



European Commission
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Focus group with Mothers, 2007-09-21

Participants: 7 Mothers and one 1 years old child,
Patrik Edegren from JämO and Johanna Krigström

Questions:

- a) *What will you find as an important question for you to discuss during this focus group?
(Question f and g are results from question a)*
- b) *Who does the household work affects while both parents are working?*
- c) *Do you find it difficult to combine work and parenting? Please give some examples?
Did you manage get any help from employer, relatives or friends?*
- d) *What has to be changed in our society to make it easier for parents to make work life balance easier? What do you suggest to the employers to do in order to make life easier for working parents?*
- e) *Are you content with the way teachers and preschool staff treating you?
Are the treating mums and dads different?*
- f) *Can work and vacations be combined?*
- g) *Did you ever suffer from discrimination salary vice?*

CONCLUSIONS:

There is not such a difference between parents “today” and yesterday as it was between the parents “yesterday” and their parents.

The highest in % of the world with fathers taking parental leave.

Domestic services the most important political change.

Swedes are tired on being “helped” out in their lives from cradle to death. Don’t want to have any help from Government level.

The high taxes have made people powerless in their lives. There is one standard for Swedish families: to work in public sectors NOT too hard 30-40 hours, both parents “shall” take parental leave 50-50% for 1,5 years with each child (the next child “MUST” be borne before the first one turn 2.5 years old!!! AS ONE EXAMPLE!).

You shall not earn too much because then you will lose too much money using this standard!

For parents with ambitions the standard model is very frustrating!!

The huge public services in Sweden forces women to have less opportunities doing career. Many women in Sweden want to have it so. (This makes less salary...)

Discussions

“If I do the cooking my husband washes the dishes and vice versa.”

“It was different before we got children.”

“You are always frustrated, you can’t be a good parent and a good worker”

“If you buy non iron shirts you don’t have to iron.”

“Some of you work part time but still feel that you are under pressure.”

“Some of you split work with your husbands.”

“Some of you think that it works well.”

“Some feel that you (the wife and mother) takes a greater responsibility.”

“Some feel that you (the wife and mother) does things in order to avoid fights and arguments.”

Patrik: According to research.

Women do more.

Women do the things that have to be done right now.

Who makes sure that the kid

- put the right stuff in the bag when going to school?
- does the home work?

MOTHER!!!

C) No, it is not easy to have help. Grandparent’s lives far away, neighbours are busy etc

I was not welcome to be employed for a special work because I was pregnant! (Against the law).

I would like to work part time but then I couldn’t feel pride in my work.

If I didn’t work 75% it wouldn’t function in our life. I wouldn’t be a human! When I worked 100% I almost became sick.

My husband has changed work to make it easier for the family. Even though our children are always first and latest for the Kindergarten.

We are both working fulltime. I’m riding the bike as crazy each morning.

I am not a human during working hours.

But it even more distressed at home.

I m choosing low income and the children can be more with me. It's good for the family and the children but I know it will cause me a small pension. I wished there was a law that children under 5 years old were not allowed to be in institutions!

- VERY RADICAL!!!

D) Be more understandable about what the family lives needs?

Get more flexible and using more distance works.

Do fewer activities. It is sick with all this activities.

Before setting the Equal plan have a focus group with parents.

The Summer holidays are difficult!

Some mothers were very frustrated about that the vacations days from work are not as many as the holidays from school. Divorced parents have it easier because they can split.

Sometimes I wish that I had more time for family.

But I only should work 4 or 6 hours per day I would not be proud. Because I would produce too little in work.

Why do parents nowadays have to drive kids in cars everywhere?

“Somebody has created work with low salaries for women”

“Some people may think that I am lazy but I work part time because I believe that it is good for my children.-

We want our employers to be more flexible.

Today kids are too active. Reduce the number of organised activities. “My nine years old boy was told that he is too old to start playing tennis.”

Why are parents so eager to involve kids in all these activities?

Older female colleagues are negative when you as a younger mother has to leave office early (in the afternoon) to pick up kids from preschool.

A few suggestions:

1. Split parental leave between mother and fathers
2. Law that forces both parent to small kids to work part time.
3. The employer have to be positive to and even encourage parental leave
4. Work from home
5. parental group at work

Patrik's advice: Contact you trade unions. Activate the official document concerning equality between men and women.