Key findings: Dads and work

Takes a closer look at the more than 4,000 participants in the Who are today’s dads? research project in relation to employment, work-life balance, parenting roles and aspirations. Participant “dads” exemplify the diversity of those who play father-figure roles in the lives of children in the contemporary, longitudinal study Growing Up in New Zealand, when the children were six years old. Participants include biological fathers, stepfathers, adoptive and foster parents, co-mums, grandparents and other family members.

Participants and paid work

More than 90% of participants are in paid employment when their children are 6 years of age. Paid work includes a diverse range of occupations (from accountants to youth workers). Some participants report long hours, little flexibility and having multiple jobs. Most of those who work feel satisfied and/or secure in their employment overall. However, three quarters of all working participants would like to change some aspect of their work situation.

94% of participants have a paid job

- **Working patterns of those who currently work**
  - 95% work full time (more than 30 hours a week)
  - 63% work more than 40 hours a week
  - 47% report that it is often possible for them to have flexible work hours
  - 32% work at the weekend
  - 6% have more than one paid job (up to 9 jobs)
  - Participants work an average of 47 hours a week (range: 1 to 100 hours)

Satisfaction and security of those who currently work

- 91% are satisfied with their (main) job
- 90% feel secure in their present job arrangement(s)
- 75% of participants want to be able to change some aspect of their work situation

Out of all working participants

- 33% want to work fewer hours
- 27% want to work from or closer to home
- 23% want to work more flexible hours
- 13% want to become self-employed

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Work-life balance

Many working participants say they have some difficulty balancing work and family life. Over half feel their work is a positive influence on their child, family and parenting skills. But half also say they miss out on family time because of work commitments.

Participants who do not work

Participants give a number of reasons for not being in paid work with almost half being either a stay at home parent and/or having been unable to find suitable work, while one in five is prevented through illness or disability. Nearly half the stay at home participants say they would prefer to work at least part time.

Among stay-at-home parents

- 39% would like a part-time job
- 27% would like to work from home
- 10% would like a full-time job

Of parents not working because of an illness or disability

- 32% would like to find part-time work

The most commonly reported reasons for not being in paid work are

- stay-at-home parent (25%)
- unable to find suitable work (26%)
- have an illness or disability (20%)

Growing Up in New Zealand is New Zealand's contemporary longitudinal study of child development, tracking the development of nearly 7000 children born in 2009 and 2010 in the context of their diverse families and environments from before their birth until they are young adults.

A key strength of the study is that the diversity of the child cohort reflects the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of today's primary school age children. The study has collected detailed multidisciplinary information about children's early development on multiple occasions throughout their preschool years and will continue to do so every 2-3 years until they are adults.

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For further information visit www.growingup.co.nz