

Sex Workers with Children



Being a working parent is not always an easy task and it often feels like an endless round of housework, shopping, trips to daycare, kindergarten and school, grabbing a bite to eat on the run. For sex workers, there are extra obligations of work and parenting. The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide common concerns of sex workers including:

- **Childcare**
- **Managing home and work**
- **Money**
- **Time out**

Day to Day Issues

Child Care:

Daytime – There are many good childcare facilities available for children of all ages – from infancy, toddlers and preschoolers, as well as before and after school care for older children. Many sex workers opt to work during the day, as it is easier to accommodate the needs of children. It is best to visit a couple of centre's with your children to see how they operate, and decide on one that is suitable for your needs. Childcare can be costly, however Centrelink offer child care benefits for eligible persons – contact Centrelink for more details.

Night time – The best solution is probably to hire a babysitter/nanny to come to your home. Some sitters offer overnight rates. You may need to leave your child at their place and collect them in the morning. Finding a good sitter can be difficult – you may need to contact some baby sitter or nanny agencies for some decent referrals. Prices for overnight care vary according to experience etc. There are a small number of night childcare centre's, however these have very limited spaces. See the yellow pages for details.

TIP – Relying on the generosity of friends or family (other than your spouse) can sometimes be problematic. It may be better to come to some sort of business arrangement, and if a family member can happily accommodate your children, terrific.

Managing home and work:

Find ways to cut corners if possible. Preparing and freezing meals in advance can be a timesaver, and keeping healthy snacks such as fruit can be helpful when you have children who always seem to be hungry! Paying someone to do the more tedious tasks such as ironing, and cleaning, may assist when your time is limited. Encouraging children to be involved in housework and encouraging them to be responsible for their bedroom tidiness can also be beneficial.

Money:

Working out a budget and organising direct debits from your bank account, or using bpay for bills can also save time.

Opening a separate account for savings is always a good way to save money for things such as family holidays!

Time out for you:

When overloaded with responsibilities, many working parents forget to take care of themselves. Before long, they feel exhausted, burnt out and dissatisfied.

Some strategies to prevent burnout occurring are:

- Getting plenty of sleep
- Eating well balanced meals
- Balancing work and leisure time

Spend some time relaxing – some workers suggest a weekly massage or even soaking in a long leisurely bath

Ensure you and your children have quality time together without the pressure of always having to hurry.

What should I tell my children I do for work?:

This is very much a personal choice and up to the individual. It depends on the relationship you have with your child. Whatever the decision, it is one only you can make. Respect Inc are available to provide support to you if necessary.

Can my children be taken from me if I am working in the sex industry?:

No, not unless your child is being harmed in some way. Government agencies and welfare services are only interested in the wellbeing and care of children they suspect to be at risk of emotional or physical abuse or neglect. However, it is important that you keep your work completely separate from your children.

It is not considered appropriate to expose children to sexual activity and/or adult material (pornographic material, sex toys etc). It is illegal for you to work whilst your children are on the same premises.

Can my ex-partner get custody of the children if the court knows I am a sex worker?:

Every Family Law Case is different, and the Magistrate takes into account many variables. We suggest you contact Legal Aid for legal advice. You may also wish to consider resolving your differences out of court by lodging a parenting agreement – this can be arranged through mediation. Your best option is to contact the Family Law Court counselling service who offer free confidential advice on all issues concerning Family Law.

Disclaimer:

All material in this fact sheet is provided for your information only and may not be construed as legal, medical or health advice or instruction.

Can I still claim benefits if I am working?:

Your ability to claim benefits depends on your income. It is an offence to claim social security benefits and not declare your income from sex work. You may find yourself with a hefty fine and/or a fraud charge.

If your income from sex work is less than a certain amount, you may be entitled to receive part or full benefits, including your family payments and childcare fee relief.

If your income exceeds a certain amount, you may not be eligible for benefits, but you may be entitled to some family payments and/or partial childcare assistance. For more information, contact Centrelink

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