

CASE STUDY:

The 100% In-Person Worker with On-Site Child Care

Michael

- Washington, D.C., 40 years old
- Senior scientist at a major pharmaceutical company
- Children: Josie, 3, and Theodore, 5

HIS JOB:

Development and innovation of therapeutic drugs for cancers and infectious diseases in a pharmaceutical company lab. “We call ourselves antibody engineers,” he says.

PARENT SUPPORTS HE HAS USED:

- On-site, lower-cost child care
- Backup child care stipend of \$50/day for 15 days/year

Michael's Story

Not long ago, Michael got a call while in his laboratory in the middle of the day. He works as a scientist developing life-saving medicines, and it was his son's daycare: “They had found a tick on Theo and it needed to be removed,” Michael recalls. So, two minutes later (literally) Mike was there with sterile tweezers and a lab tube. And two minutes after that, he was back in his lab, having not missed a beat on the experiment he was conducting. That's all because the pharmaceutical company where he works has affordable on-site childcare.

“I would never even consider leaving this job while my kids are in the daycare here.”

\$8,750+ = stronger communication skills

“As a scientist you're spending like half your day being silent or talking in jargon,” says Michael. Talking to teachers, parents, and staff at his on-site daycare has made him a much better communicator on his lab team, he explains. “I'm better at managing, explaining and instructing, and mentoring in a broader way about where their careers could go. That's all due to drop off and pick up.” Better communication has been shown to boost employee satisfaction,



For five years, while his entrepreneur wife works at home, Mike has commuted with his kids (traffic, fighting, singalongs and all) five days a week. It's no surprise that they enjoy bookending their day with time together, but he also says that the situation has transformed his work capabilities: Meeting other parents at drop-off and pick-up, he's built community and developed business across departments he'd never interact with otherwise. He's improved his communication skills, thanks to conversations with his kids' teachers (and his commute time with toddlers). He's also become a stronger mentor and recruiter, using the visibility of his family as a work/life integration model for colleagues, and sharing the company's whole-person values with outside hires. Because the nature of his work is so hands-on, Mike is also able, often, to estimate the dollar value of these numerous advantages:

productivity, and innovation, and decreases conflict. Businesses with highly effective communicators have a 47% higher return to shareholders and are 3.5 times more likely to out-perform their competitors. Michael says these skills are a byproduct of his on-site child care. That saves his employer roughly \$350/hour for 10 hours in executive coaching and \$5,250 annually—that’s the average per-employee cost of communications errors.

\$4,000 = peer training

Mike struck up a friendship with another dad using his company’s daycare and ended up training him on a scientific experiment—and advising him on which equipment to purchase. That friendly interaction eliminated the need for outside training that Mike estimates would have cost \$2,000. Plus, double that, because when another colleague overheard what they were up to, he jumped in and received the training, too.

\$10,000 = reduced waste

“Some days you get that phone call, and they need you there in an hour because your kid is sick,” says Michael. “But since I’m so close, I can finish up whatever I was doing first. The reagents I’m using, the cells that have been growing for weeks that you’ve got to get back in the freezer or move to the next step—that could be \$1,000 to \$10,000 or more lost in materials without that time. Plus, repeating my time to backtrack on lost steps.”

Priceless = A sense of belonging

“There’s so much camaraderie—who was up in the night with their kids, who’s teaching them to read. It’s like a family within the company,” says Michael. “There are even parking spots for pregnant moms—which even as a dad just makes me feel like families are welcome here. It really adds value.” It’s true. High levels of belonging have been shown to foster a 56% increase in job performance and to decrease sick days by 75% and turnover by 50%. Losing an employee at Michael’s level has an attrition cost of 213% of their salary, so retention has huge value.

Calculating the employer’s estimated R.O.I. on benefits he used in the past year

INVESTMENTS

On-site childcare benefit	\$14,400
15 backup care days	\$750
One-Year Investment	\$15,150

RETURNS

Communication skills	\$8,750
Peer training	\$4,000
Approximate reduced supply waste:	\$10,000
75% reduced sick days (calculated based on industry/level typical base compensation of about \$150,000):	\$3,462
50% reduced risk of attrition	\$159,750
One-Year Savings	\$185,962

11.3x R.O.I.