones.

Summary of Challenges

Based on all the primary and secondary research that has been compiled for this report, this section extracts all of the primary challenges faced by employers and the government, as it relates to gender equality, childcare/early learning development and labour market participation (Table 5a and Table 5b). Being aware of these challenges will allow the Newfoundland and Labrador government to create policies and initiatives that are directly aimed at tackling the specified challenges.

Table 5a Challenges Faced by Employees in Maintaining Work-Family Balance	
<i>Gender Equality</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significantly lower income benefits provided through maternity and/or parental leave cause a large financial strain, often leading the parent to take only part of the leave • Working mothers face a greater challenge with work-family balance, as women still bear the majority of caretaking responsibilities compared to men • Maternity/parental benefits are linked to employment status – not everyone is eligible • Due to family responsibilities, women may resort to working part-time as they feel unable to achieve work-life balance by working full-time • The “mommy tax” wage gap 	
<i>Childcare and Early Learning Development</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult for many families to afford childcare and early learning programs, particularly if they have more than one child in the program • Programs do not accommodate for non-traditional work hours (e.g., early mornings, evenings, or nights) • Rural communities may not have convenient and easy access to childcare centres • Eligibility requirements for childcare subsidies, tax credits, or other financial benefits may exclude families or single parents in need of these benefits 	
<i>Labour Market Participation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking additional days off from work may impede career advancement or higher earnings, and employees may feel discouraged from taking leave • There may be a possible stigma, or discouragement, towards employees for using flexible work arrangements or taking time off for their family • Employees are not always aware of the work-family policies available to them through the government or their workplace • Heavy workloads may prevent employees from taking time off to fulfill family obligations • Accessibility to mobile technologies (e.g., smartphones) create the expectation that employees are available to work at all times 	

Table 5b Potential Challenges for Government/Policy-makers	
<i>Gender Equality</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If paternity leave benefits are available, it may be a challenge encouraging working fathers to use paternity leave due to pressures of working for career advancement and stable income • Raising awareness of the importance of work-family balance, and educating employers to be understanding and respectful of employees' decisions to make use of family policies, particularly mothers • Addressing the "mommy tax" in supporting working mothers to achieve pay parity with working women who do not have children 	
<i>Childcare and Early Learning Development</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing funding to childcare and daycare services to be open during non-traditional working hours • Ensuring that all communities have reasonable access to a childcare or early learning centre (e.g., ensuring that no family has to drive more than a certain number of hours to access a centre) • Encouraging fathers to share childcare responsibilities 	
<i>Labour Market Participation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating flexible work policies that are applicable to (and reflective of) different industries and occupations in Newfoundland and Labrador • Providing assistance for parents (particularly mothers) to transition back to work after taking maternity leave, so that they do not leave the labour force 	

Gap Analysis

The goal of a gap analysis is to compare the current state against the best practices. The gap matrix depicted below provides a comparison of four key work-family policies issues that have been repeatedly highlighted through the primary and secondary research. The matrix identifies their deficiencies in current state practices, and the suggested actions are based upon the best practice research (and the suggestions gleaned from the key informant interviews). This matrix can be used to inform recommendations in terms of business practices and government policies.

Table 6			
Practice	Current State	Deficiency	Actions
Leave from work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Usually only 2-3 family days a year - Parents take their own sick leave to care for family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of sufficient number of dedicated family days - Leave is often unpaid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a set number of family days per month - Increase the number of paid leave days
Flexible work arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of written and unwritten (informal) policies - Work flexibility is often limited to certain types of jobs (typically “9-5” jobs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of awareness of the health/well-being and organizational benefits of job flexibility - Flexible work arrangements sometimes equated with a lack of commitment to the job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rather than having informal policies, create written (formal) policies, giving employees the choice of different flexible work arrangements. This also helps prevent misuse of informal policies, and gives all employees an equal opportunity to make use of the benefits - Introduce a variety of flexible work arrangements that consider all types of jobs, such as traditional office jobs, shift work, night-time work, etc. - For shift work jobs, such as in mining, ceilings on the number of hours worked can be implemented as standard practice to help curb overworking

Table 6

Practice	Current State	Deficiency	Actions
Integrated caregiving (childcare and eldercare)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Federal benefits in place for childcare leave and eldercare leave - Eligibility requirements exclude unpaid workers - Often benefits are not financially sustainable for the family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Childcare is costly, it is often unaffordable and subsidies are not sufficient enough to cover costs - Childcare is not always accessible for parents who work during non-traditional work hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider universal childcare (at the federal or provincial level) - Greater subsidies for childcare - Focus on providing adequate childcare resources in rural communities (e.g., to reduce driving distance for parents to drop off their children)
Gender parity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No guaranteed pay equity for men and women - Women take on majority of childcare responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of organizational support for working mothers - Women more likely to lose out on career advancement (and pay) due to unpaid leave for family responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce incentives to encourage fathers to share child-rearing responsibilities - Provide affordable and accessible childcare services so that both parents are able to participate in the workforce full-time - Larger businesses should consider on-site childcare services

Recommendations

Below are three recommendations for work-family policy that should be taken into consideration by the Newfoundland and Labrador government. These recommendations are based upon all the research compiled for this report. While some of these recommendations can be implemented by the government, others require the involvement of employers.

There was not enough primary or secondary research available to make industry-specific recommendations. However, based on the secondary research that was compiled, the challenges faced by workers in the key industries generally all revolve around childcare and lack of work flexibility – which are issues for workers across all industries. The recommendations provided here are meant to address the global challenges faced by workers across all industries; however it is important to consider that work-family balance is not achieved in the same way across all populations, particularly with regards to flexible working arrangements.

Promoting a Variety of Flexible Work Arrangements

Based on the survey results, best practice interviews and the literature, the most common recommendation is to implement flexible work arrangements. However, the interviews and survey data indicate that the type of flexible work requirements differ based on the type of occupation. According to researchers at the Vanier Institute, there is still a long way to go in terms of addressing work-family balance for low-wage workers, late-career workers, remote area workers, and high-risk workers.

Flexible work arrangements are alternative arrangements that allow the worker to perform their work activities outside of the traditional work schedule (for example, a 9am to 5pm workday). Over the years, flexible work arrangements have become an increasingly common practice, and are provided to workers as either formal HR policies, or informal agreements between workers and managers.

Flexible working arrangements are most commonly associated with part-time work, job sharing, and teleworking (i.e., working from home). While these remain the most commonly used tools for employee flexibility, they may not be applicable to all occupations. For example, an individual working as a school teacher would not be able to work from home during the school day. It is also important to keep in mind that women are often disproportionately disadvantaged with regards to balancing work and family obligations (particularly childcare).

Research shows that organizational benefits of promoting flexible work arrangements include *attraction and retention of employees, increased worker productivity, improved concentration on work, and increased loyalty and motivation*³¹.

Table 7 below summarizes a variety of flexible work arrangements that are in practice today. It is important to offer a selection of flexible work options, as opposed to just one or two, so as to account for different needs and circumstances of employees. From an employer's perspective, it is critical to ask the employees what arrangements they would benefit from.

³¹ Downes & Koekemoer (2011). Retrieved from <https://sajhrm.co.za/index.php/sajhrm>

Table 7	
Type of Flexible Working Arrangement	Definition
Part-time work	Employees work less than standard full-time hours
Flextime	Employees have a degree of autonomy in deciding when to work during the workday
Staggered hours	Employees have different working times, allowing employee flexibility, and the business to be open longer
Compressed working hours	Employees can complete their full-time house in fewer days
Job sharing	One full-time job is shared between two employees, who divide the hours
Shift swapping	Employees decide shifts amongst themselves, provided all shifts are covered
Self-rostering	Employees suggest their preferred shifts, which are taken into account during scheduling
Term-time working	An employee has a permanent contract, but can take paid or unpaid leave during school holidays
Annual hours	Employees' hours are calculated over a year, and those hours are worked as needed (e.g., seasonally)
"V-time" work	Employees reduce their hours to part-time for a fixed term, and then go back to full-time work after this term ends
Home working/teleworking	Employees spent all or part of their work week working away from the business location (e.g., from home)
Sabbatical or career break	Employees can take paid or unpaid time off for an extended period of time

This information was adapted from Northern Ireland Business Info. Retrieved from <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/types-flexible-working>

Supportive Childcare Options and Universal Childcare

Traditionally, employers have defined success as someone who works long hours, never takes time off, who is available at all times, and is willing to give up personal activities for work. This attitude permeates through our culture as well, as mothers take on more childcare responsibilities compared to fathers. This has created a culture that favours men for career advancement over women, who often get overlooked because they are perceived as being "less dedicated" to their job, because they take more time off for personal reasons (such as childcare).

As a result, better provisions must be put in place to encourage gender equality in caretaking responsibilities. Employers and governments must realise that women are more susceptible to lower work-family balance compared to men; however, there are ways to create progressive change, in both practice and in cultural attitudes towards gender roles.

One example policy that has been implemented in Quebec, and in many European countries, is **paternity leave**. Paternity leave is for fathers only, and unlike parental leave, which can be taken by either parent. The introduction of paternity leave is to encourage fathers to participate in initial child rearing requirements, giving mothers the opportunity to go back to work³². In January 2018, the federal government has stated that they are considering implementing paternal leave through Employment Insurance Benefits.

One challenge mentioned by participants in the survey was the cost of childcare. A report released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in 2017³³ found that childcare costs in rural areas are almost as high as childcare costs in big cities, such as Toronto, where the median childcare cost is \$21,000/year. Currently, the federal government has plans to provide over \$7 billion in funding to all provinces and territories, with the goal to heavily subsidize childcare country-wide. Newfoundland and Labrador must make it a top priority to subsidize childcare in a way that relieves families of the extreme financial strain that childcare causes.

In implementing changes to childcare policies, the provincial government should also consider delegating some specific childcare centres as ones that operate outside of normal working hours (e.g., early mornings) so as to accommodate different types of occupations, such as shift work.

One researcher who was interviewed stated that the Newfoundland and Labrador government should **frame their family policies in a way that would include unpaid work**, instead of excluding them from family benefits.

Building a Supportive Culture

Work-life balance should not be the sole responsibility for the worker. Rather, organizations, government, and workers must work together in fostering a culture that is supportive of work-family balance practices. In the context of businesses, a supportive organizational culture refers to “the shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the length to which an organization supports and values the integration of employee’s work and family interface”³⁴. However, this definition can be extended to include other entities, such as the federal and provincial governments, unions, and industry associations. Even when family-friendly policies exist at a workplace, a common issue is that employees still may not make use of these policies. This can be because of reasons such as:

- Perceived negative impact on future job prospects;
- Lack of support by the employer (supervisors and managers);
- Heavy workloads that make it difficult to make use of family-friendly policies;
- Lack of supportive infrastructure to telework (e.g., not having the technology to be able to telework); and

³² As per Quebec law, in same-sex relationships, paternity leave can be awarded to the non-biological parent of the child.

³³ <https://globalnews.ca/news/3911327/child-care-costs-canada/>

³⁴ Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness (1999). Quote taken from article by Akanji, Mordi & Ojo (2015). Retrieved from http://www.upg-bulletin-se.ro/archive/2015-3/3.Akanji_Mordi_Ojo.pdf

- Loss of earnings by taking unpaid leave/breaks) makes work-life balance difficult, especially for people in lower-income jobs³⁵.

Having a positive organizational culture can greatly help to enhance employees' work-family balance. In doing this, employers must accommodate (and respect) the choice to avail of family-friendly policies. Government legislation must be supportive in creating a societal culture that recognizes the importance of employee work-family balance and well-being. If the provincial government makes work-family balance a top priority, it may prompt businesses and employers to learn about its importance, not only for employee satisfaction, but for organizational outcomes as well (i.e., higher productivity, lower turnover, etc.).

³⁵ Gifford (2007). Retrieved from <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/op13.pdf>

Appendix A: General Population Survey

Screening Questions

S1. Do you have any dependents?

01 Yes **Continue to S1a**

98 No **Thank and terminate**

S1a. Are your dependents children, elderly family members, or both?

01 Children

02 Elderly family members

03 Both children and elderly family members

98 None of the above **Thank and terminate**

99 Prefer not to say **Thank and terminate**

S2. Are you currently employed in any of the following industries?

01 Agriculture

02 Aquaculture

03 Fisheries

04 Mining

05 Oil and gas

06 Information technology (IT)

07 Cultural industries (for example: tourism, film, food)

98 Other (please specify) _____

98 I am not employed **Thank and terminate**

Demographic/Tracking Questions

D1. Sex (**RECORD**): (BY OBSERVATION)

01 Male

02 Female

D2. Do you currently have more than one paying job?

01 Yes

02 No

98 Prefer not to say

For the remainder of the survey, please refer to the job to which you worked the most hours at over the past month. **For interviewer only: if they work the same number of hours between jobs, than the job they've held the longest.**

D3. How many hours a week do you work?

01 Less than 10 hours/week

02 10 to 20 hours/week

03 21 to 30 hours/week

- 04** 31 to 40 hours/week
- 05** 41 hours or more/week
- 98** Prefer not to say
- 99** Don't know/no answer

D4. What is your marital status?

- 01** Married
- 02** Common-law/co-habiting
- 03** Divorced/separated
- 98** Prefer not to say

D5. Are you a primary caregiver in your household?

- 01** Yes
- 02** No
- 98** Prefer not to say
- 99** Don't know/No answer

D6. Do you come from a single-income household or a dual-income household? Please specify one from these options:

- 01** Single-income household where you are the primary caregiver
- 02** Single-income household where you are not the primary caregiver
- 03** Dual-income household
- 98** Prefer not to say
- 99** Don't know/No answer

D7. How many children do you have for which you provide care?

- 01** 1 child
- 02** 2 children
- 03** 3-5 children
- 04** More than 5 children
- 05** None **Skip to D9**
- 98** Prefer not to say

D8. How many of these children are under the age of 6 years?

- 01** 1 child
- 02** 2 children
- 03** 3-5 children
- 04** More than 5 children
- 05** None
- 98** Prefer not to say

D9. Where are you located (please name the city or town)?

- 98** Other (please specify) _____
- 99** Prefer not to say

General Questions on Work-Life Balance

Q1. Do you feel work-family balance is a problem for you?

01 Yes

02 No

98 Prefer not to say

99 Don't know/No answer

Q2. Are you satisfied with your current work-family balance? (1-5 scale)

01	02	03	04	05	98	99
Extremely dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral Skip to Q3	Satisfied	Extremely satisfied	Don't know/No answer Skip to Q3	Prefer not to say Skip to Q3

Q2a. **If "Extremely dissatisfied" or "Dissatisfied" to Q2:** why are you dissatisfied with your current work-family balance?

Q2b. **If "Extremely satisfied" or "Satisfied" to Q2:** why are you satisfied with your current work-family balance?

98 Other (please specify) _____

99 Prefer not to say

Q3. How often do you feel work interferes with your family and home life?

01	02	03	04	05	98	99
Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Only a few times a year	Never	Don't know/No answer	Prefer not to say

Q4. How often do you feel your family life interferes with your work life?

01	02	03	04	05	98	99
Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Only a few times a year	Never	Don't know/No answer	Prefer not to say

Q5. In the past year, how often have you:

(a) Missed work because of family responsibilities –

01	02	03	98	99
Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Don't know/No answer	Prefer not to say

(b) Spent less time with your family because of work responsibilities –

01	02	03	98	99
Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Don't know/No answer	Prefer not to say

Q6. What would a good work-family balance look like for you?

98 Other (please specify) _____

99 Prefer not to say

Q7. Do you access any specific policies or programs through your workplace to accommodate your family responsibilities?

01 Flexible hours

02 Ability to work from home

03 Work-sharing arrangements

04 Personal days

05 Sick days for dependents

06 Flexible leave entitlements

98 Any other programs (please specify) _____

99 Prefer not to say

Q7a. Based on the policies and/or programs you stated above:

(a) Which is the most effective in supporting work-family balance?

98 Other (please specify) _____

99 Prefer not to say

(b) And have any of them played a part in allowing you to remain working in your industry?

01 Yes

02 No

98 Prefer not to say

If 'Yes', which ones specifically? _____

Gender

SKIP THIS SECTION IF RESPONSE TO D7 = 5 (no children)

In Canada, mothers are permitted up to 15 weeks of maternity leave, where the weekly benefit rate is 55% of the person's average weekly insurable earnings up to a maximum amount.

Q8. Given this information and based on your own experience with maternity leave, do you believe Canada's maternity benefits are sufficient for achieving work-family balance for your family?

01 Yes

02 No

98 Prefer not to say

99 Don't know/No answer

*Parental benefits come in two options. **Standard parental benefits** allow either or both parents up to 35 weeks of leave. The weekly benefit rate is 55% of the person's average weekly insurable earnings up to a maximum amount. **Extended parental benefits** allow either or both parents up to 61 weeks of leave. The weekly benefit rate is 33% of the person's average weekly insurable earnings up to a maximum amount.*

Q9. Given this information and your own experience with parental leave, do you believe Canada's parental benefits are sufficient for achieving work-family balance for your family?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 98 Prefer not to say
- 99 Don't know/No answer

Childcare & Early Learning Development

SKIP THIS SECTION IF RESPONSE TO D7 = 5 (no children)

Q10. Do you currently access a childcare program for your child/children while you are at work?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No **Skip to Q18**
- 98 Prefer not to say **Skip to Q18**

Q11. What type of childcare do you access?

- 01 Child care centre
- 02 Family child care (individual comes to the family's home)
- 03 Pre-kindergarten programs (school sponsored)
- 98 Other (please specify) _____
- 99 Prefer not to say

Q12. Do you find that your current childcare is affordable?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 98 Prefer not to say

Q13. Do you believe childcare is easily accessible to you?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 98 Prefer not to say
- 99 Don't know

Q13a. If "Yes" or "No": Can you elaborate on why? _____

Q14. Is your child (or children) in an early learning program as part of their childcare?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 98 Prefer not to say

Q15. Do you feel that early learning programs are easily accessible to you?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 98 Prefer not to say
- 99 Don't know

Q15a. If "Yes" or "No": Can you elaborate on why? _____

Q16. What are some benefits of...

(a) Childcare?

98 Other (please specify) _____

99 Prefer not to say

(b) Early learning programs?

98 Other (please specify) _____

99 Prefer not to say

Q17. What are some challenges you have faced to accessing...

(a) Childcare?

98 Other (please specify) _____

99 Prefer not to say

(b) Early learning programs?

98 Other (please specify) _____

99 Prefer not to say

Labour Market Development

Q18. Do you feel work-family conflict prevents you from fulfilling your obligations to your job?

01 Yes

02 No

99 Prefer not to say

If "Yes", why? _____

Q19. In terms of policies and programs, what could the provincial government do to help people in the labour force achieve better work-family balance?

98 Other (please specify) _____

99 Prefer not to say

Q20. In terms of policies and programs, what could employers do to help people in the labour force achieve better work-family balance?

98 Other (please specify) _____

99 Prefer not to say

This is the end of the survey...thank you for your time and cooperation.

Appendix B: Survey Participants by Industry

Table 8	
Occupation	Frequency
Oil and Gas	4
Information Technology (IT)	2
Cultural Industries	4
Fisheries	-
Aquaculture	-
Agriculture	-
Other	38
Education	9
Retail*	6
Transportation and Aviation	5
Healthcare*	5
Construction	3
Government/Provincial Government	3
Automotive	2
Industrial Supply	1
Academia	1
Police (RCMP)	1
Finance	1
Logistics	1
Marine Engineering	1

*One participant works in both healthcare and retail; thus they are counted twice.

Appendix C: Key Informant Interview Guide

Section I: Your Role in the Area of Work-Family Policy

ASK TO ALL:

(1) In general, can you describe **your role(s)** within your organization?

HR professionals, industry-specific leaders, and NL government staff ONLY:

(2) In general, can you describe the role(s) you play in overseeing, developing, and/or implementing work-family policies?

Work-family researchers ONLY:

(3) Can you briefly describe the focus of your research with regards to work-family life and its related policies?

Section II: Barriers Faced by Workers in Achieving Work-Family Balance

ASK TO ALL:

(4) In your industry/experience, what are the greatest barriers faced by employees with regards to achieving work-family balance?

Probe: What about challenges faced specifically with regards to childcare and early learning development? Are there any policies in place to address childcare or early learning development?

Probe: What about gender-related challenges? Do you feel that work-family balance related challenges impact workforce participation differently for men and women in your industry? Are there any policies or practices in place to alleviate these challenges?

Section III: Work-Family Balance Practices and Policies

Industry-specific leaders ONLY:

(5) Can you share the work-family practices that are currently in place at your organization?

*Probe: Paid parental leave (maternity and paternity leave);
Availability for children's educational and developmental needs; and
Leave for children's health needs.*

(6) Can you describe the general types of work-family policies that exist in your specific industry?

Work-family researchers ONLY:

(7) Based on your knowledge in the area, what jurisdictions are leading the way in terms of their approach to work-family balance (e.g., provinces, states, or countries)?

Probe: What specifically is notable about their approach?

(8) Of these what policies do you feel are the most effective at increasing gender diversity and work family balance?

Section IV: Role of Industry**HR professionals, industry-specific leaders, and NL government staff ONLY:**

(9) To your knowledge, in general, what is your industry doing/what are workplaces doing to help improve work-family balance?

ASK TO ALL:

(9) Do you feel supporting work-family balance is important [in your industry]? Why?

(10) Can you list some examples of practices that you believe employers should adopt across the board in order to encourage work-life balance for their employees?

(11) Are there any work-family policies, either existing policies, or policies you know of under consideration, that you feel would help increase gender diversity [in your particular industry]?

Section V: Role of Government and Community Agencies/Organizations**NL government staff ONLY:**

(12) To your knowledge, what is the Newfoundland and Labrador government currently doing to support work-family balance in industries across the province?

a) How might these efforts support gender diversity in industry?

b) How might these efforts support childcare and/or early childhood development?

(13) What do you see as challenges for the Newfoundland and Labrador government in implementing family-friendly work-life policies across the province?

HR professionals, work-family researchers, and industry-specific leaders ONLY:

(14) What do you see as challenges for businesses in implementing family-friendly work-life policies?

Section VI: Conclusion**ASK TO ALL:**

(15) Is there any other organization or individual you feel it would be valuable for us to speak with to gain a thorough understanding of the current research/policies/practices relating to work-family balance?

(16) Do you have any additional thoughts or comments that you would like to add?

Those are all the questions I have for you today. Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me. If you have any questions or concerns about this research please feel free to give me a call [provide contact information].