

**OUR POSITION**

Families need quality time together. But many struggle to balance work and family commitments. We support changes to improve work-life balance for New Zealand families.

**OUR GOAL**

Work-life balance is achieved through improved access to parental leave provisions, flexible work arrangements, quality early childhood education and affordable childcare options.

**WHAT THE COMMISSION HAS DONE SO FAR**

2007: *When schools out* research published

2007: *It's about time: Towards a parental leave policy that gives New Zealand Families real choice* report published

2007: Submission on Government's Flexible Working Hours Amendment bill

2008: *Give and Take – Families' perceptions and experiences of flexible work in New Zealand* research published

2008: *New Kiwis, Diverse Families: Migrant and former refugee families talk about their early childhood care and education needs* research published

2008: *Juggling Acts: How parents working non-standard hours arrange care for their pre-school children* research published

2009: Submission to the Government's Job Summit

2009: *Finding Time – parents long work hours and impact on family life* research published

2009: Submission to review of Holidays Act asking for employees to be able to observe statutory holidays on other days, accumulate time in lieu for holidays and work on their fourth week of holidays

2010: Submission to ECE taskforce on the review of Early Childhood Education

2010: Paid Parental Leave: Issues for today's economic times

2010: Connections: Supporting family relationships through schools and workplaces

2011: *Caring for Kids: Parents' views on out-of-school services and care* research published.

**COMMISSION'S VIEW**

- > Families want to achieve a better work-life balance and benefit from increased time together.
- > Employers benefit too. Satisfaction with work-life balance is a significant contributor to employee wellbeing, staff retention and productivity.
- > Improved paid parental leave gives parents more choice about the amount of time they spend with a new baby. Everybody wins: better health outcomes for mother and baby, income stability for the family, family members returning to work when they are ready, which makes for satisfied employees.

- > Families and whānau need to be able to make real choices and be well-supported as they balance family responsibilities and paid work.
- > Working hours in New Zealand are amongst the highest in the world. Long hours of work provide greater income, but negatively impact on health outcomes and time available for family.
- > Parents prefer to provide care for their child themselves, followed by extended family or whānau. Formal services (such as OSCAR programmes) appear to be used by a small group of parents who need these services to meet their work commitments.
- > The availability of childcare at the hours needed becomes critical for maintaining employment relationships. Particularly for those who work non-standard hours.

**REFERENCES AND LINKS**

Families Commission

<http://www.familiescommission.org.nz/category/topic/family-relationships/separation>

<http://www.familiescommission.org.nz/research/the-kiwi-nest>

Submissions

<http://www.familiescommission.govt.nz/act/welfare/submission-on-the-welfare-working-group-options-paper>

<http://www.familiescommission.govt.nz/act/welfare/submission-to-the-welfare-working-group>

Ministry of Social Development

Out of school services /OSCAR

Department of Labour

Paid Parental Leave

<http://www.dol.govt.nz/er/holidaysandleave/publicholidays/publicholidaydates/current.asp>

<http://www.dol.govt.nz/paidparental/>

Flexible work

<http://www.dol.govt.nz/consultation/qualityflexiblework/results1.asp>

