

## Considerations for Supporting Employees with Children

CSTA is closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation in Canada. The work of the seed industry is essential as the beginning of the agricultural value chain. As time progresses, our industry is becoming more aware of the various impacts facing employers and employees. One major impact is on parents. Currently, schools and daycares are still closed across Canada and parents are trying to balance their jobs, homeschooling their kids, and providing care. The purpose of this document is to outline considerations of employers of parents and caregivers; and to serve as a reminder for co-workers.

Parents are facing additional challenges in these unprecedented times, and special considerations of the unique impacts they are experiencing are encouraged. The support employers can provide now will set their organizations up for long-term success. Compassion, understanding, and flexibility are more important now than ever. With member input, CSTA has outlined some suggestions based on three pillars: Recognition, Recalibration and Reassurance.

### Recognition

It's good to check in with all staff frequently during these turbulent times but it's important to recognize that the situation is unique for employees with children. Recognize this increased burden on your employees. Avoid making assumptions about which parents are carrying the biggest burden. Check in with fathers and mothers equally and continue to reach out frequently.

### Recalibration

Childcare is a full-time job. Check in with your employees about what level of work is reasonable for them to accomplish. If they can work from home, be cognizant that a traditional work week may not be possible right now. Discuss options for flexible hours and anticipate reduced work output. If the work requires your employee on site, discuss whether adjusted hours are a possibility to accommodate child care responsibilities. Employers should be prepared to recalibrate expectations and workload right now. Work together with employees to prioritize projects and activities and if possible, drop non-essential work until later.

### Reassurance

Rapid change and ambiguity create a ripe environment for stress. It is critical for employers to remember that school and daycare closures are out of parents' control. Employees that require accommodations due to childcare constraints right now should not be penalized. Reassure employees that reduced work output, required leaves of absence and flexible accommodations will not harm their career advancement or perception within the company. Be sure to track the reasons required for accommodations and absences as COVID-related and out of your employees' control. In upcoming performance reviews and advancement discussions, remind managers that pandemic-related work disruptions should not impact reviews and future opportunities.

## **Further Resources:**

For Employers:

- [UNICEF](#)
- [Catalyst](#)
- [Randstad](#)

For Parents:

- [World Health Organization](#)
- [Canadian government](#)